

# GOOD NEWS

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## SACSCOC

*fully reaffirms*

## KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY'S ACCREDITATION



The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) reaffirmed Kentucky State University's accreditation for the next 10 years. SACSCOC made the official announcement during its annual meeting recently in Houston.

Kentucky State received the best possible review, with the committee finding the University in full compliance and offering no recommendations or requests for continued monitoring.

"Today's accreditation decision is a strong signal of institutional health at Kentucky State University," said University President Dr. M. Christopher Brown II. "As a former SACSCOC board member, I know firsthand the valuation that regional accreditation attests about the quality of our faculty, staff, and students."

President Brown added, "In order to achieve this distinction, an institution must meet specific standards of excellence and make a commitment to ongoing improvement to ensure continued delivery of outcomes-based education to current and future students. In sum, based on an external review by our peers, Kentucky State University has valid and verifiable high-quality academic programs and institutional operations."

As the major accrediting body for public and private institutions of higher education in the 11 southernmost states, SACSCOC accredits more than 780 universities and colleges in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, as well as Latin America.

Kentucky State University's reaffirmation was the result of a multiyear review process that included internal studies involving hundreds of people on campus and culminating in a March 2019 site visit by a peer review committee from SACSCOC. SACSCOC has 84 standards with which institutions must comply in order to gain or maintain accreditation.

As part of the reaffirmation process, Kentucky State developed a Quality Enhancement Plan, or QEP — a comprehensive plan for institutional improvement. Kentucky State's QEP, "Learning that Works," is a University-wide initiative to teach students skills that will aid them in career readiness and advancement. As part of teaching them the concept of Design Thinking, students will acquire skills in problem-solving, teamwork, oral and written communication, and cultural agility.

## KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY CONFERS NEARLY 60 DEGREES AT FALL 2019 COMMENCEMENT CONVOCATION

Nearly 60 Kentucky State University graduates crossed the stage Friday, Dec. 13 during the Fall 2019 Commencement Convocation in Carl H. Smith Auditorium in David H. Bradford Hall.

Bishop Joseph W. Walker, III, presiding prelate of Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, gave the commencement address. Walker warned the graduates to fight against the enemy called average. "You have not come this far and through this much to fall victim to average," Walker said. "Average is the top of the bottom. You can't be satisfied until you're on top of the top. Average is easy. Average is accepted." Megan J. McCoun, valedictorian, spoke about overcoming obstacles to reach graduation. McCoun said leaving for college was hard to imagine sometimes while growing up on a farm in Henry County.

McCoun said the kindness and support she received, as well as small class sizes, helped her excel. "Dr. (Suzette M.) Polson made me feel smart enough to be in her organic chemistry class," McCoun said. President Brown announced interesting facts about the fall class of 2019: the class is comprised of students from 10 states and three foreign countries, the youngest graduate is 19 and the oldest graduate – Barbara White – is 80 years old. Student Government Association President Keirra L. Donald congratulated the graduates. "All of the obstacles, hard work and perseverance have gotten you to this point," Donald said. "Soak it all in. You have reached the finish line."

Musical guest and The Voice Season 8 contestant MaKenzie Thomas brought the house down with musical selections "Rise Up" and "I Was Here." President Brown gave each graduate their first \$2 as "Old Town Road" by Lil Nas X filled the auditorium. Graduates reacted with laughter and excitement.

## KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR PENNYED THE BIOGRAPHY OF DOLEMITE BEFORE EDDIE MURPHY'S NETFLIX FILM

A Kentucky State University professor wrote the biography of Rudy Ray Moore, whose life is portrayed by Eddie Murphy in Netflix's "Dolemite Is My Name," nearly 24 years before the big budget film.

Dr. David Shabazz, associate professor of journalism, and his brother, Julian, wrote the biography and David was recently quoted in USA Today regarding the accuracy of the film portrayal. "The story is authentic," Shabazz said of the film's portrayal of Moore's life. Shabazz said he first heard about the film six months ago. "I was thrilled to see the movie finally come



to fruition, but also nervous," Shabazz said. "I never thought this film would be made. I certainly didn't expect a big budget film."

Shabazz said it took a long time for the movie to be made because Dolemite was essentially persona non grata. "Rudy knew back then that it would take someone of Eddie Murphy's stature to 'legitimize' what he was doing," Shabazz said. "A lot of people just hear the language, see the album covers and distance themselves from it." Shabazz said the film surpassed Moore's wildest dreams, who passed away in 2008. "When we spoke in the early 1990s, Rudy wanted Eddie Murphy to put him in one of his films," Shabazz said. "Eddie made movies like 'Harlem Nights,' where he paid homage to comedians Red Foxx and Richard Pryor. That's what he really wanted."

Rudy Ray Moore was a household name in the black community, Shabazz said, but he was mostly kept underground. "To see a mainstream biopic movie about Rudy Ray Moore and the character Dolemite nearly 24 years after our book was published is gratifying," Shabazz said. "This is much better than Rudy just being a character in one of Eddie Murphy's movies. God has a better plan than ours if we are patient." Shabazz said the biography is a result of his brother, Julian, attending one of Moore's shows in the early 1990s and asking if he could write a book on Moore.

At the time, Shabazz was a newspaper reporter and grad student finishing his master's degree on the rap group Public Enemy. "My research on the origins of rap led me to several popular people like H. 'Rap' Brown, Muhammad Ali and African American poets Nikki Giovanni and Haki Madhubuti," Shabazz said. Shabazz said he discovered Henry Louis Gates, Donald Bogle, Bruce Jackson, J.L. Dillard and other scholars of classic African American literature and folklore. "They helped me understand the significance of Rudy Ray Moore's comedy," Shabazz said. Moore agreed to the biography and provided source material along the way. "For almost two years, we mostly talked on the phone," Shabazz said. "He was always on the road because the bulk of his money came from concerts and live events." But, whenever Moore was near enough to hang out, they would. "He was a complete riot to be around," Shabazz said. "He wore African attire always. He would still go to Kinko's and make his own flyers. He loved interacting with people." Though books don't normally come with parental advisory warnings, Shabazz said the biography is for adults only. "He wanted us to not only tell the Dolemite story but to also document his version of classic folklore tales," Shabazz said. "He was very pleased. The book was his way of solidifying himself as the toastmaster of classic black folklore." Seeing the movie was surreal, Shabazz said.

"We were fans and eventually became friends," Shabazz said. "We hung out whenever we could, so this is something special."