SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY ALUMNI FEDERATION
POST OFFICE BOX 9746
BATON ROUGE, LA 70813-9746

E LinkedIn: http://linkedin.com/in/preston-castille-50527613
E-Mail: Preston.Castille@TaylorPorter.com
Twitter: @PrestonCastille
Direct Dial: 225-381-0217
Mobile: 225-317-3363

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

June 9, 2017

Dear Southernites and Friends:

In the midst of SU Day at the Capitol, the close of this year's regular Legislative Session, and alumni tours of our Baton Rouge campus, I attended a great meeting of the Baton Rouge campus's Academic Council. Foundation CEO, Al Harrell, and I had an opportunity to present to the University's deans, at the invitation of interim Provost Dr. Luria Young, the status of the *Imagine 20,000* project. We explained that part of the next steps will be the creation of task forces to assist the consultants who are developing feasibility studies for the Master Plan for *Imagine 20,000.* Al and I shared that the Innovation and Development Committee very much appreciates the deans willingness to lead a task force to provide programmatic input into the feasibility studies to determine what projects are needed and achievable.

I was so pleased by the deans' support of this strategy for developing the planning process. The deans expressed their support for the vision of growing enrollment on our campus to 20,000 students over the next 10-15 years by transforming our campus physical structure, expanding the campus beyond its current borders, and seeking new innovative opportunities. The boldest expansion idea posed in the *Imagine 20,000* project is the creation of a Southern University medical campus that would include a Southern University medical school. A Southern University Medical School. Some would say this idea is too ambitious for Southern to achieve. However, I strongly disagree. More importantly, a Southern University medical school in North Baton Rouge would have a major economic impact on the community and provide much needed health care for the community. A medical school and a major medical campus could almost singularly transform North Baton Rouge and the Greater Baton Rouge community. Yes, I know we have to fix some of our current problems on our main campus, but we must be ambidextrous: fix our problems and imagine a more innovative, community-centric Southern University at the same time.

On Monday, University officials, alumni and SU supporters were able to gather at the Capitol and showcase Southern University for a day. While the Capitol is typically seen as a battleground for money, policy, and politics, the Blue-and-Gold-laced Capitol rotunda was a reminder that the work of our Legislature has a direct impact on our University and the students it serves. Much credit goes to SUAF Executive Director, Derrick Warren, and Dr. William Broussard for planning this year's SU Day at the Capitol.

In the same spirit of sparking a little magic by getting engaged in the change we seek, the Southern University Home Chapter hosted a campus tour for alumni. Much has been said about the challenging conditions of our University's physical plant. Of course, the *Imagine 20,000* project is one solution to improving the buildings and grounds on our Baton Rouge campus, but it's important to do whatever we can to immediately help the university. Kudos to the Home Chapter for continuing to share with our alumni the improvements, and the remaining challenges.

As you know, the last couple of years have been riddled with grave concerns about the condition of our University. Social media has been a buzz, and sometimes a battleground, for what needs to be done to improve our campus. I think all of the discussion is fantastic. It's what makes America such a great country – we are free to express our opinions and views unabashedly. But what is most encouraging is that so many people are looking for solutions. They are willing to work with the University, with the Board of Supervisors, with alumni and students to continue to ***Make our Great University Greater***.

Please continue to offer solutions and be willing to roll up your sleeves to solve the problems. After this week's events, it was suggested that other chapters should host tours of our campuses, in order to see the reality of our situation (good and bad) and offer solutions. It has been further suggested that chapters should band together and each adopt dormitories and buildings on our campus to take responsibility, along with the University, for its maintenance and upkeep. I think these are all wonderful ideas. Most importantly, they are constructive ideas. Please keep them coming. They continue to energize me to serve our great institution.

As always, I remain

Sincerely Serving Southern,

Preston

Preston J. Castille, Jr., Esq.
National President
HBCU Alumni Coalition President