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Avon Foundation for Women Awards Campus Grant to Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University for the 2015 Avon Campus Grants to Activate Bystanders to Reduce Sexual Assault and Dating Abuse

Grant to fund preventive education on dating abuse and violence through Student Health Services

Tallahassee, FL — Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) has received a $10,000 grant from the Avon Foundation for Women through its Speak Out Against Domestic Violence initiative. The grant will fund the Student Health Services at FAMU to activate bystanders to reduce sexual assault, dating abuse and stalking. This is the first year FAMU has received funding from the Avon Foundation for Women.

The grant is one of 25 Avon campus grants totaling $250,000 awarded to colleges nationwide to fund programs focused on preventive education on dating abuse and violence, sexual assault, stalking and the promotion of healthy relationships, as well as offer local resources and provide referrals for community-based domestic violence experts. The grant also supports educator training, materials and support sessions about healthy relationships.

“I am excited about this grant; we are proud that the Avon Foundation for Women shares our mission and has chosen to support our program. With these funds we will be able to obtain training in the Green Dot program which is a nationally recognized program offering training in Bystander Intervention. We hope to participate in the training this fall and be able to offer the program to our students during the spring semester. Our goal is to obtain trainer certification for two staff persons, train 100 students in bystander intervention strategies, and reach 50 additional students/faculty/staff with overview speeches. Students receiving the training are campus leaders, so we expect to monitor social media traffic to assess for dissemination of prevention and bystander messages to additional students,” said Tanya Tatum, MHA, Director, FAMU Student Health Services and Principal Investigator for the award.

Tatum is an experienced healthcare administrator with a history of developing new and innovative programs and services, facilitating many collaborative relationships to enhance services to students, and working in underserved communities. An Ohio native and scuba instructor, she had early aspirations of working with Jacques Cousteau as a marine biologist. After receiving a biology degree from Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida, she was employed in biological research. A desire to spend more time with people rather than lab animals, led Tanya to earn a master’s degree in healthcare administration from Ohio University (Athens). She spent more than 11 years working in Appalachia managing inpatient and outpatient mental health and alcohol and drug services. In 2001, Tanya moved to Florida from North Carolina where she served as Deputy Director for public mental health, disability and alcohol and drug treatment services.

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Young women ages 16-24 experience the highest rates of dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. Since the Clery Act was passed in 1990, a variety of initiatives have been developed to educate college administrators on the issues of gender violence, particularly sexual assault, and to provide resources for college campuses to reduce violence. Although much has been learned, there is a great deal more that can be accomplished to implement effective campus-wide policies and prevention practices to prevent and reduce incidences of violence.

In April 2014, the White House issued NOT ALONE: The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, highlighting steps school administrators can and must take to honor their obligation to protect all students from sexual assault and violence. Recognizing that school administrators bear the burden of responsibility to provide safe communities for all students, the Avon Foundation partnered with Futures Without Violence to develop Guidelines for Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence in Higher Education. These guidelines highlight best practices for creating and promoting a campus norm of interpersonal respect and non-violent relationships, and can be downloaded for free.

Students must also be part of the solution to help prevent violence perpetrated against and by their peers. With this new grant the Avon Foundation has funded campus dating abuse programs to educate significant numbers of student groups and faculty to create awareness, to recognize the warning signs of abuse and to encourage students to safely intervene to help prevent violence.

About FAMU

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) is one of the largest single-campus historically Black colleges or universities in the nation. The University blends a strong research focus with a commitment to economic empowerment and community service.

The University was founded in 1887 as the State Normal School for Colored Students. Today, FAMU continues its mission to be a best-in-class, land-grant institution with a global reach that focuses on science, technology, research, engineering, agriculture, and mathematics.

FAMU contributes to a strong workforce by providing a high-quality, affordable education to students from diverse backgrounds.

What distinguishes FAMU from other universities is its legacy of providing access to a high-quality, affordable education to many students who otherwise may never have the opportunity to fulfill their dreams of getting a college degree. The CollegeNet and PayScale Social Mobility Index (SMI) have recognized FAMU for its commitment to providing pathways for social and economic mobility.

SMI ranks FAMU third among all colleges and universities in the nation for fostering social and economic opportunity. FAMU is also one of the top institutions for providing a high-quality education at an affordable price in Florida, according to The College Database (2013).

U.S. News & World Report lists FAMU as the nation's top public historically Black college or university (HBCU) for 2015. The U.S. News & World Report recognized FAMU as one of the "Best National Universities" for 2014. The Princeton Review listed FAMU among the "Best in the Southeast" colleges.

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Avon Foundation for Women and Speak Out Against Domestic Violence

The Avon Foundation for Women is the world’s largest corporate-affiliated philanthropy focused on issues that matter most to women. Since its inception in 1955, the Avon Foundation has promoted or aided charitable, scientific, educational, and humanitarian activities, with a special emphasis on activities that improve the lives of women and their families. Through 2014, Avon global philanthropy, led by the Avon Foundation, has contributed nearly $1 billion in over 50 countries. Today, Avon philanthropy focuses on funding breast cancer research and advancing access to quality care through the Avon Breast Cancer Crusade, and efforts to reduce domestic and gender violence through its Speak Out Against Domestic Violence program. Visit www.avonfoundation.org for more information.

For more information about relationship abuse, please visit www.breakthecycle.org. To receive immediate help, please contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or the National Dating Abuse Helpline 1-866-331-9474

To learn more about the Avon Foundation for Women, visit www.avonfoundation.org, where you can access information about Speak Out Against Domestic Violence.

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