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**Xavier University of Louisiana graduate’s dream to reduce health inequities supported through Ochsner Health Medical School Scholarship**

**New Orleans, La** -- The fourth annual Ochsner Health Medical School Scholarship for LSU Health Shreveport – School of Medicine has been awarded to recent Xavier University of Louisiana graduate Aaron Jackson. The scholarship award covers the cost of tuition for Aaron to attend LSU Health Shreveport – School of Medicine over the 4-year enrollment.

“Ochsner Health is driven by our mission to ‘Serve, Heal, Lead, Educate and Innovate’ with a commitment to a “Healthy State” for all by training the next generation of physicians,” **said Leonardo Seoane, MD, FACP, Chief Academic Officer, Ochsner Health and Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, LSU Health Shreveport**. “Through outstanding academic accomplishments and demonstrated resilience, Aaron has demonstrated the attributes needed to be impactful as a physician. He is committed to improving health outcomes for our communities by focusing on health equity.”

Aaron, a first-generation college graduate, earned his Bachelor of Science degree from Xavier. Outside of the classroom, he worked to put himself through college, and engaged in work-study programs, internships, and scientific research. He aims to show young people of color that attending medical school is possible, even in the face of adversity, and to open new doors to young aspiring healthcare professionals by providing them with shadowing, volunteering, and research opportunities.

Aaron is from Opelousas, Louisiana, a small, rural city near Lafayette with a majority Black population. While well-known for its zydeco music and spice and seasoning production, Opelousas also has a high poverty rate. Aaron was raised with three siblings by two loving parents. “I knew early on in life that I wanted to care for and treat those affected by mental illnesses, having firsthand witnessed my brother's struggles with his combination of intellectual and impulsive disorders,” he said in his application letter. “I also knew, however, that the road to becoming a physician would not be an easy endeavor, especially for someone like me and with my disadvantaged background.”

To qualify for consideration for this scholarship, students are required to be a Louisiana resident, a Xavier student, and have already been accepted into the LSU Health Shreveport – School of Medicine. To apply for the scholarship, Xavier students detailed academic accomplishments, recommendations and an essay reflecting on how they have overcome adversity. A joint Xavier and Ochsner committee reviewed the applications and selected the final scholarship recipient. One scholarship recipient is selected annually for this scholarship program.

“LSU Health Shreveport is grateful to Ochsner for their continued awarding of a full tuition scholarship to a deserving student who faced disadvantage, and we look forward to welcoming Aaron on campus in the fall,” **said Dr. David Lewis, Interim Chancellor and Dean of the LSU Health Shreveport School of Medicine.** “This scholarship is an important tool in enhancing LSU Health Shreveport’s’ ability to recruit and retain top minority students.”

The annual Ochsner Health Medical School Scholarship for LSU Health Shreveport – School of Medicine is just one way Ochsner is investing in the education of the next generation of healthcare professionals in the region – [a key component of Ochsner’s 10-year vision to transform Louisiana into a healthier state by 2030](https://news.ochsner.org/news-releases/ochsner-and-state-leaders-announce-10-year-vision-for-a-healthy-state).

With a focus on cultivating the next generation of healthcare professionals, Ochsner and Xavier have a relationship dating back to the 1980s when an affiliation agreement partnership was established to provide educational experiences to pharmacy students. Through this ongoing partnership, Ochsner provides clinical training for hundreds of Xavier students in multiple programs every year.

“The long-standing relationship between Xavier and Ochsner is key to advancing health equity and diversity in Louisiana,” said **Dr. Anne McCall, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs at Xavier.** “We are grateful that Ochsner supports our students in multiple ways, including scholarship opportunities like the one bestowed on Mr. Jackson. Such benefaction allows our students to continue to pursue their dreams as they leave Xavier and continue in their academic careers.”

For more information about Ochsner Academics, visit [www.ochsner.org/locations/center-for-academic-excellence](http://www.ochsner.org/locations/center-for-academic-excellence). For more information about Xavier, visit [www.xula.edu](http://www.xula.edu/). For more information about LSU Health Shreveport – School of Medicine visit <https://lsuhs.edu/som>.

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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. 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* [*https://xula.edu*](https://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 Regi Reyes at (504) 520-5240 or* *rreyes@xula.edu**.*

***About Ochsner Health***

[*Ochsner Health*](https://www.ochsner.org/) *is an integrated healthcare system with a mission to Serve, Heal, Lead, Educate and Innovate. Celebrating 80 years in 2022, it leads nationally in cancer care, cardiology, neurosciences, liver and heart transplants and pediatrics, among other areas. Ochsner is consistently named both the top hospital and top children’s hospital in Louisiana by U.S. News & World Report. The not-for-profit organization is inspiring healthier lives and stronger communities. Its focus is on preventing diseases and providing patient-centered care that is accessible, affordable, convenient and effective. Ochsner Health pioneers new treatments, deploys emerging technologies and performs groundbreaking research, including over 700 clinical studies. It has more than 34,000 employees and over 4,500 employed and affiliated physicians in over 90 medical specialties and subspecialties. It operates 40 hospitals and more than 300 health and urgent care centers across Louisiana, Mississippi and the Gulf South; and its cutting-edge Connected Health digital medicine program is caring for patients beyond its walls. In 2021, Ochsner Health treated more than 1 million people from every state and 75 countries. As Louisiana’s top healthcare educator, Ochsner Health and its partners educate thousands of healthcare professionals annually. To learn more, visit* [*https://www.ochsner.org/*](https://www.ochsner.org/)*.*