

February in Review: A Commitment to Cultivation



Greetings Lincolniters,

The month of February was brimming with excitement, travel, and opportunity. There is never a dull moment in serving as President of our beloved Lincoln University, and this past month was certainly no exception. Black History Month was celebrated on our campus with a bevy of student-led programs, thought-provoking forums facilitated by faculty, and programming from our Inman E. Page Library, to name a few. We continue to celebrate and live the dream of our founders by offering opportunity and a pluralistic environment for all who seek it.

On February 8, months of diligent work culminated in hosting Lincoln University Day at the Capitol. The event was a success and our work at the Capitol has already garnered us more support than at this period last year. This year, we engaged nearly every facet of campus. Staff, faculty, students, alumni, and administration occupied the Capitol for the daylong event where we reiterated the message of the importance of our land-

grant match. It was a sight to behold as exhibits representing the various areas of our campus were displayed in the Third Floor Rotunda. All the aforementioned groups representing Lincoln University were deployed to visit strategic legislators throughout the day. We also were recognized in the House and Senate gallery by Representative Jay Barnes and Senator Mike Kehoe respectively. The night concluded with a reception including refreshments and smooth jazz from the Lincoln University Jazz Ensemble. The evening gave us the extended opportunity to converse with representatives, senators and staff outside of the hurried pace that is customary in the statehouse. I want to extend a thank you to everyone who collaborated or participated in the event.



From left to right: Lincoln University Executive Director of Philanthropy and Foundation Willie Jude, Director of Campus and Community Relations Carlos Graham, Lincoln University Chief Financial Officer Sandy Koetting, Senator Mike Kehoe, Dean of College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences Dr. Albert Essel, Lincoln University Chief of Staff Joesph Watkins

In addition to the important interactions at the Capitol, the month of February brought forth other paramount meetings. On February 14, we were visited by the Department of Education and Great Lakes Project Success. This partnership will provide Lincoln University students with emergency financial aid, paid internships, and financial literacy programming among other offerings. In continuation of our campus meetings, we welcomed the newly appointed Director of Health and Senior Services to campus, Dr. Randall Williams, on February 15. His office will work closely with our Cooperative Extension. Our discussion was pertinent to how to strengthen our relationship and improve the quality of life for Missourians.

I was accompanied by members of senior leadership when I spoke before the House Minority Caucus about our land-grant funding. The meeting provided a sizable, captive audience with good questions, which allowed me to demystify the process. We have garnered support in the House and the Senate, and we are diligently working on meeting with Governor Greitens to discuss our unique

mission as a land-grant school and how important it is to support our birthright. It is vital we have significant support in all three areas.



Photo Courtesy of Kansas State University Communications and Marketing Photography Services

I was delighted to serve as a keynote speaker for various Black History Month events. The schedule began on February 20, when I traveled to Kansas State to speak for the Black Student Union's Fourth Annual Black Student Union Leadership Conference. It was a great event, which convened upper level high school students from around the state of Kansas to partake in educational and thought-provoking discussions about their future, and the richness of their past. This provided the forum to impart wisdom on the budding leaders at Kansas State University, as well as recruit high caliber high school students. Three days later, I traveled to Vorhees College to be the keynote speaker for their Black History Month event. I spoke on the relevance of HBCUs and how the onus of their continual vitality is incumbent upon those who graduate from our top-tier institutions. We have a responsibility to give back as a path was laid for us. Finally, I spoke at the Southside Wellness Center in St. Louis on the subject of education versus incarceration - the school-to-prison pipeline. The audience was very engaged and enthusiastic about the actionable steps outlined for a community to dismantle the objectionable trend. Black History Month is a time to celebrate indeed, but it also is a time to analyze what work lies ahead and coalesce on how to accomplish that work.



I was encouraged by the invitation from President Trump's administration to participate in meetings at the White House. Nearly all HBCU presidents were present to begin what hopefully will be a flourishing relationship between our respective campuses and the White House. We conducted meetings with Vice President Pence and Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos to further amplify our collective message. Our discussions covered topics of the overall plight of HBCUs in today's climate, while also addressing the devolving funding situation many of my president counterparts grapple with daily. We all eagerly anticipate the Executive Order outlining how the White House intends to support the nation's HBCUs - which generally have been neglected and treated disparately nationwide. The mutual goal is to help our students, and the communities our institutions are situated in, which should always be a non-partisan effort.

We exist for our students and our community; to labor and student. This is Lincoln.

All my best,

President Kevin D. Rome

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