

## **African Diaspora Studies Program Hosted by Global Engagement a Great Success**

The Division of Global Engagement successfully hosted the Xavier session of the African Diaspora Studies in New Orleans and Ghana Program from June 14 to June 21, 2022. Through seven days in New Orleans and over two weeks in Ghana (June 22-July 6, 2022), students will earn six credit hours toward their graduation.

The African Diaspora Studies program is a joint effort among the University of Oregon (UO), Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU), and Xavier University of Louisiana. Three UO faculty lead the program. Dr. Yvette Alex-Assensoh, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion, and Dr. Akwasi B. Assensoh, an eminent scholar of African American and African Diaspora studies, are the Co-Directors of the program. Dr. Aris Hall, Dean of Students, is the Faculty Coordinator.

The program explores the transformative journeys of continental Africans to diasporic Africans living in America. It examines the broad spectrum of the human experience related to the African diaspora as well as with a dedicated emphasis on the relationship between Louisiana and West Africa.

Five of the 10 student participants are from Xavier, with the remaining four from UO and one from PVAMU. Each of the five Xavier students receives a scholarship of \$5,900 from the UO, which covered all their program costs. In addition, all Xavier students are awarded between \$550 and \$750 from the Xavier University Study Abroad Scholarship, thus covering a significant amount of their international travel expenses – such as airfare.

While staying in New Orleans, students learnt the rich and complicated history of New Orleans, often called the most African American city in the U.S. They studied how New Orleans functioned as the first port of entry for the majority of slaves who were brought in chains to the U.S. and the impact of the circumstances of slaves and free people of color that left an indelible mark. Such impact continues to pulse through the music, the art, and the cultural heritage of the people themselves. In addition to intensive classroom learning, students visited museums and historical landmarks, including, for instance, the New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans African American Museum, River Road African American Museum, and Whitney Plantation.

Through the trips to New Orleans and the historical Ghana, students will, among the many learning outcomes, gain a deep understanding of the meaning of diaspora, forces that shaped the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the African American Civil Rights Movement and Ghana's anti-colonial Independence struggle.



