Students learn about the rise of Bitcoin

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor

In today's ever-evolving world, many things such as dollar bills are set to become a thing of the past.

For this reason, the School of Business's Professional Enrichment Platform (PEP), hosted a PEP Talk featuring the wave of digital currency, known as Bitcoin.

"We have this concept of money being something physical, but it hasn't been so for years," Stephen Wilmarth, founder of the BitCafe Project at the university, said. "Bitcoin is a purely digital asset."

Wilmarth led the "The Relentless Rise of Bitcoin" PEP Talk on Wednesday, Feb. 12.

Students, staff and faculty were able to gain more insight on Bitcoin and the future of business in a digital age.

Wilmarth, who has visited countries and explored their economy, also said that money is on the path to becoming fully digital, similar to other countries.

"Money will become digital at some point," Wilmarth said. "China does not even take cash anymore and Bitcoin is legal tender in El Salvador."

Wilmarth also helped to explain Bitcoin and break the concept down to audience members.

He said that unlike the traditional bank, Bitcoin is decentralized.

"If you have Bitcoin, you are the bank. It is only between you and the person you are paying," Wilmarth said.

As many people are skeptical about the fully digital form of currency, Wilmarth helped to debunk misconceptions about Bitcoin.

"People think Bitcoin is the perferred money of criminals of drug lords, but so is the U.S. dollar and Euros, and everything else," Wilmarth said.

Wilmarth said that people believe that Bitcoin is used for sketchy reasons, due to its anonymity. However, that is not fully true. Infact, all forms of currency leave a "paper trail."

"Bitcoin is not as anonymous as people claim, as every transaction is recorded on the blockchain," Wilmarth said.

The blockchain is a public ledger, where transactions can be viewed, making it far more transparent than often assumed.

Business administration major Jessy Ebengo, a junior, said that Wilmarth's clarification cleared up many misconceptions he had about Bitcoin.

"At first I was skeptical about it because I mostly heard bad stuff about it in the media," Ebengo said. "But after hearing a PEP Talk about it in school makes it more credible."

Wilmarth also provided full transparency for students and staff who expressed interest in investing in Bitcoin.

"The value of Bitcoin continues to go up with about a 100% increase overtime," Wilmarth said. "Real estate does not do that; stock doesn't do that."

Business major Ernest Mulomba, a senior, said that investing in Bitcoin has crossed his mind more than once, however, after the PEP Talk, he feels better about doing so.

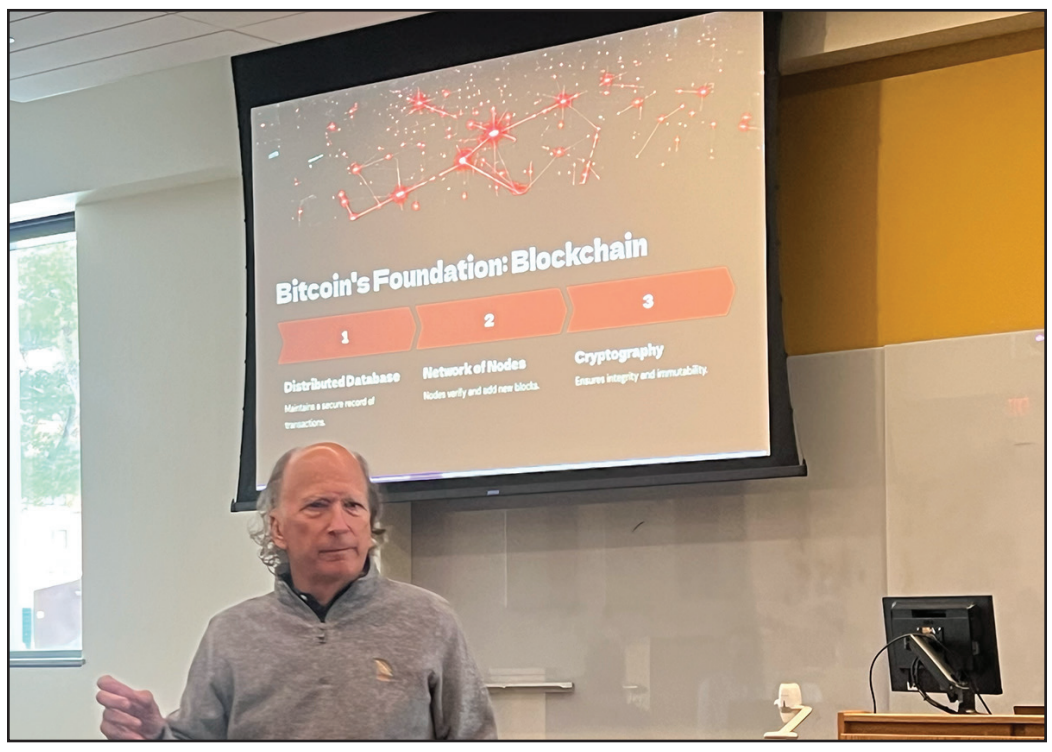
"I think it's a risky thing that if I try to invest, I would just have to just put my foot in the water and go ahead," Mulomba said.

Apart from the economic impact, Wilmarth said that Bitcoin is a significant milestone in technological advancement.

"Bitcoin is another step in the progress of technology and humans as we are able to exchange value, it's a remarkable invention," Wilmarth said.

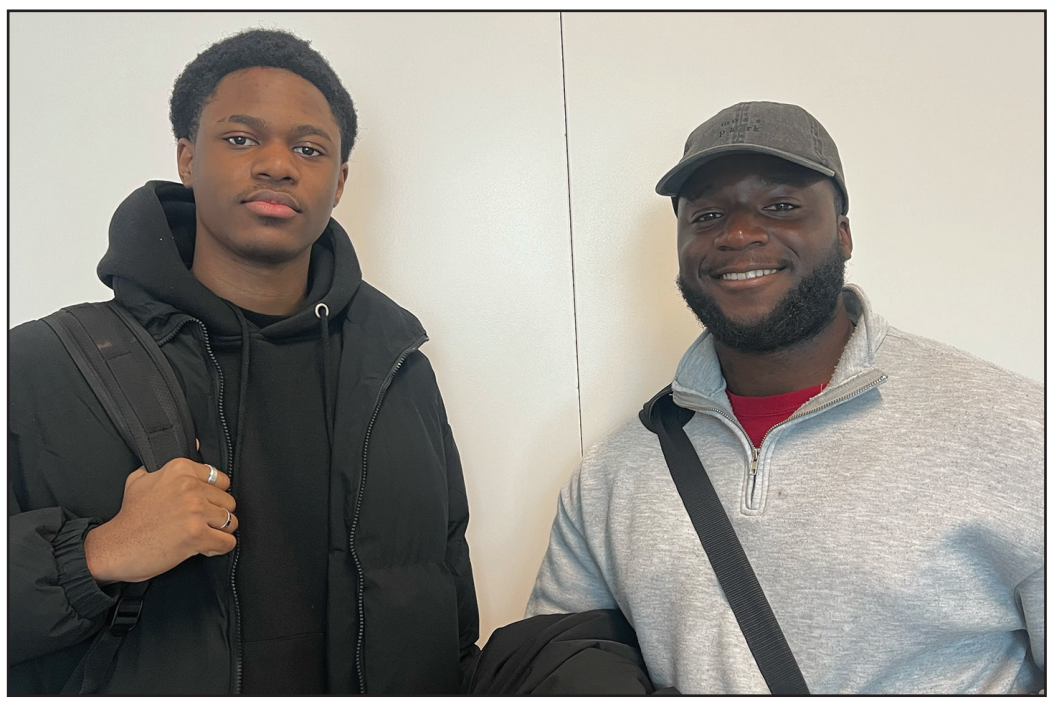
The "The Relentless Rise of Bitcoin" PEP Talk is part one of a four-part series. On Wednesday, Feb. 19, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., the "Blockchain Beyond Bitcoin" will take place in Room 122, or "The Case Study Room," in the School of Business.

More students and staff will have the opportunity to learn more from Wilmarth as he shares his insight on technological innovations, and their impact on various industries and society as a whole.



PHOTOS | BRIANNA WALLEN

Founder of BitCafe Project at the university, Stephen Wilmarth, presenting his "The Relentless Rise of Bitcoin," PEP Talk on Feb. 12 in Room 122 of the School of Business.



Business administration major Jessy Ebengo, a junior, and business major Ernest Mulomba, a senior, in the School of Business.

SCSU Foundation empowers students with finanacial aid



PHOTO | SCSU WEBSITE

Lewis DeLuca, director of student financial literacy and advising, helping students with financial aid options.

By Victoria Cruz
Contributer

The university community thrives on the shared goal of student success and is not just a place of learning.

At the heart of this mission is the SCSU Foundation.

This organization is dedicated to securing financial resources to create educational opportunities and improve students' overall experience.

Established in 1972, the foundation works to invest, receive, administer and solicit private gifts for the benefit of students in various programs with various needs.

Through donor contributions, fundraising efforts and strategic investments, the foundation plays a vital role in creating financial accessibility in higher education.

The foundation assists with scholarships from lab equipment to student financial emergencies and they impact every aspect of campus life.

The foundation also facilitates technology upgrades, student engagement initiatives and other resources students may need to help them be well equipped for their academic and professional journeys.

Individuals who want to support the foundation can make online donations, check contributions or planned gifts, allowing donors an opportunity to integrate philanthropy into financial planning.

Many employers also offer matching gift programs.

For those looking to make a lasting impression, naming opportunities are available to honor significant contributions by individuals and organizations.

The board of directors that acts as the foundation's leadership plays the essential role in ensuring donations are used effectively in alignment with the university's mission.

The board oversees financial policies, investment strategies and student gifts.

Despite its vital role in campus life and its community, many students are still unaware of the foundation's work behind the scenes.

"I had no idea this existed but knowing there's a whole organization dedicated to helping students succeed is really reassuring," psychology major Tiffani Ramos, a sophomore, said. "College is expensive, and it's great to know that scholarships and resources are being made available by people who care about our education."

Most importantly, the foundation directly provides critical funding for scholarships, grants and emergency financial assistance.

Many students at the university rely on these funds to continue their education, purchase necessary materials and participate in opportunities that might otherwise be financially out of reach.

From tuition relief to research stipends, the foundation ensures that financial barriers do not interfere with the success of students.

The SCSU Foundation is more than just a financial entity, it is a pillar of support for students, faculty and the entire community.

The university can continue to offer high quality education and experiences because of philanthropic donations from donors.

For those interested in contributing and learning more the advancement office is always available to connect individuals with giving opportunities that align with interests and values.

Students interested in becoming beneficiaries can contact the SCSU Foundation for more

Owls discuss cultural engagement

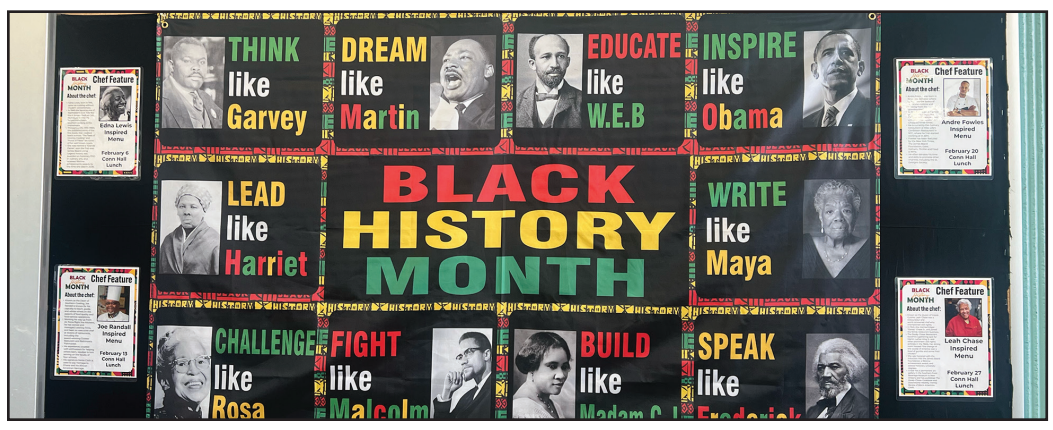


PHOTO | BRIANNA WALLEN

Bulletin board in honor of Black History Month, on display at Connecticut Hall on Feb. 17.

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor

Psychology major Dalice Urera, a sophomore, said that she enjoys celebrating Black History Month (BHM), as it is an opportunity for her to learn more about resilience and contributions of African Americans.

"I love learning about Black History," Urera said. "America was built on their backs."

The month-long celebration from Feb. 1 to March 1, is a time for reflection, education and commemoration.

At the university, many events are hosted to honor the legacies of African Americans and provide students and campus community members with opportunities to engage with their history and learn about their achievements through lectures, cultural activities and discussions.

Early childhood education Priscilla Adebambo, a junior, said that her email is filled with notifications about events to celebrate and honor BHM.

"I feel like there's always a lot of events going on," Adebambo said. "I've seen the posters going around and there's always emails informing us about it."

While the university puts effort into celebrating the holiday, many students have noticed a decline in the level of celebration over time. Healthcare studies major Kisha Francois, a senior, said that she observed that the enthusiasm for BHM has diminished as she has spent more time at the university.

"I feel like it's been a little quiet," Francois said. "I've seen more effort in the past years and more programs advertised back then.

Despite this, many students have said that Connecticut Hall has caught their eye due to its consistent effort to showcase and celebrate BHM.

"I really love the banners in Connecticut Hall, and I like how they always have something going on and they're always celebrating something or someone," Adembamo said.

The dining hall is decked out in BHM decorations. From gold tapestries to vibrant banners, many students have taken a liking to their efforts.

Additionally, Connecticut Hall also serves food that is embedded in black culture.

This can help to represent the rich culture of African Americans and immerse the campus community in their cuisine.

"Conn always does their big one," Francois said. "They always have days where they put out different foods for BHM."

Urera said that the food does not go unnoticed, as many students enjoy it.

"Last week they had soul food, which was fried chicken and mac and cheese," Urera said. "The fried chicken was really good with some hot sauce."

Whether it is Connecticut Hall or organizations under the university hosting events or spotlighting the celebration, Adebambo said that their initiative demonstrates the university's commitment to recognizing and celebrating student heritage.

"It really lets us know that Southern cares and that they truly value us and our history," Adebambo said.

As events and activities appear on the calendar, many students value the importance of attending and even learning more about the history of African Americans.

Adebambo, who attended the "Martin Luther King Unity Lecture" last week, said she puts emphasis on carving out time to attend more events.

She also encourages students and staff to do the same.

"We live in a time where there are many people and forces trying to erase Black History, so I think it is really important to take the opportunity now to learn and celebrate," Adebambo said. "We might not have this same ability in the future."