



PHOTO, 4B
Campus eats and treats

College of Liberal Arts and Communication partners with Aunt Flow Brings free menstrual products to campus

LAILA CASIANO

OPINION EDITOR

When Claire Coder founded Aunt Flow at age 18, her goal was simple: make period products accessible and free in public spaces. Now, Arkansas State University is joining her mission by installing dispensers at the College of Liberal Arts and Communication (CLAC).

Since its founding, Aunt Flow has partnered with hundreds of schools and businesses — including Apple, Meta, Google, Versace, Lego, Princeton University and Netflix — to offer free and accessible menstrual product dispensers within their facilities, as well as to educate and normalize menstruation.

By joining Aunt Flow's mission, CLAC aims to promote menstrual equity and advance awareness of the menstrual movement on campus.

"We want to do whatever is necessary to help all students be successful while they're at Arkansas State University and in the College of Liberal Arts and Communication, and if this is one small way to do that, then we're happy to do it," Cherisse Jones-Branch, Ph.D., said. Jones-Branch, the dean

of Liberal Arts and Communication, said with the help of her staff, they coordinated with Aunt Flow to provide menstrual products for their female students.

She said there has been a significant demand among the student body for free and accessible products, adding it was important for the dean's office to alleviate financial burdens for students.

"It is important," Jones-Branch said. "I know that those items are expensive and people are in college, they have other expenses and they're trying to hold it together as best they can."

In a 2021 study by the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments,

14.2% of undergraduate students who menstruate could not afford menstrual products, highlighting the negative consequences of limited access to period products in institutions of higher education.

The dean also said providing resources like menstrual products aligns with A-State's mission to support students and help them succeed.

"There are young women all over this campus who need those items and for whom



Eret Ledbetter, a senior history major from Stuttgart, Arkansas, grabs a pad from an Aunt Flow dispenser.

they may very well be cost-prohibitive. This is our one way of helping them deal with that expense," Jones-Branch said.

She said she hopes this initiative will educate the campus

community about menstrual equity and period poverty. "I think as the landscape of higher education changes, we need to be looking at all of our student needs," Jones-

Branch said. "These things are very real issues, and we can't wish them away."

CONTINUED:
AUNT FLOW, 4A

Valentine's Day dance scheduled Friday

The Fiesta de Solteros Valentine's Day dance will be hosted from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Pavilion. The event is organized by Hermana Y Hermano.

"Galentine's" Game Day set for Saturday

The Women's Leadership Center is hosting a day of games, free food and fun to celebrate "Galentine's" day. The event will be held from 12 to 3 p.m. at the Mockingbird Room in the Union.

Night of the Arts event to be held Monday

Celebrate African American talent at Night of the Arts from 6 to 8 p.m. at Centennial Hall. The event will feature performances from the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Jonesboro High Steppers, Evolve: The Student Organization and more.

Agriculture Fair scheduled for Tuesday

The 2025 Spring Agriculture Fair will be held from 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. at the Cooper Alumni Center. The fair provides a chance for employers and students to connect regarding job opportunities in the field of agriculture.

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Alpha Kappa Alpha hosts annual Soul Food Sunday event

BENJAMIN MCDOWELL

STAFF WRITER

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., hosted their annual Soul Food Sunday at the Arkansas State University Pavilion. This event allowed A-State students to come together for a free meal, take part in fellowship and listen to a motivational speech.

DeAnna Jones, Alpha Kappa Alpha president, said the event was a welcoming place for all students to get to meet new people.

"It's a way of connecting the campus community and local community while indulging in delicious food," Jones said. "It serves as an opportunity for us to serve others and be a blessing to someone who may just miss a good home-cooked meal."

Additionally, she said this traditional event has occurred in the Eta Upsilon Chapter for several years. She said this event was a unique way to uplift and create companionship, while also providing powerful words of encouragement.

Soul food is traditionally associated with African Americans of the southern United States, created to help bring their families closely together to share memories and love.

Bryson Brown, a sophomore biotechnology major from Memphis, said soul food is a common meal in his everyday life, especially on Sundays.

"It's always been that kind of staple to where it's good for your soul," Brown said. "I feel like that food gets you closer to family and gets your entire family closer to God."

Brown said he felt that soul food could help the community in many ways that people may have never thought of, through community engagement and trust.

"Seeing how the recent climate is changing economically and socially, it's good for us to know that we are here for each other, and to be able to have a space where we can gather and talk to each other about certain things," Brown said.

Jonathan McElroy, a senior computer science major from West Memphis, Arkansas, said soul food can have great benefits in people's lives.

"I think everybody will benefit from it," McElroy said. "Soul Food is known for hitting the spot, it's good for your soul. It's in the name."

Amaya Kindle, a first-year communication disorders major from Sherwood, Arkansas, said she was excited to attend Soul Food Sunday.

"I think this event will impact me positively," Kindle said. "Getting to meet new people and experience a new culture that I have not been a part of before is something that I'm excited about."

Kelsey Garrison, a first-year hospitality management



Shunqetta Cunningham, CEO and lead strategist of Kharis Group Consulting, speaks at the Soul Food Sunday event. Cunningham served as the event's motivational speaker.

major from Flippin, Arkansas, said she encourages people to try soul food.

"People who have never thought about it before would benefit a lot," Garrison said. "It is something that comes out from the whole world and soul food is not just something that you could just pick up on the side of the road."

Shunqetta Cunningham, CEO and lead strategist of Kharis Group Consulting, was the event's motivational speaker. She is a nonprofit consultant, social entrepreneur and professional public speaker.

Cunningham said she encourages everyone to show compassion and respect valuing

the moments of fellowship, soul food and community.

"Each and every day is an opportunity to be compassionate. You may not always like the person that's speaking in front of you, but you can still be respectful," Cunningham said.

During her speech, Cunningham spoke about the importance of unity and remaining positive in response to the country's current social climate. She said if so many people can come together to advocate to keep TikTok, they can also come together to combat other social issues.

"Americans were walking and having this social media temper tantrum and warning

to go and shut down the government," Cunningham said. "I needed that same energy."

Additionally, she said social media was desensitizing people's compassion.

"You may not always like the person that's speaking in front of you, but you can still be respectful," Cunningham said.

Jones said soul food can impact people's lives spiritually, connecting people for years, which is why they continue to host this event.

"The idea of soul food is more of a feeling, an emotion, it's a way of showing that food can be more than nourishment, but it can paint a beautiful picture of love, history and pride," Jones said.