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LU MEN'S BASKETBALL CROWNED SAC CHAMPIONS

the Gazette

The *Gazette* is produced within the Department of Communication at Langston University. It serves as a teaching tool.

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Edition Editors

Kesean Cleveland
Samuel Gichohi
Jasilyn Spivey
Chantele Gordon

Cover Designer

Midori Williams

Staff Writers

Sam Battle
Samuel Gichohi
Chantelle Gordon
Sharodon Jenkins
Taniya Mcqueen
Ma'Kalynn Richardson
Midori Williams

Adviser

Daniel Thompson

The Gazette Office

Langston University
Sanford Hall, Room 318

Send story ideas, comments and calendar events to dthom34@langston.edu. Opinions expressed in Voices are those of the writers whose names appear with the articles.

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Read Online

Gazette editor visits White House for HBCU press briefing

By Daniel Thompson
Gazette Adviser

Sasha Ndisabiye, junior broadcast journalism major, represented Langston University in Washington D.C. at a White House press briefing for HBCU journalists. The briefing on February 23 was led by the White House Senior Adviser for Public Engagement Kesiah Lance Bottoms and was attended by Vice President Kamala Harris.

The official briefing was open to one student journalist from each historically black college or university in the country. Students asked one question to Lance Bottoms in the same briefing space in the White House used by their professional journalist counterparts.

Ndisabiye joined the broadcast journalism program in 2021, covering campus housing for the student newspaper. Her work won her first place in the news story category of the Oklahoma Press Association Better Newspaper Content in 2022.

"Going to Langston, I fell into this role of fighting for the students," she said, "and so with that I realized I really really like uncovering truths and helping other people ... I feel like I've been doing some good."

Her goal in going to D.C. was to get a clearer picture of the life of a



journalist in a large metropolitan area. "I also am not going to pass up on the opportunity to meet the two most influential and powerful black women on the planet," she said, referring to Harris and Lance Bottoms.

As a sophomore, Ndisabiye interned with an investigations team at USA Today. There, she co-wrote a front-page story for the August 31 edition of the paper focused on how DNA databases try, and often fail, to help people of color find their loved ones in missing persons cases.

"As someone that is black and very young, I could relate to some of that, especially with black women being some of the highest rates of missing people in the US," Ndisabiye said.

It is "important to me that other people aren't just focused on entertainment," she said. "With my dad being raised in Africa and my mom traveling around Europe when she was younger, because of that I've been raised with a very open mind. I've been raised knowing what's ... been going on in the world around me ... I shouldn't be the only one who finds it interesting or important to pay attention to news."

When funds could not be secured from the university to make the trip, individual Langston University faculty, staff and surrounding community members donated the money necessary to purchase airfare and lodging for Ndisabiye.

Ndisabiye expects to graduate from Langston University with a bachelor's in broadcast journalism in 2024 and hopes to pursue a master's degree in international relations, working to achieve a "good combination of educational tools and skills to actually do some good for some people."

Daniel Thompson is an instructor in the broadcast journalism major.

Water outages persist; the solution is complicated

By Taniya Mcqueen
Staff Writer

If you talk to students at Langston about problems they face, you'll likely hear about the water. Michael Prather, a current student, shared his experience with the most recent water outage. "I work off campus so whenever I wake up and notice I must use a water bottle to brush my teeth [it] is upsetting."

Students feel inconvenienced by these outages, which they think occur too frequently. "I now prepare for outages by keeping bottles on standby and handling my business early in the day to avoid coming across being out of water," Prather said.

In addition to water outages, students have also expressed concern about the water color when it does work. The Langston University Parents Facebook Group and LU Students Group Chat are filled with these concerns: "Another water outage!!! This is beyond ridiculous at this point"; "It's sad that I pay 9k a semester to not have water every other week"; "For the only HBCU in OK they have to do better because this is getting annoying."

Langston University gets its water from Logan County. According to the Langston Division of Operations, "Water outages on campus can happen for a variety of reasons. For example, if repairs are being completed involving a campus water line, the University is required to turn the water service off to ensure the repair can be made safely. The campus water service is also affected whenever there is a water outage in the surrounding area, such as within Logan County or in Guthrie."

Some students believe that the problems have gotten worse since the dismantling of the Langston water tower on October 17, 2022. However, the Langston water tower has not been in use for campus water for over a decade.

Another concern some students have raised is the appearance of the water, which sometimes looks cloudy or discolored. Kierra Washington, a biology major, has had the opportunity to test the campus water.

"In my class we were discussing the water color and tested it. We found minor bacteria in the water, but it is safe. Cloudy water is caused by air and water blending in the pipe. Be-

fore I knew any of this information, I didn't trust the water here," Kierra said.

The university is currently working to prevent outage issues on campus. According to an email from LU Operations, "Outages occurring in Guthrie or Logan County are out of our control and cannot be resolved directly by the University. On campus, the installation of additional valves in the existing water infrastructure will help us isolate outages to small areas when repairs are needed. The installation of valves is an ongoing process to modernize our infrastructure which takes time to complete."

LU Operations anticipates working on these valves over multiple summers. When outages occur, university officials work to alert the campus as quickly as possible via email communications. Langston is committed to continuing communication whenever they are alerted to an outage.

Taniya Mcqueen is a sophomore broadcast journalism major.

Empty floors: Retention declines 20% spring 2022 to spring 2023

By Midori Williams
Staff Writer

While strolling the halls of Langston University this semester you will find that there are fewer students on campus than there were in the fall. There has been a significant decrease in enrollment for the spring 2023 semester in comparison to the fall 2022 semester. In fall 2022 there were 1903 students enrolled in classes, and 1573 students enrolled in classes for the spring 2023 semester. This 330 student decrease is due to a lack of returning students.

Alyssa Dawson, Resident Director of Young Hall and Cimarron Garden apartments, has noticed a large decrease in returning students living in on-campus housing.

"Last semester, I didn't have any open rooms and this semester, I have a complete floor on each side," Dawson said.

This floor housed 100 students last semester who have decided not to return to Langston University this spring. "Fifty rooms that are usually double occupancy are now completely empty," Dawson said.

In fall 2021 there were 1960 students

enrolled, and 1686 students enrolled in spring 2022. Comparing enrollment from fall to spring in the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, there was a 20% decrease in returning students. Heath Burge, the president for strategic enrollment and academic advising services at Langston University, explained that it is typical for universities to experience a decrease in enrollment from fall to spring semesters.

"We have seen a decrease in continuing students from the fall...some students decided after the holiday break that they wanted to stay home so they did not return," Burge said.

Some reasons why students might decide not to return to Langston University for the spring 2023 semester are outstanding account balances, deciding that they no longer want to pursue a degree or making the decision to pursue education elsewhere. Student account balances must be under \$200 in order to enroll in classes.

"It is the university business office policy that bills are paid down to a certain amount in order for enrollment for the following semester to occur," Burge said.

Dawson suggested that the lack of the HERF Covid-19 relief grant oppor-

tunity this past semester may also be a contributing factor as to why students were unable to pay off their bills and return to school this spring.

"This is the first semester in about three years that we haven't gotten HERF funding...I think a lot of students were expecting that money to come in, but it never did," Dawson said.

Another reason why some students have decided not to return for the spring semester is they no longer want to attend college.

"Once they are at college away from the comforts of a home environment they may think twice about returning to college," Burge said.

Universities frequently recognize a trend of decreased enrollment of returning students in their second year of college.

"There's a natural drop off...between fall and spring, and then there's often an additional drop off between first year and second year students", Burge said. Some former students at Langston University may have decided that attending college was not the right fit for them.

"College isn't for everybody," said Dawson.

Burge also believes that some of the students who have decided not to continue their education at Langston University have chosen to transfer to other universities. As for future enrollment, Burge expressed that he has a detailed plan for how to get more students enrolled in classes at Langston University next fall.

"My goal with this new responsibility is to develop a more strategic kind of approach to how it is that we recruit and even enroll students," Burge said. He revealed that the plan for future enrollment will involve analyzing recruitment numbers based on the time of year Langston University has held high school outreach events in the past, as well as beginning the recruitment process as early as middle school.

"Historically, I think enrollment managers have sort of looked specifically at second semester juniors and seniors when they think about recruiting. There is a new school of thought that is starting to think about rather than looking that late, perhaps we need to go a bit earlier," Burge said.

Midori Williams is a junior broadcast journalism major and biology minor.

"The price of a paper and a handshake withheld my degree."

By Ma'Kalynn Richardson
Staff Writer



On May 6, the senior class of '23 will have graduate and move on to the next chapter of becoming alumni of Langston University. Graduation is a significant milestone in a graduating senior's academic career, but after finishing coursework requirements, completing internships, and remaining committed to graduating, some students still face the reality of ineligibility for graduation. Graduating seniors are under a strict timeline to pay off bills before March 1st. They have to pay off tuition bills to reach a zero balance before

they are able to participate in the commencement and have their name included in the graduation program. Even with scholarships, student loans and grants, some of which will not be received before March 1, students still have financial difficulties resulting in degrees being postponed by unpaid tuition fees and earlier payment requests than normal.

One particular difficulty is that some scholarships and financial aid students depend on do not arrive for students before the March 1st deadline. Graduating senior Kalynn Gray, a corrections major, plans to attend the police academy and work her way up after graduation. Gray believes that Langston can prepare students for life after graduation if they take advantage of every opportunity handed their way. That said, "The March 1st deadline is kind of tricky because I'm rushing to make sure that I'm doing my best to have my bill paid off earlier than usual," said Gray.

On February 15th, a senior class meeting was held. In this meeting the topics of deadlines and qualifications for graduation were discussed. Students were given a deadline of October

17th to submit for approval status for graduation. According to the office of the registrar administrator Jeanese Outlaw, "January 31st was the extended date; if you turned it in after the date of the original date in October then your letter is waiting as well."

Graduating senior Amari Brown, a criminal justice and corrections major, came to college because her parents didn't attend college and at a young age she was always motivated to do what they didn't get the chance to do. Brown has plans to attend graduate school in Virginia and receive more credits in criminal justice.

"Langston has prepared me for anything, whether that be struggle or success," said Brown. "I feel that it makes it harder for graduating seniors with bills that waited their whole life to walk across the stage but can't because they didn't have time or a chance to pay their bill." Students are left to question if they will make the deadline for graduation. Whether or not students have enough time between the February 15th class meeting and the March 1st bill deadline is the rising issue.

Jonah Fabian, a senior broad-

cast journalism major, came to Langston after being accepted for a McCabe honors scholarship. He chose Langston because he wanted to experience something different from high school and step in a unique path. Fabian says, "The deadline is terrible for us seniors because they won't send out our acceptance for graduation until the week before. It is annoying not knowing."

Ma'Kalynn Richardson is a senior corrections and criminal justice major and broadcast journalism minor.



Photos by Jeremiah Harrison

Langston starts first Ignite chapter in Oklahoma

By Sharodon Jenkins
Staff Writer

Ignite is a brand-new organization that has joined Langston's campus. Ignite is a movement of young women and allies who are ready and eager to engage their communities in civic service but also have the desire to oversee the next generation of leaders. Langston University is the first Oklahoma Ignite chapter and this is the first full year that Ignite is in Oklahoma.

Although this organization is new to Langston, it is a national program. According to Jasmine Thomas, an Ignite Fellow, the organization formed as "nonpartisan, nonprofit political organization and the focus of Ignite is to build the nation's largest coalition of women, political leaders."

The organization has a focus on young women being able to utilize their political power. According to Thomas, "we do that specifically by targeting young women that are early in their careers and connecting them with training and the resources

that would prepare them to run for office."

Thomas joined Ignite for the community. "I have an interest in politics, but I also recognize that it can be intimidating within the political sphere when you don't know people. So, what was really attractive about Ignite was having a safe space to learn about politics and to get organizing experience. And since the organization targets women specifically, I just felt like there was going to be a different level of understanding and community as I walk through the process of learning this world".

Chastity Chatmon, senior HYPER major, is a general body member of the organization.

"I chose to be a part of this organization to be more involved in my community and to be an advocate for women." Chatmon believes that this organization will help foster more civic engagement on campus.

"From the little amount of time that I have been a part of this organization, I've learned that women in politics are trans-

forming our future. It used to be very uncommon for women to be involved in politics and civil engagement, but now you see women in the senate, being the vice president, and even running for governor. Times are changing and by this organization coming to campus, I feel that it will instill hope into the young ladies who aspire to have a career in politics."

Chatmon said that she would also recommend Ignite to all of her peers. "I would say that this organization is very forming, especially when it comes to politics and people's different life experiences. Although it doesn't fit all the way into my career goals, I have the opportunity to learn a new skillset and know more about my rights."

Brooklyn Stewart, a senior corrections major, currently serves as the president of the organization. Stewart is very involved with civic action and rights for her people, especially when it comes to women that look like her.

"I decided to run for president because I want to be a present change in my com-

munity. And I just feel like if I care about something enough, I need to be the one to actively try to make that difference that I want to see," Stewart said.

The first event will be held in February in honor of Black History Month.

"We're going to be talking about knowing your rights as well as we're going to be having the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) come into this talk about different rights and civic action pieces that you can get engaged with as a young person," Stewart said.

Even though the main part of the organization is about women's rights and getting parity, applications for men are being taken and it is asked that everyone be open hearted and accepting. To stay updated with this organization, you can follow them on Instagram at [ignite_lu](https://www.instagram.com/ignite_lu) for all upcoming events. The first general body meeting will be February 15 at 5:00 p.m. in Jones Hall.

Sharodon Jenkins is a junior broadcast journalism major.

Campus Question

Compiled by Jasilyn Spivey



Monie Smith
Freshman
Nursing

"No because it's still somewhere where I want to be in life, but I'm still going through the college process and still learning myself and environment."



Jayla Wilson
Freshman
Psychology

"I am happy with where I am, but I do know there is so much more that I can do, and I can't wait to see what God has in stored for me."



Maurielle McIntosh
Junior
Broadcast Journalism

"I am happy with where I am at in life because I listen to myself and listen to my body about how I feel about situations and I don't let anyone dictate how I choose to live my life."



Cynsere Boyd
Freshman
Nursing

"No I'm not happy where I am in life because I have been going through depression, but I am going to counseling and talking to friends to push me through with all my struggles."

Campus involvement changes lives

By **Sharodon Jenkins**
Staff writer

When first coming to college, it can seem like a new normal. It's a period filled with opportunity with all the people to meet, classes to take and campus organizations to join. Students come ready to take advantage of as many opportunities as they can since they want to make the most of their college experience. They might be surprised to learn that being active on campus has a number of significant advantages. Although meeting other students is undoubtedly one of the benefits of joining college clubs and organizations, it's not the only one. There are additional advantages to participating.

Lovette Mba, junior business major, took a leap of faith when deciding to come to Langston.

"I really wanted to go to an HBCU ... My parents didn't want me to travel outside of Kansas, but they said I could leave Wichita if I earned a full ride, so I just took that as a challenge. Langston fulfilled my wish, and I'm now here."

Lovette identifies her college experience as stagnant but revolutionary. "It's not at all what I expected it to be, and it did take me some time to get out my own shell. However, I held myself to a standard to continue to challenge myself every single year."

As a freshman, Lovette felt like there were not many unique organizations that catered to all interests of students and although she stayed in tune by following all of the social media pages, something was still missing. So she started her own organization: the African Students Association.

"If you don't see something you want, become it. And I wanted to create and be a part of the African community. So I went out of my way to create ASA, because that's something I miss from back home."

One thing that kept Lovette encouraged when becoming involved on campus is "If you're working on an idea by yourself for a while, use that as motivation to make extra efforts to connect with others and identify potential supporters of the idea."

Charles Gates III, senior biochemistry major, was not always an open person. He decided to step out of his comfort zone and make the best of his college ex-

perience by reaching out. "I was more trying to start out with my outgoing nature because, I didn't want to just be at home alone all the time. I began by simply asking around on campus, getting to know some upperclassmen, and they essentially directed me in the right direction. SGA was one of the first organizations to offer me guidance, and with the help of the ideas I had, I was able to meet Mr. Robert Couch, who later introduced me to the NAACP. Since I was more concerned with students and making sure that everyone succeeds, he thought I would be a good fit for the organization." Gates did have personal concerns

so that it can be easy for them to digest and to have a better college experience."

There is also a point in time while being in college that you may become homesick. Gates was one of the individuals that came across this and shared how he managed. "I was always homesick but again because I wanted my own independence and I wanted to try to live how I wanted. As with both with my college experience, I tried to distance myself from home as much as possible, but still on occasion visited every other weekend or so. And some people aren't fortunate enough to go home to do that. But I think it is important to

be successful without the help of advisers. Dr. Latoya Johnson, assistant professor of mathematics, serves as the advisor for the National Council of Negro Women. Johnson shared that being an advisor has given her a new perspective regarding the student body and getting to know students outside of her classes.

"I think it's kind of eye opening for you. It helps for you to see how everything kind of works within the organizations and all the things that they kind of have to go to. And I think it's good to be involved so that you can interact with others, and you're not just like closed off."

Johnson wanted to become an advisor so that students would have a role model to look up to.

"I was requested by students, so I believe that this helps. I also believe that being an advisor and being a black woman with a doctorate in mathematics is essential and something for them to be able to see and look up to, so I thought that I might be a positive effect on the organization."

Organizations can often become time consuming and it is important for students to prioritize.

"Students have expressed their overwhelm to me because they feel pressured to perform once they join a group. Numerous students have admitted to feeling overburdened by their durations and having high expectations of them. Because they still need to have time for their own studies and to do all the other things, I believe that it should be policy not to over stimulate our students within these organizations," Johnson said.

Johnson left some advice for students aspiring to become active in campus organizations. "I think it's really good to be involved in organizations because one, it's service to your community, right? So you definitely want to have service. I would say don't get overly involved. Langston is definitely a place where you can do too much. Like you can want to get involved in too many things and then you lose focus of your academics. So definitely, you know, pick something that you like and kind of invest your time with that. But don't overly involve yourself because it could definitely happen."

Sharodon Jenkins is a junior broadcast journalism major.



Sharodon Jenkins and Charles Gates III

as freshman coming into Langston regarding campus involvement. "I feared that I may not be a certain way I wouldn't be able to adapt to the culture that is on campus to relate to other students or to do what I needed to do. I consider myself a little distant from everyone else." In high school, Gates considered himself a bookworm and closed off. Yet, he realized he wanted a different outlook on his college experience. "That was always hard working with that. But I wanted to be known on the campus as something more. Being on the SGA academic committee, I learned that there was a lot of stuff in SGA that students didn't understand or know. As I was more fortunate than other students, I wanted to make a commitment to being someone who can clearly communicate the knowledge that I am being presented to students

have a college experience versus just being home all the time and being used to being uncomfortable." Gates left some advice for students aspiring to become a part of campus organizations. "Every student should have the chance to get uncomfortable and speak to other students on campus because it's not what you know, it's who you know. Whether you're joking around or discussing some serious issues. You want to be able to demonstrate your versatility, your ability to perform under pressure, and your ability to endure discomfort while yet maintaining a positive attitude. And once others see that you are capable of doing this, they will take the time to invest in you and you'll become great."

Campus organizations are important to collegiate institutions due to building community. However, organizations would not

Tevin's Home Cooking valued by community

By Samuel Gichohi
Staff Writer

Tevin's Home Cooking is a well-established Soul Food restaurant located near Langston University's campus that has been a staple to the community. The restaurant opened in 2017 and since then has been catering to Langston students and the town. Tevin Williams is a proud alumni of Langston University who graduated in 1991. Williams loves the atmosphere Langston students bring to his establishment. For him, serving food and showcasing his cooking abilities are fulfilling.

"I love it," Williams said, "it's not about the money, especially at Langston, but it's about giving back to the youth".

Tevin's is located near the university bookstore and will continue to stay there as a restaurant.

"I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. I've been offered many restaurants all over the state of Oklahoma but I would like to retire here," Williams said.

Tevin's is not only a place to eat but an experience of comfort to the public where customers are acknowledged with assurance. Tevin grew up in New Orleans, Louisiana, where he learned and worked under his mother's three restaurants. At six years old, he found his passion in cooking and as he got older "it was always my desire to open my own restaurant when I retired."

Biology major Joseph Jones said, "It's cool having a restaurant that's on campus that's good rather than driving to Guthrie or Still-



Tevin Williams and Samuel Gichohi

water." Many students on campus do not own a vehicle and after class, they find themselves consistently going to Tevin's Restaurant. For "broke college students," the menu price range varies from \$2-\$13. Not only does the restaurant provide quality service but it also provides the opportunity for students to have

high-quality home-cooked meals.

When the Covid-19 pandemic first occurred 3 years ago, the restaurant faced a few setbacks. Income was not flowing how it normally would have due to student, staff, and faculty concerns for their own safety and the safety of Tevin's staff. Additionally, during the holiday season, business at Tevin's experiences about a 35% drop off. Yet, throughout the year service runs smooth, especially during Langston's annual homecoming season every fall.

From Latino workers in the area getting off work to police officers coming in on their break, customers from all backgrounds find themselves eating at Tevin's. Feeding and providing for band students and Student-athletes is also something Tevin's is known for.

Sophomore Shamar Young used to eat at Tevin's on a daily basis and as she grew comfortable she decided to work at Tevin's.

"Last semester I was in need of a job and the option that I felt was the best for me was at Tevin's. Business is always good and you get to laugh and talk," Young said.

Williams feels Langston "keeps me young." With new students constantly attending Langston every year, they are bound to run into the restaurant, introducing him to new lingo and the latest music. Not only is Tevin's a great place to eat great soul food at a reasonable price, but it is one of Langston's proud Black-owned businesses.

Samuel Gichohi is a junior broadcast journalism major.

Town of Langston to pave roads; plant trees

By Chantele' Gordon
Staff Writer

Resources and work opportunities needed in the city limits of Langston, Oklahoma, are underway to begin development. The Langston Planning and Economic Development Group, consisting of Mary Boyles, Charlene Meeks, Patrick Franks, Charles Membula and Diane Sims came together to make a difference amongst the Langston community.

Bringing resources to the community for the residents of Langston and the students of Langston University is their goal; a major focus is determining how the community can provide or maintain repairs.

Car troubles are one of the main issues both residents and students face in Langston. Traveling 12 miles to Guthrie, 15 miles to Perkins, or 22 miles to Stillwater every other day means a lot of tire repairs, oil

changes, suspensions and other car repairs.

Boyles said, "The group was started to bring and make a change in the Langston community."

To make that change resources must come.

"We plan to bring new businesses like a grocery store, salon/barbershop, breakfast restaurant, and computer repair to create many jobs for the community."

With the developments underway and ideas being pushed for approval, the first two projects to begin are the Pave The Way project to pave the dirt roads south of the park and The Beautification Project to plant trees, add smart lights, and gazebos along Sammy Davis Jr. to give Langston a new look.

The group was funded \$150,000 from ACOG to pave the dirt roads and \$100,000 fix the water/sewer infrastructure. The group itself will receive \$1.4 million to bring in re-

sources and jobs.

"We want to make sure everything is in walking distance for the students and the community," Boyles said.

The funding has been secured, so Diane Sims, business major and economics minor, notified the Development Group that the Young Entrepreneur Project has ideas that will benefit the Langston Planning and Economic Development Group.

"I did a proposal about YEP's ideas because each idea fills in what development group wants to do," she said. "I want to bring a food market and Krispy Krunchy Chicken, and that helps create job opportunities and provides resources to the community on and off campus."

Providing jobs is one of the main goals for the developments of Langston.

Another YEP member Mario

Barnes, junior health, physical education & recreation major, plans to bring entertainment and provide resources to the community.

"I came up with the M80 Bar & Grill so that the students can have a space to relax and have a good time and the Lion Cubs Daycare so that the non-traditional students can have a reliable care system for their kids," he said. "Also a LU Mechanic & Tire Shop for car repairs."

Collaboration between the Langston Planning and Economic Development Group and Young Entrepreneur Project together could be valuable when it comes to bringing resources to Langston, Oklahoma.

With Pave the Way and The Beautification Projects approved to begin developing in April through the summer, more developments will begin.

Chantele' Gordon is an English major.

Langston First HBCU to Win SAC

By Sam Battle Jr.
Staff Writer

On February 11th in an away game against Texas Wesleyan University, the Lions came out on top 76-60, moving their overall record to 24-2 and claiming the SAC title. The SAC is a 12-team conference that spans the states of Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, and Texas. The Sooner Athletic Conference consist of teams from Langston University, Panhandle State, Southwestern Christian University, Oklahoma City University, the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, Mid-America Christian University, Wayland Baptist University, Southwestern Assemblies of God University, University of North Texas at Dallas, Texas Wesleyan University, John Brown University, and Central Christian College. The win locks their spot as the first seed for the conference tournament following the end of the regular season, as well as punches their ticket to the NAIA Men's Basketball National Tournament as the regular season

champion and the conference tournament champion in the SAC are awarded automatic bids to the national tournament. This is the first time in program history that the men have won the conference title and Langston is now the first HBCU to win the title.

The Lions now have the highest win total they have had since 2016-2017 when they finished the year 24-11. This comes previously after only having one win together from the past two seasons. In what head coach Chris Wright described as "the biggest turnaround in the history of college basketball." Wright has become the SAC John Hudson coach of the year during his first year as the head coach of the Langston Men's basketball team. The turnaround isn't only just on the court; off the court the support and coverage of the program has been amazing as well. "It's crazy to see the difference from last year," Kristian Baccus a sophomore guard who was on the team last year and now on the team again

this year. Baccus is the only player from the team from last year's team that had a final record last year of 1-27 to return to the team. Baccus described the "energy" of the team and the "togetherness" within the team is a what has been a big part of the success they have had this season. Baccus said the next steps for the team are to focus on the conference tournament, even though they have their bid to the national tournament "We still need to handle business," Baccus said.

The team ends the season as the fifth best team in the country in the final NAIA Men's Basketball Top 25 Poll with a 26-2 record. They are the only team from the Sooner Athletic Conference to be in the top 25. The Lions are set to host the first and second round of the NAIA Men's Basketball national tournament at CF Gayels Field House. on March 7th and 8th.

Sam Battle Jr. is a junior broadcast journalism major.

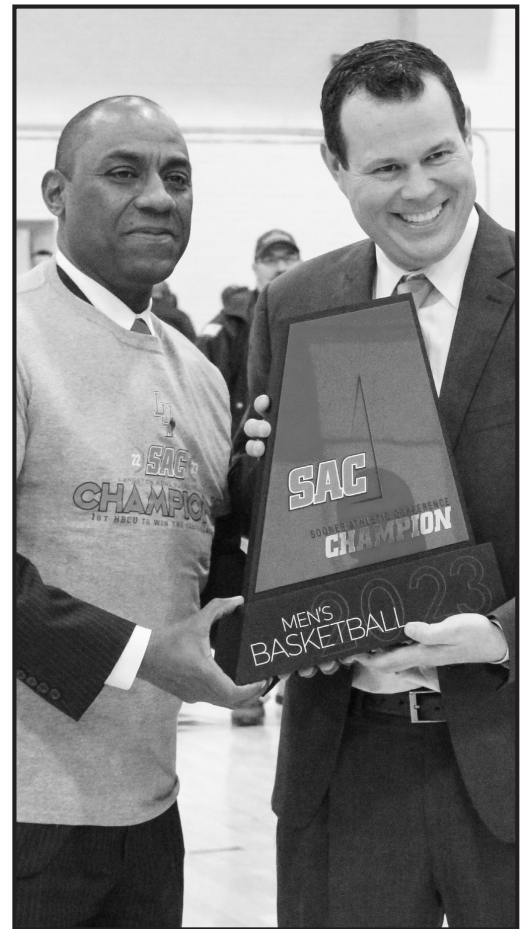


Photo courtesy of Krystal Butler



Photo courtesy of Langston Mens Basketball Twitter

Oklahoma City Museum of Art opens exhibits that depict the history of Black Americans

By Midori Williams
Staff Writer

The Oklahoma City Museum of Art is opening two exhibits called "Fighters for Freedom William H. Johnson Picturing Justice" and "Art and Activism at Tougaloo College." These exhibits will be available to the public starting on Saturday February 18th and ending on Sunday May 14th.

"Fighters for Freedom" is a collection of paintings by William H. Johnson, a black artist from South Carolina, who created paintings from the 1920s-1940s. He attended the National Academy of Design in New York. After attending the National Academy of Design, he went to Europe to learn about different modernist styles of art.

According to the Oklahoma City Museum of Art, "On his return to Europe in 1938 he abandoned his expressionistic brush work and adopted a faux naive style to depict the lives of black Americans."

Johnson wanted to capture the experience of black Americans that were working against racism to create a better future for themselves and their peers. He was able to demonstrate his newfound inspiration to create art that reflected his culture by painting both historical people and events in black history.

This exhibit is full of art that memorializes many black historical figures such as Harriet Tubman, George Washington Carver, Marian Anderson and Booker T. Washington as well as shed light on the harsh reality of racism through depictions of lynching and violence against black people.

Dr. Rosie May, the exhibit curator, explained that this exhibit is meaningful to black history because of the research and attention to detail that Johnson took while creating these works of art.

"He really showed people that African American history is American history, and that black Americans have been fighting for liberty since the beginning of this country," May said. Many of the paintings in this exhibit are very colorful and show a particular historical figure surrounded by impactful scenes from their life as well as symbols of their accomplishments and the people or places they influenced.

Art and Activism at Tougaloo College features pieces that are a part of the first collection of modern art in Mississippi at Tougaloo College. This collection of art is significant to black history because it was created in 1963 amidst segregation and the civil rights movement as a way to show racial activism.

The Oklahoma City Museum of Art explains the efforts that Tougaloo College made to make art more accessible to black Americans during that time.

"Tougaloo's early acquisitions afforded many students and visitors their first exposure to the modern styles of Europe and New York. This rang especially true for Black patrons, who, as a result of Mississippi staunch segregationist policies, were excluded from many public institutions but welcomed within Tougaloo's integrated community."

As I was observing the art created by Picasso it occurred to me that similar to the black visitors at Tougaloo College in 1963, this exhibit was my first exposure to modern art as well.



3D replica of "Women Builders" by William H. Johnson

The Art and Activism at Tougaloo College exhibit is still actively carrying on the mission of its founders to expose African Americans to modern art today.

The exhibit is organized into three galleries that show the evolution of diversity in the collection. In the first room there is art from several world renowned European artists such as Matisse, Picasso and George Grosz. However, the next two rooms include a mixture of American, European and African American artists. Some of the African American artists included in this exhibit are Hale Woodruff, Jacob Lawrence, Richard Mayhew and Alma Thomas.

"This exhibit trowels a broader, more diverse story for our visitors...we are thrilled to have this exhibition at the same time as William H. Johnson," May said.

Along with opening these new exhibits the

Oklahoma City Museum of Art is working to make their exhibitions more interactive and accessible to the public by offering virtual field trips, creating touchable 3D replicas of art and displaying QR codes so that visitors are able to read and listen to the history and descriptions of the art on their phones.

Virtual field trips from the Oklahoma City Museum of Art are free and available to PreK-12 as well as college classrooms. The virtual field trips are held using Zoom and are led by a museum educator. Virtual field trips can be scheduled online and both the Fighters for Freedom and Art and Activism at Tougaloo College exhibits will be available to explore virtually.

The Oklahoma City Museum of Art has also partnered with NewView Oklahoma to create four touchable 3D art replicas within the Fighters for Freedom exhibition to accommodate blind and low vision visitors.

"Touchable versions of works of art are great for pretty much everyone because a lot of people come into a museum and they want to touch works of art, especially kids," May said.

The 3D replica of a piece called "Women Builders" was my favorite of the touchable works of art because it was placed directly in front of the real painting and I was able to closely examine the painting while physically connecting with the replica. There are also QR codes posted next to every work of art in the Fighters for Freedom exhibit to make the text accessible to read and listen to on a mobile device.

"We also have special double taped lines that NewView uses in their factory in front of all of our QR codes...so that somebody who is using a cane as a directional aid could find the QR codes," May said.

The Oklahoma City Museum of Art will also be holding various events related to their new exhibitions. On March 2nd from 6pm to 8pm there will be a panel conversation centered around art and activism where artists from Oklahoma will discuss how they have created art to represent activism and advocacy from marginalized groups. This event requires pre-registration and will cost \$16 to the public. On March 15th and 17th from 2pm to 3:15pm the Oklahoma City Museum of Art will also be holding a film screening for ages 9 and up called Celebrating Black Stories. Finally, on April 1st at 2pm there will be an event called One Work Many Voices where a single work of art from the exhibit will be discussed by a museum facilitator and guests from the community. Pre-registration is required for this event and it will be available for 5\$ plus the cost of admission. Tickets for these events can be purchased online at okcmoa.com

Midori Williams is a junior broadcast journalism major