

PVAMU RISE Scholars Showcase Excellence at the 43rd Research Association of Minority Professors (RAMP) Conference

The Research Association of Minority Professors Conference (RAMP) was founded in 1975 by the late Dr. Frank T. Hawkins, a Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) Mathematics professor, to advance research excellence, mentorship, and leadership opportunities for minority faculty in higher education. This year, the Annual Conference was held in New Orleans from February 4 – 7, 2026 under the team” *Reimagining Research: AI As a Partner in Educational Transformation*. Prairie View A&M University was strongly represented by faculty and students from the Whitlowe R. Green College of Education and the School of Public and Allied Health, demonstrating the University’s continued commitment to research leadership and academic distinction.

PVAMU faculty presented their research papers while the students scholars served as session moderators. The students also distinguished themselves in the highly anticipated student research competition. Two doctoral students presented, Ms. Kendramia Prestage delivered a compelling pilot study from her dissertation, titled **“How Higher Education Shapes Conversations in Makerspaces: Using AI Transcription to Inform Educational Transformation”** and Ms. Monique Oates, RISE doctoral student captivated the attendees with her dynamic presentation, **“Rebranding a Rural Campus: A Descriptive Case Study in Higher Education Marketing and Brand Renewal.”** Both students were placed in the doctoral category, Monique placed first and Kendramia placed third.



From L-R- Andrea McDonald, PhD., CHES, Associate Professor and 2026 RAMP Conference Planning Committee Chair, shared a moment with Monique Oates-PhD Educational Leadership Student (1st Place Winner in the Doctoral Students’ Competition) & Kendramia Prestage – PhD Educational Leadership Student (3rd place awardee, Doctoral Students’ Presentation) RAMP-2026.

Ms. Shearyl Smith, a final-semester undergraduate student and a RISE scholar from the School of Public and Allied Health (SPAH), confidently made her conference debut with ***“Transforming Public Health Education through Artificial Intelligence.”*** Her conceptual framework illustrated forward-thinking application of AI in public health education and marked a promising beginning to her new scholarly journey.



Final semester undergraduate Student Shearyl Smith of the School of Public and Allied Health

Overall, seven faculty (Drs Stella Smith, Clarissa Booker, Pamela Barber Freeman, Andrea McDonald, Douglas Butler, L.S. Spencer & Diane Reed) and the three students presented their research at the RAMP conference. The success at the Research Association of Minority Professors Conference demonstrates that PVAMU-RISE is effectively advancing its priorities to develop research excellence, elevating scholarly visibility, and preparing emerging scholars to lead in higher education and public health. Shearyl and Monique express their sincere appreciation to the PVAMU Office of Research and Innovation as well as Dr Angela Branch-Vital, Dean for School of Public and Allied Health (SPAH), for the opportunity to present.

Submitted by:

Andrea McDonald, PhD., CHES.

School of Public and Allied Health