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De'Jonique Carter named to replace program's first adviser, Adria N. Kimbrough

By Jorden Hampton, Managing editor

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NEW ORLEANS (March 26, 2021) – The new adviser for Dillard's Pre-Law Program says she expects to continue the high admissions rate of DU students into professional school that was begun by its founding adviser.

De'Jonique Carter, who previously was a success coach for Dillard's Legal Education Advancing Diversity, or LEAD, was named to replace Adria N. Kimbrough this year as adviser to the Pre-Law Program.

Kimbrough left DU for a position as student recruiting manager of the Marshall-Motley Scholars Program with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

Kimbrough became the program's first adviser in 2016 to support students who are trying to gain admission into law school and promote diversity within the legal profession. Since then, 100 students have participated in some aspect of the Dillard Pre-Law Program, with 60 students now in the Pre-Law Program, Kimbrough said.

She added that 88 percent of DU students who applied to law school have been admitted, compared with a 51 percent admissions rate of black applicants nationwide in 2017. And already this year, 12 members of the Class of 2021 have been admitted into law school, which Kimbrough called a "record number."

The admitted seniors are from a wide range of majors, she said, including criminal justice, political science, urban studies and public policy, accounting, chemistry and mass communications. According to the American Bar Association, some 5 percent of the nation's lawyers are black, compared with 13.4 percent of the nation's black population. The profession is one of the least diverse.

Carter received a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Southern University at New Orleans and a master's degree from Tulane University. She graduated from Southern University Law Center in May 2020.

The Pre-Law Program is not a major, but a co-curricular program to support students outside of the classroom in achieving their goal of law school admission. DU's Center for Law and Public Interest was created in 2015 to support students interested in law and governmental service. Kimbrough was named as its pre-law adviser the following year.

The Pre-Law Program is available to any Dillard student who expresses interest in attending law school.

Carter said rising juniors are encouraged to participate in the Foundation to LEAD program, a precursor to LEAD, to develop logical and analytical reasoning skills needed for the LSAT. It is a two-week residential program.

The LEAD program, a year-long program, supports pre-law students at Dillard, Xavier University and Southern University at New Orleans as they prepare for and gain admission to law school. The program consists of a 10-week Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) Prep Boot Camp, a year-long mentorship with lawyers and judges, assistance in the application process and individual advising. Carter said, "As a member of the Pre-Law Program, a student is offered opportunities to learn about various law schools and law firms through informational sessions, scholarships and summer programs."

Carter said working in law has been a passion since childhood: "My love for justice has always been there."

Carter lauded Kimbrough's mentorship in her own life, noting, "She paved the way for me and helped me get into law school when no one else would," and reviewed her personal statement. Students in the program praised outgoing adviser Kimbrough for her efforts.

Noah Armstrong, a junior criminal justice major from Dallas, said, "I learned so much about the legal profession and how black people are underrepresented in the legal community ... [Kimbrough] taught us so much about being a better person overall, not just in legal field, but life in general."

Lydia Paige Moffett, a senior political science major from Mobile, Alabama, said, the program has helped her to "fine-tune my speaking abilities while teaching me to command the attention of others."