

2024 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 27

BY REPRESENTATIVE HUGHES

A RESOLUTION

To recognize Tuesday, March 19, 2024, as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Day at the state capitol.

WHEREAS, Louisiana is proud to be home to eight Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs): Dillard University, Grambling State University, Southern University and A&M College, Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Southern University Law Center, Southern University at New Orleans, Southern University at Shreveport, and Xavier University of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana is home to the nation's only HBCU System, the Southern University System, which is uniquely positioned as an exemplar with a profound commitment to research and student success; the system's board of supervisors is celebrating fifty years of service to the students, faculty, staff, and community surrounding the its five campuses in Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Shreveport; and

WHEREAS, Grambling State University and Southern University and A&M College celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the annual Bayou Classic extravaganza, which brings fans, supporters, and alumni of both universities together for a celebration of football, family, and tradition in New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, the University of Louisiana System welcomed new leadership in 2024, naming Dr. Martin Lemelle as the president of Grambling State University; Dr. Lemelle, a 2006 graduate and former Student Government Association president of Grambling, recently served as the executive vice president and chief financial officer at Maryland Institute College of Art; his prior position as the executive vice president and chief operating officer at Grambling from 2016 to 2021 demonstrates his extensive experience in higher education administration, preparing him for his new leadership role at the university; and

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2023, Dr. Aubra J. Gantt, was named the chancellor of Southern University at Shreveport (SUSLA); Dr. Gantt began her educational career at SUSLA, where she learned one of her passions was to serve students, faculty, and staff from various backgrounds; she is a believer in the community college mission because she is a product of a community college; and

WHEREAS, since their establishment 188 years ago, HBCUs have continued to build a legacy of excellence, achievement, and tradition; HBCUs were created to provide opportunities for access to education for black students during a time when institutions of higher education discriminated against black Americans; the establishment and advancement of these universities fostered academic excellence, cultural empowerment, and professional readiness for black students throughout our nation; and

WHEREAS, HBCUs play a crucial role in contributing to the economy and workforce, aligning their academic programs with the needs of industry while ensuring HBCU graduates meet the demands of the job market; HBCU graduates are exemplary public servants, scientists, doctors, artists, lawyers, judges, engineers, educators, entertainers, business owners, and leaders; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's HBCUs have distinguished themselves, both nationally and in the state, in numerous ways including:

(1) Dillard University is recognized for its Ray Charles Program in African American Material Culture, to which the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a significant grant for a multi-year project titled "Higher Learning through Humanities in Food Studies".

(2) Grambling State University, with a legacy spanning nearly 122 years, pioneered Louisiana's first Doctor of Philosophy program in Criminology and Justice Administration, receiving student scholarships from Beyoncé's "BeyGood" Foundation that showcase the institution's commitment to innovation and student support.

(3) Southern University and A&M College, which is a Carnegie Research 2 institution, was awarded a grant to aid in pursuit of the Carnegie Research 1 designation, and received, with Boeing, a joint award from NASA for their combined work on NASA's Space Launch System rocket.

(4) Southern University at New Orleans, which will soon celebrate 65 years of providing access to educational opportunities for students, is in the process of designing a new nursing building, recently enrolled its first cybersecurity cohort, and formalized an articulation agreement for a cybersecurity degree pathway with Delgado Community College to train future cybersecurity practitioners in the field of information technology.

(5) Southern University Shreveport, celebrating 56 years of providing an excellent and accessible educational experience to students and programming for its surrounding community, has acquired a new mobile health unit, which will travel across northwest Louisiana to provide quality health and dental screenings to under-served populations and bring healthcare to communities that would otherwise not receive these services.

(6) Southern University Law Center, a highly ranked legal education institution, has prospered within the esports industry, hosting regional and national tournaments in the newly established Esports Innovation Lab.

(7) Xavier University of Louisiana, which is known for being the top producer of black graduates who earn medical degrees, was recently recognized by OnlineU as the second-ranked HBCU in the nation for highest payoff for black graduates; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to commend Louisiana's Historically Black Colleges and Universities for their outstanding achievements and their numerous alumni for their contributions to their local communities, the state of Louisiana, and the world as a whole.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize Tuesday, March 19, 2024, as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Day at the state capitol and does hereby acknowledge Louisiana's HBCUs for their invaluable contributions to our residents and state.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES