

VOICE OF THE WILDCATS

BETHUNE-COOKMAN UNIVERSITY • DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA

Pandemic ushers in new campus normal



Two students wait in line in the cafeteria to be served.

Photo by Joshua Payne

Bethune-Cookman University, unlike some of its peer institutions in other states, opened its doors this fall to new and returning students.

The school returning students found, however, is different in many ways because of the COVID-19 or coronavirus pandemic that brought much of the country to a halt. Students, faculty and staff have been working to resume life as it was before the coronavirus put many things on hold.

Campus officials urge everyone to follow the protocol established by the Centers of Disease Control, including wearing of mask on campus, social distancing and frequent

hand washing.

Thus far, B-CU has not been forced to shut down, as some larger institutions were forced to do so shortly after opening because of outbreaks on campus.

Students, meanwhile, have made the adjustments to longer class periods but a shorter work week. The new normal on campus means some instructors teach both face-to-face and Zoom at the same time.

Fall football has been put on hold, all Homecoming activities have been cancelled and the fall semester is slated to end in mid-November.



A sign on a campus marquee urges campus residents to wear a mask in keeping with federal guidelines.

Photo by Victor Minikwu



Signs telling people to practice social distancing can be found throughout campus.

Photo by Joshua Payne

B-CU celebrates return to full accreditation status

Staff Report



Belvin Perry

The efforts to reaffirm Bethune-Cookman University as a fully accredited institution finally paid off for the Wildcats.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or SACS, which placed B-CU on probation, informed officials of the change in status at the beginning of September. The university had been placed on probation following concerns about governance and accountability in connection with past administrations.

"This news comes after nearly two years of unimaginably difficult work," college President E. LaBrent Chrite said in a prepared statement.

"This decision represents the culmination of our collective effort and I am immensely grateful to this community for all its support. The SACSCOC review process was extraordinarily rigorous and we met (and in some instances exceeded) the conditions that were put before us," Chrite said.

Accreditation is a process in which accrediting agencies assess the quality of education that higher education institutions offer and ensure they meet certain standards. In order for schools to receive federal financial aid funds, they must have a Department of Education-rec-

ognized accrediting agency accredit them.

"This is an enormous accomplishment and it reflects the very best of B-CU: strength, resilience, faith, and an enduring commitment to doing what is right and necessary in support of our students and our legacy," Chrite said. "While much work remains in a post-COVID environment, there is no doubt as to our ability to secure the future of our beloved University and to sustain the vision of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune."

The Honorable Judge Belvin Perry, chair of B-CU's Board of Trustees also expressed his delight at the news. "It (B-CU) is a great institution and it has a great legacy," Perry said, after a celebration Sept. 8 in the Chapel in White Hall.

HONOR THE PAST, SUPPORT THE FUTURE

By Sky Stephen
VOICE Staff

There is a political responsibility that all Americans inherit when they turn 18 years old.

It is the right to vote.

And, if young people become a large-enough voting bloc (that actually votes), they can influence the platforms of candidates.

They can begin making change that way. Eventually these 20 somethings will grow into the adults who actually run the world, and taking political interest early in life helps make the next generation more civil and in tune.

Notably as for Black Americans, we have not always been granted this civil right.

Therefore, it is extremely important, that we vote. In fact, if all people of color in the United States registered to vote did so, they could easily determine who wins.

The same could be said for women, who comprise the majority of people in this country. If women voted at 100 percent every time, they would determine the winner.



Voter apathy, however, is a very real issue here in the United States.

We have elected 44 Caucasian men and only 1 person of color to the office of president of the United States. No woman has come close.

But, there is hope, as more women and people of color are running for office and getting elected than ever before.

Hopefully, voter apathy will decrease so that every citizen who is eligible to vote will make it a priority to get to the polls on election day, Nov. 3rd.

Voting is the most credible way to make your

voice heard on the issues which concern our communities and this nation.

So, no matter who you intend to vote for, please vote, and let your voice be heard. Our democracy is an amazing and wonderful thing. Thousands of people, including soldiers, civil rights activists, and private citizens, have fought and died so that people can take part in the democratic process.

Voting gives us an opportunity to be a part of decision-making, which affects our nation.

We all want better facilities providing health-care, education, childcare, better transportation routes, ample employment and fair judicial systems.

Many believe that it doesn't count when they choose not to vote. In reality, they are voting against their own best interest, whether they want to admit it or not.

Sky Stephen is a junior mass communications major currently residing in Georgia.

Wildcats leaving MEAC for SWAC in 2021

By Sidney P. Brown



After decades in the MEAC, Bethune-Cookman University, along with two other longtime MEAC schools, will officially be pledging allegiance to new conferences in 2021.

The board of trustees voted unanimously during summer break that the 2020-21 school year will be the Wildcats' final year competing in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference and B-CU will join the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) on July 1, 2021.

The Wildcats are now the fourth program since 2017 to leave the MEAC. They are following in the footsteps of Hampton University that left in November 2017 to join the Big South conference in 2018. It was followed by North Carolina A&T in February 2020 and Florida A&M University—the Wildcat's biggest rival--left on June 4 and to SWAC July 1, 2021.

President Dr. E. LaBrent Chrite was very optimistic about this move and feels that it will strongly help the university going forward.

"Bethune-Cookman's move to the Southwest-

ern Athletic Conference is one that is clearly in the best interest of the University, particularly during this major shift in higher education and intercollegiate athletics," Chrite said in a prepared statement.

"We believe this is a logical next step in the evolution of our university. Moreover, it reflects our commitment to strengthening the university's long-term competitiveness and viability, while providing the best possible experience for our student-athletes."



Thanks to the additions of Bethune-Cookman and Florida A&M, the SWAC will grow to a 12-team conference. Member schools include Alabama A&M, Alabama State, Alcorn State, Grambling State, Jackson State, Mississippi Valley State, Prairie View A&M, Southern University, Texas Southern, and Arkansas-Pine Bluff.

Meanwhile, the MEAC will be left with eight members – Coppin State, Delaware State, Howard, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Morgan State, Norfolk State, North Carolina Central, and South Carolina State.

"We're extremely excited to welcome Bethune-Cookman University to the Southwestern Athletic Conference," SWAC Commissioner Dr. Charles McClelland said in a prepared statement.

"Bethune-Cookman's alliance with the Southwestern Athletic Conference from a competitive standpoint made perfect sense and strengthens us in all of the sports in which the Wildcats sponsor," McClelland said. "Many of our member institutions have competed against B-CU for decades and will now have that opportunity on a yearly basis. Bethune-Cookman's addition to the Southwestern Athletic Conference ultimately puts us in a great position to expand our brand in a manner that will bring a high level of value to our league and membership."

Sidney P. Brown is a sophomore mass communications major from North Carolina.

Voice of The Wildcats Contributors

Staff contributors: Sky Stephen, Sidney P. Brown, Victor Minikwu, Joshua Payne, Tatiana Tyler-Addison

Co-advisers: Prof. Valerie Whitney & Dr. Keith O. Hilton



bcuvoice.com



@bcuvoice