



Washington Fisk Alumni Association

Fall 2020 Newsletter

Cultivating Scholars & Leaders One by One



Fisk University SACSCOC Probation Status Lifted

Dear Fisk Family:

On September 2, 2020, the University received notification from Officials with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (Commission of Colleges), that Fisk University's three-year process to settle its accreditation has concluded. Probation has officially been lifted.

According to Interim President Vann Newkirk, "This is a great day, and it would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the faculty, staff, students, alumni and other supporters of the University. We also would like to thank members of the Commission for recognizing the strength of our finances, and the value of our educational product." According to Frank Sims Chair of the Board of Trustees, "This exciting news is the product of a deliberate plan to build a sustainable and scalable business model for Fisk University. We have strengthened each of our major revenue streams, set fundraising records, grown enrollment, lowered the discount rate, improved the academic quality, strengthened our balance sheet and this SACS decision is a wonderful acknowledgement of Fisk's outstanding progress."

Fisk University was also granted permission to operate its first off campus location in Clarksville, TN. **Fisk** became the **first** historically **black college** to gain **accreditation** by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1930.

Fisk Forever!

Vann R. Newkirk, Sr., Ph.D.
Interim President



Kevin D. Rome, Sr. Departs as President of Fisk University

Fisk University has ended its relationship with Dr. Kevin D. Rome, Sr. The University thanks Dr. Rome for his service as president of Fisk and wishes the very best to him and his family. Dr. Vann Newkirk will serve as Interim President. "Fisk is positioned for a wonderful future and we look forward to the years ahead," said Frank L. Sims, Chair, Fisk University Board of Trustees.



WFAA 2020-2021 Officers

Samuel L. Williams, Jr. '68
President

Will J. Carter '57
Vice-President, Membership

Catherine Hogan '83
Vice-President, Fundraising

Colvin E. Eason '80
Recording Secretary

Dr. Alfreda H. Payne '70
Corresponding Secretary

Dr. Raynese Fikes '94
Treasurer

Cheryl Robinson Eason '80
Financial Secretary

Christine D. Williams '81
Parliamentarian

Michelle R. Overstreet '95
Marketing Chair

Khristen Foster '98
Mentoring Program Chair

Ann Paytes '69
Fisk Fun Bunch DMV Chair

Deborah Curry '80
Eastern Region Chair

Janine Smith '84 & '87
GAAFU Chair

Betty Ritter Seltzer, PhD '83
WFAA Committee Chair -
DC HBCU Alumni Alliance

Visit us online at
wfaaonline.org
and fisk.edu!

Dearly Departed

Dwain Worsley '78

Goddess Kim Wilbert '82

Lawrence R. Cannady, MD '49

Robert B. Hunter, Sr. '56

Message from the President



Fisk Family,

Who would have thought that 2020 would be a year

of expected and unexpected circumstances.

We knew that the Presidential and other elections were coming up in November and I expect most of us will be voting. It is imperative that we vote and also get the word out to our family members and friends to vote in November. The WFAA is part of a voter campaign sponsored by the HBCU Alliance and hopefully our participation in that program will reflect on an increased voter participation rate. We need you to help in any way you can.

Our club as well as our entire community has been impacted by the coronavirus and one day things will be somewhat normal and although we have not met in person, we have been meeting by online Zoom calls. I anticipate that we will be meeting at least for the near foreseeable future by Zoom calls and we need your participation to keep our success rate up in fundraising, paid membership and program activity. Please pay your dues. It is only \$25.00 and do so immediately. Our budget depends on dues paying members. Two hundred paid members provides us with \$5,000. We need fundraising to keep our programs in place. We cannot depend on virtual fundraising to make things happen.

This past June, we voted on a New Board of Directors and I believe that all of our Board members are willing to serve and

understand their role in keeping our programs in place. I want to thank all outgoing and past Board members for their service to the WFAA.

As most of you know the University has new Presidential leadership in place and we have not missed a beat. Enrollment is up, fundraising has improved, and great things are being said about Fisk. The new President of the GAAFU, Ms. Janine Smith has made tremendous strides with her positive organizational and management skills and is increasing national dues retention and a steady increase in the life membership program. As George Jefferson would say "we are moving on up."

In addition to our regular programs we have started a relationship with the Washington HBCU Alliance with our participation in their 5K run/walk which is scheduled for Saturday, July 10, 2021, at Freedom Plaza in D.C. and we have over 25 paid run/walkers for this event. Their HBCU Gala is tentatively scheduled at the National Portrait Gallery on September 24, 2021. Participation in these events supports our fundraising efforts and we need you to participate and attend. We also have established the WFAA Fun Bunch which presently meets by Zoom on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month. It is a lively group, game and discussion forum that normally would meet for adult beverages, but we now do it in the comfort of your own home. Remember get your dues in and we will see you at the next meeting.

Thanks,
Samuel L. Williams, Jr. '68

WFAA Meetings to be Held Virtually

Because of ongoing uncertainties, our monthly meetings will be conducted virtually. All meetings will be on Zoom until further notice at 4:00 pm on the following dates: 9/13, 10/4, 11/1, 12/6, 1/10, 2/7, 3/7, 4/4, 5/9, 6/6.



Fisk University Names Social Justice Institute After Late Congressman and Fisk Alumnus John R. Lewis



Fisk University announced that it will be naming its recently launched institute for social justice after the late Congressman and Fisk alumnus John R. Lewis. “Nothing could be more appropriate given the Congressman’s extraordinary impact on civil rights in this country and across the world,” said University Provost Vann Newkirk. Congressman Lewis

repeatedly expressed the importance of Nashville and Fisk in helping shape his mission of non-violence and the importance of getting in ‘good trouble’/‘necessary trouble’. Congressman Lewis was an inspiration to generations of Fisk students and with the John R. Lewis Institute

for Social Justice, Fisk will continue its leadership role in shaping the next era of change-makers. The John R. Lewis Institute for Social Justice is a continuation of the famous Fisk Race Relations Institute, which shaped so many of the conversations and policies during the 1960s and 70s. The John R.

Lewis Institute will include a master’s program in social justice, several certificate programs as well as various undergraduate projects, research, and forums. “Congressman John R. Lewis embodied the very best of humanity – his kindness, perseverance and unwavering commitment to fighting for those in need set an example for all the young people who are looking to create a better world,” said Fisk President Kevin D. Rome.

Meet Interim Fisk University President Dr. Vann Newkirk

The Board of Trustees of Fisk University has named Dr. Vann Newkirk Sr. as Interim President. Dr. Newkirk received his doctorate in history from Howard University and has been a proven leader in higher education for more than 20 years. Dr. Newkirk served as Provost for three years at Elizabeth City State University before joining the Fisk team as Provost in 2018. Dr. Newkirk has held numerous senior administrative and academic positions throughout his outstanding career. His expertise in accreditation matters and programmatic development is nationally recognized, and he has established himself as a leader in the education technology space.



Dr. Newkirk has substantial experience managing budgets, overseeing major grants, supervising enrollment management, and spearheading the research. In addition to his administrative accomplishments, Dr. Newkirk is a published scholar and recipient of the Willie Parker Award. Since he arrived at Fisk, Dr. Newkirk has not only launched several highly successful new programs including bioinformatics, data science, and social justice, he has also been instrumental in the University’s accreditation process. According to Board Chair Frank Sims, Fisk has benefitted greatly from Dr. Newkirk’s leadership and we are confident he will lead the University to new heights in the coming years.

I am honored by this opportunity and look forward to the days ahead, said Dr. Newkirk. I am excited about the existing momentum and Fisk is poised for a great future. According to Dr. Newkirk, Fisk has a critical role to play both in Nashville and across the country. Our students are excellent, our faculty outstanding, our board insightful, our alumni/supporters invigorated, our finances sound and our partnerships inspiring, concluded Dr. Newkirk.

WFAA Presents Virtual FAFSA Workshop



THE WASHINGTON FISK ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

A VIRTUAL FAFSA WORKSHOP
FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2020 10:30AM



Our presenter is **T. Benee' Edwards**,
Grants Management & Manager,
Maryland Higher Education Commission

Follow FISK @fiskuniversity



WFAAONLINE.ORG

FISK.EDU

Free and open to the public. Join us on Zoom!
ZOOM INFO TBA

For more information, contact Deborah Curry,
WFAA Recruitment Chair at dfmcurry@netscape.net.



Become a GAAFU Life Member



Please consider becoming a life member of the General Alumni Association of Fisk University, Inc. (GAAFU). You will receive a handsome plaque at the annual reunion weekend Gala Banquet following your payment in full, or if you cannot attend, the plaque will be mailed to you. The cost of life membership is \$750, which may be paid in full or in installments. Five installments of \$150 each, or two installments of \$375 each are the installment choices to select from. In order to receive the plaque at the Gala Banquet full payment should be made by the middle of April, prior to the Banquet. Benefits accruing to being a life member include a 20% discount on purchases in the University bookstore and discounts on items sold by the GAAFU. ●