



Contact: Patrice Bell
(504) 520-7558 | pbell2@xula.edu

Contact: Ashley Irvin
(504) 520-5424 | airvin1@xula.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Xavier University of Louisiana announces planning phase for Graduate School of Health Sciences and Medical School

New Orleans, La. – Today, Xavier University of Louisiana announced that it is entering the planning phase to establish a Graduate School of Health Sciences and Medical School. For decades, Xavier has consistently produced more African American students and students of color who achieve Medical Degrees and Ph.D.'s in the health sciences than any other higher education institution in the nation. Xavier's College of Pharmacy is the oldest in Louisiana and continues to rank amongst the highest performing.

Building upon this success, Xavier University of Louisiana has continued to add innovative graduate degree programs, including a Physician's Assistant program, a master's in Public Health program, Speech Pathology, Pharmaceutical Studies and Health Analytics that expand representation in health professions.

Dr. Reynold Verret, [President of Xavier University of Louisiana](#), has long been a champion for addressing health disparities and underrepresentation in the medical and health sciences.

"Xavier was founded with the mission of promoting the creation of a just and humane society through education," President Verret stated. "The establishment of graduate education programs dedicated to the preparation of more black healthcare professionals is a natural extension of our foundress' legacy as we approach our second century of service. It is also where we are called to answer a critical need of our nation."

The pandemic emphasized the necessity for greater diversity in the medical profession, as representation and trust are essential determinants underlying the health disparities affecting underrepresented populations. A recent Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) report noted "...gains in diversity are not shared by all groups. In particular growth of Black or African American applicants, matriculants and graduates lagged behind other groups."¹ Underrepresented minorities still struggle to grow in numbers at all levels of the medical profession, with only incremental improvement over the past

¹ Diversity in Medicine: facts and Figures 2019, <https://www.aamc.org/data-reports/workforce/report/diversity-medicine-facts-and-figures-2019>

decades, including at the highest academic levels.² Thus, higher education must also redouble efforts to recruit, retain, and advance minorities in academic medicine.

Experts agree the way to address the physician shortage is to create new medical schools, but diverse representation requires a further step. In the last century (and since the Flexner report), there have been few new medical colleges until recently, and only one at a Historically Black College and University. Xavier University of Louisiana is examining the option to change that narrative.³

In 1925, Saint Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament founded Xavier to create a more just and humane society for all. Today, the institution holds true to this mission. A School of Medicine and Health Sciences at Xavier will advance that mission as the university guides and nurtures students from their undergraduate studies to their selected graduate programs. In addition to being recognized for providing a quality, affordable education for all, Xavier is poised as the catalyst for change and to address needs of the local and national community.

About Xavier University of Louisiana

Xavier University of Louisiana, America's only historically Black and Catholic University, is ranked among the top three HBCUs (historically Black colleges and universities) in the nation. Recognized as a national leader in STEM and health sciences, Xavier produces more African American students who graduate from medical schools each year than any other university in the United States. Additionally, Xavier's College of Pharmacy is also among the top producers of African American pharmacists in the country.

Established in 1925 by Saint Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament as a place for African Americans and Native Americans to receive quality education, Xavier has since expanded its programs in art, business, education, biological sciences, chemistry, pharmacy and political science. More recent additions in robotics, bioinformatics, engineering, data science, neuroscience and genetics, in addition to new STEM-based master's programs, have provided Xavier students (2815 undergraduates and 787 graduates) an unbeatable combination of traditional classroom study, hands-on research, service-learning opportunities and life experiences. Xavier students collaborate with world-renowned faculty, who are experts in their fields, to produce award-winning research and notable work. The winning Xavier formula provides students with a well-balanced curriculum and an environment that nurtures their intellect and feeds their souls, thereby facilitating a more just and humane society for all. For more information about Xavier University of Louisiana, visit us online at www.xula.edu or contact *Patrice Bell* (504) 520-7558 or pbell2@xula.edu.

Philanthropic partners interested in joining Xavier as we expand and extend our mission into our second century of service to meet the demands of today can contact Phillip Adams, VP of Advancement at pdadams@xula.edu.

###

² *Results of a 12 year retrospective study of diversity at the highest levels of America's teaching institutions, published in the Journal of Surgical Research, J Surg Res 2013 Jun 15;182(2):212-8. doi: 10.1016/j.jss.2012.06.049.*

³ *Racial Bias in Flexner Report Permeates Medical Education Today, published in Medpages Today, Epub 2020 June 18. Elizabeth Hlavinka <https://www.medpagetoday.com/publichealthpolicy/medicaleducation/87171>.*



**Xavier University of Louisiana
announces planning phase for
Graduate School of Health Sciences
and Medical School**

