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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

January 10, 2017

Dear Southernites and Friends:

Happy New Year! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season. During the holidays, one of the best gifts I received was the expansion of the Southern University System as it moved to the downtown area. This move officially marked the first step in providing access to higher education in downtown Baton Rouge. Southern University Law Center's Chancellor, John Pierre made history on Wednesday as he took the lead to offer classes in the downtown Baton Rouge area. There will be five law school courses offered by the Law Center which marks the first Southern University System program to offer classes in the downtown Baton Rouge area.



Preston Castille, SULC Chancellor John Pierre, Mentorship Academy CEO Dr. Graysen Walles, SU Ag Center Chancellor Dr. Bobby Phills and administrators planning for the future



Professor Alvin Washington teaching his first class at SU Downtown Baton Rouge

Following closely in this endeavor is the Southern University Agricultural Center where the Chancellor and Dean, Dr. Bobby Phills, has committed this semester to developing a rooftop garden on top of the six-story building. His plans are to develop academic programs in the near future. I knew my holidays were special when I found myself in the presence of two university chancellors and several Ag Center administrators discussing the incredible opportunities that a new downtown location could offer. Congratulations to Dr. Ray Belton for having two great chancellors and leaders. The SUBR College of Business has also begun exploring the possibility of having a major presence in the downtown area. The thought of having three Southern University programs participating in this new venture is remarkable.



SU Ag Center Chancellor Phills, Mentorship Academy CEO Dr. Walles, along with SU Ag Center administrators discuss plans for Rooftop Garden.



SU Ag Center planning Rooftop Garden on top of Mentorship Academy building, Southern's new downtown location.

The collaboration with the Mentorship Academy, a local Baton Rouge high school, opens up the pipeline to higher education. The Law and Ag Centers are both developing ***mentorship*** programs with high school students. Students will have an opportunity to learn more about careers in law and agriculture. Should the College of Business also offer programs or courses in this new location, it will also create greater opportunities for the students. Dr. Donald Andrews, Dean of the College of Business along with his administrators are just beginning to research the possibilities of taking advantage of this new location. It is hoped that the College of Business will join in on this great undertaking.

I look forward to the high school students learning from Southern how to become lawyers, judges, agronomists, horticulturalists, entrepreneurs and business managers. Indeed, even though there is a

waiting list to get into the school, I hope students from other area high schools will want to attend the Mentorship Academy to become exposed to a Southern University education. I think students all over the city will develop an even stronger interest in attending our alma mater because of this new downtown Southern University presence.

I cannot thank President Belton and the SU System enough for believing in the SU Alumni Federation and allowing us to take the lead in developing this dream. I look forward to sharing more with you about this new venture throughout the year. What a great start to 2017!

Go, Jags!!

Preston

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