

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 11

BY SENATOR BOUDREAUX

A RESOLUTION

To recognize Tuesday, March 19, 2024, as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Day at the Louisiana State Capitol.

WHEREAS, Louisiana is proud to be home to eight Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Dillard University, Grambling State University, Southern University and A&M College, Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Southern University Law Center, Southern University at New Orleans, Southern University Shreveport, and Xavier University of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana is also home to the nation's only HBCU System, the Southern University System, which is uniquely positioned as an exemplar with a profound commitment to research and student success and whose Board of Supervisors is celebrating fifty years of service to the students, faculty, staff, and community surrounding the system's five campuses in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Shreveport; and

WHEREAS, Grambling State University and Southern University and A&M College celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Bayou Classic, an annual extravaganza that brings fans, supporters, and alumni of both universities for a celebration of football, family, and tradition in New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, it would be remiss not to welcome two new leaders of Louisiana's HBCU presidents to the state: Dr. Martin Lemelle and Dr. Aubra J. Gantt; and

WHEREAS, the University of Louisiana System welcomed new leadership in 2024, in naming Dr. Martin Lemelle as the eleventh President of Grambling State University; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lemelle, a 2006 graduate and former Student Government Association President of Grambling, recently served as the Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer at Maryland Institute College of Art and prior to his service at Maryland Institute College of Art, Dr. Lemelle was the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at Grambling State University from 2016 to 2021, developing extensive experience in higher education administration and preparing him for his new leadership role at the university; and

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2023, Dr. Aubra J. Gantt, became Chancellor of Southern University at Shreveport; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gantt began her educational career at SUSLA, where she learned one of her passions was to serve students, faculty, and staff from various backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gantt is a believer in the community college mission because she is a product of a community college; and

WHEREAS, since their establishment 188 years ago, HBCUs have continued to build a legacy of excellence, achievement, and inclusion; and

WHEREAS, HBCUs were created to provide opportunities and access to education for Black students during a time when institutions of higher education discriminated against Black Americans; and

WHEREAS, the establishment and advancement of HBCUs fostered academic excellence, cultural empowerment, and professional readiness for Black students throughout our nation; and

WHEREAS, HBCUs play a crucial role in contributing to the economy and workforce, aligning their academic programs with the needs of industry while ensuring HBCU graduates meet the demands of the job market; and

WHEREAS, HBCU graduates are exemplary public servants, scientists, doctors, artists, lawyers, judges, engineers, educators, entertainers, business owners, and leaders and have distinguished themselves in numerous ways, both nationally and in the state as follows:

Dillard University is recognized for its Ray Charles Program in African American Material Culture, to which the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a significant grant for a multi-year project titled "Higher Learning through Humanities in Food Studies"; and

Grambling State University, with a legacy spanning nearly 122 years, pioneered Louisiana's first Doctor of Philosophy program in Criminology and Justice Administration, receiving student scholarships from Beyoncé's "BeyGood" Foundation that showcase the institution's commitment to innovation and student support; and

Southern University and A&M College, a Carnegie Research 2 institution, was awarded a grant to aid in the pursuit of the Carnegie Research 1 high research activity designation, and received with the Boeing Co., a joint award from NASA for their combined

work on NASA's Space Launch System (SLS) rocket; and

Southern University at New Orleans is celebrating sixty-five years of providing access to educational opportunities for students; is in the process of designing a new nursing building; recently enrolled its first Cybersecurity cohort this past fall, and formalized an articulation agreement for a Cybersecurity Degree Pathway with Delgado Community College to train future cybersecurity practitioners to meet workforce needs in the field of information technology; and

Southern University Shreveport, celebrating fifty-six years of providing an excellent and accessible educational experience to students and programming for its surrounding community, has acquired a new Mobile Health Unit, which will travel across Northwest Louisiana providing quality health and dental screenings to underserved populations and bringing healthcare to communities that would otherwise not receive these services; and

Southern University Law Center, a highly ranked legal education institution, has prospered within the Esports industry, hosting regional and national tournaments in the newly established Esports Innovation Lab; and

Xavier University of Louisiana, known for being the top producer of Black graduates who earn medical degrees, was recently recognized by OnlineU as the second-ranked HBCU in the nation, with the highest payoff for Black graduates in 2024; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to commend Louisiana's Historically Black Colleges and Universities for their outstanding achievements and their numerous alumni for their contributions to their local communities, the state, and the world.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize Tuesday, March 19, 2024, as Historically Black Colleges and Universities Day at the Louisiana State Capitol.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE