



**Louisiana Tech University**  
**DAVISON ATHLETICS COMPLEX**  
1524 W. Ruston, LA 71272, USA

**Theme: Dream. Grow. Flourish.**  
*Creating a sustainable plan for community development and growth by investing in our Health, Education, and Society*

**DATE: OCTOBER 27, 2022**

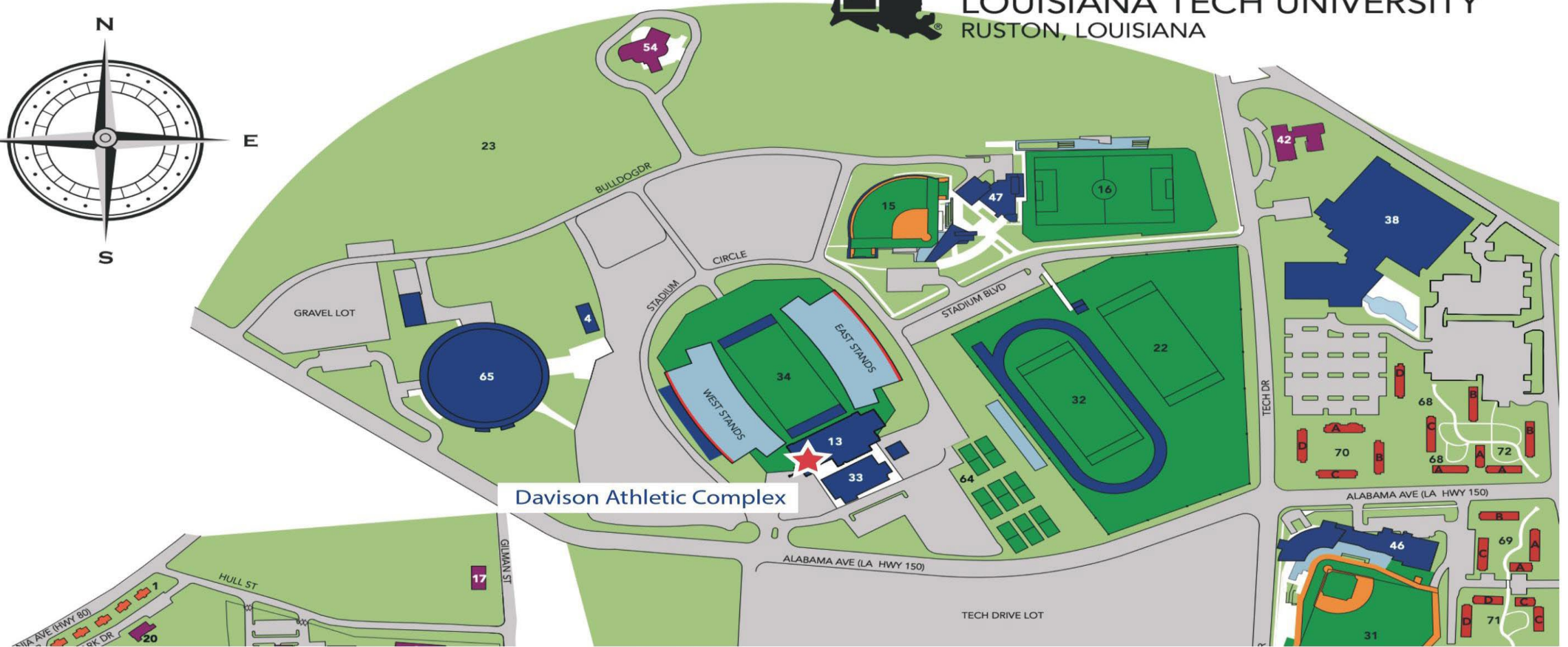
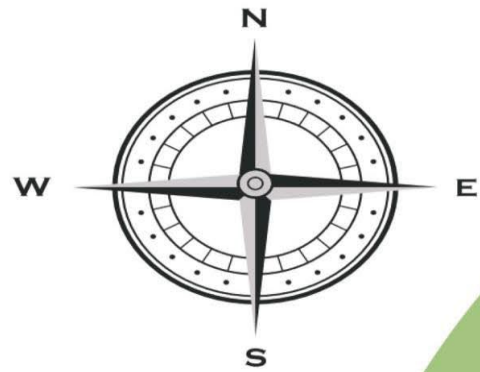
**TIME: 9am-4:30pm**

Co-Hosted By:





LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY  
RUSTON, LOUISIANA



Davison Athletic Complex

# Let Us Dream Annual Conference

The Let Us Dream Conference was established to create a better networking and collaboration among volunteers, potential volunteers, philanthropists, and community organisations; thereby empowering them in their diverse community improvement programs.

The conference also introduces different community service possibilities and intervention models among younger and older generations to promote their volunteerism.

The conference is committed to bringing together the knowledge from both researchers and practitioners on the same platform to synergise their impact on community improvement initiatives.

## AGENDA

FIFTH ANNUAL LET US DREAM CONFERENCE  
OCTOBER 27, 2022

9:00 a.m. - Registration and Vendor Networking

9:30 a.m. - Welcome: Dr. Dickie Crawford

9:35: a.m. - Welcome: Father Lijo Thomas  
Welcome: Pauline Leonard

9:40 a.m.- Education Panel

10:40 a.m. - Keynote Speaker- Mayor Ellis

10:55 a.m. - Short Break

11:00 a.m.- Social Panel

Noon - Lunch Break

1:00 p.m.- Health Panel

2:00 p.m. - Keynote Speaker-Dr. Noflin, Jr

2:15 p.m. - Unsung Heroes

3:00-3:15 p.m.- Short Break

3:15 p.m. - Student Panel

4:15 p.m. - Closing Video: President Rick Gallot, GSU

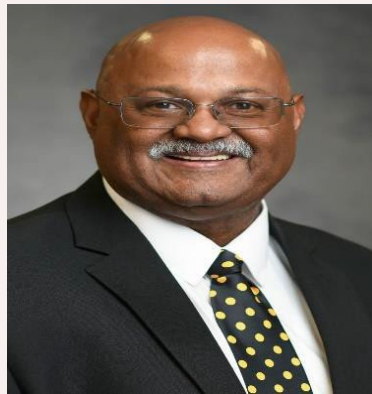
4:25 p.m.- Acknowledgments- Lisa Elam

# Keynote Speakers



**Mayor  
Friday Ellis**

Mayor Friday Ellis was born in rural Rayville, Louisiana. Friday decided to settle in Monroe and that's where he met his wife, Ashley. They married in 2001 and like many Americans, their lives were greatly impacted by the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Just two months later, Friday enlisted in the United States Marine Corps to serve his country in its time of need. Mayor Ellis is an advocate of entrepreneurship and business growth. He encourages community and civic development and involvement at local and state levels. In 2019, he was named Free Enterprise Champion by the Louisiana Business and Industry.



**Dr. George  
Noflin**

Dr. George Noflin, Jr., is a native of Jackson, Louisiana. Over the past thirty-plus years, Dr. Noflin has become a knowledgeable administrator who is diligent, conscientious, and hard-working. He has served in the United States Marine Corps for a number of years where he received the United States Marine Corps Meritorious Award while serving his country. Dr. Noflin has held the following positions: Teacher, Coach, Athletic Director, Assistant Principal, Director of an Alternative School, Principal, Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent of School in Morehouse Parish, LA, Assistant Professor at La Tech University, and now Associate Professor at Grambling State University and Director of the Call Me MiSTER Program.

# Social Panel



**Will  
Dearmon**

Moderator

Will Dearmon earned his bachelor's degree in Political Science at Louisiana Tech in 2013 and his master's degree in Public Service and Administration with a Higher Education concentration at Texas A&M University in 2016. He came back to Ruston in March 2022 as President and CEO of the Ruston-Lincoln Chamber of Commerce.



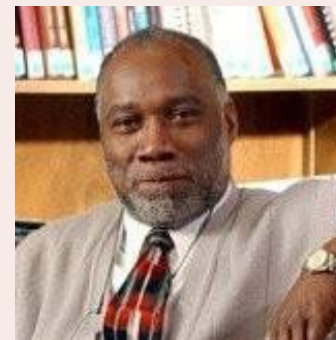
**Kristopher  
Kelley**

Kristopher Kelley serves as the Executive Director for the West Monroe-West Ouachita Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Assistant Manager for Columbia, and is a small business owner. He is a local naturalist entrepreneur with over two decades of experience as a non-profit consultant, biology instructor, and environmental chemist. Kelley has worked not only for business development and promotional initiatives with local and regional government organizations; but also, with US Fish and Wildlife, US Army Corps of Engineers, USDA, and the just to name a few.



**Janet  
Durden**

Janet Durden has been president of the United Way of Northeast Louisiana since January 1985.



**Dr.  
Reginald Owens**

Dr. Reginald Owens is the retired chair of the Department of Journalism at Louisiana Tech University. He was the inaugural holder of the F. Jay Taylor Endowed Chair of Journalism, served as director of the former Tech news bureau, and was associate director of university communication.

At Tech in the late 1960s, he was one of the founders of the university's first African American student organization, Soul Tech, and he served as its first president. He also initiated the application and organized interest meetings to bring to Tech the first black Greek organization, Alpha Phi Alpha. Owens was a reporter and columnist for *The Tech Talk* student newspaper.

# Education Panel



**Dr. Cheyrl  
Mansfield-  
Ensley**

## Moderator

Dr. Cheyrl Mansfield Ensley currently serves as an Associate Professor and the Interim Head of the Departments of Curriculum and Instruction and Developmental and Higher Education Studies at her alma mater – Grambling State University. She received her master's from Louisiana Tech and earned her doctorate from Texas A&M Commerce. Ensley is an advocate for providing access and opportunity for all students with over 30 years of experience in education. She is an experienced educator, dedicated to leveling the playing field for all children. Prior to joining the GRAMFAM in August 2018, Ensley had previous experience teaching at the college level and served in the PreK-12 setting as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, director, executive director, and assistant superintendent.



**Dr. Patsy A.  
Hughey**

Dr. Patsy A Hughey began her career at Louisiana Tech University in March 2018. Before transitioning to higher education, she has 29 years of experience working in K-12 public school education. She has been a teacher, principal, central office administrator, district school superintendent, and educational consultant. Hughey graduated from Southern Arkansas University with a bachelor's degree in Elementary and Early Childhood Education and a master's degree in School Administration. She obtained an Educational Specialist degree and was a member of the first cohort group to graduate from Arkansas Tech University, Russellville, Arkansas, with an Educational Doctorate in School Leadership.



**Lanecia  
Deshund  
Clinton**

Lanecia Deshund Clinton, a native of Ruston, is the oldest of six children. She earned her bachelor's degree in criminal justice in 2018 and is currently pursuing her master's degree in education at Grambling State University. Clinton is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated and serves as a second-grade teacher at Lincoln Preparatory School.



**Dr. George  
Noflin**

Dr. George Noflin Jr. is a native of Jackson. He and his wife Valerie are the proud parents of five children. Over the past 30 years, Noflin has become a knowledgeable administrator who is diligent, conscientious, and hard working. He served in the United States Marine Corps for a number of years where he received the United States Marine Corps Meritorious Award while serving his country. Noflin has been a teacher, coach, athletic director, assistant principal, director of an alternative school, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent of schools in Morehouse Parish. He has also served as Assistant Professor at Louisiana Tech University and Associate Professor at Grambling State University. He is currently the Director of the Call Me MISTER Program.



**Dustin  
Whitlock**

Dustin S. Whitlock, Ed.D. is an Assistant Professor at Louisiana Tech University. He completed his doctorate from Johns Hopkins University with an emphasis in 21st Century Learning, as well as a MA in Teaching and MA in Counseling and Guidance from Louisiana Tech University. His research interests include 21st century learning, learning science, educator preparation, teacher professional development, and teacher efficacy. In his role as an assistant professor, Dustin teaches undergraduate courses in Learning and Development and Secondary Teaching Methods. He also teaches courses within the MA Education, Curriculum and Instruction program.

## Brenda Dupree



In her nomination, Brenda Dupree is described as one of the hidden treasures of North Central Louisiana. An active member of her church, sorority, and the NAACP, she leads the charge in several parishes for completing and providing accurate information for census reports. She understands the importance of an informed voter and therefore during each cycle, she leads the efforts to organize candidate forums. At over 70 years of age, she has more than tripled her load this election season and will stop whatever she is doing if someone has a question about voting or registration. Brenda wants to be sure that everyone understands their rights and knows exactly who to contact in their district regarding voting. Well known for her kindness, organization skills, relationship building and selflessness, she lives the motto “Intelligence is the torch of wisdom.” Her diligence has inspired our youth to become more active and she guides community leaders on the best ways to merge their generational gaps by developing programming or simply serving as a mentor. A force of nature, Brenda Dupree lives a life committed to advocacy and service for those around her



## Bobby Mounts



While you could start with the fact that valiantly Bobby Mounts served his country as a Marine, he is recognized today for how he has chosen to live his life as a civilian and businessman. Each year, PJ's Coffee hosts a contest that allows a veteran the opportunity to win a franchise. Upon the urging of his wife, Mounts entered and became the second franchise winner. He chose to open his business in Ruston but as he opened his doors, he made a commitment to make a difference through his work. Beyond his ongoing support for veterans and veteran causes, Mounts dedicates one day each month where a portion of his proceeds goes to support non-profits and various needs throughout the community. At his own expense, he advertises and promotes these efforts, welcomes representatives from the benefitting group, and hosts special events to bring awareness to the cause. Yet Mounts does this quietly and without fanfare because he wants no credit; instead, he prefers the spotlight shine on those he is serving. He operates with the purest servant's heart and with a desire to truly leave this world better than he found it through his steady, consistent gift. Whether mentoring college students or volunteering with 4-H, Mounts is a warrior with a sterling heart for service that represents "paying it forward" in the finest sense of the expression.

## Michelle Tarpley



When the unthinkable happened on April 25, 2019, Michelle Tarpley transformed into an angel for countless individuals throughout the community. As the sun came up the very next day, she became a tireless volunteer, checking on neighbors and senior citizens in her community where the F3 tornado had severely ravaged the area just two streets over from her home. Throughout the neighborhood, she consistently helped family after family with hot meals, water, and much needed supplies. But she wasn't finished. Even after the tornado recovery began to subside, she chose to continue her service, passing out homemade soup once a week during the winter months to shut-ins as well as those individuals who were sick during their wellness checks. Furthermore, Tarpley teaches diabetes awareness as a licensed life coach to help individuals become better informed about how to live with the disease and also volunteers with the TAPS program which provide comfort, care and resources to those grieving the death of a military loved one. A resident of Ruston, Tarpley is known as a true caregiver who never meets a stranger and lives her life daily with the goal of making someone else's life better.

## Jackie White



Jackie White works tirelessly for the community as director of the Lincoln Parish Health Hut where she strives daily to bring the very best health care to those who may be struggling with how to pay for their care. She has established school-based health care programs throughout the Lincoln Parish School District, advocating for telemedicine protocols that will help keep students from having to leave school and their instructional time. White also gives of her time to the students of Louisiana Tech University, allowing them to shadow her and her staff. White readily engages with community partners as well as the university to improve the health of those who live throughout the parish. She has been recognized as an outstanding volunteer in various capacities, honored for her advocacy around better health care for all. However, she is quick to allow others to have the spotlight, demurely declining opportunities so that others can have their moment to shine. Jackie White is a role model and inspiration to many, especially young women who want to have careers in medicine while also having a family and living a life of purpose while practicing selflessness through service.

## Adarian Williams



While a student at Grambling State University, Adarian Williams distinguished himself through his active role in various organizations before going on to serve in various capacities in Washington DC, including as an Organizing Fellow for the Campaign of President Joe Biden. He later worked in the office of former Congressman Cedric Richmond and went on to work as the Senior Manager of Congressional Relations for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Inc. During summer 2020, Williams led an effort that brought together elected officials, law enforcement officers, religious leaders, and most importantly, families, students and citizens in a Week of Action to discuss the racial unrest across our country and take united action in growing a thriving community for future generations. Shortly after that effort, he hosted and engaged more than 4,000 citizens in a virtual candidate forum for Louisiana's Fifth Congressional District. He currently serves as the Deputy Chief of Staff in the office of GSU President Rick Gallot where his commitment to service is evident. Williams is said to possess resilience, integrity and the ability to collaborate with others to achieve a shared vision while remaining fully committed to giving back to this community he calls home.

# Health Pannel



**Kendra  
McMurry**

Moderator - Kendra D. McMurry, MSN, RN is an Assistant Professor for the School of Nursing at Grambling State University. She is a Ruston native and 2009 graduate from Grambling State University with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and received her MSN from Walden University. McMurry's research interests consist of strategies to improve health literacy in minority communities, de-stigmatization of mental illness, and journaling as a form of self-care to improve mental health. McMurry has a passion for educating, empowering, and encouraging others to strive for their greatest potential.



**Tori  
Davis**

Moderator-Tori Davis serves as the Chief Communications Officer for Green Clinic Health System in Ruston, Louisiana. Tori is a Shreveport native who received her bachelor's degree in mass communication from Louisiana State University and a master's degree in business administration from Louisiana Tech University. Prior to joining Green Clinic, Tori gained experience in marketing, public relations, social media, and strategic planning while working in the travel and tourism industry. Tori is passionate about the Ruston community and doing her part to ensure the best quality of life for residents and students who call the area home.



**Becky  
Stutzman**

Becky Stutzman, LCSW-BACS, C-SSWS, has been a social worker for 25+ years and she has worked in the school setting from over 22 of those 25 years. She graduated from McNeese State University with her BA degree in sociology and Louisiana State University with her Master's degree in Social Work. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Board Approved Clinical Supervisor, and Nationally Certified School Social Work Specialist. Becky is currently the Coordinator of Pupil Appraisal Services and Mental Health Services for Lincoln Parish School Board in Ruston, Louisiana. She has worked for Lincoln Parish Schools since 2005.



**Jerrilene  
Washington**

Jerrilene Washington, Ed.D., is Executive Director, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – Ruston, Louisiana, Chapter. NAMI Ruston is a 36-year-old, nonprofit mental health organization, which serves communities in North and Central Louisiana. Dr. Washington serves as a volunteer columnist for the Ruston Daily Leader with a bi-monthly column focusing on mental health issues. She retired after 44 years of service in education in school systems and universities in North and South Louisiana, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

# Health Pannel



**Spencer  
Stelly**

Spencer is a third-year student majoring in Chemistry and minoring in Spanish and will be graduating in the Spring to continue his studies in Veterinary Medicine School. Spencer currently serves as the President of the Peer Leadership Council (PLC) at Louisiana Tech University's Counseling Services, and is involved in other organizations such as Student Recruiters, Union Board, American Chemical Society, Pre-Veterinary Medicine Club, College of Engineering and Science Ambassadors, Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine Alliance through Equity and Diversity, and 3 research groups.



**Calvin  
Williams**

Calvin C. Williams is a Licensed Professional Counselor with over 25 years of experience. He has a private mental health practice in Monroe, LA and provides counseling to patients of The Health Hut, a mobile healthcare unit providing services to Lincoln Parish residents. He served as a clinical consultant in the healthcare industry, Director of an Intensive Outpatient Chemical Dependency Program, and provided direct care for inpatient and outpatient psychiatric programs serving adolescents, adults and geriatric patients. Calvin was presented with a LCA Presidential Award for recognition of his exemplary service to the counseling profession and the Louisiana Counseling Association



**Baylee Gray**

Baylee Gray is the ER Director at Northern Louisiana Medical Center in Ruston, Louisiana. She is originally from Mansfield, Texas and received her BS in biology from Northwestern State University and BSN from Texas Christian University. Following a nursing travel assignment, she fell in love with the Ruston community and what it has to offer. Her goal is to continue to assist in giving quality care to the city of Ruston and surrounding communities.



**David Wells**

David Wells is the Director of Emergency Medical Services for the Ruston Fire Department. He received his degree in Fire Science from Columbia Southern University and holds multiple certifications including International Critical Incident Stress Foundation: Assisting Individuals in Crisis and International Critical Incident Stress Foundation: Group Crisis Intervention. He serves as a board member for the Louisiana Emergency Response Network Region 8 and is chairman of the Louisiana Delta Community College Paramedic Education Board



**Dr. Ashley  
Owen**

Dr. Ashley Owen is a National Board Certified Counselor, Licensed Professional Counselor-Supervisor, and a QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Instructor. In 2009, Owen received her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Louisiana Tech University. She returned to Louisiana Tech University to receive a Master of Counseling and Guidance in 2013, and completed her PhD in Marriage and Family Therapy at the University of Louisiana Monroe in 2021. Owen's clinical interests include anxiety disorders, suicidal ideation, self-harm, disordered eating, and personal growth and development. Her research interest are issues in suicidal bereavement specific to existential regret, sense-making, meaning-making, relational aspects, and the impact of physical exercise on mental health. In her free time, Owen can often be found cheering on the Bulldogs and Lady Techsters, spending time with family, and volunteering



**Meleah Pea**

Meleah Pea is a native of the Strawberry City, Ponchatoula, and graduated from Ponchatoula High School in 2019. In high school, she was involved in an array of organizations and sports that influenced her desire to be involved. Pea is now a senior Biology major and psychology minor that continues to serve her campus and community. Pea serves in various positions on campus, such as the President of the Alpha Theta Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, President of the President's Student Leadership Initiative, GRAMBassador, Health Equity Intern for ASPHN, amongst many other things. Off-campus, Pea serves her country as a Munition Systems Reservist in the United States Air Force and her community as a sickle cell disease awareness advocate providing informational events and scholarships for students and citizens. Pea enjoys shopping, reading, and playing sports outside of school. After graduation, Pea is looking to attend medical school to become a physician and work in underserved populations.

Moderator: Allie Cowan  
Elizabeth McKinney-LaTech  
Deepthi Chappidi-LaTech  
Katrice McMullen- GSU  
Jakyrannee Phillips-GSU  
Sarah Pirece-GSU  
Abram Bender-LaTech  
Max Bryan-LaTech



# Founder

Dr. Fr. Lijo Thomas

Christ University, Bangalore, India

Lijo Thomas is currently serving with Christ University, Bangalore, India, heading the Office of International Affairs, the Student Welfare Office, the Center for Academic and Professional Support and the Department of Performing Arts, Music and Theatre as Director. He has been contributing his services as Associate Professor of the School of Social Sciences. He is also the Founder/Director of DREAMS: A community-university collaborative service-learning project established in the USA, Germany and India. He did his doctorate on the same project at the University of Louisiana, Monroe, USA. He is also the Founder/Director of Let Us Dream Community Conference which was established in 2017 to connect diverse community service initiatives, scholars, and post-secondary students for further empowering local communities for sustainable impact and improvement.



## 2022 Conference Core Team

### **Founder:**

Father Lijo Thomas

### **Conference Core Leadership Team:**

Dr. Pauline Leonard

Dr. Suzanne Mayo

Conference chairs

### **University Chair:**

Lisa Elam, Louisiana Tech University

### **Community Chair:**

Will Dearmon, Ruston-Lincoln Chamber

### **Co-Chair:**

Dr. Natalie Yates

## SUBCOMMITTEES

- Keynote speaker – Cathi Cox-Boniol and Lindsey Murry
- Media and Marketing – Tonya Oaks Smith
- Technology – Darryl Eddy, Will Lancaster, and Chris Womack, Louisiana Tech
- Education – Dr. Patsy A. Hughey, Louisiana Tech; Dr. Cheryl Ensley, GSU
- Social – Will Dearmon, Lincoln-Ruston Chamber of Commerce
- Health – Dr. Donna Hood, Louisiana Tech; Dr. Debra Craighead, ULM; Dr. Kendra McMurry, GSU; Dr. Dong Xie, Louisiana Tech; David Wells, City of Ruston EMS; Lori Keen, Green Clinic; Renee Skipper, Lincoln Parish Schools; Tori Davis, Green Clinic
- Student – Wes Cavin, Louisiana Tech; Ja'Deric Tolbert, GSU; Allie Cowan, Louisiana Tech University
- Unsung Heroes – Yanise Days, GSU; Cathi Cox-Boniol, Louisiana Tech; Terry Matthews, GSU; Dr. Suzanne Mayo, GSU; Dr. Elise Reed, GSU; Dr. Natalie Yates, GSU; Tom Boniol; Dr. Anissa Horne, ULM; Adrienne Webber – GSU
- Registration – Dr. Lindsey Keith-Vincent and Martha Stevens

**Thank you!!**

On behalf of the Planning Committee, panelists and volunteers we would like to thank you for being attending the Let Us Dream Conference and hope that something that was said or done resonated with you. We hope that you enjoyed and that you will tell a friend. See you, next year

## Student Volunteers (In addition to Panel)

# Many Thanks!

### Opening Remarks:

Jordan Smith, Miss Louisiana Tech

### Additional Student Volunteers:

Chatian Banks, Psychology-GSU

Brooke Edmonston-LaTech

Isaih Farrell, Elementary Education-GSU

LaToya Givens, Family and Consumer Sciences-GSU

Stefon Jackson, Mass Communications-GSU

Juamya Marion, Family and Consumer Sciences-GSU

Joseph Pappion, Family and Consumer Sciences-GSU

Mierra Simmons, Family and Consumer Sciences-GSU

Ja'Derick Talbert, Elementary Education-GSU

Thyme Turner, Family and Consumer Sciences-GSU