

NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY

BEHOLD

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 1 • 2020

Kimya Jones'99

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Kimya Jones '99
Medical College of Georgia
at Augusta University





From the Desk of the Vice President
for Operations and Chief Strategist
for Institutional Effectiveness

To my fellow Spartans, near and far, let me begin this column by saying that I hope you all are safe, secure, and in the best of health. I also want to extend my sincere gratitude, both personally and in my role as an administrator, for the support from our greater NSU community that the University has received in the midst of a life-altering pandemic. While the halls and edifices of our campus have been nearly empty for the past three months, the spirit and heart of our community lives and beats strongly. Although COVID-19 has had a tremendous impact on all of us, it certainly has not diverted us from our path and journey towards excellence.



One word comes to mind as I reflect on all that has happened this year – that word is RESILIENCE. Please allow me to share how we have maintained and thrived in these challenging circumstances. COVID-19 compelled us to make some serious and hard decisions, but we maintained a culture of academic excellence by delivering to our students a world class instruction in an online and remote learning environment. Our amazing faculty not only rose to the challenge of delivering instruction in new mode, but they superseded it by being innovative, creative, and flexible to ensure that the learning for our students was neither disrupted nor diminished. As a result, more than 500 students completed their academic journeys here at NSU and now join the Spartan Alumni network all over the world and they are prepared and equipped to meet the needs of employers during these challenging and uncertain times.

As I think about all that has happened this year, I need to share with you how hard the staff and faculty have worked to maintain this beautiful campus and all that we do to serve our students and community. Our leader, Dr. J, has masterfully led us through a storm we couldn't imagine, and she will continue to lead us at the helm. In this issue of BEHOLD you will learn more about how our esteemed faculty have excelled in the virtual classroom. Faculty members such as Dr. Rhonda Fitzgerald and Mr. Lateef Gibson employed innovative methods to ensure that students were engaged in rigorous discourse from the safety of their homes. You'll learn about how our devoted staff and administrators, such as Dr. Vanessa Jenkins, Director of the NSU Counseling Center, used virtual technologies to connect with our students to assist them in maintaining wellness and health in the midst of these challenging times. You'll also learn about the brave and impactful work of our alumni that are first responders to COVID-19 as healthcare workers. All of these individuals represent NSU with distinction and demonstrate the resilience that I have witnessed during these last few months.

Please join me in congratulating two of our Spartan Leaders, Dr. Deborah Fontaine, Vice President for Advancement, and Dr. Michael Shackleford, on their phenomenal careers at NSU as leaders to our staff and as mentors to our students. While they are retiring from their roles as administrators, they will forever be Spartans as they enter the ranks of the many esteemed administrators that have served with excellence.

I wish you all continued health and a wonderful summer and I look forward to the near future when we can connect on campus!

Justin L. Moses

JUSTIN L. MOSES, J.D., Ed.D.

NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY
BEHOLD
VOLUME 9, ISSUE 1 • 2020 A MAGAZINE WITH GLOBAL REACH

The word **"Behold"** is often used by those who love Norfolk State. It sums up the excellence of the University and pride felt for it. That is why when it came to naming the magazine featuring the accomplishments and progress taking place at Norfolk State, **"Behold"** easily came to mind.

Javaune Adams-Gaston, Ph.D.
University President

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Helping GROW, DIVERSIFY STEM Educators



Virginia Governor Ralph Northam announced an initiative intended to increase the number of secondary teachers in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) field. Northam made the announcement Monday, Feb. 10, at Norfolk State University.

Gov. Northam is proposing to invest \$1 million to increase pathways for students to become STEM educators at Norfolk State and Virginia State universities — Virginia's two public historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The initiative, UTeach, is an innovative, university-based approach to recruiting, training, and retaining STEM teachers that is currently functioning at 45 colleges and universities across the country. Virginia is the first state in the nation to propose investing public funds toward establishing a UTeach program.

"The demand for STEM education is growing rapidly, and we must ensure that students of color, students from lower-income school divisions,

and students in other under-represented populations are not left behind," said Northam. "UTeach will help address our existing teacher shortage and create a pool of diverse, talented STEM educators who are equipped to ensure Virginia students have the knowledge, skills and mindsets necessary to thrive in a fast-changing, technologically advanced, global society."

NSU President Javaune Adams-Gaston noted that Northam is a champion for HBCUs and is committed to funding equity in higher education. "In fact the governor's 2020-2022 biennium budget proposal makes historic investments in Virginia's HBCUs," she said during the announcement. "This investment will be a game changer for NSU and our students as we continue to create access to a high-quality education."

From its beginnings 84 years ago, Norfolk State has had a focus on teacher education and classroom learning. Now the School of Education and College of Science, Engineering and Technology will work together to implement the program.

"Norfolk State University has had a long legacy of producing diverse classroom teachers," said Dr. Leon Rouson, dean of the NSU School of Education. "NSU Faculty with expertise in STEM fields and secondary teacher education will work alongside master teacher practitioners to design a program emphasizing deep understanding of STEM content, practices and pedagogy, and strong connections between theory and practice."

Dr. Michael Keeve, dean of the College of Science, Engineering and Technology, said the initiative provides STEM majors with additional career opportunities. "We're taking STEM majors who are not in the education area and certifying them to teach K-12 and it doesn't add any more time or money. It won't add another year to their program and that's a plus."

One student who is glad to hear that is Nathan Foster, an NSU sophomore biology major. Foster plans to teach at his high school alma mater while pursuing his dream to become a physician assistant. "By the Governor implementing this program, I am able to give back to my community and make my dreams become a reality." **B**



ENVIRONMENTAL STAR

The Elizabeth River Project recognized Norfolk State University for its environmental efforts. The University is a recipient of a River Star Business Award, presented at the annual River Star Businesses Recognition Luncheon. This award was achieved through the efforts of Norfolk State's Department of Facilities Management administrators and staff, who gathered data to demonstrate the many ways NSU serves as a good steward of the Elizabeth River and our environment.



School of Business **Dean Glenn Carrington '77** is featured in an article by his law school alma mater. The article, published in April, appeared on the University of Virginia School of Law website. Carrington earned his law degree in 1980 from UVA. He has served as NSU business dean since 2017.



Dr. Andrew Franklin, assistant professor of psychology, who also teaches cyberpsychology, served as an expert on the radio show *Top of Mind with Julie Rose* to discuss a new phenomenon and term—"Zoom fatigue." Franklin pointed out that one reason people may feel fatigued is where they were used to having a variety of interactions, due to COVID-19, much of our current interactions are by video face chatting. The nonverbal cues that we normally detect may not be as apparent.



The American Kinesiotherapy Association featured **Dr. Sheila Ward**, professor of Health, Physical Education and Exercise Science, in its March 2020 *Keeping Up with KT* newsletter. The spotlight article highlighted Ward's expertise in Exercise Physiology, Dance Kinesiology/Biomechanics, exercise and chronic disease.



Dr. Sacharia Albin, professor of engineering, (Left) and **Dr. Makarand Deo**, associate professor of engineering, received a \$500,000 National Science Foundation grant for a project titled "Novel Label-free Optical Imaging Approaches for Early Breast Cancer Detection." The grant will run from August 15, 2020 to August 14, 2023.





FERGUSON SIGNS PARTNERSHIP WITH NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY

Article Courtesy of
Ferguson Enterprises

Plumbing distributor and historically black college say they are stronger together

As part of Ferguson's commitment to business diversity, technology and talent development, the company signed an agreement with Norfolk State University to provide students with business development education, internships, mentorships and other opportunities. The partnership was recently signed at the University's Innovation Center in Norfolk, VA.

"I am proud to say that this is the first agreement of its kind with a historically black college and university (HBCU) for Ferguson," said Cathy Williams, Ferguson's business diversity and government administration manager. "We look forward to creating more of these partnerships with other HBCUs in Virginia and across the country to expand our reach for new business ideas and to attract new talent to continue to grow our company."

"This is a great opportunity to support and encourage tomorrow's industry leaders through partnering with innovative academic institutions such as Norfolk State," said Mike Sajor, Ferguson's chief information officer. "We are stronger together. Everyone – associates, customers, partners, vendors and investors – play an active part in who we are today and who we will be in the future. We are grateful for the opportunity this partnership represents, as it

aligns precisely with our desire to ensure our workforce for the future is diverse and possesses the skills needed to power Ferguson's, and our customers', future successes."

Mike and Dr. Javaune Adams-Gatson, president of Norfolk State University, signed the agreement, which includes:

- A three-day pitch event in partnership with the Business Diversity department and Ferguson Ventures
- A 12-week series for students on business strategies, innovation and automation
- Potential internship opportunities
- A year-round mentorship program with Ferguson Technology

Glenn Carrington, dean of NSU's School of Business, said the agreement will help students be ready to thrive before and after graduation. "To be first-day ready we need communication skills, we need problem-solving skills, we need interpersonal skills, and we need to know what the industry wants our students to have when it comes down to technology," he said. "Those are the things we will figure out from having this partnership with Ferguson, so I'm very excited." **B**

A Crowning Glory: **THE CROWN** **ACT** & History of Natural Hair

By SHARON RIDDICK HOGGARD (M.A. '04)



Graham Central Station, the '70s funk band, said it best in their cut titled *Hair*. "Black or blonde or nappy or fair. You can't judge nobody by hair." Logical, right? Depends on who you ask. Comedian Paul Moody said, in one of the most famous lines in the Chris Rock movie *Good Hair*, "If your hair is relaxed, they are relaxed. If your hair is nappy, they are not happy." The dialogue refers to chemically altered and natural hair.

Discrimination based on hair texture is a form of social injustice that has plagued Africans and African Americans around the world for centuries. In the western world in particular, "afro-textured" hair has been treated with disdain from all ethnicities. Upon arrival to North America, black slaves' hair was cut supposedly to prevent the spread of lice, but it was also an effort to erase part of their culture. "Hair is a very personal identifying characteristic. It is also linked to how in the U.S. we identify, categorize, classify and judge folks (positively and negatively). Therefore, hair that is not like the dominant society (those who hold power) is categorized as other," said Dr. Khadijah O. Miller, professor of interdisciplinary studies and chair of the Department of History and Interdisciplinary Studies at Norfolk State University.



The **CROWN** Act

**CROWN Act (Create a Respectful
and Open World for Natural Hair)**

Miller notes that hair became a symbol against the status quo during the women's and Black power movements. "But Black hair discrimination is a relevant (yet sad) news discussant because it is another tool used to discriminate against a group of people. When one says your hair, the hair you were born with, and an identifying aspect to the core of who you are . . . is inappropriate, it also states that you are inappropriate."

In an effort to blend into American society, Blacks have been using hot combs or chemicals to straighten their hair for decades. What has changed is that politically, we have more and more people in positions of power who are embracing cultural differences as different and not wrong."

Enter the CROWN Act (Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair), legislation that ensures protection against discrimination based on hairstyles, extending statutory protection to hair texture and protective styles in the Fair Employment and Housing Act and state education codes. Six states — California, Colorado, New Jersey, New York, Virginia and Washington — have ratified the act. The legislation movement was birthed by the CROWN Coalition, a group of businesses and other organizations that have dedicated themselves to the advancement of anti-discrimination across the United States.

Virginia Governor Ralph Northam signed the bill, which expands the Virginia Human Rights Act's definition of racial discrimination, into law in March. The new law provides that the terms "because of race" and "on the basis of race" and similar terms, when used in reference to discrimination in the Code of Virginia and acts of the General Assembly, include traits historically associated with race, including hair texture, hair type and protective hairstyles such as braids, locks and twists.

"If we send children home from school because their hair looks a certain way or otherwise ban certain hairstyles associated with a particular race —

Here's a short list of hair discrimination instances that recently made national headlines:

- DeAndre Arnold was suspended from school in February because of his dreadlocks and was also told he would not be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies unless he cut his hair.
- Juelz Trice was "forced" to fill in his shaved-hair design with a sharpie to avoid suspension.
- Michael Tatum, a four-year old, was told by school administrators to cut his hair or wear a dress and be addressed as a girl.
- Charity Jones was offered a job at Catastrophe Management Solutions. After the job offer, a human resource manager told her that the company could not hire her because of her dreadlocks. When Jones questioned the decision, she was told that locks "tend to get messy."



that's discrimination, it's unacceptable and wrong. This bill makes Virginia more equitable and welcoming to all," Governor Northam said about signing the bill.

Will the legislation change attitudes about Black hair? "Honestly, I do not know," reflected Miller. "What I do know is that it is a sad commentary that we have to instill an act for fair treatment in 2020. . . . Perhaps racial relations have not improved as much as we have hoped. Systematic institutionalized discrimination embedded in American society exists. It adversely impacts African Americans disproportionately compared to white Americans, and Americans of other ethnicities. So with all of that, I do not think it will change attitudes, opinions, and/or beliefs about Black hair, but I do believe it may stimulate more awareness, conversations and a sensitivity to 'check' certain beliefs held by African Americans and others regarding Black hair."

Marquetta Anderson, owner of Naturally U Hair Salon in Suffolk, Virginia, has a down-to-earth approach when it comes to Black hair. "It is vitally important for Black people to wear natural hair," she said, "one reason being, so many of us are losing hair from chemicals." The hairdresser and entrepreneur has worn long dreadlocks for many years and has cared for clients wearing natural hair for nearly 30 years, many who have experienced hair loss. Anderson acknowledges that chemically processed hair may have helped African Americans climb the ladder of business success. "Employers want you to present yourself a certain way and natural hair doesn't fit the mold. You have to look a certain way in the business world. And, natural hair just wasn't universally accepted. So we straightened our hair to lengthen it and to fit in."

Anderson believes that the CROWN Act will spark discussion across the races. "Hollywood and television stars are now wearing natural hair." Because the wealthy and powerful are choosing natural hair, she believes that other states will follow suit and pass their own versions of the CROWN Act. "Some employers and others in the business community will eventually accept natural hair. I applaud everyone who wears their natural hair," she said, "because we shouldn't allow anyone to tell us how we should wear our hair."

One's race, culture, manner of dress and definitely not the style of one's hair should ever be a deciding factor in that person's ability to perform a job effectively, become an elite athlete, graduate from college or attend school. **B**



"Our generation takes up half of the voting population in the country. Our one vote can influence an election with strong advocacy and civic engagement on campuses and social outlets."

- Juanice Thomson '20

HISTORICAL MILESTONES

Shine Light on Fight for Voting Rights

The struggle by African Americans for the right to vote is a story of activism and commitment to attain and hold on to this right.

“Since the beginning of the formation of the United States, the right for its citizens to actively engage in the rights, responsibilities, opportunities, protections and supports of the government have been at the center of what it means to be America and for one to be an American,” said Dr. Khadijah O. Miller, NSU history and interdisciplinary studies department chair.

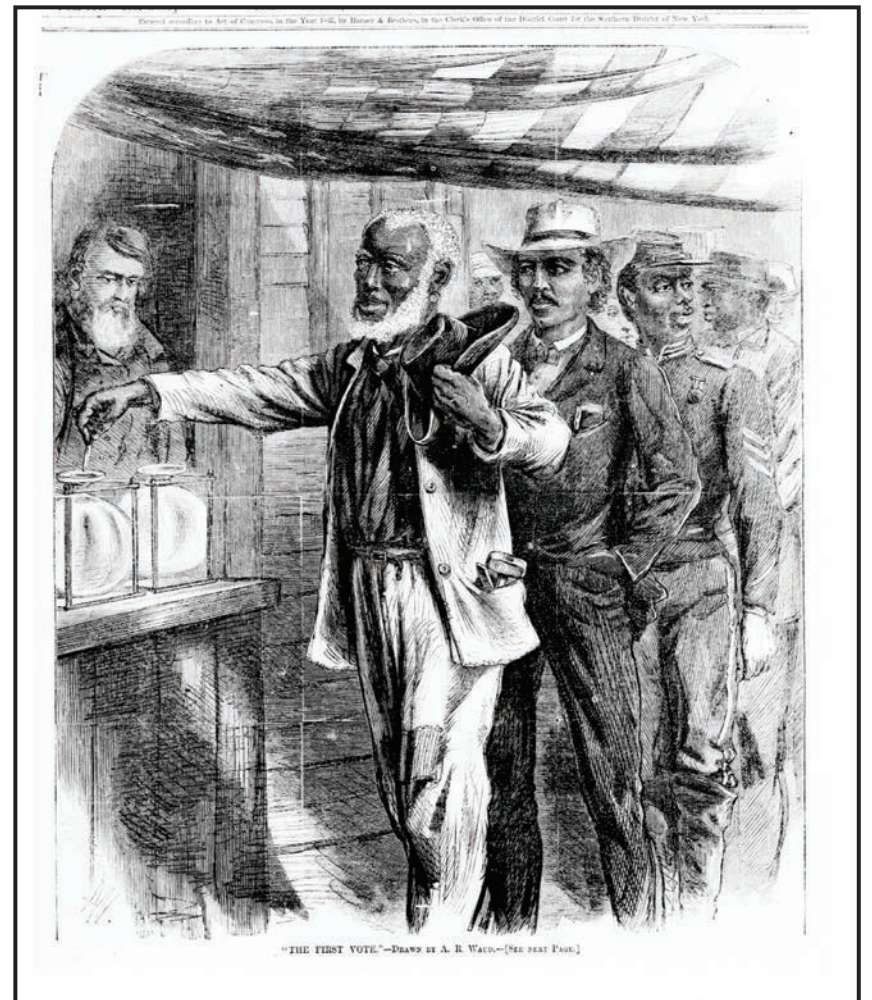
2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the 15th amendment to the U.S. Constitution that gave Black men the right to vote, and it also marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment granting women the right to vote. Despite these amendments blacks have continued to face obstacles to exercising their voting rights. This year’s Black History Month highlighted this important fight.

“2020 is a presidential election year and that is important given our current political situation with an impeached president,” she said, “however, every year is an important election year, and we hope to emphasize that civic engagement is not an every four-year activity, but it is a daily, weekly, annual activity to ensure we all have the basic rights stated in our Declaration of Independence and Constitution.”

Juanice Thomson ’20, president of the NSU Young Democrats this academic year and has been working to impress upon young people the importance of their vote. “Our generation takes up half of the voting population in the country. Our one vote can influence an election with strong advocacy and civic engagement on campuses and social outlets, said Thomson, who majored in political science.

Although students were not on campus most of the spring semester due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Thomson and her group continue to reach out. “My organization has held several Zoom conferences engaging students on the significance of voting for the upcoming election in November and brainstorming several ways students can be virtually educated on voting,” she said.

A May 2020 graduate, Thomson’s hope for the fall 2020 semester is that students are committed to voting in the upcoming election. “I hope students will utilize available resources on campus and take action to get involved with student organizations that have a mission or goal to engage with students on the matter of voting. Organizations like Nextgen America and Campus vote project are non-partisan organizations that provide students opportunities to advocate and participate in important civic engagements.



“The vote is precious. It is the most powerful non-violent tool we have in a democratic society, and we must use it.”

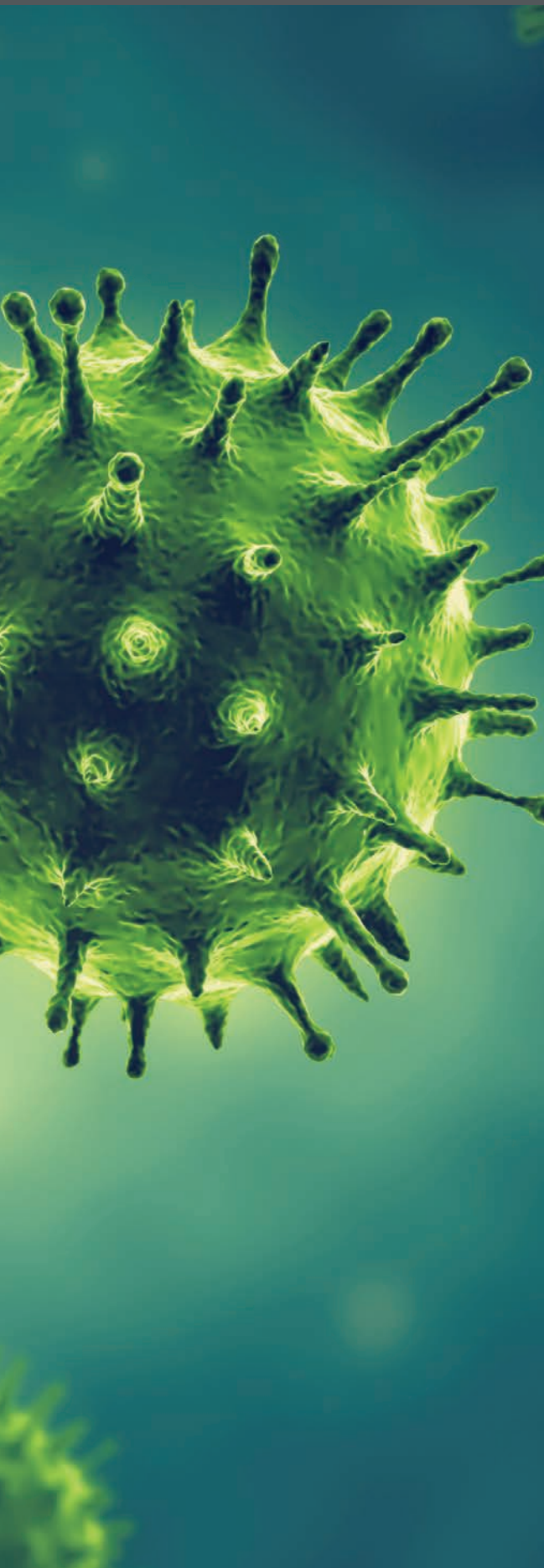
- John Lewis, Congressman and Civil Rights Leader



THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

"True character is revealed in the choices a human being makes under pressure -- the greater the pressure, the deeper the revelation, the truer the choice to the character's essential nature."

—Robert McKee, screenwriter



Over the past few months, the Norfolk State community, our families, friends, our nation and the world have been living through an unprecedented time of challenge. The COVID-19 global pandemic has swept across America closing schools, universities, restaurants and gyms, leaving athletic champions uncrowned and stealing many special moments and celebrations years in the making.

This crisis has presented us with unprecedented challenges as an institution, as a community, and as individuals. Those challenges have revealed who we are, what we value and what we stand for.

These next several pages contain snapshots of the actions, grit and determination of the Norfolk State community. The Spartan Family not only rose to the challenge of the Coronavirus but also cared for one another.

With the decision to move classes online, the faculty had one-week – 40 hours – to make the transition. Dr. Dorothy Jones, director of the Office of Extended Learning, said the university went from 254 online courses to 1,732 online courses in 29 days. In addition, the NSU Office of Information Technology issued more than 250 laptops and close to 100 mobile hot spots to students, faculty and staff who needed access to distance learning tools.

With the fast-moving changes, the NSU Division of University Advancement established the NSU Emergency Relief Fund for students experiencing hardships due to the COVID-19 transition (see page 25). In April, the Division of Finance and Administration began issuing more than \$4 million to students for unused housing, dining and parking payments for the spring semester. Despite the pandemic's impact on the U.S. economy, Gerald Hunter, Vice President for Finance and Administration, said the University is projected to end the year with a balanced budget.

Beginning in late February, the NSU Office of Communications and Marketing, in conjunction with the Spartan Health Center, sent coronavirus awareness safety messages and videos to the campus community and created a coronavirus website to house all communication regarding the virus. Safety messages also aired on WNSB Blazin' Hot 91.1. Dozens of NSU campus announcements continue to be sent to email addresses to keep the NSU community informed.

Although the University's on-campus commencement was postponed until the fall semester, the Norfolk State community worked to recognize the more than 500 graduates of the Class of 2020 with celebratory messages and experiences beginning May 4 and culminating with a Presidential message from Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston and a surprise speech delivered virtually by musical artist, fashion designer and philanthropist Pharrell Williams on Saturday, May 9. Below is a listing of the special attention showered on our graduates. **B**

-
- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ 2020 Senior Spotlight Radio Ads (May 4) | ■ Additional Congratulatory Messages (May 10) |
| ■ Congratulatory Graduation Banner | ■ Degree Mailing (May 11) |
| ■ Senior Class Toast (May 8) | ■ Senior Class Gift Mailing (May 12) |
| ■ Presidential Message (May 9) | |



President Javaune Adams-Gaston, reached out to students numerous times through videos.

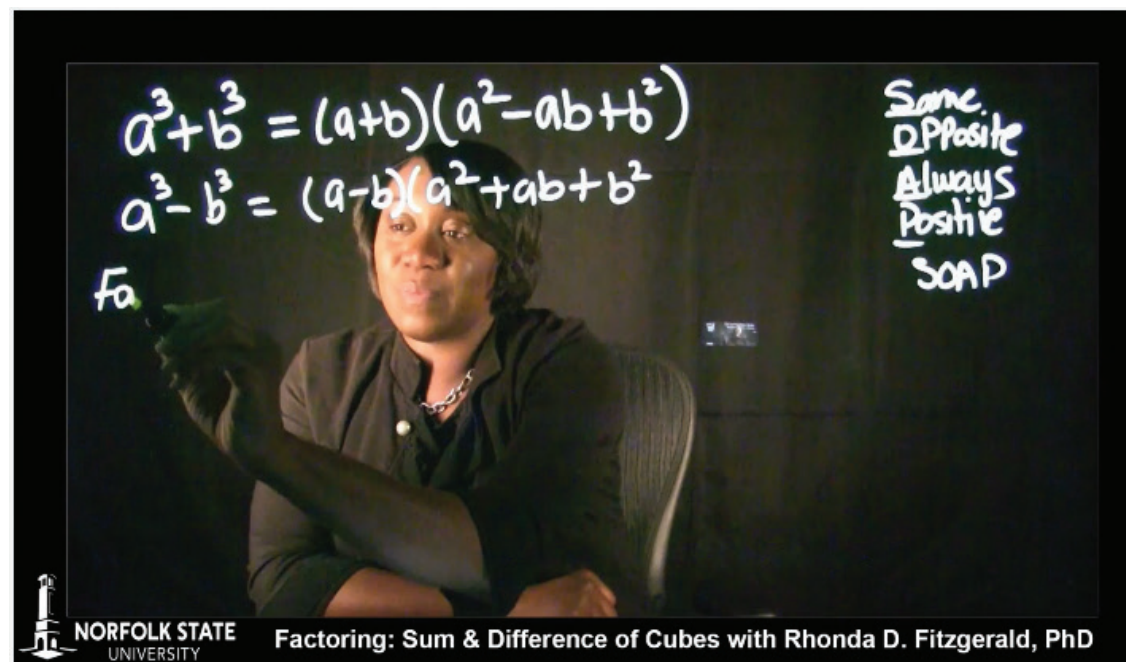
#VAHigherEducationTogether

Campaign: Dr. Adams-Gaston took part in the statewide #VAHigherEducationTogether campaign, in which 44 of Virginia's public and private colleges and universities created a message of solidarity for Virginia high school and college students and their families. The first phase of the campaign features a video collage of college and university presidents holding signs with an overarching message: "To our current and future students: These days aren't easy. But our hearts are with you, and we send you these messages of support. We know we'll be back together again. We know we'll be stronger than ever. Be safe. Be informed. Be well. Sincerely, Virginia's College and University Presidents."

ADVERSITY IS the Mother of Innovation

In mid-March, University officials decided that for the health and safety of the University community that courses and most administrative functions would be taught and delivered remotely for the remainder of the semester. Faculty, staff and administrators had to quickly determine new approaches.

Here are snippets of some creative ways the University community reached out to students.



Dr. Rhonda Fitzgerald, associate professor of mathematics, became certified to teach online through the Office of Extended Learning in December 2019. But despite being certified for just a few months, she has learned to provide her students with innovative tools in the online world.

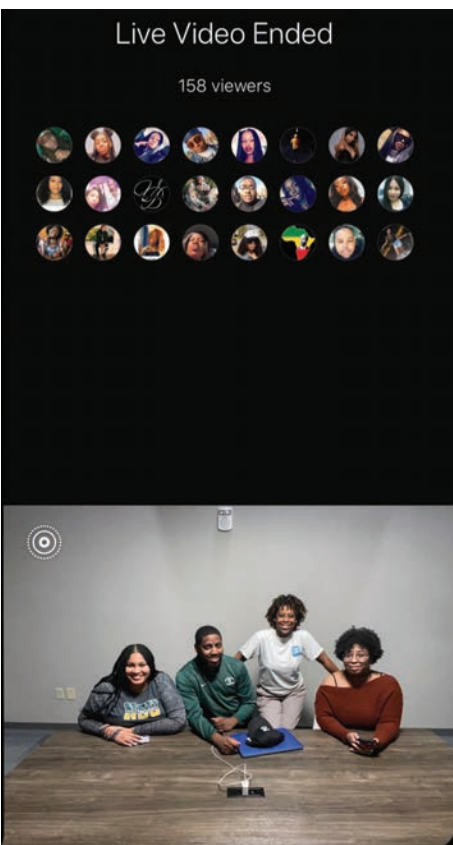
Flipped Classroom: Fitzgerald took her face-to-face teaching techniques and used them in the online arena during the spring semester. Ultimately she continued using her flipped classroom method to teach. Under this approach, she creates short videos that explain mathematical concepts. Students watch the videos, take notes and practice the concepts at home before each class to test their understanding. At the beginning of class, Fitzgerald answers questions and clears up any misconceptions the students may have and then the bulk of class time is spent working problems. Because she has two supplemental instructors, even online, Fitzgerald uses the breakout group feature in the online Blackboard platform.

"In this structure, we can be more focused on a smaller set of students," Fitzgerald explained, "whereas in the face-to-face setting, we roamed the room and it was easier for some students to 'hide'. I also use the polling feature to question students about steps and procedures to ensure that they're clear."



Dr. Patricia Lynch Stith Student Success Center reached out to students through a number of programs including #NSUGRIT under the direction of **Theophilus Clark**, associate director of learning assistance programs.

#NSUGRIT: The primary purpose of the #NSUGRIT campaign was to uplift and motivate the Spartan community in response to COVID-19. “The overarching intended goal was for students to persevere through the duration of the school year and beyond in the spirit of grit and resilience with the unwavering support of the NSU community,” said Clark. “As part of the initiative, students received an email that included an uplifting video. Students were then asked to take a photo of themselves being productive and to post, tag and follow the Success Center via its social media channels. “I would like to earnestly thank the many students who participated and supported the #NSUGRIT campaign,” he said. As a result, over 250 care packages were mailed to participants who actively contributed by posting to social media. “A special recognition is in order for Maleik Watkins, who serves as the Lead Peer Leader in the Student Success Center and facilitated integral logistics as the campaign manager,” said Clark.



Housing and Residence Life

kept its connection with students even though they were no longer living in the residence halls.

Virtual Connections: Since the residence halls closed after Spring Break, 47 virtual programs have been held to help students reduce stress and anxiety and interact with their Resident Assistants (RAs) and the residence life staff. The programs have provided a sense of community, and helped foster learning beyond the digital classroom. Virtual programs held in March and April include: Chat-and-Chews; movie nights; digital parties; virtual games (such as Cell Phone Smackdown with a \$200 prize); Virtual Study with Your RA sessions; Wellness Check-ins (topics on positivity, good mental health tips, real talks, etc); and more! Students on campus are still able to stream current movies through the ResLife Cinema streaming platform.

Housing and Residence Life is committed to remaining connected with our residents who have left campus and those who remain here in emergency housing. Through virtual engagement our office is able to retain connections, maintain real-time communication, and foster enhanced student interaction” said Dr. Faith Fitzgerald, executive director for housing and residence life. “We have had awesome participation and feedback from our students, many of whom have told us they are ready to get back on campus!” Virtual programs will continue through the summer and will include the incoming fall 2020 students as well as current students.



NSU Counseling Center provided students with a series of virtual workshops to help navigate the sudden change and their new normal.

Glow Up Your Mental Health: Consisted of a series of workshops presented on the Blackboard platform. The workshops were conducted by the Counseling Center, which has a staff of licensed mental health professionals and offered at varying times to accommodate differing time zones. Topics included addressing life beyond sports, social distancing didn’t mean social isolation, reducing anxiousness and frustration as well as self-care and gratitude. “The goal of the workshops was to assist students with coping and adjusting to the new normal impacted by COVID-19 as well as the services the Counseling Center offer to them while they are not on campus but available to us remotely,” said Dr. Vanessa C. Jenkins, counseling center director. “The workshops were well attended and we received positive feedback.” Workshops will continue through the summer and into the fall and there are plans to offer specific workshops for faculty and staff as well. “We know when the students return to campus, they will need us more than ever before,” Jenkins said. “We are working on a strategic plan to address their return. We want to let our students know while we are apart we are here for them.”

Lateef Gibson, video producer/director/adjunct professor, asked his students who were taking TV Directing to tell their coronavirus stories by documenting them via video.

The New Normal: The docuseries shares the true, raw and authentic feelings and realities students faced in their everyday lives as we all began living a new reality.

“Since my TV Directing class is designed to be a hands-on course to teach the fundamentals of directing for television and conducted in a TV production studio setting, I had to design something that would still be relevant to directing terms and the students would find it to be equally engaging,” Gibson said. He wanted to make sure the students could use the project to have a tangible product to place on their resume and/or production reel. “We were able to complete 5 episodes before the semester came to an end,” he said. “I hope this experience will give each one of my students the confidence it will take to either be in front of the camera as talent or behind the scenes as a producer/director.” **B**

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Norfolk State Took Quick, Decisive Action

By Staff



In February of 2020, it was business as usual at Norfolk State University. Athletes were busy preparing for a competitive March madness, students were counting down the days until spring break, and faculty and staff members were continuing their normal plans to support student success. But a deadly threat was brewing thousands of miles away that would shake the entire country to its core and force businesses and higher education institutions to completely reimagine their normal operations. That threat was the novel coronavirus.

In early March, the virus had already claimed thousands of lives in countries all over the world, and during this time the first cases also started to appear in America. This serious situation demanded swift, thoughtful

decisions and Norfolk State University's leadership team rose to the challenge.

NSU President Javaune Adams-Gaston, Ph.D., immediately pulled her team together to discuss making difficult, yet necessary, decisions to protect the health and well-being of the entire University community. Those decisions included extending spring break for an additional week, making plans for students to safely leave residence halls, and transitioning to an entirely online course instruction model.

"We are being proactive in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while also continuing our delivery of instruction and services to our students, faculty, and staff. Please know that the safety of our



campus community is always our top priority,” said Dr. Adams Gaston in a message to the NSU Community.

As more information about COVID-19 was released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the state and local health departments, even more action had to be taken to prevent the spread of this deadly illness. Dr. Adams-Gaston and her team decided to extend online course instruction through the entire spring and summer semesters, and they also started thinking about how the campus would operate during the upcoming fall semester.

“We have a dedicated cadre of faculty and staff,” Adams-Gaston said in an interview. “The faculty quickly pivoted to online learning, and our housing, facilities and public safety personnel continue to maintain the health and safety of the campus.”

In addition to asking students to adjust to online learning, they also had to make yet another difficult request — they asked students who were living on campus to relocate off campus in order to adhere to state and national guidelines regarding social distancing.

University Police and Housing and Residence Life staff implemented a logistics plan and helped to move more than 2,600 students off campus in just one week. NSU Facilities Management staff also conducted deep cleanings in residence halls and buildings all around campus.

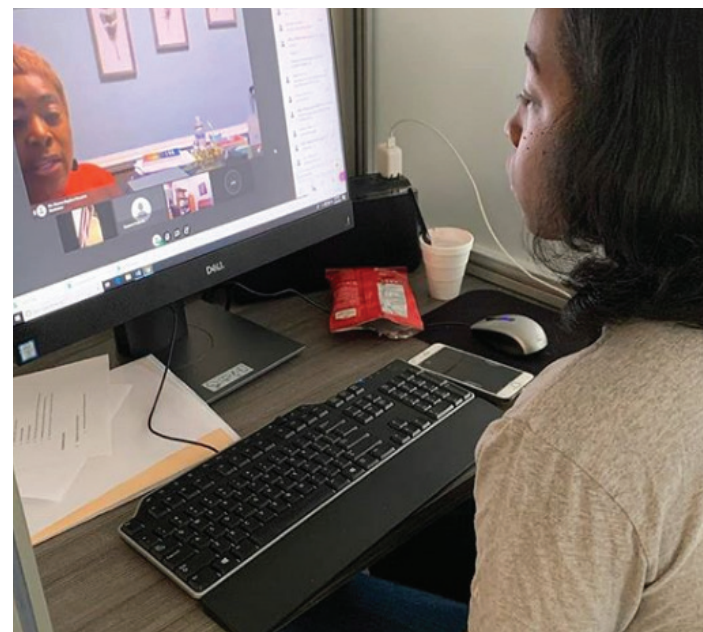
As that unfolded, University administrators were also working on a plan to keep staff safe as the virus continued to spread around the world. They quickly implemented alternative work plans for all staff who could work from home and approved a telecommuting policy.

In a matter of roughly 10 days, University leadership had put in place measures for the health and safety of the campus community. Although other decisions would need to be made, these first decisions were crucial to slow the spread of the virus.

COVID-19 has impacted every aspect of life for those in the University community and beyond. Hundreds of thousands have lost their lives and millions have been

“We are being proactive in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while also continuing our delivery of instruction and services to our students, faculty, and staff.

— Dr. Adams Gaston



Originally posted by @nsu_bss

infected. Health and economic disparities exist for African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans and individuals from poor communities who have been impacted by the disease.

In Virginia, by late May, there were over 40,000 cases and more than 1,200 deaths. These numbers continue to climb as businesses and other institutions adjust to this new normal.


“Life is inherently unpredictable,” Adams-Gaston said. “There has been so much unfortunate loss, but the ability our students have to react quickly to the changes brought about by COVID-19 demonstrates a level of maturity and tenacity that will serve them well as they work to earn their degrees and prepare for their professional lives. They will be a part of the generation of innovators who help us find the solutions in response to this crisis.”

Dr. Adams-Gaston has praised the efforts of the leadership team, faculty, staff and students during the very fluid process. Now, like many institutions of higher learning across the country, university leaders are making plans to reopen in the fall. President Adams-Gaston said leadership will continue to assess the safest ways to do so while working with state and local officials.

No one knows when the Spartan Community will gather together again, but when it does, campus life, activities and interaction will be different. But the Spartan legacy will always remain the same for our students, alumni and community. “The new normal of COVID-19 has affected all of our lives,” said President Adams-Gaston, “but it has not changed who we are, and what we value as Spartans.” **B**

BEHOLD





ON THE FRONT LINES AGAINST COVID-19

NSU Alumna Works
With Team in Georgia to
Develop COVID-19 Test

CONTINUED ON PG. 19

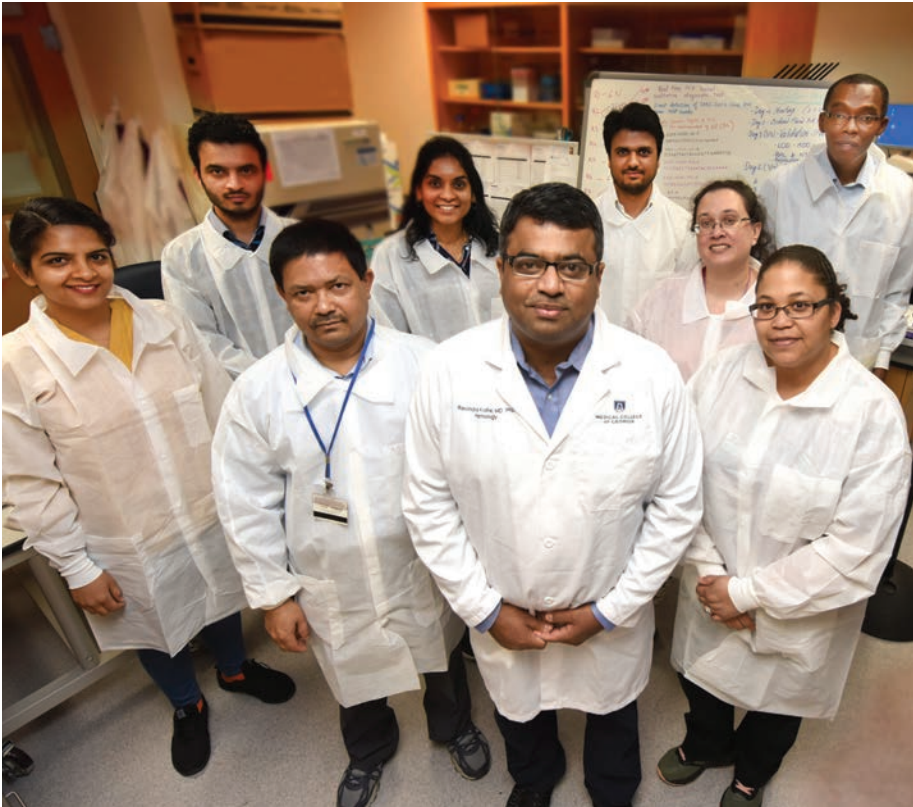
By DORIS SHADOUH



Kimya in the lab with Dr. Ashis Mondal.



Kimya working in the lab



Left to right (back) Meenakshi Ahluwalia, Pankaj Ahluwalia, Sudha Ananth, Nikhil Sahajpal, Yasmeen Jilani, Dr. Allan Njau
Left to right (front) Dr. Ashis Mondal, Dr. Ravindra Kolhe (Director), Kimya Jones

Heroes don't always wear capes, but sometimes they wear a lab coat and have an affinity for Green and Gold! Kimya Jones '99, a research associate and laboratory manager, is one of them. She is conducting life-saving work through medical testing and validation.

In the early days of the coronavirus in the U.S., a team at the Georgia Esoteric and Molecular Laboratory in Georgia, where Jones is laboratory manager, was diligently working on one of the most important pieces of the novel coronavirus puzzle — the Test. It was early March and the team, a part of the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University, had been working long hours to find a way to test for the virus that causes COVID-19 and deliver results in a matter of a few short hours rather than several days as most tests did. Before March, the sources of testing materials and kits were confined to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state laboratories. However, because the ability to test was outpaced by the growing numbers of those contracting the virus, the government began allowing outside labs to develop and validate their own tests. The team went to work, and after 90 straight hours, developed a test they could begin using.

By the end of April, the lab had been tapped to help in Georgia's statewide testing effort and was processing 1,000 tests a day.

Jones has been engaged in life-saving work her entire career. She started out performing cancer research after she earned her degree. She then decided to join the GEM team because she was able to do molecular diagnostic testing and she could work in the histology lab as well.

"I wanted to learn more about clinical diagnostic testing while developing my skills with histology. I am never doing the same thing on a daily basis. It gives me freedom to continue learning and improving myself in both fields," explained Jones.

Learning and improving is also something she did as a student at Norfolk State University. She says her time at NSU taught her to love biochemistry,

She started NSU in the fall of 1994, and her first two years were full of surprises and new experiences. While tending to her studies in science, she also joined the legendary Spartan Legion band as a piccolo flute player.

"During this time, I formed lasting and lifelong friendships. I fell in love with NSU and wanted to become a part of it. The familial atmosphere was very intriguing to me. Somehow, I knew I made the right decision in selecting NSU as my home away from home," says Jones.

She also remembers working as student assistant to Dr. Bertha Richards in the comparative anatomy laboratory. She excelled in all aspects of the curriculum, and later went on to earn a Master's in Medical Science.

While Jones and her team are spending innumerable hours in the lab to perfect the COVID-19 test, she also has to balance her workload with another extremely important job—taking care of her family.

"It is hard to balance caring for myself when I am needed so much by the community and my coworkers. My family understands that I take pride in my work and will not leave until it is done. My children are especially proud of me. My husband, Herb Jones, has always been supportive of my career and he is always pushing me forward, which allows me to fulfill my career obligations," says Jones.

Even during such difficult times, the thing that keeps her going is her faith, her love for the field and knowing that the work she does is important.

"The most rewarding part of my work is knowing that every aspect of my duties will result in a patient receiving reliable and accurate results whether it be from histology or molecular diagnostics. I have some unbelievably talented co-workers and they also deserve praise as well," says Jones.

Jones has worked closely with Dr. Ravindra Kolhe, GEM Lab director and vice chair for translational research of the MCG Department of Pathology at Augusta University who gave her the responsibility as lab manager, and

"The most rewarding part of my work is knowing that every aspect of my duties will result in a patient receiving reliable results and accurate results whether it be from histology or molecular diagnostics."

organic chemistry and histology, the study of the microscopic structure of tissues.

"The skills I developed from hands-on experience in the biochemistry laboratory sparked my interest in molecular biology which gave me some of the background to perform my duties as the lab manager for GEM lab," says Jones.

Jones is originally from Fort Washington, Maryland, where she lived with her mother and three sisters, one an identical twin. She learned about NSU from Veronica Williams, a family member who was attending at the time. Jones traveled to Norfolk to experience homecoming, and once she stepped onto the campus, she knew she wanted to be a part of the Spartan family.

Dr. Ashis Mondal, GEM Lab's Molecular Laboratory supervisor, who she says has helped her to further develop her skills in the field.

She also offered a few words of advice to current Norfolk State students who also wish to follow their dreams and discover a career path as rewarding as the one she has chosen.

"I would tell them to follow their dreams and not to have just one dream, but to have several. There is nothing wrong with multi-tasking. My advice for students in the scientific field is to volunteer or intern in a research laboratory during their time off. There is nothing more rewarding than hands-on experience with the things you learn in your curriculum," says Jones. **B**



STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER

Launches Next Up Podcast Staff

Sometimes things don't happen when you've planned them or as you've planned them. But when the plans finally come to fruition, it's exactly the right time and the right plan.

That's what happened with The Next Up podcast and Dr. Felicia Mebane. When Mebane first came to Norfolk State University several years ago, she shared her vision for the podcast with colleagues. Her original goal was to form a partnership with WNSB or another creative platform, and she wanted to highlight the programs and services that were offered at the Dr. Patricia Lynch Stith Student Success Center. The podcast would be a way to share valuable information, showcase student accomplishments and build the community on and off campus around NSU academics. However, her focus was directed to other priorities and the podcast had to wait. "Sometimes fulfilling a vision or goal takes time," she reflected.

Finally, the time was right. During the December 2019 winter break, Mebane began building the podcast. "I knew that it would take time to put pieces into place so that production could be seamless and professional," she said. "As the executive producer, I worked countless hours on weekends and in the evenings ... I invested my personal resources to launch the project for the Center to show my commitment and proof of concept before asking NSU to commit funds."

By the time the Success Center launched the Next Step podcast in March, Mebane had teamed up with Tresstin White, a communications major who served as a peer leader at the Success Center, to serve as her co-host. "Another goal for me was to work with a student, specifically one with communications experience," said Mebane. "After meeting Tresstin, I decided that this would be a great opportunity for her to both represent the student perspective and add to her résumé."

"I am excited to be part of this project. Being a part of the creation of the podcast and serving in these roles at its launch has allowed me to diversify my skills..." says White. "Also, I am a big advocate of students graduating in four years and being intentional about their time. I am proud to collaborate with Dr. Mebane to create a different and useful tool that can help support those goals. This podcast is a perfect resource for both students and the University."

The official launch of the podcast happened to coincide as colleges and universities began social distancing due to COVID-19 and NSU had just

announced the extension of spring break because of the pandemic. Mebane and White had already recorded the first few episodes before social distancing was implemented and online classes were mandatory.

But they were soon able to demonstrate the flexibility of the podcast with the ability to record sessions online and to shift topics to focus on shared experiences as everyone adjusted to this new normal. Professors offered tips on how to manage a new class format and shared their views on how to cope with this unique situation.

"One of the most enduring themes of my career has been a focus on leveraging communications to inform, inspire and empower," says Mebane. "Whether the content was finances, public health or higher education, I am dedicated to ensuring that the general public, students and others have the information they need to thrive." **B**



Next Up is produced for the Student Success Center, a unit of the Office of Academic Engagement. Check out previously recorded podcast segments at <https://nextup-studentsuccess.org/>

ANSWERING THE CALL

University Makes Donation to Health Department

By DORIS SHADOUH



It is often said that it takes a village and during the COVID-19 pandemic that adage has proved true. When Virginia Governor Ralph Northam put out the call for donations of personal protective equipment (PPE) for healthcare workers and volunteers for the Virginia Medical Reserve Corps, Norfolk State answered the call.

In April, the University donated personal protective equipment to the Norfolk Health Department. The donation, made through the Department of Nursing and Allied Health, consisted of gloves, isolation gowns, sanitizer wipes, surgical facemasks, shoe covers and alcohol prep pads, which had a market value of nearly \$1000, and came from the department's nursing laboratory inventory.

Personal protective equipment is crucial in keeping health care workers and first responders safe as they work to take care of those suffering from the coronavirus, but it is in short supply. "As health professionals, we know the importance of practicing standard and universal precautions, which refers to the avoidance of the risk of disease transmission by wearing masks, nonporous gloves, goggles, face shields and gowns," said Dr. Mildred K. Fuller, nursing and allied health department chair. "These safety measures cannot be accomplished when PPE is not available to protect the health care team."

Faculty Volunteer for Medical Reserve Corps

In addition to the donation of personal protective equipment, nursing and allied health faculty are helping in the fight to slow the spread of

COVID-19. While Fuller serves as Norfolk State's representative on the Virginia Healthcare Workforce Advisory Council – COVID-19 Work Group, instructors and registered nurses Dr. Julie Rogers and Bonnie Mackneer are volunteers with the Virginia Medical Reserve Corps.

The Medical Reserve Corps is a force of dedicated volunteers who stand ready to support the community in the event of a public health emergency. Local units are teams of medical and public health professionals who, along with interested community members, volunteer their skills, expertise and time to support ongoing public health initiatives and assist during emergencies throughout Virginia.

Mackneer, who volunteers with the Portsmouth Unit, was affected by the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana. "I like to help others in their time of need," explaining that she has been a volunteer for the reserve corps for some time. As part of COVID-19, Mackneer, who holds a master of science in nursing, is working on contact tracing. "I contact individuals that have been exposed to a person that has tested positive for COVID-19. My responsibility is to ask specific questions regarding any symptoms that they may be having and also to get a medical history to assess their vulnerability." She says, "Volunteering with the Medical Reserve Corps is a very rewarding experience," adding, "You do not have to have a medical background in order to volunteer."

Rogers, who works with the Corps throughout Hampton Roads, sees that the need for healthcare and healthcare education is widespread. "We cannot wait for pandemics, but we as a people can make strong differences within the lives of our neighbors. Healthcare is not just performed at a hospital or clinic, it's performed at our local establishments as well." Medical support, she said, is greatly needed within every community. Rogers, a women's health nurse practitioner and family nurse educator, is glad to use her medical skills and knowledge in that way. "Giving back to people is very important to me. Why? Because someone gave back to me." **B**

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT:

Spartans on the Front Lines



MICHELLE BROWN '09

*Clinical Lab Safety Support Coordinator,
Sentara Laboratory Services*

Michelle Brown is a natural investigator and her position as clinical lab safety support coordinator allows her to do that daily. Brown, a medical technology graduate, works for Sentara Laboratory Services.

COVID-19 EXPERIENCE

For Brown, who works with COVID-19 samples, safety is imperative. “Safe laboratory practices and compliance are vital every day, but especially while handling the thousands of COVID-19 specimens collected from our region,” she said. “Guidance regarding this pandemic changes every day. I work to provide accurate and up-to-date lab safety education, resources and training, which is pivotal at this time.”

Even though she is working with a novel virus, Brown relies on her training and that of her colleagues. “In the lab, we work with dangerous pathogens every day and use standard precautions. What has helped me is knowing that our staff have been trained and are well-versed in lab safety pre-COVID-19.”

During these uncertain times, especially with this new form of virus, Brown points out the important role that laboratories play. “The lab is an integral part in healthcare. Without the lab providing results, clinicians are unable to treat effectively. It takes a village,” she said, adding, “support and recognition to our profession is encouraged.”

How can the public support those on the front lines now and going forward? Brown gives the following advice as a way to help during this crisis and beyond. “Social media and unofficial ‘experts’ present challenges by providing misleading information,” she explained. And that has an effect on those working to save lives. “It presents fear to the front line. The public should promote facts only!” **B**



ARI CUFFEE '03,'10

Registered Nurse and Care Manager for the Department of Veterans Affairs, NSU Adjunct Faculty

Cuffee sees nursing as a calling. As a young girl, she listened intently to the stories that her grandmother and aunt told about their experiences. “I admired them as heroes that made a difference,” she said. Cuffee remembers them telling of how they aided in their patients’ healing process, advocating for their patients, preventing medical errors, and even questioning doctor’s orders all in the quest to deliver the very best care they could.

COVID-19 EXPERIENCE

Cuffee is usually assigned to an outpatient primary care setting in the clinic. However, during the pandemic, she is at the main Veterans hospital in preparation for the COVID-19 surge. She has screened patients for COVID-19 in the facility parking lot and has cared for them on the inpatient unit. Cuffee receives ongoing training to ensure that proper techniques are followed.

“My experience with COVID-19 has been a daunting one,” Cuffee said. But she says, “every precaution has been taken to avoid transmission.”

Although Cuffee has years of nursing experience, she has some fear because this is a novel disease, which differs from those that have come before it. Her manager works to keep the staff informed and that has relieved some of her nervousness. She pulls her strength from several sources. “My family, prayer, and my faith in God has helped me to get through this unforeseen time,” Cuffee said. In addition, she has also had the support of her church. “Finally, the comedy and humor from my children has destroyed my anxiety. I’ve never lived through a pandemic, it is an abnormal event, but I know God is in control.”

Cuffee urges everyone to follow the guidelines. “The public can support me now by continuing to practice good hand-washing all day, every day. If you are sick or not feeling well, seek medical attention first, and then stay home until you are well. This will reduce transmission of viruses/infections that could be lingering. If you must commute for essential items, wear a face mask for protection. Eat balanced meals, monitor your health and make the necessary adjustments. Take care of your body.” **B**

TARYRA OWENS '08

Laboratory Manager, Chesapeake Internists LTD

Taryra Owens always thought that she would become a doctor, but when she saw the medical technology curriculum while at Norfolk State, she was hooked. “I chose the laboratory field because of my love for science, she said. “I genuinely love what I do and wouldn’t trade it for the world.”

COVID-19 EXPERIENCE

Owens works in the lab in a health care practice, which has given her a view to both the clinical and personal side of the pandemic. “My experience with COVID-19 has been one of excitement and sadness. Excitement because it is a scientist’s dream to investigate a new virus and to see the antigen/antibody response,” said Owens. “It’s also sad because in my role in the physician’s office lab setting, I actually get to see patients. People are really suffering and really sick. When I go in to do testing, I try to lend a caring ear and have a heartfelt conversation with them so they know that we are doing everything possible to aid them in any way we can.”

Her colleagues, family and office have helped her handle these past few months. “My husband has been amazing with maintaining the household, getting supplies and caring for our six-year-old son while I’m at work.” She also points out that her office has made sure that everyone has the needed personal protective equipment. “I believe I work for the best doctors in the world at Chesapeake Internists. They go above and beyond for their patients and staff. We have been encouraging each other daily.” She also relies on her best friend Michelle Brown who is a medical technologist and Clinical Lab Safety Support Coordinator, Sentara Laboratory Services. “To have that person who understands and that you can lean on for support is invaluable.” Owens has these words of encouragement: “I want people to know that we are only going to get through this by working together. I know we hear this all the time, but it truly is what is going to make the difference in getting through this pandemic.” **B**



CONTINUED ON PG. 24



LAJUANA M. COLLINS, M.D. (B.S.'83)

*Practicing Physician
President, NSU Foundation Inc.*

COVID-19 EXPERIENCE

Dr. Collins works in the field of psychiatry in two different settings: at a psychiatric hospital and correctional facilities. In the hospital, patients are dealing with mental health and physical issues. “We have to make decisions on how to address mental health needs while placing patients on the proper precautions (e.g. respiratory, contact) in order to adequately treat them and insure the safety of others,” she said. “All staff must wear personal protective equipment (PPE) and have temperatures recorded prior to each shift.”

In the correctional facility, staff also has to wear a certain amount of PPE. The inmates are seen regularly in the clinic for physical and mental health issues. “There is a great deal of anxiety, particularly among the inmates, about the possibility of contracting COVID-19 due to being in a close environment with limited capability to protect themselves.”

Daily prayer and meditation have helped her cope, along with keeping abreast of updates by the Centers for Disease Control and Virginia Department of Health.” Dr. Collins also finds comfort in interacting with other medical staff. “We offer support to each other to help us through this pandemic.”

Dr. Collins wants the public to understand the seriousness of this virus. “COVID-19 is real! No one is immune to this virus,” she said. “PLEASE take all the necessary precautions. Our demographic is particularly at risk due to the propensity to have underlying health conditions, which compromise our ability to effectively fight the effects of this virus. When restrictions are lifted, we should still take the proper precautions. We as a village need to stick together now more than ever to protect ourselves and those we love.” **B**



HOPE STRACHAN '12, '20

*Surgical Service and Labor & Delivery Nurse,
Maryview Bon Secours
Medical Center*

COVID-19 EXPERIENCE

Hope Strachan has been struck by how COVID-19 has changed what patient care looks like. “I have witnessed patients who had to receive emergency treatment, and high-risk surgeries without their family members by their sides.” But she has equally seen

what heroes look like. “And for the most part, I have seen frontline workers sacrificing their lives, time with loved ones, and their overall health day after day since the breakout began in our area.”

It’s a lot to take in and she’s relied on her faith, her family, friends and co-workers. “I sincerely want to thank my support system for everything . . . for every prayer, words of encouragement, meals, packed lunches, custom masks, air hugs or just a simple call. It’s an ongoing pandemic with no cure, but yet my calling has called me to still be here and for that I am both humbled and grateful.” **B**



SAMANTHA WILLIAMS '89

*Social Psychologist/Health
Scientist,
Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention*

COVID-19 EXPERIENCE

Williams has been providing scientific support to teams within the CDC COVID-19 Response since mid-March. “In that time, I’ve worked on addressing policy issues, updating guidance and developing targeted communication products, as well as responding to internal, public and congressional inquiries. I’ve also worked across teams to rapidly produce timely, evidence-informed reports.” Although she and her entire

office has been teleworking since March, Williams is still putting in long hours. “It’s not unusual now for me to work six days/60+ hours a week. This week, which was more unusual than others, I worked every day close to 70 hours.” Williams says that the Agency has been supportive and that has lessened the stress. The public can be supportive by practicing prevention strategies, she said. “I hope what I do helps others stay well, stay OUT of hospitals, get better and back to their loved ones. We can all do our part to help. ... And, in the midst of all this,” said Williams, “continue to live, love, pray, give, help, plan, dream and move forward.” **B**

EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND


to Aid Students
Exceeds Goal

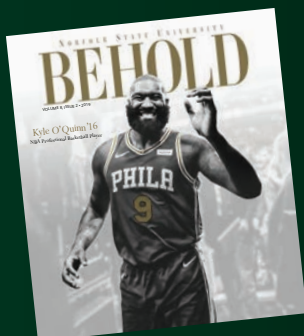


In just 30 days, the Norfolk State family and friends showed an outpouring of love and support for our students whose lives and educations were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the disruptions that may have been occurring in your own lives, you were able to set them aside and think about our students. Because of your generosity, together, we were able to reach and exceed the \$50,000 fundraising goal set for the NSU Emergency Relief Fund. A total of \$64,300 was raised from 380 donors.

The upheaval caused by the pandemic contributed to the loss of income and sense of belonging, both of which are circumstances beyond our students' control. Additionally, our students, like millions around the world, were forced to deal with the shelter-in-place mandates to help slow the spread of the coronavirus. The NSU Emergency Relief Fund provides

life-changing assistance to those students by assisting them with rent and living expenses due to job loss or reduced hours, as well as transportation expenses, childcare, utilities, and medical expenses. As of late May, 48 students have been assisted with \$18,000.

"A large number of our students work, and with reduced hours and furloughs, they have been unable to make ends meet," said Michelle Marable, NSU Dean of Students. "The NSU Emergency Relief Fund has served as a wonderful resource in helping our students overcome financial hardships and barriers during this unprecedented time. It is so important to make a difference and to lighten the load. We are truly all in this together!" 



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AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN

By Matt Michalec



Photo by Nick Sutton/Kinetic Stills

If you were to make a mold of the ideal college student-athlete, chances are he would look a lot like Jacob Milton. Conference champion athlete. Star student. Leader. The high jumper who just completed his Norfolk State track and field career checks all those boxes, and then some.

Truth be told, NSU Director of Track & Field Kenneth Giles wasn't quite sure what he had when he recruited Milton. Blame the distance – Milton finished his high school career in Stuttgart, Germany, where his father, U.S. Army Col. George Milton (since retired) and a former star collegiate high jumper at Clemson University, was stationed at the time.

The younger Milton had begun to show potential as a jumper, consistently clearing the bar at 6 feet, 8 inches. Milton decided to follow in his father's footsteps, in more ways than one.

"I knew that I wanted to be in an ROTC program and my dad

believed that I had the athletic ability to compete on the collegiate level," Jacob said. "I applied to nine institutions across the U.S. NSU showed the most interest."

Despite not getting to recruit Milton in person, Giles was intrigued when he saw video of Milton jumping.

"Thanks to technology – the videos were well done," Giles said. "You could see the potential there. We decided to take a chance."

That risk was immediately rewarded, as Milton won the MEAC indoor high jump title in his first conference championship meet as a freshman. Milton said that remains his favorite memory from his track career.

"I honestly didn't know how well I would do," Milton said. "My teammate was the highest seed in the conference, but he had an off day and my coach said he was counting on me to bring in those points."

"As the competition went on, the bar got higher and so did I. The feeling of hitting all those new heights and the energy from the crowd was surreal."

Milton blossomed on the track. He won the high jump gold medal at every MEAC championship meet in his career – four indoors and three outdoors. He also was a three-time NCAA regional qualifier.

Not only did Milton's talent shine through, so did his character.

"It was evident early what kind of leader Jacob was," Giles said. "He led by example. He was selected captain as a sophomore. It's rare to have one person serve as captain for three years."

Milton also impressed away from the track. A political science major, he boasted a GPA over 3.4 and won a slew of academic awards. He served as an officer on NSU's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), which serves as the voice for NSU student-athletes to department administration and spearheads community service initiatives. Milton was also selected to serve on the 32-member NCAA SAAC, discussing NCAA legislation on a national level.

"Being in the SAAC was such a blessing," Milton said. "Each

opportunity helped me grow personally and make a difference with the power I had as a student-athlete."

Adding to his plate, Milton was chosen to serve as cadet battalion commander in NSU's ROTC program for the fall 2019 semester.

"It was a lot trying to balance track, school, ROTC and SAAC," Milton said. "All my instructors and coaches were happy to work with me to make being a student, athlete and cadet possible."

"Jacob had a lot on his plate, but he balanced it well," said Lt. Col. Lisa Abel, NSU Professor of Military Science. "He's well-spoken, an excellent student and dedicated to being the best. He's exactly what we're looking for in the Army. He'll make an excellent officer."

Milton didn't have the opportunity to compete in his final season of outdoor track due to the coronavirus pandemic. His commissioning ceremony wasn't conducted publicly, but he will join the army as a second lieutenant afterwards. Next is basic officer leadership course this fall, likely at Fort Lee, where his father transferred several years ago when Jacob came to college.

While his final semester may not have ended the way he wanted, he will forever cherish his Spartan career. As will those who had the pleasure of working with him.

"There are so many things that I can take away from my experience at NSU," Milton said. "I learned how important it is to be a member of a team and have a good work ethic. Most importantly I learned that no matter how far I go, I'll be a proud Spartan from the illustrious Norfolk State University." **B**



Jacob Milton
with his father
retired U.S.
Army Col.
George Milton

We're Ready: Football Preview

By Matt Michalec



There remains much uncertainty for the 2020-21 sports calendar due to the coronavirus pandemic.

But when the games return, this much is certain for Norfolk State football coach Latrell Scott: his team is trending upwards. After winning four of their final six games last year and finishing with their most overall wins (five) since 2011, optimism is high for NSU. Scott welcomes back a veteran team which steadily improved during the 2019 season.

"We're looking forward to seeing what we are capable of when things return to normal," Scott said. "We have a good team coming back with a lot of experience at key positions."

The Spartans return with a wealth of firepower from their offense which averaged 28.9 points per game overall and 31.8 in MEAC play, both of which are the most by an NSU team since the program joined the conference. Leading the way is senior quarterback Juwan Carter, whose 2,631 passing yards, 23 passing touchdowns and 29 total TDs all either led the MEAC or ranked tied for first last year. Entering his fourth year as the starter with a chance to break some hallowed school records, Carter is primed for a big season.

The Spartans do return several playmakers to help carry the load. Running backs Kevin Johnson and Rayquan Smith combined for 898 rushing yards as true freshmen last year, with Johnson (11 total touchdowns) earning third-team All-MEAC honors.

NSU brings back all three of its starting receivers in seniors Justin Smith and Marcque Ellington and sophomore Da'Kendall James. The trio accounted for nearly 1,500 receiving yards and 12 touchdown catches. All-MEAC performer Shawn McFarland and fellow senior Anthony Williams give the Spartans two capable tight ends.

Those playmakers will have the opportunity to operate behind a veteran line that welcomes back three All-MEAC blockers. Senior tackle Kenneth Kirby was a first-team All-MEAC selection last year, junior guard Justin Redd was a second-team choice and senior guard Jalen Powell earned third-team accolades. In all, the Spartans return seven of their top eight offensive linemen, a group which has combined for 119 career starts.

The defense lost five key starters from last year's team. The list includes leading tacklers and All-MEAC players in linebacker Nigel Chavis (107 tackles), safety Nhyre' Quinerly (103) and safety Bobby Price (73).

But the proverbial cupboard is not bare for first-year co-defensive coordinators Kermit Buggs, a Spartan alumnus, and Zach Tenuta. The Spartans should be particularly strong up front with the return of three senior defensive line starters. Ends Chris Myers and De'Shaan Dixon were both named to the All-MEAC third team

last season. Myers tied for the conference lead with nine sacks, and Dixon posted 61 tackles and four sacks of his own. Also back is nose guard Tavien Blackwell (7.5 tackles for loss).

Senior Tyre Givers-Wilson (41 tackles) will lead the linebacker unit. Junior Brandon Savage (two interceptions) and sophomore Devyn Coles (five) lend experience to the defensive backfield.

Kicker Josh Nardone, who made nine of his 11 field goals in 2019, and All-MEAC third-team punter Ryan Richter are back to solidify the special teams units.

With spring practice canceled and summer plans modified due to the pandemic, younger players looking to earn larger roles and incoming recruits may be a little behind the curve in making a name for themselves. But Scott knows all teams nationwide are in the same predicament.

"We wish we had our normal offseason program to prepare us," Scott said. "But fortunately we have a veteran team to provide good leadership. We're all anxious to feed off that momentum we built last year." **B**



2020 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
September			
Sat. 9/5	Virginia State (Labor Day Classic)	Norfolk, Va.	6 p.m.
Sat. 9/12	Charlotte	Charlotte, N.C.	TBA
Sat. 9/19	East Carolina	Greenville, N.C.	TBA
Sat. 9/26	Florida A&M *	Tallahassee, Fla.	6 p.m.
October			
Sat. 10/3	North Carolina A&T*	Greensboro, N.C.	1 p.m.
Sat. 10/10	Howard*	Norfolk, Va.	2 p.m.
Sat. 10/17	Bethune-Cookman*	Norfolk, Va.	2 p.m.
Oct. 31	Morgan State*	Baltimore, Md.	TBA
November			
Nov. 7	North Carolina Central* (Homecoming)	Norfolk, Va.	2 p.m.
Nov. 14	Delaware State*	Norfolk, Va.	2 p.m.
Nov. 21	South Carolina State*	Orangeburg, S.C.	TBA

Home games in BOLD | Subject to change
* Denotes MEAC game

PHOTOS BY MARK W. SUTTON



The First of a Two Part Series PART ONE

*Part Two of the series will follow in the next edition of **BEHOLD** and will focus on the continued impact of Dr. Dozoretz's legacy and generosity.*

DOZORETZ Leaves Legacy of Success

Dameron L. Jones '91 was valedictorian of her graduating high school class. Yet, despite her outstanding academic honors, she could not afford to attend college. Instead, she planned to join the Air Force, serve her country and earn her degree while in service.

But fate stepped in. A high school friend had interviewed for an academic scholarship program at Norfolk State University and recommended her as well. Jones took the interview, was accepted into the program with a full four-year scholarship. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and went on to earn a Master of Science in Chemical Engineering from Penn State University. Today, Jones is a Patent Examiner at the United States Patent & Trademark Office.

Her story is not unique. In fact, Jones is representative of the hundreds of students who have been part of Norfolk State University's Dozoretz National Institute for Mathematics and Applied Sciences (DNIMAS) Program. Established in 1985, the Dozoretz National Institute is a highly successful and rigorous honors program for science, engineering, and mathematics majors.

In the 1980s, amid a push for more scientists and engineers, National Science Foundation studies pointed to the underrepresentation of Blacks and other ethnic minorities working in the field and in science and engineering graduate degree programs. Against that backdrop, NSU's second president Dr. Harrison B. Wilson Jr. conceived a program with a goal of addressing the severe shortage of minority scientists. The program would produce graduates capable of successfully completing graduate studies in the basic and applied sciences, and/or entering occupations in industry, government and education.

President Wilson reached out to local psychiatrist and philanthropist Dr. Ronald I. Dozoretz to help bring his idea to fruition. Because he was also a visionary and believed in the power of education, Dr. Dozoretz became the first major benefactor of the Institute that has borne his name for 33 years. On May 8, 2020, Dr. Dozoretz passed away at the age of 85. But his legacy lives on through the DNIMAS Program and the many Dozoretz scholars and alumni who fulfill their potential.

Jones has two memories of meeting Dr. Dozoretz. The most memorable time was a DNIMAS alumni celebration of the program's 30th Anniversary. "Dr. Dozoretz and his wife Beth accepted our invitation," she said. "I was able to thank them both and to share my story."

For Jones, her DNIMAS journey gave her not just a high-quality education, but the confidence to go beyond what she first dreamed of being. "I remember constantly being told that we could not just do enough to get by, but that we needed to be at our best so that when we left NSU, it would not be a question of whether or not we could compete with the best schools in the nation."

Andria Chapman-Taliaferro D.D.S. (BS '93) knew she wanted to be a dentist and was impressed by the success of the DNIMAS program. "The directors, professors, students, and alumni form a strong network that is conducive to success," she said. "When you graduate from Norfolk State



Top: Dr. Ronald I. Dozoretz
Bottom: Cle and Dameron Jones

University, and you are a DNIMAS student, you are equipped with the tools you need to compete successfully on the graduate and doctoral levels of any professional program,” said Chapman-Taliaferro, who is president of Thimble Shoals Dental Center. For Chapman-Taliaferro, who graduated in 1993, DNIMAS has been a family affair. “Twenty-three years later my daughter, Cariana Taliaferro Clanton, graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from NSU and DNIMAS in 2016 and graduated from medical school this year as a doctor of osteopathic medicine. The educational benefits of the DNIMAS scholarship, through the auspices of Dr. Dozoretz, have been invaluable to my family in attaining our professional goals.”

She too met Dr. Dozoretz on two occasions. Once at the DNIMAS 30th Anniversary celebration and the second by happenstance. “My mother and I were walking in City Center in Virginia Beach, when a gentleman walked by. I told my mom, ‘that looks like Dr. Dozoretz.’ Of course, she boldly calls out his name, ‘Dr. Dozoretz!’ He kindly comes toward us as she proceeds to tell him how she had always wanted to meet him and wanted to thank him for the DNIMAS scholarship for her daughter and granddaughter. He charismatically kisses her on the hand as he accepts her words of gratitude. He was very gracious.”

Cle Jones ’91, who is married to Dameron, is also a DNIMAS graduate. He had set his sights on becoming an engineer but needed financial assistance for college and DNIMAS was there to help. Cle earned his Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering and earned a Master of Science in Engineering from Penn State as well. Cle, who is currently the Logistics Unit Chief at the FBI, says this about DNIMAS, “In addition to the financial benefit, it is a great program because it places like-minded students together for motivation and support. We had many of the same classes together, and lived in the same dorms to facilitate being able to study together. We were also afforded the opportunity to apply for and attend prestigious internships with such institutions as NASA, MIT, Harvard and NIST.”

Just as Dameron and Chapman-Taliaferro attest to, Cle says that DNIMAS is more than a mere means to an end. “Making it through the DNIMAS program gave me the confidence and ability to achieve further goals in life. Being among such intelligent and ambitious African American students helped me realize the potential that I had to succeed.”

Because DNIMAS played such an enormous role in shaping them personally and professionally, in 2015 several DNIMAS graduates formed



a DNIMAS Alumni Chapter as part of the NSU Alumni Association. Cle is the current president. The Chapter’s mission is to support the DNIMAS program by contributing to an endowment established to provide supplemental funding for DNIMAS students, mentoring and assisting DNIMAS students with their academic pursuits and career objectives, and promoting the program nationally to attract interest and support. The Chapter also presents yearly scholarships to DNIMAS students.

Chapman-Taliaferro and Cle and Dameron Jones remember Dr. Dozoretz as having a calm, approachable and gracious demeanor. They say at the 30th Anniversary celebration that he and Mrs. Dozoretz went around the room and met each DNIMAS alumnus and listened to their story.

DNIMAS Director Dr. Aliecia R. McClain worked in partnership with Dr. Dozoretz for 15 years. “He dedicated his life and work to the betterment of the lives of students seeking degrees in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) areas at Norfolk State University,” McClain wrote in a tribute to him. “He would always tell me that his goal was to provide students with the opportunity to get an education, and in doing so, their worlds would open up to many more opportunities for their lives.” **B**

DNIMAS PROGRAM STATISTICS 1990-2020

495+ The number of Dozoretz Scholar graduates

85% The percentage of Dozoretz Scholars accepted to graduate, medical, or professional schools

72% The percentage of Dozoretz Scholars who have earned their graduate/professional degrees and others who remain in the advanced degree pipeline

Advanced Degrees Earned by Degree Type

M.S.	Ph.D.	M.D.	Pharm.D.	D.D.S.	MBA	J.D.
192	72	66	13	13	11	2

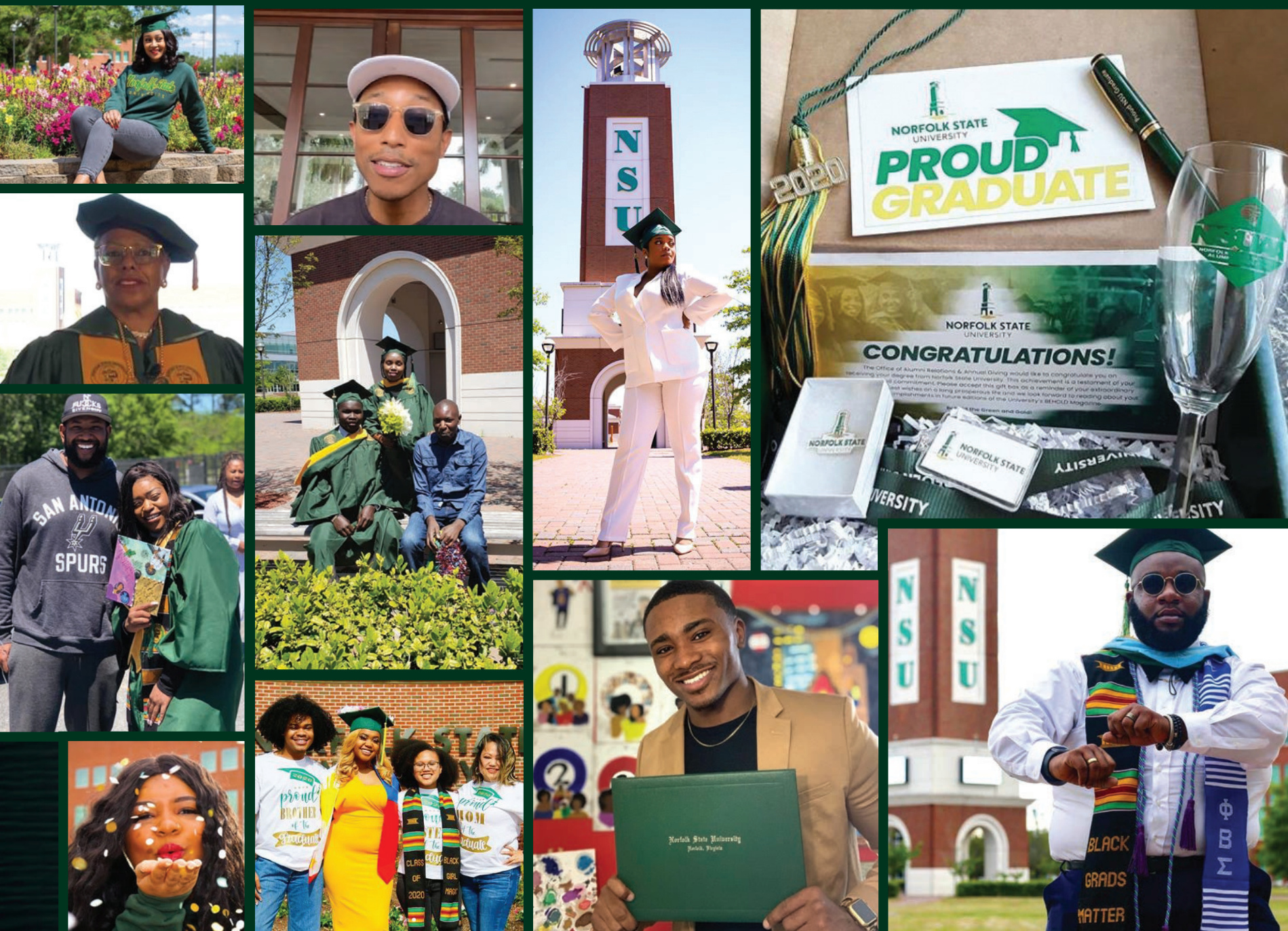
CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2020!

We salute you, your accomplishments and your resiliency!

Despite the obstacles, you stayed strong and took the victory. You have put the world on notice that nothing will stop you. To our newest Spartan Alumni, we offer you our Best Wishes for your continued success.

And a Community that will always support you.

Behold, the Green and Gold!



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