



Contact: Lance Sumler
lsumler@xula.edu

Xavier University of Louisiana to Host Socially Distanced in-person Ceremonies for spring 2021 Graduates

New Orleans LA – [Xavier University of Louisiana](#) will host its official 94th commencement ceremony in-person at the University Convocation Center on May 8, 2021. This year, due to COVID-19 protocols, there will be two separate graduation ceremonies. The first will take place at 10 a.m. and the final ceremony will take place at 2 p.m. **Congresswoman Alma Adams** of the 12th Congressional District in North Carolina and **Michael O. Smith**, General Manager for Hyatt Regency in New Orleans, will receive honorary degrees and serve as this year's speakers during Xavier's 2021 commencement ceremony.

Dr. Alma S. Adams was elected to her fourth full term representing the 12th Congressional District of North Carolina on November 3, 2020. After winning a special election in November 2014, Congresswoman Adams was sworn in immediately as the 100th woman elected to the 113th Congress. Representative Adams serves on the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Education & Labor and the Committee on Agriculture. She holds several leadership roles including Assistant Whip for the Democratic Caucus, Chairwoman of the Committee on Education & Labor's Subcommittee on Workforce Protections and Vice Chairwoman of the Committee on Agriculture.

Michael O. Smith has spent more than 40 years with Hyatt and is an expert in the hospitality and tourism industry. As an active civic citizen within the city, he takes pride in supporting programs and organizations of diversity and inclusion, LGBTQ, arts and culture, education, religion and community. In 2005, Smith received widespread recognition for his efforts in safely evacuating nearly 4,000 guests and staff, along with supporting government officials in transporting thousands of residents from the Superdome through the hotel to buses departing the city during Hurricane Katrina. Smith has also won several awards, including the Boys Scouts of America's *Whitney M. Young Jr. Service Award* in 2019 and was honored at UNCF Mayor's Masked Ball in New Orleans as a 2021 honoree.

Other scheduled commencement-related events include the [College of Arts and Sciences Doctoral Hooding & Graduate Honors ceremony](#) Thursday, May 06, at 6:00 p.m.; [the College of Pharmacy Hooding and Honors Ceremony](#) Friday, May 07 at noon, and the [Baccalaureate Mass/Honors Convocation](#) Friday, May 07 at 5:00 p.m. To get more information about the scheduling of these events and to access livestream links, please visit www.xula.edu/commencement.

Xavier's spring 2021 commencement ceremonies are ticketed events that will allow two guests per graduate in an effort to practice effective social distancing. The events will be [livestreamed](#) and strict adherence to COVID-19 guidelines will be enforced for those who attend in person. To attend the

ceremony, proof of a negative COVID-19 test is required. Live ceremonies will be canceled and alternately presented in a virtual format if local or national pandemic numbers mandate.



Congresswoman Alma Adams
12 Congressional District in North Carolina



Michael O. Smith
GM for Hyatt Regency, New Orleans

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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 (3,300 students), Xavier is a nationally recognized leader in the 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 provides 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 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 Lance Sumler at (504) 520-5240 or lsumler@xula.edu