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Research Assistant
Professor - Physics



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Amaya Rearden
Student



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DIVERSITY IN STEM

CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING/PRESERVING BLACK HISTORY


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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

9 Black History Month Ideas to Implement ASAP



Credit: Daniel Lee

By S. Mitra Kalita • February 7, 2023 7:30 AM EST

We're now a week into Black History Month. In the newer, welcomingly woke world order, the "mainstreaming" of celebration months and holidays like Juneteenth, Day of the Dead, and Diwali can be fraught with people (often unintentionally) doing or saying the wrong thing.

For ideas on how to best commemorate this month, I turned to a predominantly Black group of diversity, inclusion and equity experts, human resources leaders, marketing managers, program planners, and other professionals.

There are quotes besides "I have a dream."

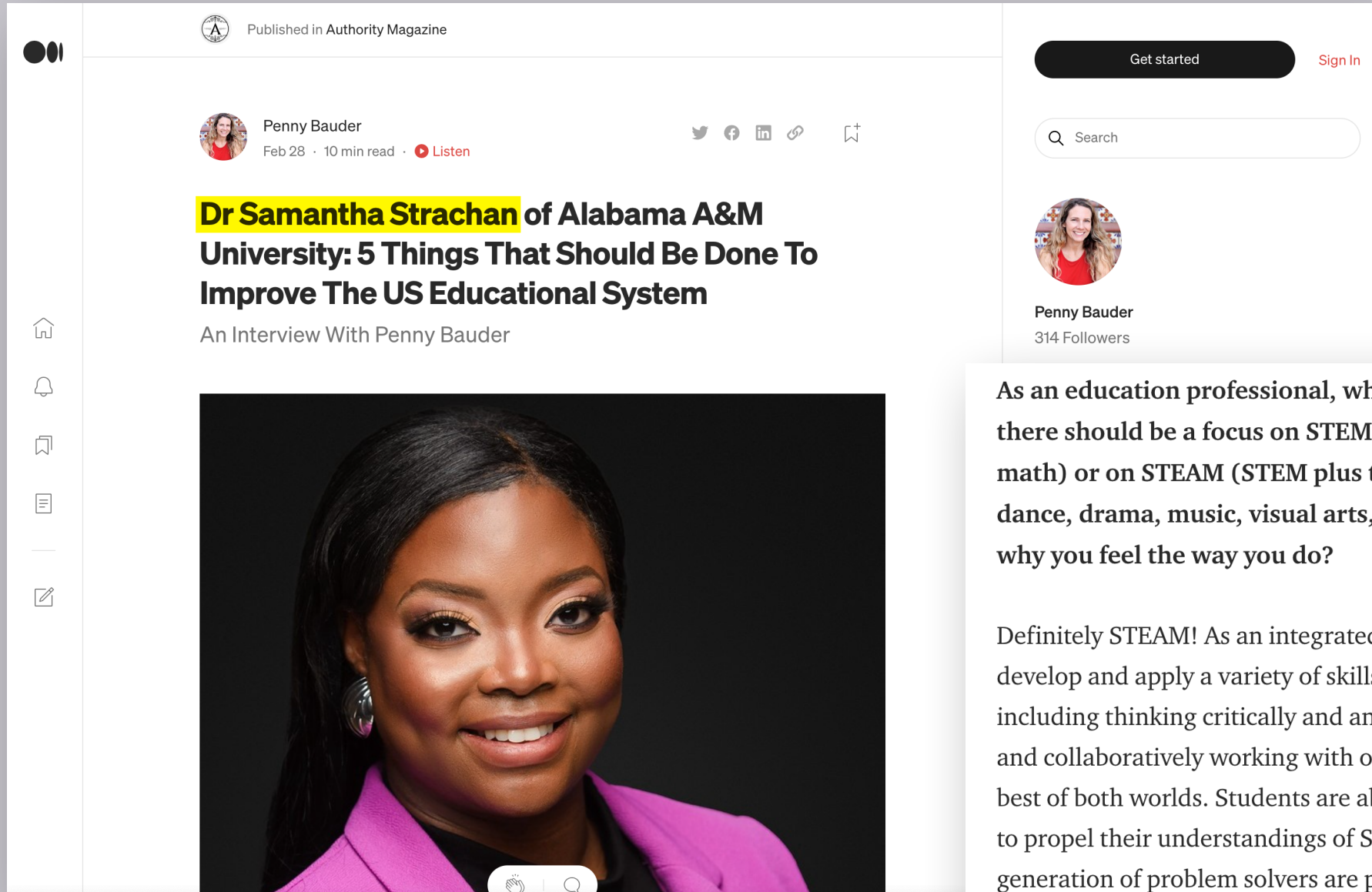
Especially because many companies kick off their Black history commemorations with the celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day a few weeks earlier, there can feel an overdependence on King and his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

"There are so many King quotes that companies could pull out of the darkness and bring into a new light great insights by simply exposing them," says Jerome Saintjones, director of marketing and public relations for Alabama A&M University, a historically Black public university. And, for that matter, so many quotes from other Black leaders and thinkers. For example, he says, "Think of the sheer beauty of Zora Neale Hurston that thousands of businesses could 'rediscover' by taking the time to do a deeper dive."

Saintjones shares a few of what he calls "Zora pearls":

- "Bitterness is the coward's revenge on the world for having been hurt."
- "There are years that ask questions and years that answer."
- "If you are silent about your pain, they'll kill you and say you enjoyed it."

Another King quote worth reflecting upon and sharing with employees comes from his Letter from a Birmingham Jail:



The screenshot shows a Medium article page. At the top left, there is a logo and the text "Published in Authority Magazine". Below this, the author's name "Penny Bauder" is displayed with a small profile picture, the date "Feb 28", a "10 min read" indicator, and a "Listen" button. To the right of the author information are social media sharing icons for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and a link icon. The main title of the article is "Dr Samantha Strachan of Alabama A&M University: 5 Things That Should Be Done To Improve The US Educational System", with "Dr Samantha Strachan" highlighted in yellow. Below the title is the subtitle "An Interview With Penny Bauder". A large portrait of Dr. Samantha Strachan is featured below the subtitle. On the right side of the article, there is a "Get started" button, a "Sign In" link, a search bar, and a profile card for Penny Bauder with a circular profile picture and the text "Penny Bauder 314 Followers". A vertical sidebar on the left contains navigation icons for home, notifications, bookmarks, a list, a horizontal line, and a draft icon.

As an education professional, where do you stand in the debate whether there should be a focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) or on STEAM (STEM plus the arts like humanities, language arts, dance, drama, music, visual arts, design and new media)? Can you explain why you feel the way you do?

Definitely STEAM! As an integrated approach, STEAM allows students to develop and apply a variety of skills that are important for today's workforce, including thinking critically and analytically, solving problems in unique ways, and collaboratively working with others to achieve common goals. It is really the best of both worlds. Students are able to tap into various skill sets and use those to propel their understandings of STEM content. It is important that the next generation of problem solvers are provided with the necessary tools to be ready for tomorrow's challenges.

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Wealth Living

Elite Colleges Lose Diversity ‘Shortcut’ After Affirmative Action Ruling

An end to admissions that consider race leaves schools looking for workarounds to ensure a diverse student body.

By [Francesca Maglione](#)
June 29, 2023 at 2:43 PM EDT
Updated on June 29, 2023 at 3:37 PM EDT

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Duke University is expanding aid to students from North and South Carolina. Princeton is consulting its lawyers. And at historically Black colleges, officials are watching for an influx of students.

Across the halls of America's selective colleges and universities, administrators are dusting off contingency plans after the US Supreme Court effectively barred race as a factor in admissions. In arguing affirmative action programs violate the Constitution's equal protection clause, the justices removed a longstanding method for institutions to bolster campus diversity.

Considering race in admissions, a matter brought before the Supreme Court in 1978 and then again in 2003, is just one way colleges can ensure a range of backgrounds in their classrooms. Focusing on economic status is another approach, but its effectiveness in ensuring diversity has been questioned. Some justices have pointed to alternatives: Neil Gorsuch, in hearing arguments in October, suggested eliminating the “legacy” preferences given to athletes and the children of alumni and big-money donors. But colleges are so far mostly loath to take that option.

The “legacy” preferences singled out by Gorsuch have proved sticky. So far, only a few colleges have eliminated the practice of admitting such students, including Johns Hopkins and Amherst, both of which have multibillion-dollar endowments. It could be a tougher sell at smaller, less-wealthy schools.

Meanwhile, HBCUs have an opportunity to recruit and enroll higher achieving Black students who might not have previously considered attending such a school, **Braque Talley, vice president for student affairs at Alabama A&M University**, said before the decision.

“This decision will be another feather in HBCU's hats,” he said.

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Race on Campus

Engage in higher ed's conversations about racial equity and inclusion. Delivered on Tuesdays. To read this newsletter as soon as it sends, sign up to receive it in your email inbox.

APRIL 19, 2022

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From: Oyin Adedoyin

Subject: Race on Campus: What Colleges Are Doing About the Shortage of Black Teachers

Welcome to Race on Campus. Research has shown that Black students who have one Black teacher by third grade are more likely to graduate high school and enroll in college. But Black teachers — especially Black men — are in short supply. Our Oyin Adedoyin explains what colleges are doing in response.

“Colleges and universities have significant roles in helping to train and prepare diverse teacher candidates,” says **Samantha Strachan, director for Alabama A&M University’s M.A.L.E. Initiative Scholarship program**. Her program is one of a growing number of efforts by colleges to recruit more Black men into the teaching profession — by giving them access to an education degree.



Latest News ▸ [As \\$2 Trillion Spending Package Inches Closer To Biden's Desk, Here's What It Could Mean For HBCUs](#)

HBCU By Mirtha Donastorg December 7, 2021

As \$2 Trillion Spending Package Inches Closer To Biden's Desk, Here's What It Could Mean For HBCUs



“Many of our schools are 150 years old and we have buildings that are very, very old that need major renovations and repairs, and/or to be demolished and rebuilt,” **Daniel Wims**, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research at Alabama A&M, told *The Plug*.

“Federal funding is important to all institutions, however, due to historic funding inequities it has become critical for HBCUs,” **Andrew Scott**, interim director of Research, Innovation, Science, and Engineering at Alabama A&M University, told *The Plug*. “Increased federal funding when complemented with private and corporate contributions provide tremendous support for HBCUs which have experienced inconsistent state funding.”



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*"What I've done is to give students not aspirational talk but guarantees. This is your pathway. Follow this path. Guaranteed outcomes."
"It's our job to help produce and provide minority credential. Graduates that can fill those roles and support the growth and opportunities of the city."*



In The Margins



EP 65 Matching Aspiration With Expectation with Alabama A&M University President, **Dr. Daniel Wims**



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EP 65 Matching Aspiration With Expectation with Alabama A&M University President, Dr. Daniel Wims

  IN THE MARGINS
EP 65 Matching Aspiration With Expectation with Alabama A&M University President, Dr. Daniel Wims

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Feb 24, 2022

In this episode of *In The Margins*, the new president of Alabama A&M University, Dr. Daniel Wims, sits down with your host David Pluviose to discuss what drives his approach to higher education as well as his model for the future of Alabama A&M. Tune in as he shares his vision to enhance STEM programs and provide students a first-class experience while building a faculty committed to the cause, mission, and historical trajectory of the institution. Providing the sustainable leadership necessary to all HBCUs, listen in as Dr. Daniel Wims invests in making Alabama A&M a global brand.

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STEM

Alabama A&M Launches Effort to Combat Racial STEM Teacher Gap

Jon Edelman
Apr 6, 2023

[Experts believe](#) that without a strong STEM workforce, America could lose its position as the world's preeminent power. However, America is facing a STEM labor shortage, and part of the reason is racial. African Americans are [underrepresented in STEM jobs](#), and [Black students leave STEM majors at nearly double the rate of whites](#). The problem has roots at the K-12 level: while [15% of public school students are Black](#), [only 7% of the STEM teacher population is](#).

On Wednesday, Alabama A&M University, the largest HBCU in the state, launched an effort to tackle the problem: AAMUTeach, a program allowing STEM majors to get a secondary school teaching certification while earning a bachelor's, without any additional time or cost.



Dr. Vernessa Edwards, an assistant professor of physics at Alabama A&M and a co-director of AAMUTeach

Nevertheless, UTeach is a natural partner for HBCUs. Although HBCUs make up just 3% of colleges in the US, they produce nearly a quarter of Black students with STEM bachelor's degrees and a quarter of Black students with bachelor's degrees in education. According to **Dr. Vernessa Edwards**, an assistant professor of physics at Alabama A&M and STEM co-director of AAMUTeach, Alabama A&M produces the most Black STEM majors in the state, with a current total of 1,200.

AAMUTeach also aims to offer supports that will help students finish the program and stay in the teaching profession after graduation.

"Because the numbers are low, our education students feel as if they're trying to overcome mountains by themselves," said **Dr. Nathan Blom**, assistant professor of secondary education at Alabama A&M and the education co-director of AAMUTeach. "UTeach is going to give them a support network so they know they're not alone."

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How to Address the Dearth in Black Male Teachers

Arrman Kyaw
Apr 27, 2023



Dr. Samantha L. Strachan said she wants to figure out why fewer than 2% of all teachers in the U.S. are African American men and what can be done to improve that number.

“While we know that they bring value to the classroom, they’re very much absent in the classroom as educators, as teachers,” said Strachan, acting chair of the Department of Teacher Education & Leadership at Alabama A&M University.

“Being at the largest HBCU in Alabama, I had the experience of training quite a bit of exceptional male teachers who would go on to do great things in the schools,” Strachan said. “I wanted to know how we could get more into schools, but I also wanted to know what was keeping them out, why they’ve decided not to continue if they started, and what do they perceive to be some of the challenges, issues, points of engagement for teacher education.”

Strachan has been focusing her scholarly work on this topic for almost as long as she has been at Alabama A&M, 8-9 years, she said. Her research focuses on the experiences of African American men on the teacher education pathway, such as their day-to-day lives while training, their feelings and perspectives, and their motivations in wanting to teach.



Dr. Samantha L. Strachan



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AAMU's STEM boon carves career paths for HBCU students

Students in AAMU's college of engineering are working with Apple to develop computer chip prototypes with guidance from Apple representatives who frequent the campus.

By *Alcino Donadel* March 1, 2023

The largest HBCU in Alabama is no novice to adversity. Alabama A&M University and HBCUs at large are some of the most [underfunded state universities](#) in the nation, fighting year after year for supplemental grants, scholarships and business partnerships to keep their students competitive in the workforce.

[Jobs for the Future](#), a nonprofit focused on the American workforce and education systems, recently identified a skill and career gap among Black learners and job seekers. In [its recent action plan](#), the organization makes clear its belief that peer mentoring, paid work-based learning, and partnership development are keys to strengthening student success.

"Many education and workplace strategies for Black learners and workers only focus on credential attainment, but this is not enough to solve education and economic disparities," said JFF Vice President Michael Collins, leader of JFF's Center for Racial Economic Equity, in a press release. "Black Americans continue to have less systemic access to build and maintain professional social capital."

AAMU answered the call. Deloitte, Apple, IBM and Google are some of the big-name companies to partner with the school's STEM field, offering career and skill development training, research opportunities and program funding. As a result, students are leading cutting-edge research and getting hired.

"AAMU is known for pumping out the largest number of diverse minority STEM students, and these companies are recognizing the great work we're doing and they want to get involved," said AAMU computer science assistant professor [Dr. Ed Pearson](#).

The History of Student Activism at HBCUs



by Staff Writers

Published on September 30, 2021 · Updated on November 18, 2021



With Insight From Student **Amaya Rearden**



"As Black students, politics and social issues touch every facet of our lives, so everyone is involved in organizing at one point or another," said **Amaya Rearden**, a senior at Alabama A&M University.

Student activists at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have helped to change the course of history in the United States.



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Why Did You Choose an HBCU?



by Staff Writers

Published on October 14, 2021 · Updated on November 18, 2021



With so many options for college, students have to weigh a variety of factors when it comes time to choose a school. However, for many HBCU students, the reasons for attending their school extend beyond academic coursework and future career plans. For them, choosing an HBCU is a personal choice that is often connected to community and culture.

Nia Whitten is senior communications media major with a concentration in production from Decatur, Georgia. She serves as the 71st Miss Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University.

What has been the biggest lesson you learned since going to college?

There are so many! However, I'll say that I learned the importance of finding a way or making one. In the good and bad times, AAMU has shown me how a family and a community can come together to make it happen.



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College Guide for Black and African American Students

Black students face challenges at college. But with the right resources, they can thrive — find out more by reading this Black student college guide.



by Staff Writers

Published on February 3, 2022 - Updated on March 18, 2022



Dr. Pamela G. Arrington is associate vice president of faculty and programs and undergraduate studies at Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University. She has been employed as the associate dean of Troy University; director of instruction, planning, and special projects at the Alabama Commission on Higher Education; associate vice president and tenured professor at Coppin State University; senior staff specialist at the Maryland Higher Education Commission; tenured professor at Bowie State University, Maryland; college counselor and administrative faculty at Northern Virginia Community College; and director at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in Washington, D.C. She received her BA in psychology from Spelman College, graduating magna cum laude; MA in counseling from the University of Michigan; and Ph.D. in education and psychology from George Mason University. Dr. Arrington was inducted into Psi Chi, Pi Lambda Theta, and Phi Delta Kappa.

The screenshot shows a mobile interface for Authority Magazine. At the top, it says "Published in Authority Magazine". Below that is the Authority Magazine logo and name, with the date "Nov 15, 2021" and a "21 min read" indicator. The article title is "Preparing For The Future Of Work: **Dr Teresa Orok** of Alabama A&M University On The Top Five Trends To Watch In The Future Of Work". Below the title is the subtitle "An Interview with Phil La Duke". The main image shows Dr. Teresa Orok, a woman in a red jacket, standing in front of a large white sculpture of the letters "A&M" on a green lawn. The interface includes a navigation sidebar on the left with icons for home, notifications, bookmarks, and a search bar at the top right with a "Get started" button and a "Sign In" link.

What societal changes do you foresee as necessary to support the fundamental changes to work?

One major societal change involves the employer as a social safety net. Three critical components will evolve from this societal change, including increased compensation above minimum wage, increased parental leave, a strategic and integrated response to the rapidly evolving diversity and inclusion issues across organizations, and gender equality. The other major change will involve the federal government response to workforce changes and challenges. This will include needed changes in labor laws, labor regulations particularly as it pertains to employee rights and right to work state laws. Also, employees will have more flexibility in challenging workplace issues involving civil and human rights.



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Social Impact Heroes Helping Our Planet: Why & How Jeremy Whigham Of Alabama A&M University Is Helping To Change Our World

An Interview With Martita Mestey



Martita Mestey · Follow

Published in Authority Magazine · 10 min read · Aug 27

Take a critical look at where you choose to live, what you eat, how far you drive. These questions and decisions may seem mundane or innocuous but they have an impact. The suburban lifestyle is incompatible with sustainability and conservation. Full stop. Ecosystem harm is being done on our behalf, in the pursuit of our spending power.

...

As a part of my series about “individuals and organizations making an important social impact”, I had the pleasure of interviewing **Jeremy Whigham**.

Jeremy has spent his professional life in the woods as a forester, wildlife resources biologist, and camp ranger. His current role is Forester and FireDawgs Chief for Alabama A&M University where he supports the student fire fighting team (The FireDawgs), student learning, and several research projects. He holds a B.S. and Master’s of Forest Resources from the University of Georgia.