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### The Gazette February 16, 2022

Langston University

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## LANGSTON UNIVERSITY

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## The Gazette

The *Gazette* is produced within the Department of Communication at Langston University. It serves as a teaching tool. The newspaper is published biweekly and is dispersed across campus every other Tuesday, except during examinations, holidays and extended school breaks.

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## Marching Pride Band to play in New Orleans



Photos by Jayden Hannah

**By Terrell Hailey**  
*Staff Writer*

Despite COVID-19, the Langston Marching Pride Band will be traveling to New Orleans to perform at Mardi Gras. The four day trip, starting on Feb. 25, will feature a parade with many other HBCUs.

"I can't wait til I get on the bus to head to New Orleans to take on the other schools," says Lawrence Sims. The first two days that the band is in New Orleans they will be marching

in a parade, described like walking from Langston University to the Walmart in Guthrie.

"When I found out that the parade is like walking from Langston to Walmart in Guthrie I was very surprised," said Wall. "I've never been to New Orleans so I feel like this will be a great opportunity for me."

Many of the students were shocked when they found out the length of the parade, but the whole band is ready to practice.

They plan to put in hard work for three weeks, so when they do arrive in New Orleans it will be a nice competition with the other bands.

"I've never been so pumped to be in a competition with other schools," said Sims.

Before the spring semester started the band was uncertain whether they would be having any trips this semester at all. On January 24, the band director, Mark Gordon, held a zoom

meeting in which he announced, "This semester is about to be a busy semester so you all need to prepare and get ready."

Even over the zoom call, the band students had smiles on their faces. The band will be practicing for three weeks to get ready for the Mardi Gras performance and getting in shape to march.

*Terrell Hailey is a junior broadcast journalism major.*



# One out of three: COVID's affect on retention

By Nia Daniels  
Staff Writer

The COVID-19 pandemic directly impacted the retention rate at Langston University. Retention is a term used by the university to track where students start at the university and then see if they stay in their program or at the institution for graduation. A student is considered retained if they come back as a sophomore the following year. Langston is required to report the number of students who graduate within six years and students who are freshmen that return the next year. If the retention rate is low, then the graduation rate will be low.

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) revealed that from 2018 to 2020 all first-time, full-time freshmen from the school of agriculture and applied sciences dropped from 62% to 41%. School of business student retention dropped from 62% to 40%, and the school of nursing and health declined 72% to 53%. There was also a 5% decrease overall for first-time full-time bachelor seeking students from 2018

to 2019.

According to Dr. Albright, acting chair of the department of psychology, "The incoming cohort for the fall of 2019 were especially hit because of COVID-19, more so than the years prior and subsequent. We lost a lot of freshmen and sophomores, and the class of '23 is smaller by about a one-third compared to prior years. I expect the subsequent years will be back to normal. Part of the reason that we lost students then was because even the faculty and staff were trying to figure things out, and their lives were totally shifting and collectively everyone was struggling."

Some factors that contribute to students not returning to campus are students who don't feel connected to their school, finances, the need for students to have to pay down their bill in order to enroll, being away from home and adjusting to schoolwork. Also, a sizable number of Langston students are first-generation college students who don't necessarily have the proper support to continue.

Albright believes that "making connections and

building relationships with students is one of the biggest factors, because when students have a positive relationship with somebody on campus they often will ask that instructor or staff member when they have an issue on who to talk to if they have a problem."

Albright advises everyone to know they impact the retention rate in some way or another. She suggests that advertising more appropriately and conveniently could make students aware of the resources that are offered on campus, like the food bank, counseling center, financial aid resource and the 15 to finish graduation implementation.

According to the Langston University website, the 15 to finish program aims toward helping students register for a minimum of 15 credits per semester, allowing them to follow a routine schedule and commitment towards finishing college. Research has shown that the payoffs for taking 15 credits per semester make a significant impact, such as reduced student loan debt, saving on tuition, housing and fees, followed by better academic

outcomes and earlier entry into careers.

Students provide their own perspectives as to why some of them drop out. Cornelious Florence, a junior organizational leadership major, said, "While Langston does a good job of catering to the students that are vocal and who have leadership roles, so many students go under the radar and feel unseen and unheard. And as we know Langston is not an easy place to be with all the things we go through, such as water being unusual-able for weeks and the simple fact that we aren't surrounded by anything can be a bit depressing. I have noticed most people I know who left and haven't returned was because their experience here at Langston was depressing. If Langston honestly wants to raise the retention rate they need to not only take better care of their living facilities but harp on the family aspect that Langston can provide, so they can actually be a part of the fostering process to help alleviate the notion of elitism."

"I know that students are not coming back due to their academic records," said

Imani Spearman, a sophomore animal science major. "They are writing appeals for this but some departments are not accepting them back. It's a money game. Some of these students didn't have the money to begin with and then they are being faced with academic challenges in a pandemic. If it's not academically related or financially related, it has a lot to do with the living conditions that the school provides us. The dorms are outdated and students would rather be in the comfort of their own homes. LUPD is constantly ticketing them for parking and 'speeding' violations as well which is another reason for them to stay home."

Elija Weaver, Langston University SGA president, said "One of the top reasons for low retention rate not only at Langston but all universities across the state is the absence of in-person instruction and a new verge of 'virtual/zoom fatigue.'"

The Langston University public relations team was not available for comment.

*Nia Daniels is a junior broadcast journalism major.*

## Opinion: Tribute to a true humanitarian

By Lhea Lilly  
Staff Writer

Firm, loving, caring, empathetic and dedicated are words that describe the late Joyce Lawanda Allen, according to Dr. D. Chongo Mundende. Allen was a lady of integrity who could be easily described as a humanitarian. Allen was an educator, a Langston alum and part of the Langston Alumnae Delta Sigma Theta Inc. sorority. Her desire to change the world was unmatched without any exaggeration. Allen worked for the Guthrie public school district for 42 years and was committed to changing the narrative for the lives of all

the students she encountered. She taught speech and drama to mostly juniors and seniors. She also taught English one year with the district and had a distinguished career, according to Guthrie public schools superintendent Mike Simpson.

Allen was heavily involved in the athletic events at the Guthrie public school district, in many cases the first face visitors came across while coming those events, Simpson said. "She had a smile that was infectious that made visitors feel welcoming while attending events."

Simpson continued, saying "Ms. Allen was regularly active in the community

during the summer and working with the Chamber of Commerce."

In 2001, Mundende brought in Allen after Langston University was awarded a National Summer Transportation Institute grant. The grant afforded Langston to start a highly successful summer program exposing high school students to careers in the field of transportation, as well as encouraging them to take classes in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Her work ethic and love for working and helping young adults was apparent; Allen had a desire to change the narrative in a world of inferiority.

"Mediocrity was not an option to and with her," Mundende said. "Her dedication to duty was impeccable. Although she had a given number of hours for which she was paid, Ms. Allen went beyond the call of duty."

Simpson agreed. "For example, while asking around to gather greater knowledge, the fullness of who she was exuded heavily."

Professor Kimberly Flannigan, a line sister of Allen's, said that "Miss Joyce Allen was a kind, prominent figure in the Langston and Guthrie communities. As an active Langston University Alumna (LUNAA & Guthrie) Chapter Member,

Educator, and member of Langston Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., she wanted the best for all students, society, and the world." Flannigan continued, "Ms. Allen worked tirelessly through community service projects to raise student scholarship money, mentor students, and feed the homeless. People from around the world will miss her contributions to humanity."

Allen has left her mark on the lives of many and will be greatly missed by all.

*Lhea Lilly is a junior broadcast journalism major and HPER minor.*

# Student kickback event delivers

By DeAsia Montgomery  
Staff Writer

On Jan. 31, the Student Activities Executive Board held a back-to-school Exclusive Kickback.

This event inaugurated the first official day of in-person classes for the spring 2022 semester. Masks were worn at the event and social distancing protocols were set in place. The Exclusive

Kickback was held outside of the SSC plaza from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tables were spread throughout the yard, with showings of student vendors and their business products. When asked about the outcome of the event, student vendor of The Manishop Imani Spearman said, "I really enjoyed the SSC Kickback event. I felt like it was a great event to kick off the

start of in-person classes for the semester. I felt like me personally, I got a lot of good business, I saw a lot of faces I haven't seen since the end of last semester, so I really enjoyed it."

A variety of music was played all throughout the event, featuring a short performance by a few veteran members of the Golden Feline Dance team.

"This personally

was a great event. I enjoyed everything about it, from the music, the student vendors, and even the small performance by the Golden Feline Dancers. This event was everything and more. I can't wait to see what SAB has planned next," said Hailey Chartain.

Students came out in between classes in hopes of a great first day experience.

"I wasn't able to

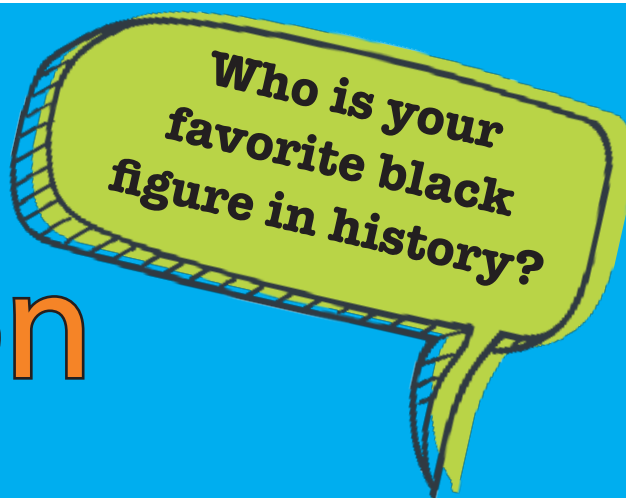
stay as long as I would have liked. However, for the short time I was at the Exclusive Kickback, I had a blast. Everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves and their first day back to in-person classes. This event was definitely needed to start the spring semester off right and I am just glad I was able to be part of it," said De'Aria Lias.

The Student Activities Executive Board

has not yet announced its full slate of plans for the spring 2022 semester. For more information on new and upcoming events, the head of the Student Activities Executive Board, Jasmin "Donut" Guy, can be reached at the official Student Activities Executive Board Instagram page @exclusive\_icons.

*DeAsia Montgomery is a junior broadcast journalism major.*

## Campus Question



Compiled by Kesean Cleveland



Sade Bass  
Junior  
Broadcast Journalism Major

My favorite black figure is Chef James Hemmings, why because he is the mastermind behind the creation of mac n cheese, my favorite food. He was Thomas Jeffersons enslaved chef. Thomas Jefferson took credit for Chef James creation which I like totally hate but the truth came to light eventually.



Keitoria Jefferson  
Senior  
Broadcast Journalism Major

Well one of my favorite black figures in history is Maria P. Williams who was the first black woman to produce, write, and act in her own movie and was also an activist and edited a newspaper called "Women's Voices."



Savion Harvey  
Senior  
Broadcast Journalism Major

Probably my favorite specifically is George Washington Carver, I really love the fact that he created something that nobody really thought about at the time in Peanut Butter and that's one of my favorite items I like to eat. Its very innovative how he came up with that because he had an idea, an ordeal that he wanted to be this guy to come up with this kind of idea that would last generations.

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# SAB WELCOMES BACK LIONS



Photos by Paris Rain and Terrell Hailey



# "Spider-Man: No Way Home" movie review



Photos by Sony Pictures

By John Crane  
Staff Writer

In December 2021, Marvel and Sony released the film "Spider-Man: No Way Home." This movie had plenty of stars and earned \$253 million at the box office opening weekend. This gives Marvel the top three opening weekends in box office history. The movie has since made \$1.74 billion globally. (Warning: This review contains spoilers).

The movie was filled with amazing special effects, heart-tugging stories and a shot at redemption for some antagonists who needed it. All three of the Spider-Man stars returned to the big screen and with this people began to pick their favorite. I asked college students and people aged 18-23 from Oklahoma who their favorite Spider-Man was

and 80% of them agreed that Tom Holland played the best Spider-Man and had the best movie.

This series of movies has had two revamp attempts but this specific one feels different. It had a sense of nostalgia for its longtime fans.

"Peter Parker is Spider-Man" reads a newspaper at the beginning of the film. Tom Holland's Spider-Man has turned his life upside down for not only himself but also his friends. His secret identity had been outed by Mysterio right before a drone strike killed him. Peter goes to Doctor Strange for help and asks for a spell to make everyone forget the identity of Spider-Man.

The dynamic between Peter and Strange is one I am happy Marvel explored. However, it felt like Strange could have defeated the villains on his own. That said, if there is one

thing we know about Marvel movies, to them the effortless way is not always the fun way.

The beginning of the movie felt rushed; it went from one thing to the next quickly and there was quite a bit to keep up with. All three versions of Spider-Man show up from their own respective universes. But where there's light there is darkness, and both of their universe's villains also come along, the biggest antagonist being the Green Goblin.

Tom Holland's version has produced a plan to try and send them all home. Green Goblin, who was originally going along with the plan, finds out he is dead in his universe and decides to betray Peter.

Aunt May is killed by Green Goblin but the scene does not do her character justice. She was the biggest person in Peter's life and Tony

Stark's death seemed to have more effect on him than his own aunt.

The movie ends with a wild fight scene on the Statue of Liberty, now holding a Captain America shield instead of the torch. Marvel's fight scenes rarely disappoint, and this was not an exception. It was filled with martial arts and special effects. But the real climax is Peter confronting the man who killed his aunt and having to stand by his own morals to not kill Green Goblin. This made the movie worthwhile, the way all three shared their experience and support him and at the climax where he had the chance to kill the villain and does not. I give this movie a seven out of ten.

*John Crane is a senior broadcast journalism major.*

**The Gazette is looking for news and story ideas for our next issue! If your department has an event or news topic you'd like us to cover, please let us know!**

[Send story ideas to dthom34@langston.edu](mailto:dthom34@langston.edu)

# Men's basketball gets first win in two seasons

By **Sasha Ndisabiye**  
Staff Writer

On January 10, Langston men's basketball walked into C.F. Gayles Field House expecting just another regular season game and walked out with their first win in two years.

Facing North American University and coming out victorious with a score of 67-65, this win marks the biggest feat since the transition to interim head coach Dewitte Mandley not long ago.

"I feel like we played as a team that night, it was fun, it was actually really fun. It was like we were just playing basketball, not really worrying much about plays and sets and what's going on in the crowd.... We all play hard for one another and even when we were down, we had each other's back," said Armani Allen, combo/shooting guard and small forward on Langston's team.

The last few seasons for Langston men's basketball have been "rough," according to coach Mandley. During the last non-conference game, due to COVID-19, some players were getting back into the groove of things. Due to COVID testing and eligibility issues, some players had been out during prior games.

The basketball team started off hot, playing good offensively and defensively, but then started letting up and making key mistakes. Turnover after turnover allowed the opposing team to get caught up. North American solidified the lead and kept scoring while making solid defensive plays well before halftime.

After halftime ended, Langston came back swinging after a little motivation from Coach Mandley, and it was a battle to the finish. Mandley said that all he tried to accomplish during his halftime speech with the players was to convince them that the game was winnable.

"I think now that they know that they have teammates that they can rely on and that they don't have to play 35 to 40 minutes a game, they can go all out in their 15 minutes and ultimately be more successful," Mandley said.

The game ended up coming down to key defensive stops, and key finishes, which resulted in a remarkably close win for Langston. In the seven games LUMBB has played since that night, they have come close to a win during two separate games but ultimately



fell short in the end.

During the first week of December, Phillip Stitt, the former Langston men's basketball head coach, unexpectedly quit leaving most of the season to former assistant coach Mandley, now acting head coach. It is unknown as to why Stitt decided to leave, but according to both players and managers coach Mandley was welcomed wholeheartedly.

Mandley played and refereed on multiple levels throughout his life and became an assistant coach at Langston in 2021. Manager to the team Kilah Johnson said, "I'm proud of him, he really took that role and he's running with it. He's really trying to build up the team to how everyone wants the team to be."

Taking only 10 season games under the interim coach's administration for Langston to get their first win, Mandley is eager to see what the next few games brings them. Already having strong relationships with the entirety of the basketball department and being highly respected among the group, his transition to interim head coach was described as "smooth" and "easy."

"Any type of transition you have to be able to embrace change, but it was one that I was pretty excited about. I already took hold of the lion family and was embraced with a warm welcome when hired. It was just an excellent opportunity for me to step into a more direct leadership role," said Mandley.

Due to the switch being mid-season, he was not focused on making changes to the team but instead implementing practices he is more familiar with and comfortable using. All that was left was to see if the players would "bite," and be able to successfully perform these plays. According to Mandley, the players favor the new offensive and defensive strategies that have proved to be beneficial.

When discussing having this win under his belt, he said, "For me to have been the current interim head coach and that win take place, that is gratifying... It was nice to know that I could help a lot of these guys that may not have seen a win last year and were uncertain about getting wins this year, get those. And hopefully we can generate more."

*Sasha Ndisabiye is a sophomore broadcast journalism major.*

Photos by Na'Tianna Stocker



# The Whisper Report: Interview with Free Nickk



**By Lhea Lilly**  
Staff Writer

I recently had the pleasure of sitting down with one of the hottest independent artist to grace Oklahoma City, Mr. Nicholas Fowler, widely known as FreeNickk.

Nickk is a Shreveport, Louisiana, native who is unapologetically taking the hip-hop world in his hands. He brings an insightful message for his fans saying, "No matter what you are going through, you never have to fake being who you are. Just be you."

With a Message like this I am confident this young man is on his way to the top. What was most notable in my interview with Nickk was his humility; a missing characteristic among many of the young

artists in the music industry.

Nickk is a junior business management major who is considering changing to psychology as a major to be of service to his community through mental health awareness. Although his professional career path is opposite of his musical aspirations, Nickk always had a love for the art because he started out as a poet.

He began to take his musical path more seriously after meeting an artist named Seth. Nickk explains meeting Seth was a catalyst for advancing his music career to another level.

Nickk says Seth approached him with an opportunity to go into the studio to record a song, but he had no clue that Seth would release the

track. Once the track was released, it yielded numerous accolades and opportunities from his counterparts and most importantly he became an instant role model for the children in his community.

When Nickk began to recognize the impact he had on the youth within his community, this made him self-assured of his musical journey. Nickk describes himself as shy and introverted, but states that, "creating music allows me to step outside the box to be a different person."

While embarking his musical conquest Nickk says he desires not to limit himself, having no set intentions on only collaborating with male artists, but expanding his horizon hoping to one day join forces with female artist

like Ari Lennox and Summer Walker. Nick adds there are several legendary artists who have fueled his passion for music, "Tupac, Kevin Gates, Fifty Cents, 51 Gang June and Geaux Mozzi."

When speaking about his creative process, Nickk aspires a different approach, by not restricting himself or his music. He says, "I can deliver whatever is required of me, I am able to deliver music that fits all genres."

FreeNickk has been active and working hard this year performing live at Langston University and the Annual LEXX MC Drip Show, and he will be traveling to Atlanta, Georgia, to perform.

He has several bangers available to download on all platforms, but my personal favorite is "Addict-

ed" featuring Cynn. When listening to this track, it's a whole vibe: both artists understood the assignment and rocked.

"The music industry is very competitive and hard to get into," according to the Atlanta Institute of Music and Media. However, being knowledgeable of this fact, FreeNickk seems prepared, recalling profound words passed down from his grandmother; "The best things in life come through patience."

FreeNickk's music can be streamed at [www.SongWhip.com/FreeNickk](http://www.SongWhip.com/FreeNickk), and he can be booked at [FreeNickkBooking@gmail.com](mailto:FreeNickkBooking@gmail.com).

*Lhea Lilly is a junior broadcast journalism major and HPER minor.*