



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### LeMoyne-Owen College Pledges to Establish a Tobacco-Free Campus

**MEMHPIS, TN** – (Oct. 5, 2016) LeMoyne-Owen College has received a grant from Truth Initiative to establish a comprehensive tobacco-free policy on the campus. The school joins 46 other Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) across the country who have pledged to make their schools tobacco-free.

A task force comprised of LeMoyne-Owen students, faculty and staff will assess tobacco use on campus, work with the College to adopt a comprehensive campus-wide tobacco-free policy, and host smoking cessation classes in partnership with the Shelby County Health Department.

“Working with HBCUs, we can reach young adults at risk of starting to smoke cigarettes and alternative tobacco products such as little cigars and cigarillos,” said Robin Koval, CEO and President of Truth Initiative. “HBCUs are home to students and faculty who deserve to enjoy healthy tobacco-free environments. We are thrilled to be working with campuses around the country to make that happen.”

Michael Robinson, Social and Behavioral Sciences Division Chair at LeMoyne-Owen College, agrees that LeMoyne-Owen is an ideal campus for the Truth Initiative project. “LeMoyne-Owen is dedicated to improving the overall health and wellness of the campus and surrounding community,” he said. “Addressing an issue that is a major contributor to the three leading causes of death among African Americans is an excellent opportunity for us to have a meaningful impact.”

Robinson adds that a college campus is ripe with creative learning opportunities that hopefully will lead to decreasing health disparities among African Americans. One such example is a field trip where 60 LOC students, faculty and staff will travel to the Ames Plantation Heritage Festival ([www.amesplantation.org](http://www.amesplantation.org)) October 8 to witness tobacco curing and discuss tobacco production and marketing with a soil scientist. The delegation also will view historical presentations from over 175 folk artists, historical interpreters, musicians and Civil War reenactors.

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Robinson hopes the excursion will improve the students' understanding of tobacco and its impact on social injustice. "We want to transform how our students think about tobacco and what better way than to have them see how it is grown, harvested and processed and the entire economy behind it."

Tobacco is the number one cause of preventable death in the U.S. Each year, approximately 47,000 African Americans die from smoking-related disease. Although the number of smoke and tobacco-free colleges in the United States has more than tripled from 446 campuses in 2010 to nearly 1,500 today, the majority of the 105 federally-recognized HBCUs in the U.S. do not have comprehensive smoke- or tobacco-free policies to protect their students and faculty from the dangers of tobacco use and secondhand smoke. Truth Initiative is working with HBCUs to increase African Americans' knowledge and awareness of the hazards of tobacco use and second hand smoke exposure.

The following are the 46 other HBCU campuses that have pledged to go tobacco-free in collaboration with Truth Initiative:

1. Alcorn State University – Alcorn, Mississippi
2. American Baptist College, Nashville, TN
3. Arkansas Baptist College – Little Rock, Arkansas
4. Benedict College – Columbia, South Carolina
5. Bluefield State – Bluefield, West Virginia
6. Bowie State University – Bowie, Maryland
7. Cheyney University – Cheyney, Pennsylvania
8. Coahoma Community College – Clarksdale, Mississippi
9. Concordia College, Selma, AL
10. Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville, NC
11. Fisk University – Nashville, Tennessee
12. Florida A&M University – Tallahassee, Florida
13. Florida Memorial University – Miami Gardens, Florida
14. Hinds Community College – Utica, Mississippi
15. Howard University – Washington, D.C.
16. The Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, GA
17. Jackson State University – Jackson, Mississippi
18. Jarvis Christian College – Hawkins, Texas
19. Lane College, Jackson, TN
20. Lincoln University – Lincoln University, Pennsylvania
21. Meharry Medical College – Nashville, Tennessee
22. Mississippi Valley State University – Itta Bena, Mississippi
23. Morehouse College, Atlanta, GA
24. Morris College – Sumter, South Carolina
25. Norfolk State University – Norfolk, Virginia
26. North Carolina Central University – Durham, North Carolina
27. North Carolina A&T State University – Greensboro, North Carolina
28. Prairie View A&M University – Prairie View, Texas

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29. Rust College – Holly Springs, Mississippi
30. South Carolina State University, Orangeburg, SC
31. Southwestern Christian College – Terrell, Texas
32. Spelman College – Atlanta, Georgia
33. Shaw University - Raleigh, North Carolina
34. St. Augustine’s University - Raleigh, North Carolina
35. Shorter College - North Little Rock, Arkansas
36. Talladega College - Talladega, Alabama.
37. Tennessee State University – Nashville, Tennessee
38. Tougaloo College, Jackson, MS
39. Texas College – Tyler, Texas
40. University of the District of Columbia – Washington, D.C.
41. University of Maryland - Eastern Shore – Princess Anne, Maryland
42. University of the Virgin Islands, St. Thomas, VI
43. Virginia University of Lynchburg, Lynchburg, VA
44. Winston Salem State University, Winston-Salem, NC
45. Wilberforce University, Central, OH
46. Wiley College, Marshall, TX

Truth Initiative is a national public health organization that is inspiring tobacco-free lives and building a culture where all youth and young adults reject tobacco. For additional information about the Tobacco-Free HBCU Initiative, visit [www.truthinitiative.org](http://www.truthinitiative.org).

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**About LeMoyne-Owen College**

LeMoyne-Owen College is a four-year liberal arts institution that prepares students to become critical thinkers, to lead productive and successful lives, and to make positive contributions to their respective communities. LeMoyne-Owen occupies a beautifully landscaped campus about ten minutes from downtown Memphis and one block from the Stax Museum and Academy of American Soul Music. With a rich heritage that dates back to 1862, the College promotes diversity in its student body, staff and faculty. Its core curriculum, which emphasizes a multicultural education, is a national model shown to build student confidence. The student is challenged by a rigorous course of study in English communication, literature, African American history, humanities, natural science, biological science, mathematics, social science, and lifetime fitness—all while pursuing the requirements of his or her academic major.