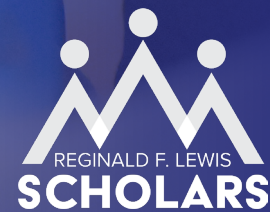




2022 ANNUAL REPORT 2023



REGINALD F. LEWIS SCHOLARS PROGRAM

It's hard to believe that we have a full two years of this program behind us. In some ways it feels like we are getting started and in others, especially when I experience first-hand the immense growth in our Cohort 1 Scholars, it feels like we have been doing this for decades. This was a hallmark year for the RFL Scholars. The Scholars of Cohort 1 broadened their individual cultural competency in an immersive educational and civic exploration of France, and we brought the program to its intended capacity with the introduction of Cohort 3.

This work would not be possible without the generosity of many. The year welcomed new investments from community, corporate and individual partners. Looking forward, we have set an audacious goal to endow this transformational program so it can live on in perpetuity. Check out more details on our current partners and that goal on pages 26-27.

Reginald F. Lewis is an ideal example of the possibilities for our Scholars—a man who didn't let his circumstances define his life's path but instead worked harder than everyone around him to realize his destiny; a man who gave of his time and riches to others; and a man who used his influence to elevate others. We are so proud of all our Scholars have accomplished the past 12 months and, with continued investment from people like you, we will continue to prepare our Scholars to be future leaders in Louisiana and beyond.

For Your Future. For Our Future.



Dr. Jim Henderson
President and CEO
University of Louisiana System



OUR WHY

The current degree attainment level for Black Americans is lower than the attainment level of White adults in 1990—more than three decades ago.

- 17% of Black Louisianians have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 28.1% of White Louisianians.
- Black males trail even further behind in degree attainment in Louisiana. Only 11% of Black men have a college degree or higher compared to 17% of Black women.

In 2021, the University of Louisiana System established the Reginald F. Lewis Scholars program to improve the collegiate experience and success of Black males. The curated educational experience focuses on three areas: academic, social, and service. Scholars are provided educational programs, mentoring opportunities and co-curricular experiences to foster their personal development. Two students from each of the nine member institutions, 18 students in total, are invited to participate in the program annually. Students are selected based on need, leadership and merit.

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM



Strengthen the secondary-to-higher education pipeline to enable many more Black male students to attend college;



Increase admission, persistence and graduation rates across the UL System;



Improve the social, academic and financial support structures for Black male students;



Facilitate and promote mentoring development; and



Improve the employment prospects for Black males after graduation.

ACADEMIC

The university's academic mission is the highest priority of the program. Scholars are provided additional academic support and opportunities including undergraduate research projects and at least one study abroad opportunity.

SOCIAL

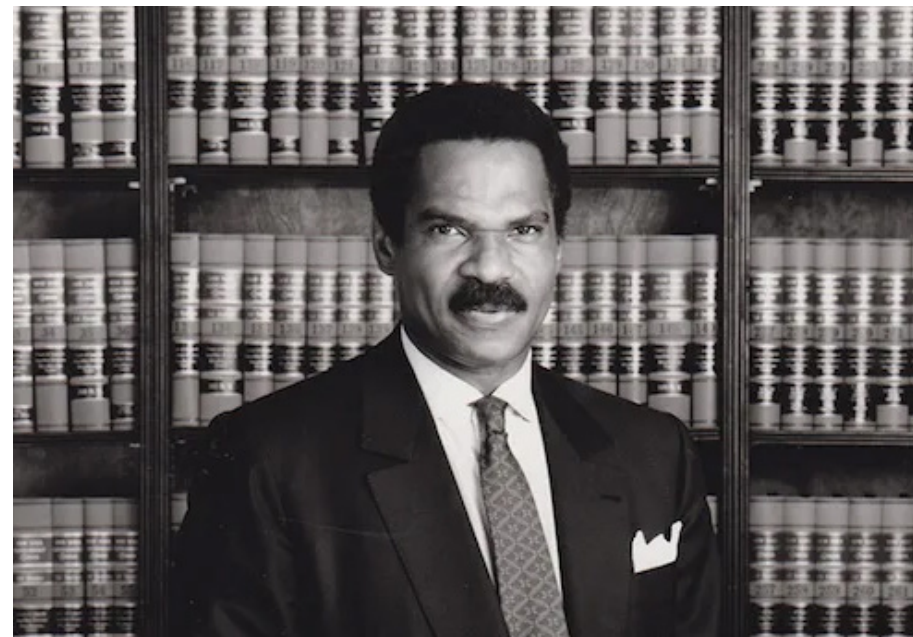
Ensuring Scholars develop a significant network available to support them in life and career success is the second priority. Scholars are matched with mentors, internships and ample opportunities to increase their individual social capital through various Scholar events.

SERVICE

Developing good citizens is our third priority. Scholars partner with organizations for various group service projects and also serve individually in their home communities. Service ensures that our Scholars remain humble and gracious.

“KEEP GOING. TO BUILD A BETTER SOCIETY IN AMERICA. TO BE A COMPASSIONATE AMERICA ... KEEP GOING, NO MATTER WHAT.”

- REGINALD F. LEWIS



Reginald F. Lewis was an American businessman. He was one of the wealthiest Black American men in the 1980s, and the first Black American to build a billion-dollar company. After graduating from Virginia Tech University, he attended a summer program at Harvard Law School where he successfully lobbied to become a student, making him the only person in the institution’s history to be admitted before applying. Active in the civil rights movement, Lewis valued service and philanthropy.

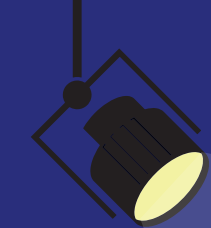
His remarkable life and career were cut short by his untimely death after a short illness in January 1993. He was 50 years old. He is survived by his wife Loida Nicolas-Lewis and his two daughters Leslie Lewis and Christina Lewis Halpern. The family continues to support educational programs and organizations dedicated to equipping underprivileged students with resources to succeed.



ISAIAH CRAWFORD - COHORT 2 SCHOLAR
SUN BELT CONFERENCE TOURNAMENT



EBENEZER AGGREY - COHORT 1 SCHOLAR
2022 NSU HOMECOMING KING



SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

FRANK CLAVELLE III

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE - ARCHITECTURAL STUDIES
LULING, LOUISIANA

Frank is the second recipient of the James Carter Exemplary Leadership Award—an honor annually bestowed upon one Scholar who embodies the important characteristics developed through the program’s academic, social and community mission.

Program facilitators describe Frank as eager to serve wherever needed. He is always the first to step up and volunteer. Frank is passionate about his future career as an architect and takes advantage of opportunities to get involved with architectural leadership organizations. He works hard and maintains a 3.5 GPA.

The James Carter Exemplary Leadership Award is named for the former chair of the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System. Carter, a New Orleans native, is one of the nation’s top attorneys and is generous with his time as a public servant.



COHORT 1 PINNED 2021

COHORT 2 PINNED 2022



JA'DERIC TALBERT
Grambling State University
Elementary Education
Arcadia, LA



ISAIAH FARRELL
Grambling State University
Music Education
Bastrop, LA



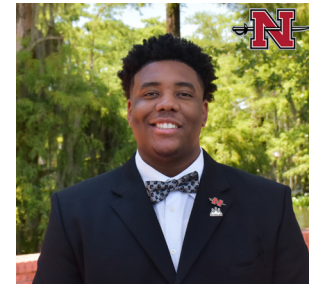
CAMERON GREEN
Louisiana Tech University
Graphic Design
Peoria, IL



DA'VOZNIK ARMSTRONG
Louisiana Tech University
Engineering
Shreveport, LA



ISAIAH E. JOHNSON
McNeese State University
Health and Human Performance
Opelousas, LA



JOHN EDMONDS
Nicholls State University
Health Sciences
New Orleans, LA



KORDE' CORTEZ
Grambling State University
Social Work
Arcadia, LA



KAMERIUS PALMER
Grambling State University
Education
Jonesboro, LA



BRANDON TERRANCE
Louisiana Tech University
Mechanical Engineering
Baton Rouge, LA



JOSEPH JOHNSON
Louisiana Tech University
Electrical Engineering
Shreveport, LA



CADENLEY FRANCOIS
McNeese State University
Nursing
Gonaives, Haiti



CHIMA OWUNNA
McNeese State University
Computer Engineering
Anambra, Nigeria



LANCE JONES
Nicholls State University
Journalism
New Orleans, LA



EBENEZER AGGREY
Northwestern State University
Business Administration
Baton Rouge, LA



DERRICK VARNADO
Northwestern State University
New Media, Journalism & Communications
Baton Rouge, LA



DEMILLE DAVIS
Southeastern Louisiana University
Music Education
Covington, LA



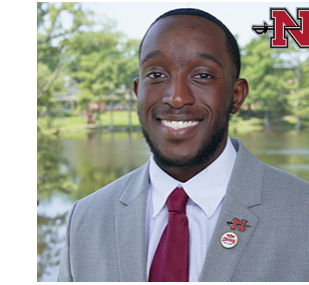
DYLAN JAMES
Southeastern Louisiana University
Nursing
Hammond, LA



CALEB FRANKLIN
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Biology Pre-med
Zachary, LA



DEON CHARLES
Nicholls State University
Allied Health Sciences
Raceland, LA



CHARLESTON RAINEY
Nicholls State University
Safety Management
Thibodaux, LA



JAIRUS KILLINGS
Northwestern State University
Communications
Alexandria, LA



CAIDEN MATTHEWS
Northwestern State University
Computer Information Systems
Shreveport, LA



NICHOLAS GIBSON
Southeastern Louisiana University
Engineering Technology
Addis, LA



JOSHUA RANDALL
Southeastern Louisiana University
Communication & Media Studies
New Orleans, LA



JACALEB SMITH
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Chemical Engineering
Destrehan, LA



CARL WHITLOCK
University of Louisiana Monroe
Business Administration
West Monroe, LA



EARNEST C. WYATT
University of Louisiana Monroe
Psychology
Monroe, LA



RABRUNTAE RACHAL
University of New Orleans
Industrial/Organizational Psychology
Shreveport, LA



ROBERT HILL
University of New Orleans
Art History
New Orleans, LA



FRANK CLAVELLE III
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Architectural Studies
Luling, LA



ISAIAH CRAWFORD
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Kinesiology
New Orleans, LA



BRAXTON JACKSON
University of Louisiana Monroe
Political Science
Monroe, LA



ERIC LAIR JR.
University of Louisiana Monroe
Social Work
Marksville, LA



BRANDON EVERETT
University of New Orleans
International Studies
Slidell, LA



BRANDON "BLUE" IRVIN
University of New Orleans
Chemistry
New Orleans, LA

COHORT 3

PINNED 2023



TREVOR NG'OMA

Grambling State University
Marketing
Blantyre, Malawi



TERRENCE ROBINSON

Grambling State University
Elementary Education
Rayville, LA



JAYDEN JOHNSON

Louisiana Tech University
Graphic Design
Crowley, TX



ANTONIO TAYLOR

Louisiana Tech University
Civil Engineering
Monroe, LA



FREDERICK NICHOLS

Northwestern State University
Business Admin./Marketing
Winnfield, LA



CHRISTOPHER SOILEAU

Northwestern State University
Health/Exercise Science
Kinder, LA



KENNETH WOODS

Southeastern Louisiana University
Communication
Prairieville, LA



JARIUS SMITH

Southeastern Louisiana University
Accounting
Prairieville, LA



JOHNNIE HARDY

University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Nursing
Lake Charles, LA



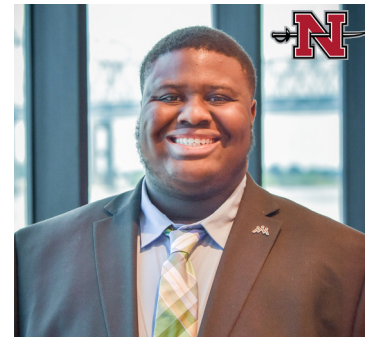
OMARI FRANCIS

McNeese State University
Finance
Lafayette, LA



CHRISTIAN MALBREAU

McNeese State University
Criminal Justice
Iowa, LA



CALEB LEWIS

Nicholls State University
Safety Management
Thibodaux, LA



EURICO COSME DA SILVA NETO

Nicholls State University
Music
Recife, Brazil



JALEN JACKSON

University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Electrical Engineering
Hammond, LA



EDWARD WILLIAMS

University of Louisiana Monroe
Accounting
Delhi, LA



MYLES GOLDMAN

University of Louisiana Monroe
History
Monroe, LA



EIAN BAILEY

University of New Orleans
Urban Studies
LaPlace, LA



JOSHUA JOUBERT

University of New Orleans
Film
Lake Charles, LA

INTERNSHIPS

Career opportunities are often dependent on past experience. It is vital for our Scholars to engage in work experiences aligned with their career goals. With the assistance of community partners, Scholars were matched with various summer internships to build on their existing skills, expand their social networks, and increase self-awareness.



JOHN EDMONDS



CADENLEY FRANCOIS



Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System hosted six Scholars for summer internships learning unique skills such as healthcare administration, physical therapy and counseling.



KORDE' CORTEZ



FRANK CLAVELLE III



SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

CALEB FRANKLIN

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE - BIOLOGY PRE-MED
ZACHARY, LA

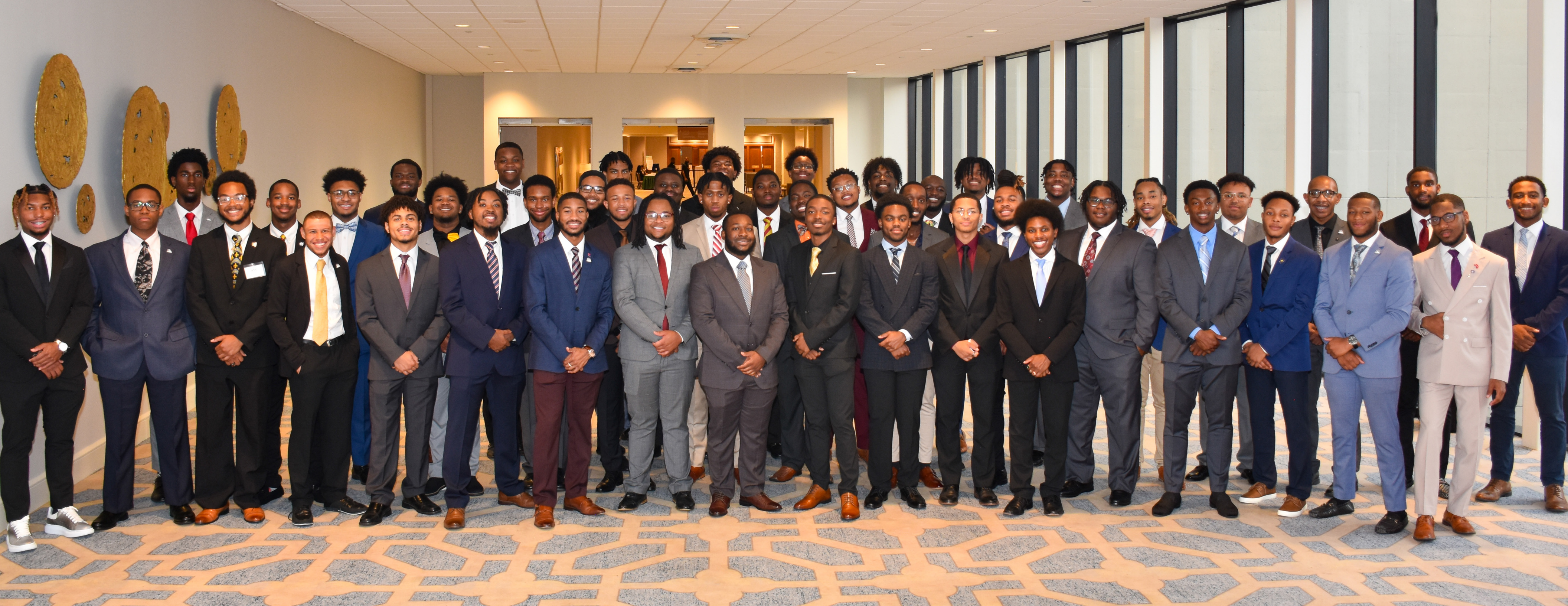
Cohort 1 Scholar, Caleb Franklin split his 8-week summer education and research training program between George Washington University and Boston University studying Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias.

After learning the latest trends in public health and biostatistics, the latter half of the program was spent on a research project exploring the correlation between happiness and future brain disease.



Caleb greatly enjoyed his time exploring cities outside of Louisiana and is considering applying for medical schools in the D.C. area.





Bon Voyage!



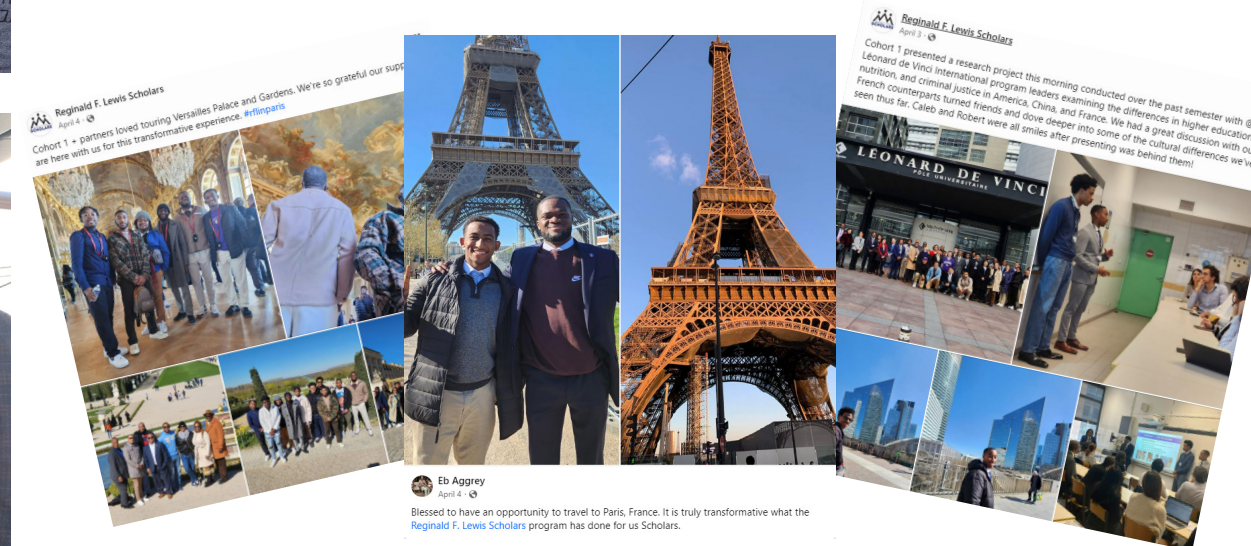
A core tenet of the Scholars' academic experience is the annual study abroad trip. For the program's first study abroad trip, Scholars were joined in Paris, France by supporters from the Legislative Black Caucus, Verizon and Sodexo. It was an excellent opportunity for our partners to spend time with the Scholars and see their worlds expand firsthand.

Spending time immersed in another country's customs allowed the Scholars to build cultural competency and make memories of invaluable experiences preparing them for life after graduation. For many of the Scholars, this trip was their first time outside of the United States. For some, this was their first time on an airplane.

Some group favorites include a tour of the Palace of Versailles, lunch at the Eiffel Tower, and the culmination of a research and international exchange program with Pôle Universitaire Léonard de Vinci comparing healthcare, diet and criminal justice policies between France and America. Scholars were also treated to lectures at the historic Sorbonne University surrounding the foundations of democracy—a day that put much of their opportunities as Scholars into perspective.



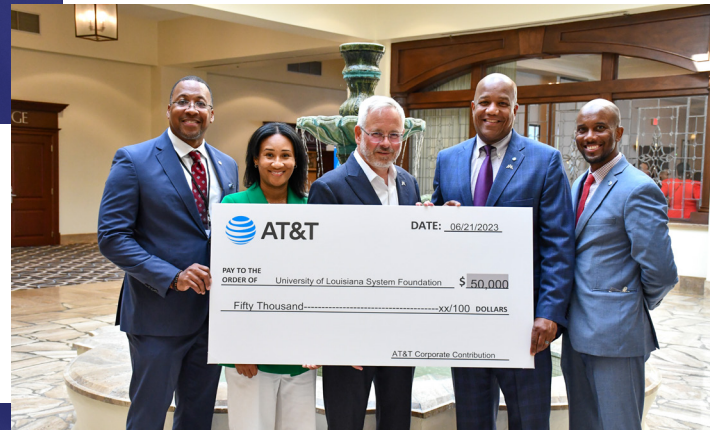
Follow our journey on social media!



BLACK MALE SUMMIT

The third annual Universities of Louisiana Black Male Summit was held in June at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside. Tyrann Mathieu was the keynote speaker and we had a wonderful lineup of panelists and presenters. The Black Male Summit provided an opportunity for in community to acknowledge our progress, and consider the work that lies ahead to ensure equitable success for Black males. Over the course of the two-day summit, we addressed a variety of critical topics including education, career pathways, healthcare, criminal justice, digital and financial literacy, and government. Our goal was to inspire attendees to make informed decisions that positively impact the Black male population and pave the way for meaningful improvements. On day two of the conference, we pinned the third cohort of Reginald F. Lewis Scholars.

FUN FACT: Each cohort participates in a pinning ceremony signifying the start of the Scholar journey. The pins feature the RFL Scholar logo which dually represents a mountain's summit and a group of men. The symbol inspires the Scholars to reach to new heights alongside their brothers.



600+ ATTENDEES

52 BREAKOUT SESSION SPEAKERS

\$50K DONATION FROM AT&T

2023 BLACK MALE SUMMIT SPONSORS





SPEED MENTORING

The University of Louisiana System's Reginald F. Lewis Scholars hosted a speed mentoring event in association with Bayou Classic weekend. During the event, nearly 100 Black male students from two-year and four-year institutions across the state engaged with nearly 40 mentors willing to provide guidance from their own personal and professional experience.

In addition to the series of one-on-one conversations with mentors from a variety of fields catering to many interests, attendees enjoyed lunch with several inspirational speakers including: Grambling State University President Rick Gallot; UL System President and CEO Dr. Jim Henderson; author and former political aide Omarosa Newman; U.S. Small Business Association Regional Administrator Ted James; Verizon VP for Governmental Relations April Brumfield; the first Black U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana Ron Gathe; former president of Dillard University Dr. Walter Kimbrough; and Xavier University of New Orleans President Dr. Reynold Verret. The event was emceed by UL System VP of Advancement Dr. Claire Norris.



COMMUNITY SERVICE

Reginald F. Lewis Scholars are expected to participate in a number of community service projects. Each scholar is required to perform 50 hours of community service annually. Examples of community service include mentoring, assisting with various community-wide events, and partnering with service organizations.

The Scholars completed over 1,470 community service hours last year.

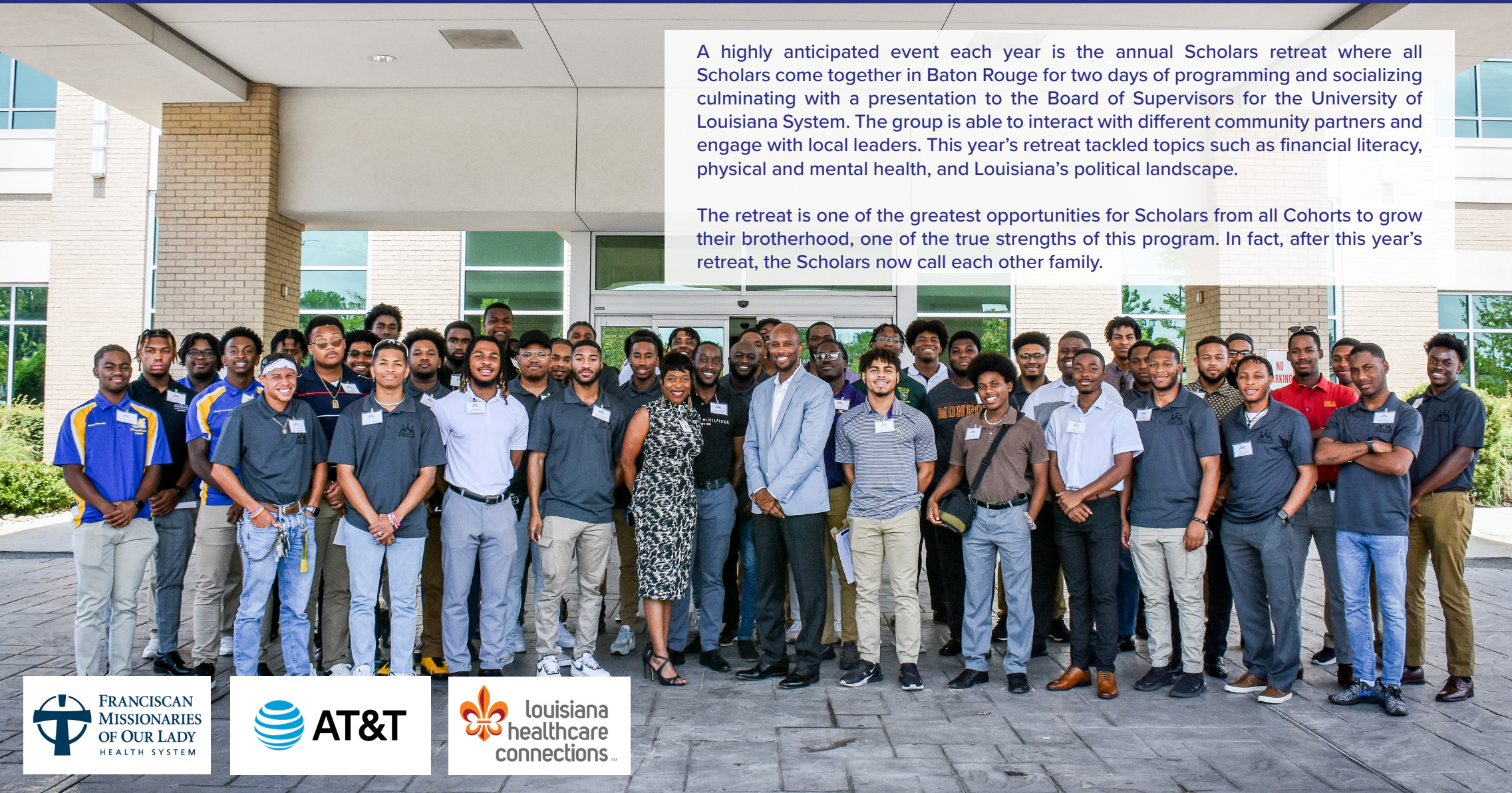


SCHOLARS RETREAT 2023

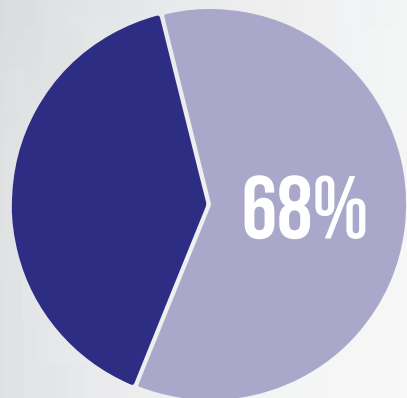


A highly anticipated event each year is the annual Scholars retreat where all Scholars come together in Baton Rouge for two days of programming and socializing culminating with a presentation to the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System. The group is able to interact with different community partners and engage with local leaders. This year's retreat tackled topics such as financial literacy, physical and mental health, and Louisiana's political landscape.

The retreat is one of the greatest opportunities for Scholars from all Cohorts to grow their brotherhood, one of the true strengths of this program. In fact, after this year's retreat, the Scholars now call each other family.



SCHOLARS BY THE NUMBERS



INVOLVED IN LEADERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS

3 BAND MEMBERS



6 STUDENT ATHLETES

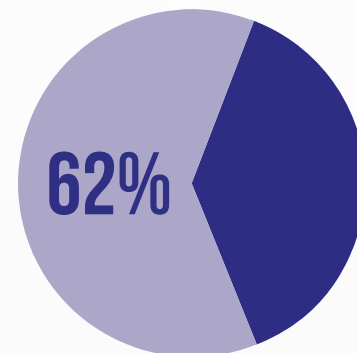
3.2 AVERAGE GPA

1,470 → COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS

9 FRATERNITY MEMBERS

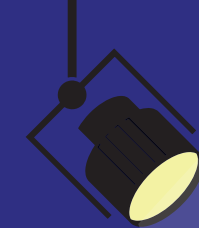
ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY, INC.
 KAPPA ALPHA PSI FRATERNITY, INC.
 PHI MU ALPHA SINFONIA
 OMEGA PSI PHI FRATERNITY, INC.
 PI KAPPA ALPHA
 THETA CHI FRATERNITY

9 SGA MEMBERS



PELL RECIPIENTS

38% 1ST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS



SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

BRANDON "BLUE" IRVIN
 UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS - CHEMISTRY
 NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

Brandon "Blue" Irvin Jr. spent his summer as a lead camp instructor at Audubon Zoo's summer camp. While he is pursuing an undergraduate degree in chemistry, Blue plans to continue his education and pursue a master's degree in teaching.

He pointed toward daily camp activities like games, crafts and zoo tours as opportunities to practice classroom management. While it was an educational camp, Blue worked to balance learning opportunities with fun.



FROM A SCHOLAR'S PERSPECTIVE

In late June, I collected my various bags from the van and headed into the New Orleans Riverwalk, anxious but excited to meet my fellow Reginald F. Lewis Scholars. I knew I was embarking on a journey of utmost importance; I didn't expect to be welcomed into a family of loving and caring Black brothers.

Being a Scholar means having your fellow members' backs and supporting them in their journeys, a lesson I continue to learn each time I get to see everyone again. As we've traveled from New Orleans to Baton Rouge and now Grambling, the love we share for each other always reaches the next destination. My family has been there to support me, teach me and remind me of my worth as a writer, as a Black man and as a human being.

Our cohorts aren't separate, but rather deeply interconnected; I've grown bonds with Scholars from each section of the program, such as Da'Voznik from Cohort 1 who stayed up late talking to me about life in our hotel room overlooking the riverwalk, and then bought me breakfast the next morning. He made me feel comfortable and welcomed, which I cannot thank him enough for.

Of course, my fellow Cohort 3 members hold particular weight in my heart. I met Jarius, my fellow Southeastern Scholar, through this program, and I now consider him a close, invaluable friend. Caleb from Nicholls is a wonderful human being, never short of hilarious quips and meaningful insight. I'm thankful I get to grow over the next three years in this program alongside them.

The family extends past the Scholars and includes every facilitator, especially Southeastern's Dr. Jerry Parker. His support, wisdom, and endless kind words never fail to make me feel seen and understood. His work and dedication, as well as that of every facilitator, power this program, and as Scholars, we are forever in their debt.

Kennith Woods is a sophomore Communication major with a concentration in Television and Multimedia Journalism and a Creative Writing minor. A resident of Prairieville, Kennith is the Lion's Roar's newly-minted News Editor. His passion for progressive change within our communities is the driving factor behind his educational pursuits, as he wants to use journalism to facilitate vital information to the public and simultaneously serve as a mouthpiece for the people's needs and concerns.



Photo courtesy of Haley Dupré with The Lion's Roar.

KENNITH WOODS
 Southeastern Louisiana University
 Communication
 Prairieville, LA

COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND GRANTS

\$1 MILLION

GRANT SECURED FROM NSF

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette, in collaboration with the Reginald F. Lewis Scholars, received a \$1 million grant from the National Science Foundation to launch the groundbreaking Addressing the Talent and Diversity Gap in Biotechnology Workforce (ASSET) program. The ASSET program emerged from the urgent need to address the underrepresentation of Black students in STEM. In 2021, nearly 47 percent of White males graduated in STEM fields, compared to only 3 percent of Black males. Recognizing these disparities and their impact on the future workforce, this program will leverage the success of the Reginald F. Lewis Scholars to address the talent and diversity gap in the biotechnology industry.



COMMUNITY SPONSORS

- Acadian Ambulance
- Aramark
- AT&T
- Baptist Community Ministries
- Baton Rouge General Medical Center
- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana
- CareSouth
- Chartwells
- Crescent River Port Pilots
- DeCuir, Clark & Adams
- Edwards & Associates Law Firm
- Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System
- Hammonds, Sills, Adkins, Guice, Noah & Perkins
- Jackson Offshore Operators
- Louisiana Asset Management Pool
- Louisiana Economic Development
- Louisiana Healthcare Connections
- National Association for System Heads
- National Science Foundation
- Ochsner
- Sisters and Brothers Keeper for Life, LLC
- Sodexo
- SodexoMagic
- Urban League of Louisiana
- Verizon
- Zehnder

2022-2023 DONORS

We thank the following donors for their generosity and support of the Reginald F. Lewis Scholars between August 2022 - August 2023.

ACADEMIC SPONSOR \$10,000+

Cormier Charitable Fund
Jim & Tonia Henderson

COMMUNITY SPONSOR \$9,999 - \$5,000

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Antonio Williams

We made every effort to list all those who generously donated and apologize for any inadvertent omissions. Additionally, we want to thank the many donors who gave anonymously.

Help us reach our goal.

\$20M

In August 2023, the University of Louisiana System Foundation announced its fundraising goal of \$20 million. Reaching this goal will endow the RFL Scholars and this work will live on perpetually.

Give online:
ULSystem.edu/give

Give by check:
Mail your donation to

UL System Foundation
1201 N. Third Street, Suite 7-300
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Make your pledge today:

Detach this card to share your pledge with the UL System Foundation.

NAME(S): _____
ADDRESS: _____
PHONE: _____
EMAIL: _____

I/WE COMMIT TO GIVE A SINGLE GIFT

\$

I/WE COMMIT TO RECURRING MONTHLY GIFT

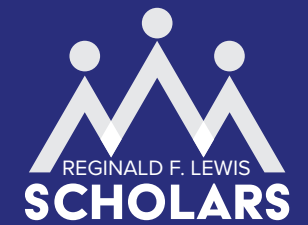
\$

SCAN QR
CODE
TO GIVE
TODAY!



THANK YOU!





UL System Foundation
1201 N. Third Street, Suite 7-300
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Follow us on social media!



For more information on the Reginald F. Lewis Scholars,
contact Dr. Claire Norris, Vice President for Advancement, at
claire.norris@ulsystem.edu or 225.219.0271.