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University celebrates first-generations

By Jay'Mi Vazquez
Managing Editor

The university continues to celebrate annual First-Generation College Day, highlighting the achievements and resilience of first-generation students.

On Wednesday, Nov. 13, the event kicked off with greetings from Interim President Dwayne Smith.

Smith shared his family's history in academia while also emphasizing attendees the importance of graduating as a first-generation student.

"The reality is that being the first in your family to graduate college is a life-changing experience," Smith said. "Not only does it change your life, but it also has the power to transform the trajectory of your entire family."

Smith said the university student population is comprised of about 48% first-generation students.

As his greeting wrapped up, he referenced the available resources on-campus, so students could feel that they are not in their college journey alone.



PHOTO | JAY'MI VAZQUEZ

Guest speaker and first-generation alumna Joy Osahon, facilitating discussion by sharing her story.

Joy Osahon, guest speaker and first-generation alumna, led students and faculty in a powerful discussion.

She shared her personal story of overcoming obstacles and finding her true calling.

Reflecting on her time as a first-generation student at the university, she spoke to the audience about the importance of perseverance, resilience and community support.

"Being back on Southern campus is so nostalgic for me," Osahon said. "I graduated with my undergrad in 2010 and my master's in 2013. During my time here, I was involved in so much— from running track to being an RA and later joining the African Students Association and the Black Student Union."

Osahon's journey to success, however, was not without its setbacks.

She recounted the difficulties she faced when she initially pursued a pre-nursing major, a path chosen due to cultural expectations.
She described how that pivotal moment changed her trajectory, leading her to stray away from pre-nursing and eventually find fulfillment in writing and public speaking.

"I want you all to understand that it's okay to pivot. It's okay if you're not sure of your path right now, but you have to be honest with yourself and recognize when it's time to make a change," Osahon said.

Her story resonated deeply with the students in the audience, many of whom were first-generation students.

As a first-generation student herself, Osahon emphasized the importance of seeking help and using the available campus resources.

"You don't have to do this alone," Osahon said. "There are so many people on this campus from professors to counselors who are here to help you succeed."

Throughout her speech, Osahon spoke about the inevitable "turbulence" that students face in their academic journeys.

"Just like your time here at Southern, you're on a flight to somewhere important. You might face turbulence, but you have to keep going," Osahon said.

The event concluded with a call to action for students to keep striving toward their goals, no matter the challenges they may face.
"Your dreams are valid, and your path is your own. Don't be afraid to take it," Osahon said.

Delta Phi Epsilon raises money for cystic fibrosis

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor

Lights illuminate the stage illuminated with Barbie wallpaper lining the wall. Contestants lined up to showcase their talent to the audience all for a good cause.

Delta Phi Epsilon sorority hosted their annual Deepher Dude event on Thursday Nov. 14.

This fall tradition brings in donations and awareness for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation by uniting students. Kara Satalino, board member of CFF, has a daughter who is impacted by cystic fibrosis.

"Without generous people like you who care to find a cure, we wouldn't have the donations and the fundraising that goes into the science," Satalino said.

Satalino said that fundraising goes a long way, as the money raised from fundraising allowed her daughter to receive the closest medicine to a cure.

"When she was able to get on the medicine, we saw improvement," Satalino said.

To raise money, contestants competed to seize the crown in a competition of the Kens.

Political science and history education major CJ Sheehy, a senior, communication disorders major Zach Thornton, a senior, environmental systems and sustainability major Joe Bradford, a freshman and art and design major James Conover, a freshman, and an outside contestant, Jalen Simms, all took the Barbie World stage.

Each contestant was coached by a member of the Delta Phi Epsilon sorority. In front of three judges, each Ken had to compete in various categories, such as swimwear and talent.

Guests tuned into an unforgettable night filled with high energy philanthropy, as selected sisters of Delta Phi Epsilon coached their own Kens.

President of Delta Phi Epsilon, Emily Weiner, an English major and senior, said collaborating with CFF was the highlight of her night.

"Anything that goes towards finding a cure and funding research is really important," Weiner said, "especially working together as a team to bring the event together and raise awareness for cystic fibrosis."

The inherited disease is typically detected during a baby's first few days of life.

According to CFF, there are around 40,000 people with cystic fibrosis in the United States.

Satalino said that fundraising events can help to save the lives of those affected by cystic fibrosis.

"If we don't have anyone to listen to our stories, we can't make change," Satalino said.

During the Ken competition, Satalino and Joseph Rosano, a CFF board member and pharmacist, shared their personal stories and offered insights to the event's audience.

"It's really important to volunteer all actors from around the globe and connect with people and understand their stories," Rosano said. "It is also important to donate. Every dollar counts."

In addition to making donations, attendees had the opportunity to purchase refreshments throughout the event, with all proceeds going to CFF.

Whether it was Ken Maid Zach Thornton, rocking out to metal music or Teacher Ken Jalen Simms showing his flawless moves, the crowd was in high spirits.

The event was tied together as Simms was crowned.

Satalino said she was touched by everyone who came out and those who donated.

"You don't have a DNA connection like I do, which makes it even more special that you're here and you care," Satalino said. "So, thank you so much!"



PHOTO | LILY RAND

Delta Phi Epsilon and Tau Kappa Epsilon together at the end of the event.



Political science and history education major CJ Sheehy, a senior, dressed up as Ken for the fundraiser.