DIRECTOR’S NOTE:

Dr. Jennifer Wilder

With approximately 5 weeks left until the end of the semester you might be feeling the pressure to end on a successful note. Let these words affirm that you can make that a reality.

Did is a word of achievement,
Won’t is a word of retreat,
Might is a word of bereavement,
Can’t is a word of defeat,
Ought is a word of duty,
Try is a word each hour,
Will is a word of beauty,
Can is a word of power.

~ Ann Landers

Wishing you a successful end of the semester.

NEW RESIDENCE HALL IS ON THE WAY!
BY: NAJA HARDMON

Change is coming soon for the Florida A&M University (FAMU) campus. After announcing the closure on a $125 million federal loan to supply housing and facility upgrades for the campus, the official groundbreaking ceremony for a new FAMU residence hall was held on March 6 to commemorate the future development.

The ceremony took place in the “gravel lot” located on the corner of South Martin Luther King Blvd. and Osceola Street. The lot was filled with members of the Board of Trustees, a few student leaders, enthusiastic supporters in attendance, and featured President Dr. Larry Robinson.

“I think it’s a wonderful thing and a great opportunity for us to help us make our residence hall facilities competitive with other campuses,” said Director of University Housing, Dr. Jennifer Wilder.

The future residence hall-complex will include two four-story “H” shaped buildings with each wing featuring 350 double-occupancy bedrooms as well as shared bathrooms. The complex will also include a 10,000 square-foot dining hall to accommodate students.
“I am grateful for the support of elected officials, colleagues at the Department of Education, the FAMU community and all stakeholders who helped pave the way for the university to provide students with state-of-the-art living and learning spaces,” president Robinson said in a feature story by Byron Dobson for the Tallahassee Democrat. “The university has experienced an increase in enrollment and admissions applications, and we are excited about meeting the needs of future and current students.”

Construction on the new facility is expected to begin in April 2019 with a completion date scheduled for fall 2020.

Out of the available 700 beds, 500 will be reserved for current students at FAMU. The remaining 200 new beds will be available for newly enrolled students for move-in. Once completed, existing on-campus residence halls Paddyfote, Palmetto North and Truth Hall will be shut down and decommissioned.

In recognition of the steady increase of applications for first-time college students, as well as transfer and graduate students, the new residence hall aims to accommodate the increasing student population.

According to University Housing, FAMU’s current residence halls can accommodate 26 percent of the student population. With the addition of the complex, the university is expected to house 30 percent by 2022. The new hall will align with the FAMU initiative of increasing enrollment rates for the university, with a proposed goal of 12,000 students by 2020.

The new facility will not only act in expanding the university’s portfolio but serve in upgrading the campus living and learning experience by providing state-of-the-art amenities for future rattlers to develop.

The Florida A&M University (FAMU), Office of University Housing maintenance staff, is continuously hard at work making sure every day on campus feels like the first day of spring to keep up with the transition. Under the direction of maintenance superintendent, Bobby Reed, and custodial superintendent, Cynthia West, the maintenance department is consistent in keeping up the image of FAMU residence halls as well as satisfying students, employees, and guests.

“Sometimes it can be, and some days it can be a sweet cherry,” said Joseph Smiley, a maintenance tech at FAMU. “But like I say, once you walk through the door then you got to expect the impossible and do the impossible.”

Smiley has served the FAMU campus for the past 12 years and counting, continuously serving the residents of on-campus facilities and residence halls. “I do painting. I do floor tiles, I do overhead tiles, a little plumbing, some electricity (work), just about everything that needs to be done when you walk into an apartment.”

Originally from Georgia, Smiley follows the footsteps of generations of handy-men, or as he would describe himself, an “All around master of none and jack of all trades.”

“IT was a family tradition, my whole family always dabbled in carpentry,” he continued.

Smiley, along with the rest of the staff, is part of a collective community who aim to provide the best service with whatever is given.

“If I go into a room and this needs to be completed, or this needs to be done I have to look at what I have to do in there before I can make a complete determination of what I have to do,” Smiley said. “Because you never know, you might have to go in and redo a wall, but when you get in there you have to cut it out, you got to measure, you got to go back and get the right sheet rock. It’s complicated--because sometimes you may go in there and it may be a 5 or 10-minute job and then when you leave and look into and discover what you have to do, it could be a little bit more than what you expected to do.”

Despite the frequent misrepresentation of maintenance staff being “unreliable” or “slow,” the department works diligently to get to everyone and satisfy everyone’s needs while maintaining the aesthetic of the University Housing we have all come to love.
RA SPOTLIGHT:
CRENEL “CJ” FRANCIS
BY: JENNIFER OSIAS

The Office of University Housing takes pride in developing student leaders to be a catalyst in both the campus community and internationally. The search of new candidates for Florida A&M University’s Royal Court and Student Government Association resulted in the win of some of our Resident Assistants (RA). The winners include FAMU Village RA’s Kyra Freeman (Miss FAMU), and Phase III RA, Crenel “CJ” Francis (Mr. FAMU).

We caught up with CJ and discussed the life and challenges of an RA.

Q: How is it being an RA?

CJ: I enjoy being an RA every day brings new experiences especially being in the apartments it’s different because you have a different approach to every resident that you come across. It built great character within me and organizational skills that I know I needed in my life.

Q: How did the skills you learned from being an RA help transition you to become Mr. FAMU?

CJ: I was able to become more communicative. I believe everywhere I went on campus I had to communicate with everyone I came across. Some of the biggest skillsets I learned from being an RA was building a connection, learning how to make lasting connections, how to connect with people I never knew prior to this role as an RA, and teach me to communicate with different people, etc. this role helped me instill multiple skillsets to help me grow as a person. Being an RA allows you to witness the growth in your residents and yourself.

Q: What advice would you give the first time RA’s?

CJ: I want to first say congratulations and get ready for an experience! My advice would be: do your best, be organized, build connections with your residents and plan out your time. With the new year, I know that there are some new departmental changes, so be aware of what is required of you to do the job well. I think the Office of University Housing is moving in the right direction. They have a new pitch now that the latest winners of Mr. & Miss. FAMU are products of on-campus housing and leadership. This shows that the Office of University Housing builds the great future leaders of tomorrow.
Hey, Rattlers!

Who do you think has the best lounge/hangout area in all of the nine residence halls?

- FAMU Village Lobby area
- FAMU Village Breezeway
- Gibbs Halls lounge area
- Paddyfote Steps
- Sampson and Young Steps
- Sampson Lounge Area
- Young Lounge Area
- Truth Hall Lobby Area
- Truth Hall Basement
- Truth Hall Gazebo
- Phase 3 Gazebo
- Phase 3 Assembly Room
- Palmetto South Computer room
- Palmetto North Lounge Area

Yeehaw! Join FAMU’s Office of University Housing on the “Set,” April 3 from 12 - 3 p.m., for the Furniture Rodeo of a lifetime. Come try out prospective furniture for our residence halls. Come out and have your voice heard!