

EDITOR'S PICK

Metropolis student inducted into WKU initiative

BY PLANET STAFF

Oct 29, 2020

Isaiah Hart II of Metropolis, was among 14 students inducted Sunday into the Why Knot Us Black Male Initiative.

The Cynthia & George Nichols III Intercultural Student Engagement Center (ISEC) at Western Kentucky University conducted the ceremony.

Why Knot Us is a targeted approach by ISEC to address the recruitment and retention of Black males. The program will offer a variety of activities including a monthly networking luncheon, featuring a community member as a guest speaker. One day during the month, students will “Dress for Success” and wear their black suits and ties. This connects to the name of the program, Why Knot Us, in which knot is a metaphor for a tie and the bond that the program plans to build.

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“During the summer, our ISEC team met and we had a desire to increase our programming specifically with the minority students,” said Student Success Program Coordinator Lamario Moore. “We noticed that the Black student enrollment has been on a decline at the university for several years. In 2018, WKU only enrolled 97 Black males. The Black male graduation rate is currently 62%, and this was a cause for concern.”

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Dr. Martha Sales, executive director of ISEC and TRIO Programs, met with Cynthia and George Nichols immediately after the meeting to discuss what resulted in support for the current Why Knot Us Black Male Initiative.



The image shows two women from the waist up. The woman on the left is wearing a dark grey sweatshirt with the text: "DON'T PISS OFF OLD PEOPLE THE OLDER WE GET THE LESS 'LIFE IN PRISON' IS A DETERRENT". The woman on the right is wearing a light grey hoodie with the text: "in a world where you can be anything..... Be Kind".

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ISEC serves as a hands-on recruitment and retention resource for the many cultural, religious/spiritual and identity groups reflected within the WKU community. The center provides student support services to foster academic success and sponsors culturally-based celebratory events. Why Knot Us adds to the work of the center since its purpose is to

increase the sense of belonging of Black males through intentional programmatic needs. Through this, they will improve retention, impact, and quality of life through professional and personal development opportunities.

“The goals of the program are to increase admission and graduation rates at WKU; improve faculty, staff, and student relationships; reduce the attrition rate of Black males at WKU; promote Black male involvement in student organizations,” Moore said. “The biggest thing that we want them to take away from the program is that there is a support system here for you on campus.”

Why Knot Us is open to any undergraduate Black male at the university. Graduate students, faculty and staff are invited to participate in the program as mentors.

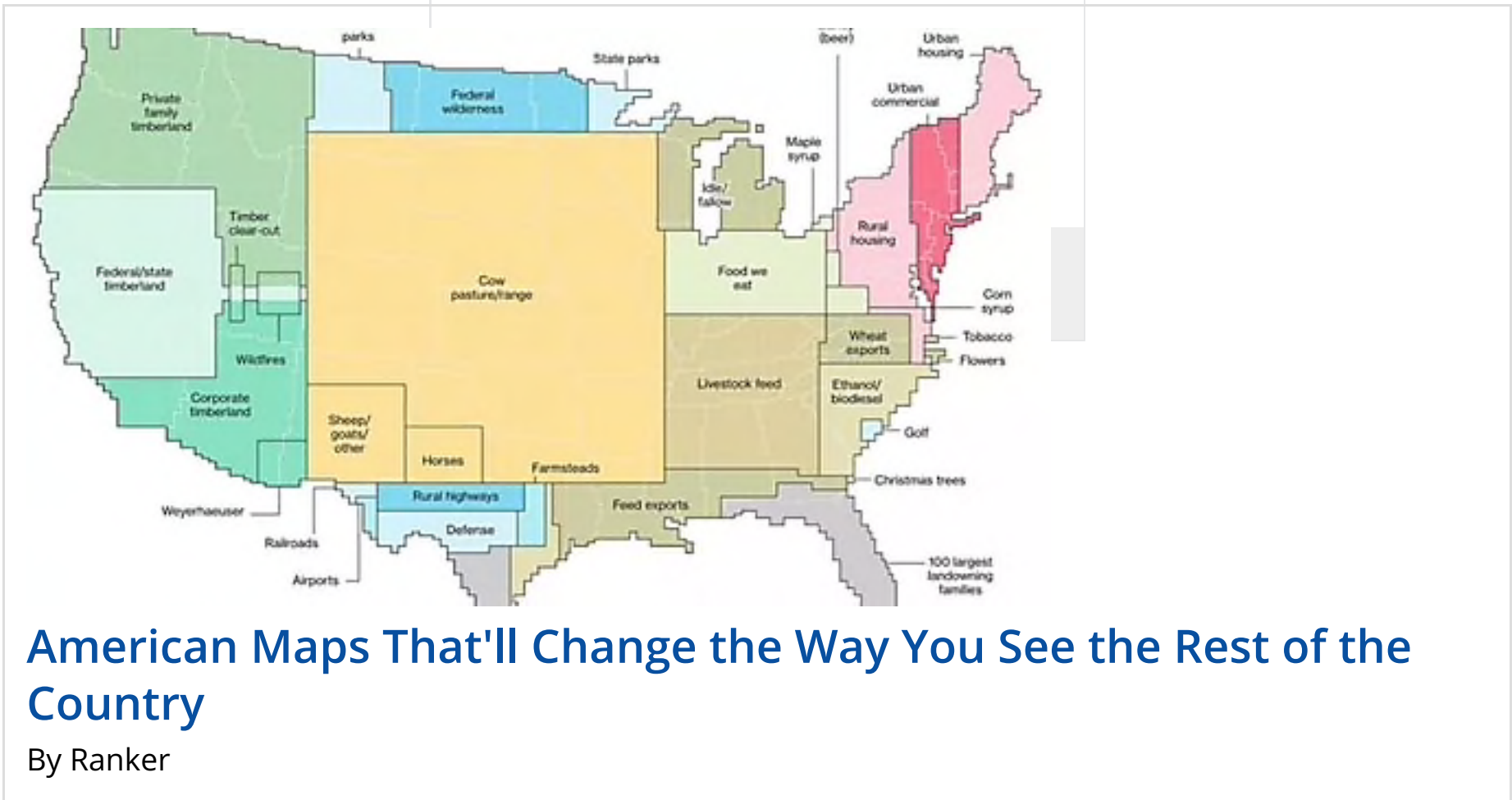
The Why Knot Us program will also partner with NPHC organizations and Building Men of Worth to facilitate Barbershop Talks and other social events. The men will participate in a “Read and Lead” series. Each semester, they will read an assigned book together and meet at different places in Bowling Green to discuss the book. At the end of each academic year, there will be a Black Male Leadership Conference for Black males on campus, local high schools and in the community.



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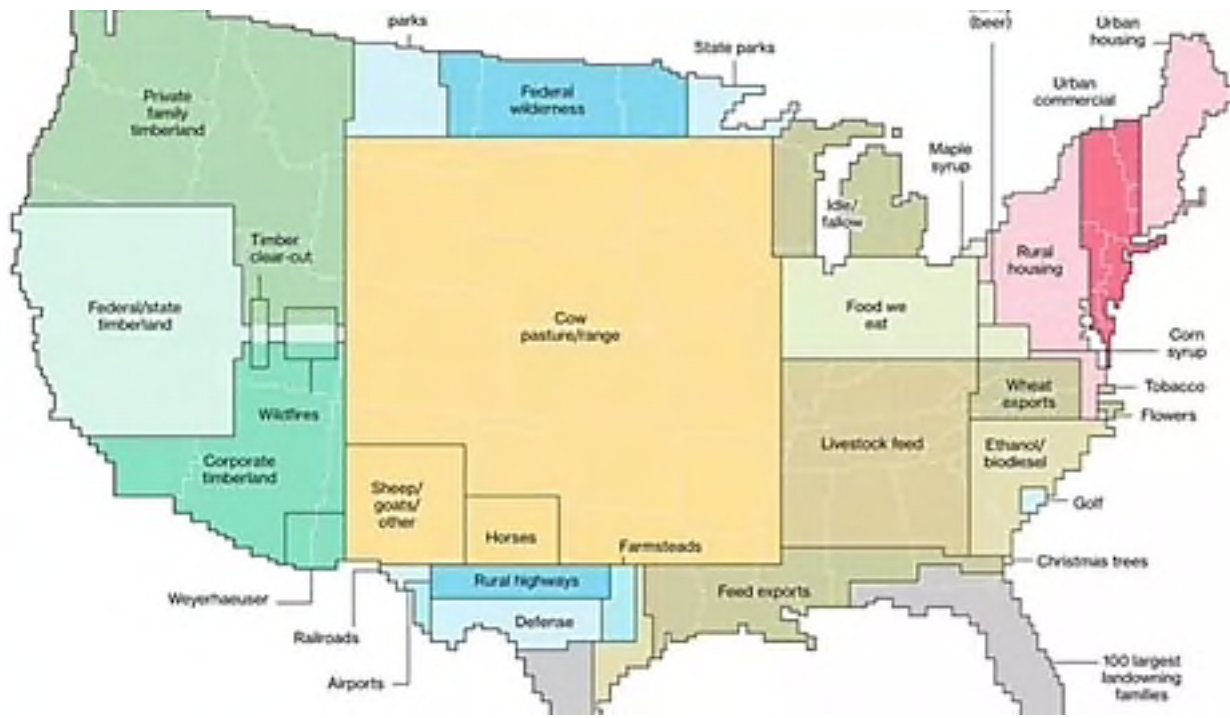
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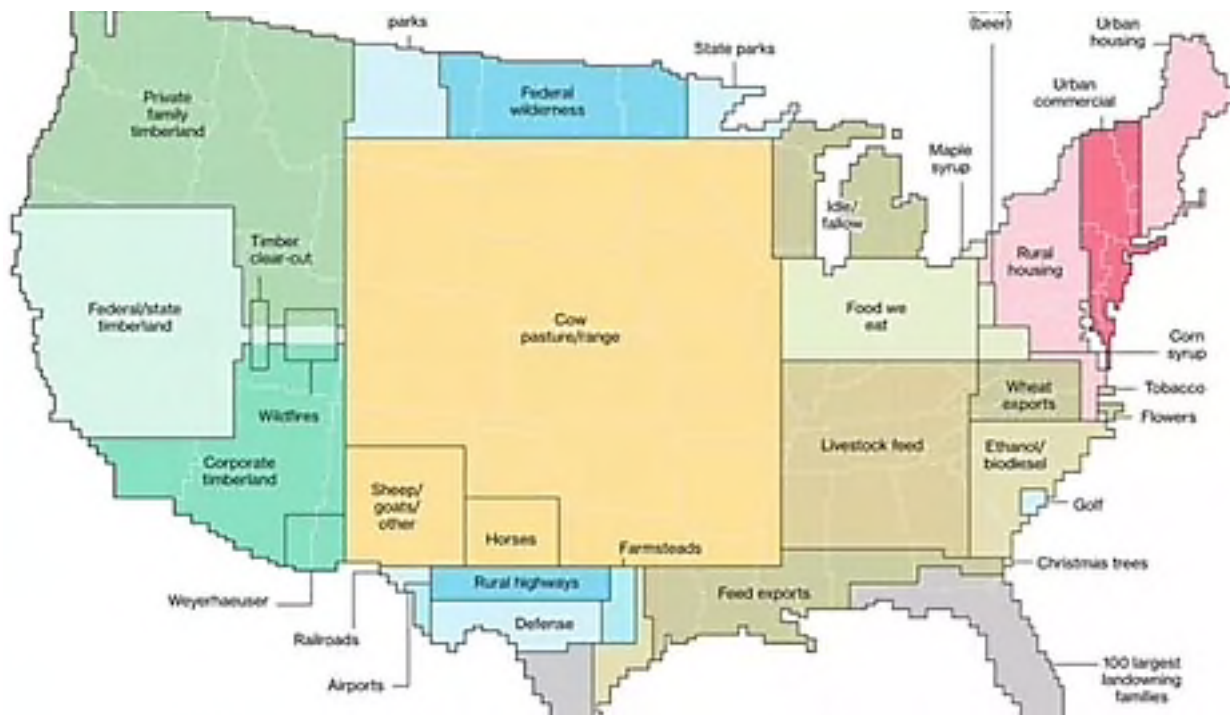
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