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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Xavier University of Louisiana announces a Bachelor of Science in Robotics and Mechatronics Engineering program

**New Orleans, La-** Xavier University of Louisiana is excited to announce its new Robotics and Engineering program beginning in January 2022. The university is the first HBCU to implement such a program, and students in the 120-hour program will receive a Bachelor of Science upon their graduation. The curriculum is designed for students interested in applying intelligent systems to improve the quality and performance of technology and products. Program graduates will be valuable to employers in various industrial sectors such as aerospace, automotive, or defense.

“The implementation of this program reflects Xavier honoring our mission to strive for a more just and humane society through educating the next generation of leaders,” said Dr. Anne McCall, provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs at Xavier University of Louisiana. “Xavier has long been a leader in educating young professionals, and we are excited about this opportunity for our students to explore this field and achieve their dreams while at Xavier.”

Shafqul Islam, Ph.D., an assistant professor at Xavier in the Department of Physics and Engineering, is the program coordinator. Dr. Islam and other faculty members from the Department of Physics and Computer Science were involved in developing the curriculum and the planning and approval process of the program. The program curriculum was created and accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).

The program will use laboratories and classrooms within the Department of Physics and Computer Science, two additional campus spaces will be renovated to provide an 1150-square foot mechatronics laboratory and a 965-square foot robotics laboratory. Students will utilize the university's Makerspace to complete various projects. The Robotics and Engineering program will be housed in the Department of Physics and Computer Science within the Division of Mathematical and Physical Sciences. Xavier's Department of Physics and Computer Science has an active chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers, which provides professional and student support activities to engineering program students.

Like many other fields under the STEM umbrella, engineering industries have low numbers of people of color. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 6% of individuals employed in “architecture and engineering occupations” are Black or African American ([2020](#)). Xavier officials saw a need that the university could fill.

“We need more people of color in engineering because we want to create that society that is more just and humane,” said Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Anderson Sunda-Meya. “Robotics and mechatronics is focused on the fundamentals necessary for the design of intelligent systems, including automation of computation and mechanization. We want our students to be at the forefront of this developing area, because it will certainly affect us all as the industry continues to evolve.”

Xavier offers a 3+2 dual degree program in engineering through partnerships with other institutions, but this is the university’s first full-fledged engineering degree. For some students, the program’s launch means a more definite path.

Michael Coleman III, a freshman currently participating in the computer science and engineering dual degree program, is one such student who wants to join the new degree program. Coleman’s mother and father both graduated from Xavier, and he credits them for asking the right questions and opening his mind to studying engineering.

“I was in my senior year [of high school] and I didn’t know what I wanted to do,” Coleman said. “But then my parents sat me down and got me thinking- I’m all about innovation and finding new, more efficient ways to do things, so that opened me up to the idea [of an engineering degree]. Mechatronics is engineering that combines computer, electrical, and mechanical [engineering], so it’s a great foundation and middle ground.”

Xavier currently has agreements with the following Engineering Schools as part of the 3+2 dual degree program: [Georgia Institute of Technology](#), [Louisiana State University](#), [North Carolina A&T State University](#), [Notre Dame University](#), [Southern University at Baton Rouge](#), [Tulane University](#), [University of Detroit Mercy](#), [University of New Orleans](#), and [University of Wisconsin-Madison](#). Other partnerships are under development and further expansion of the engineering programs are under consideration.

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### **About Xavier University of Louisiana**

*Being America’s only historically Black and Catholic University is only the first among many distinctions that have set Xavier University of Louisiana apart for more than nine decades. Despite its relatively small size, Xavier is a nationally recognized leader in STEM and the health sciences, producing more African American students who graduate from medical schools each year than any other university in the United States. Its College of Pharmacy is among the top producers of African American pharmacists.*

*Its liberal arts-based programs in such areas as art, business, education, psychology, and political science – as well as recent additions in bioinformatics, data science, neuroscience, crime and social justice, and jazz studies – offer students an unbeatable combination of traditional classroom study, hands-on research, service-learning opportunities, and life experiences. The winning Xavier formula to provide students with a well-balanced curriculum and an environment that nurtures their intellect and feeds their souls.*

*For more information about Xavier University of Louisiana, visit us online at [www.xula.edu](http://www.xula.edu) or follow us on Facebook, YouTube, or Twitter @XULA1925. To book interviews and/or to speak with our experts in the field of pharmacy, education, premed, public health, science, technology, math, business, English, communications, and the arts, contact Chelsea Cunningham at (504) 520-5425 or [ccunnin@xula.edu](mailto:ccunnin@xula.edu).*



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