



NEWSLETTER

June 2024

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BRITE Training at North Carolina Central University

Dr. Siva Mandjiny attended the BRITE training May 5 – 17, 2024 at the North Carolina Central University in Durham, NC. Rob Onyenwoke, Ph.D., Associate Director – BRITE and Assistant Professor, Dept. of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, worked with the trainees. The training course provided an overview of the techniques and best practices involved in the upstream biopharmaceutical operations customized to NIIMBL partner companies. Dr. Mandjiny will be the construct instructor for the BRITE program at the Biotechnology Regional Center at COMtech.

Great job, Dr. Mandjiny!



UNC Pembroke Celebrates Careers of 28 Staff and Faculty Retirees

UNC Pembroke recognized a group of staff and faculty retirees during the annual Retiree Celebration dinner on June 6, 2024.

Mrs. Felicia Scott was among 28 retirees recognized during an evening ceremony and dinner at the University Center Annex and hosted by the Office of human Resources. The group of 2023-2024 retirees served a collective 549 years at UNCP.

As the longest-serving female faculty member in the Chemistry and Physics Department, Felicia Scott was affectionately known to her students as ‘Mama.’

Scott nurtured and impacted the lives of countless students during her 26-year teaching career. She formed lasting bonds with her students in and out of the classroom.

"I would take time out with the students to find out what's was going on with them," said Scott, a UNCP graduate. "I adopted a few of them over the years. One student lived with me for half a year after they returned home from pharmacy school. I'm going to miss my students."

"You've each played an important role in providing a life-changing education for thousands," Cummings said. "You all have had such rich careers at UNC Pembroke. You have truly impacted our region, our state and beyond. It's because of the people, including all of you, who have built this university into what it is today."



Felicia Scott was presented with the Order of the Long Leaf Award at the Retiree Celebration.

The **Order of the Long Leaf Pine Award** is the highest award for state service granted by the Office of the Governor. Nominations can be made for retiring individuals who have 30 or more years of service in the State of North Carolina.



Congratulations, Felicia! *We are so proud of you.*

New SHRA Employee



Emily L. Hunt
Research Operations Specialist

On June 10, 2024, Mrs. Emily Hunt joined the Chemistry and Physics Department. She is the Research Operations Specialist at the Biotechnology and Training Facility (Biotechnology Regional Center) at Comtech.

Congratulations, Emily. We welcome you to our department.

Engineering Camps at UNCP

Dr. Steven Singletary and Dr. Benjamin Killian participated in the engineering camps at UNCP. The camp was sponsored by Cummings Aerospace. Dr. Sheila Cummings is the founder, president, and CEO of the company. She joined Drs. Singletary and Killian to run the camps during June 17 – 28, 2024. There were 80 students in the camp the first week. The students did 3D printing and rockets. In the following week, 80 students from a different camp did coding and robotics. Everyone had a great time building rockets, robots, learning how to 3D print, and write computer codes. Thank you all for your commitment and dedication in making this a successful event and experience for our younger students.



Dr. Steven Singletary
Clinical Assistant Professor



Dr. Benjamin Killian
Assistant Professor



Dr. Sheila Cummings
Cummings Aerospace

Cummings Aerospace Camp at UNCP Prepares Students for STEM

The two-week summer camp introduced students to 3D design, coding, 3D printing and robotics. “These camps help students choose what they want to study when they get older.” Shelia Cummings, CEO of Cummings Aerospace, said the experience exposes students at an early age to STEM-related curriculums, which may inspire some to follow in her footsteps. Cummings began her educational career at UNCP before completing an aerospace engineering degree at the University of Maryland. The Pembroke, N.C. native is now head of an engineering company considered a leading provider of high-value engineering solutions in the aerospace, defense, and intelligence industry. “We hope we are making a great impact on the community,” Cummings said. “Not only does it give great exposure to UNCP and give them a pipeline to future students, but for those of us in the STEM field, it allows us to gain some future hires in our companies, hopefully. I’m excited to give back to the community in this way.” The students were happy to do a lot of hands-on activities, which is something they don’t really do at school,” she said. The aerospace engineering camp is a great recruiting tool for UNCP and its award-winning rocket team.

“You can see that the kids get excited when building the rockets, but when they launch it—they get hooked,” said Singletary, who serves as team advisor. “These are the students I’m recruiting to come here to join the rocket team. “The nice thing is everything they are learning at this camp is in demand in the engineering field, so even if they only remember a fraction of what we are teaching them, it’s putting them ahead when they begin looking for a career.”

Biomanufacturing Training

The second-in-a-series of regional bioprocessing training programs in North Carolina will help students and residents prepare for entry level positions in the biopharmaceutical manufacturing.

The two-week, hands-on short course was offered for free from June 17 - 28, 2024, for up to 12 participants. Training was held at UNCP's Biotechnology Research and Training Center, (COMtech). This new training is part of the [Accelerate NC – Life Sciences Manufacturing initiative](#), funded by the [U.S. Economic Development Administration's Build Back Better Regional Challenge \(BBBRC\)](#), which aims to build strong regional economies and support community-led economic development nationwide. NCCU, home to the Biomanufacturing Research Institute and Technology Enterprise (BRITE) and leader of the HBCU/HAIU Coalition, worked closely with UNCP for it to be the first university in the coalition to offer bioprocessing training. The coalition also includes Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State University, Livingstone College, Saint Augustine's University and Winston-Salem State University. Other coalition members are expected to launch similar trainings in 2024.

"Accelerate NC is all about helping underserved populations develop new skills to prepare for job opportunities in life sciences manufacturing that may have seemed unobtainable," said William Smith, NCCU-BRITE director of development. "UNC Pembroke is taking a critical first step for the HBCU/HAIU coalition in building an equitable talent pipeline, with many more training opportunities to come." BBBRC funding helped purchase equipment needed to teach upstream and downstream bioprocessing as well as provided the funding to conduct "train the trainer" events where faculty could become trainers.

UNCP training applicants must be 18 years of age or older and must have a high school diploma or GED. Before starting the short course, students must complete five online modules.

Upon completion of the two-week free course, students will earn several certifications in biomanufacturing, including an advanced certificate in biopharmaceutical manufacturing.



Special “Thank You” Dr. Siva Mandjiny and Mrs. Emily Hunt working with this group for entry level positions in the biopharmaceutical manufacturing.

Summer 2024 NSO Transfer Orientation



Tikaram Neupane, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Physics

On Monday, June 24, Dr. Neupane participated in the NSO Transfer Orientation. The orientation went well.

Thank you for your commitment and dedication to connect directly with incoming students, sharing information about the department, and engaging them in meaningful ways.

Deepest Sympathy

With heartfelt sympathy



The department members send their condolences to Dr. Meredith Storms and her family for the passing of her daughter, Katheryn.