The 2009 Spring Commencement Exercises at Florida A&M University brought a new air of celebration as the grand tradition of “cap and gown” returned to the campus for the first time in many years. Highlighting the event were three dynamic celebrity commencement speakers namely, the Honorable William B. Clinton, the Honorable Kendrick Meeks and world renown CNN journalist, Soledad O’Brien.

On Sunday, May 3, 2009, at 6 p.m., graduates from the College of Engineering Sciences, Technology and Agriculture joined the line of march into the new Multipurpose Center Teaching Gymnasium. CESTA’s graduating class included 59 scholars. Fifty one received their baccalaureate degree; one (1) person received the master’s degree; and seven (7) Navy ROTC candidates were commissioned as Ensigns in the United States Navy.

Dr. Makola Abdullah, Dean and Director, and the faculty and staff in CESTA salute the following members of the FAMU Spring Class of 2009:

**BACHELOR OF SCIENCE**

**AGRI-BUSINESS** - Marcus Akeem Braynon, Bryson Rashad Jackson, Shawn Johnson, Jashon A. Jones, Jelani A. Pratt, James M. Petion, Shehu Salam Tagoe, and Qudus O. Yusuff

**ANIMAL SCIENCE** - Marcitta Lynnette Barrington, Ashly Nicole Bell, Marlesia Lalzay Brooks, Renata Nicole Headen, Aisha Treneice Lyons, Latasha J. T. Lyte, and Shariane Adaeze Onwurah

**BIOLOGICAL AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS ENGINEERING** - Owen Julius Duncan*

**CIVIL ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY** - Myrlea A. Cole, Gregory Dorson, Takena M. Knight, and Charlan Aleya Waldron


***Summa Cum Laude  **Magna Cum Laude  *Cum Laude

**LANDSCAPE DESIGN MANAGEMENT** - Aldrick Jerome Sholtz, Jason Donald Stafford*, and Adam J. Thompson

**ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURE** - Rueben DeCastro Gomez, Jr.*

**INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURE AND BUSINESS** - Kimberly Latrice Black and DeAnna C. King

**MASTER OF SCIENCE**

**AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES** - Lanfang Yu

Title of Thesis: Healing Gardens: A Participatory Study on Therapeutic Benefits and Users’ Satisfaction

**NAVY ROTC** - Gustavo Aguilar, Lauren J. Ellison, Angela N. Idleburgh, Eric A James, Timothy P. Kirsch, Martin J. Kuhnle, Charles M. Manchion.

Commencement Photographs
Compliments of Keith Pope, University Photographer.
On Tuesday, May 5, 2009, Florida A&M University (FAMU) hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially open a new Animal Healthcare Complex, which will support the animal science, research and extension programs in the FAMU College of Engineering Sciences, Technology and Agriculture (CESTA). A host of dignitaries attended the ceremony, including representatives from government, land-grant institutions, veterinary medicine professionals, and FAMU alumni.

“The best is yet to come,” said FAMU President James H. Ammons. “African Americans represent only 1.9 percent of the veterinary medicine profession. The total representation of minorities in the profession is 7.7 percent. This new animal healthcare facility will impact FAMU’s ability to help address a critical national shortage of minorities in the field of veterinary medicine, and related disciplines.”

With the opening of the new complex, FAMU is one among only 11 other major universities in the nation that will offer a four-year degree in veterinary technology. Also FAMU will be the only institution in the country offering a program that emphasizes regulatory education and training. The first classes in this program begin in the fall 2009.

Makola Abdullah, Ph.D., dean and director of land-grant programs in CESTA, explained, “The new facility will further strengthen the our college to accomplish the mission of FAMU and CESTA as an 1890 land-grant institution.”

Dr. Ray Mobley, director, FAMU Cooperative Extension Program, was a driving force in the development of the facility. He remarked, “The impact on student training and community outreach will be greatly increased. This reflects a true partnership effort between FAMU and our USDA partners.

Charles H. Bronson, commissioner of agriculture for the State of Florida, remarked that “The future in the United States depends on facilities like the Animal Healthcare Complex. The development of facilities like this one shows FAMU’s commitment to producing the safest food supply in the country.”

Dr. Jocelyn Martin, a FAMU/Tuskegee alumna, expressed, “I am definitely proud to be a Rattler from CESTA! I just left FAMU in 2005, and to see it expand so much since then, especially in my area of study, is just wonderful.”
The new multi-functional complex will greatly enhance instructional delivery and learning for students enrolled in the animal science program options offered in the FAMU College of Engineering Sciences, Technology and Agriculture. In the fall of 2009, the college will offer a new animal science option in veterinary technology, and the facility will enhance the educational experience and training for these new students immensely. The educational and experiential training of the program will encompass vital aspects of food safety and biosecurity, and production management. The facility will also aid in maintaining proper herd health measures required by the Animal Welfare Act for those animals currently residing at the FAMU Research and Extension Center.

Funding for the new facility was obtained through grants from the United States Department of Agriculture Animal Plant Health Inspection Service and the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES).

The state-of-the-art complex includes an animal science clinical laboratory, research facilities, upgraded technology and conference center, and custom designed small ruminant and cattle facilities. Academic, research and extension educational activities will take place interchangeably at the facility.

One component of the complex includes a fully functional surgery suite with Polycom capability to allow students to view and participate in surgical procedures while simultaneously broadcasting the live surgical procedures through internet/electronic transfer to other institutions around the world.

For more information, please contact: Dr. Thomas Peterson, Extension Veterinarian, 202-H Perry-Paige Building, South; College of Engineering Sciences, Technology and Agriculture, Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, FL 32307; Telephone: 850-412-5117; Email: thomas.peterson@famu.edu.
A cargo of “excellence” was transported to Atlanta, Georgia, to showcase the outstanding research efforts of the Florida A&M University College of Engineering Sciences, Technology and Agriculture at the 15th Biennial Research Symposium sponsored by the Agricultural Research Directors, Inc., on March 28 thru April 1, 2009.

Students, faculty and administrators from the 1890 land-grant institutions participated in the symposium which is a scholarly forum designed for interaction, knowledge sharing and networking for expanded partnerships. For 36 years, the Association of Research Directors, Inc., has showcased the exemplary talents and achievements of undergraduate and graduate students to support basic and applied research through the 1890 community.

The theme for this year was “1890 Research: Sustainable Solutions for the 21st Century.” Nineteen students from FAMU attended. Approximately 250 student presentations were made a variety categories. Three FAMU graduate student won 1st and 2nd place recognition for poster presentations.

Thaddeus Payton, (center column) a graduate student in CESTA, won first place in the Emerging Technologies categories. His poster was entitled: “Functional Analyses of Key Flavonoid Genes in North American Native Muscadina Variety ‘Noble.’” Payton is working to earn his master’s degree in agricultural sciences (plant science).

Lissa Reid, (top right) a CESTA graduate student majoring in plant science, also won first place recognition in the Renewable Resources and Environmental Stewardship category. Her poster was entitled the “Evaluation of Extracts of Native and Non-Native Plant Species for the Control of Cogongrass (Imperata Cylindrica L.).”

Gideon A. Nnaji (center column 3) won 2nd place recognition for a poster on the “Effects of Hydrological Processes on the Suwannee River Coastal Ecosystem,” in the Renewable Resources and Environmental Stewardship category. Nnaji is pursuing a masters degree in environmental engineering from the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, and is conducting his research in collaboration with Margaret Gitau, Ph.D. FAMU’s Center for Water and Air Quality.

Dr. George Cooper, President, South Carolina State University and a FAMU-CESTA alumnus was honored at the Awards Banquet as an Exemplary Leader by the Association of Agricultural Research Directors, Inc. Dr. Cooper was recognized for outstanding support of the Research Symposium and the 1890 land-grant system throughout his long history with the United States Department of Agriculture.
CESTA Grad Accepts Internship with the Army Corps of Engineers

A very important news flash came as the icing on the cake at the CESTA Spring Graduate Reception. With pride and excitement, Daniel Francois, an electronic engineering technology graduate in the FAMU Class of 2009 (Spring), announced that he will soon begin a two-year internship with the Army Corps of Engineers in Wiesbaden, Germany.

When the native of Fort Pierce, Florida, was asked how he came upon this unique opportunity, Daniel said that he was in the right place at the right time while attending the Black Engineers of the Year Award Conference in February (Baltimore, MD). During this conference, he met with representatives from the Army Corps of Engineers who were seeking senior engineering majors interested in obtaining internships after graduation.

The internship will provide participants with extensive hands-on experience in architecture and construction, mechanical and electrical engineering. Upon successfully completing the internship, he will be offered a civilian position with the Army Corps of Engineers in either Europe or the United States.

Reflecting on his experience at FAMU and CESTA, Francois remembered that his classmate recruited him to enroll in the college when he decided to transfer to the university from a community college. During his collegiate career, Daniel expressed that he really appreciated the training he received at FAMU. “I was very impressed by the faculty, especially Professor Leon Prosper, who thoroughly prepared his students for the professional world through his course requirements that included weekly presentations.”

Already planning for his future, Francois aspires to continue his education. He feels that the engineering field offers immeasurable opportunities to young people who seek to build a rewarding professional career. In the next ten years, Francois would like to have earned his master’s degree and at least have started working toward earning his doctorate degree. A young man of big dreams, Francois anticipates thoroughly experiencing the engineering profession and maybe later teaching and/or coaching.

PHOTO: Daniel Francois (center), FAMU electronic engineering technology graduate from Fort Pierce, FL at the CESTA Spring Graduates Reception (May 2) with Dr. Carolyn Collins (left), former President of the FAMU National Alumni Association and CESTA alumna; and Dr. Makola Abdullah (right), Dean and Director, FAMU College of Engineering Sciences, Technology and Agriculture.
Jocelyn Martin, D.V.M., a FAMU graduate (Spring, 2005), recently completed her studies in veterinary medicine at the Tuskegee University School of Veterinary Medicine (TUSVM) on May 10, 2009. She is also the recipient of the Madden-Richburg-Judkins Award given at the Annual Awards Ceremony held at (TUSVM) on May 8, 2009, in Tuskegee, Alabama. This award is given to a student who works while attending Veterinary School at TUSVM and is successful to graduate on time with fellow classmates.

Dr. Martin was delighted as she stated, “It is an honor to be chosen as the first recipient of the Madden-Richburg-Judkins Award. I was thrilled to receive the award in front of my classmates and professors. It was especially meaningful to know that the award is designated for students who worked while attending veterinary school at TUSVM.”

Dr. Martin performed her veterinary internship with the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, in Gainesville, Florida. She successfully passed the National Veterinary Board Examination and is

Reflecting upon her journey, Martin noted, “Because of my decision to work, the next phase of my career plan will be seamless. I have accepted the position of Pathology Intern at TUSVM. I am excited about the transition from being a student to being a member of the Pathology Department. I am looking forward to next year’s award ceremony and recipient. It is my hope that this award becomes a permanent part of the Annual TUSVM Awards Ceremony. Again, it has been an honor to have been chosen as the first recipient of this wonderful award.”

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Article submitted by Uford A. Madden, DVM, MS, PhD, DABT, Assistant Professor and Extension Food Safety Specialist, Extension and Outreach Program, College of Engineering Sciences, Technology and Agriculture Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, Florida.
On Saturday, May 9, 2009, Cherissa Abdul-Hamid was among 172 students at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine who donned their white laboratory coat at the Professional Coating Ceremony as a symbol of their transition from pre-clinical to the clinical phase of their studies.

Cherissa Abdul-Hamid is a FAMU alumna who earned her Bachelor of Science degree in animal science in Spring 2007. At the ceremony, Miss Abdul-Hamid was coated by Dr. Uford A. Madden, Extension Veterinarian and Assistant Professor at FAMU. Madden was her instructor for several animal science courses while enrolled at FAMU. Several representatives from FAMU were present for the coating ceremony including: Dr. Verian Thomas, Director of Agricultural Sciences; Dr. Caroline Odewumi, Assistant Professor/FAMU; and Dr. Lee Anderson, Program Leader for Animal Science Program. Miss Abdul-Hamid was also supported by her immediate and extended family members who were in attendance to share this special occasion with her.

Miss Cherissa Abdul-Hamid is a native of St. Maarten. She speaks English and Dutch, and is proficient in Spanish and Papiamentu. Her early aspirations focused on human medicine. However, in 2002, she had an opportunity to work in a veterinary clinic for three months. This experience influenced her to pursue a career in veterinary medicine.

She graduated from Milton Peters College (MPC) with a Vwoortgezette Wetenschapelijk Onderwijs (V.W.O.) diploma, which is the highest level of high school education offered in the Dutch system. Obtaining her VWO diploma helped her prepare for independent study and time management, two aspects that strongly enhanced her preparation for a career in veterinary medicine.

Upon enrolling in the FAMU College of Engineering Sciences, Technology and Agriculture, Miss Abdul-Hamid was exposed to various animal science courses that have contributed to her educational development. Also, as a member of the Animal Science Club, she gained invaluable experiences working with other people.

During the summer of 2004, she participated in a two-month internship at the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Florida. Abdul-Hamid stated, “The experiences that I gained during the internship confirmed that I wanted to continue my education and pursue a career in veterinary medicine. Also, this helped me build on the training gained from my animal science courses at FAMU.”

“Willingly accepted the challenges that I encountered during my study—taking initiative, caring for animals, working with others in various areas of study -- to acquire the needed skills and training that are required in my aspirations to become a veterinarian.”

Cherissa concluded, “Overall, these experiences will enhance my abilities to be able to make significant contributions to the promotion of health issues, disease management, control, and prevention for both animal and human welfare when I return to work, hopefully, in St. Maarten and promote veterinary medicine among students.”

Miss Abdul-Hamid has always enjoyed being close to nature, and she has a great love for the ocean. For these reasons, she has special interest in horses and other animals, including marine animals. She believes that, upon completion of the veterinary medicine program, she will gain the necessary knowledge, training and skills to achieve her career objectives and personal goals to become a practicing veterinarian.

The supporters of the St. Maarten Partnership Agreement, and the faculty at Florida A&M University, join hands to applaud and congratulate Miss Cherissa Abdul-Hamid on her achievements in her professional career.
Natasha emerged as a “CESTA pacesetter” while a graduate student when she became the first student to participate in an educational partnership between FAMU/CESTA and the Sandals Beaches Resorts of Jamaica initiated by the Office of International Agriculture in 1999. Since that time, Natasha Bruton has continued to climb the ladder of success.

A native of Tallahassee, Florida, Bruton earned both her bachelor’s degree in agribusiness (1998) and the master of science degree in agricultural sciences (2001) from CESTA. For the past seven years, Natasha has been employed as an agricultural statistician with the United States Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service.

“CESTA was the foundation of my successful professional career. The rigorous coursework, numerous internships, oral presentations, and many experiences, both good and bad, helped develop me into the person I am today,” expressed Bruton about her college experience. “I gained the values of leadership and self-determination.”

At FAMU, Natasha was very active in extracurricular activities including: Gamma Alpha Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated (Grammateus); MANNRS; CESTA Graduate Student Club (President). She said, “Being a part of these clubs/organizations was rewarding for me, because I learned a great deal from these relationships and experiences that helped me develop skill in teamwork and allowed me opportunities to value new perspectives.”

Her most memorable experiences as a scholar in CESTA include the internship opportunity in Jamaica during the first year of the Sandals Beaches Resort Exchange Program. “It was one of those opportunities that I could not let pass. Being able to experience another culture was amazing.”

“Another memorable experience was when I successfully defended my Master’s Thesis. This challenge showed me that hard work and dedication do pay off.” Her thesis title was “The Effects of Proximity to Swine Operations on Residential Property Values in Onslow County, North Carolina.”

When asked about her career goals and what her dream job is, Natasha responded, “I am keeping my options open. If the opportunity arises to do something different than what I’m doing now, I will take accept the challenge and go for it. I have been contemplating the option of going back to school to pursue a Ph.D. degree in the area of agriculture economics; however, no definite plans have been set. As an alumna of FAMU/CESTA, Bruton was eager to give words of wisdom to students. “I would encourage any student entering the field of agriculture, or any other area of study, to take advantage of all opportunities that are available to them. These opportunities offer new perspectives, began valuable relationships and networks to increase the resources available for you to succeed.

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Jabari Gayles, agribusiness graduate from Miami, Florida, beams with excitement when sharing his vision for life after FAMU. Graduating on December 12, 2008 with his bachelor’s degree in agribusiness, Gayles has designed his ultimate career path to sow seeds of style that grow into a new fashion culture bearing his signature.

Gayles enrolled in CESTA through the School of General Studies. He arrived on “The Hill” with a dream to pursue a career in fashion design, which he has been doing since he was 13 years old. Although he first looked at pursuing a degree in business administration, he stated that the advice of a FAMU employee helped him take a closer look at the agribusiness program to gain essential skills and knowledge needed to succeed as an entrepreneur. Jabari expressed that the agribusiness faculty helped him gain a stronger understanding of business and economics.

“This was what I needed to learn to accomplish my goal to establish myself as a clothing designer with a company ranked among the top four fashion houses in the clothing industry,” stated Gayles.

Upon graduation, Jabari says he would like to work in marketing for a design company in New York or Atlanta to gain experience in the field. “I was not familiar with the agricultural side of business when enrolling in the college. However, I have gained a deeper understanding of the importance of agriculture, especially in the fashion design industry. Learning firsthand about fibers and textiles derived from plants will certainly help my quest to become a known designer on the cutting edge of the fashion world,” stated Gayles.

“I am thankful to God for this opportunity to follow my dreams and appreciate the faculty and staff who helped me complete this part of my journey.”

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Read FAMUan article at:
Janelle Lee Chee, BASE major, was recognized as an Outstanding Scholar at the FAMU Honors Convocation on Thursday, April 2, 2009. Janelle has a 3.70 grade point average and is passionate about agriculture, music and traveling. As a freshman, she was selected to spend a semester at the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences in Vienna, Austria. Janelle dreams of becoming the owner of a food processing company after graduation. Following is a note of appreciation received from Janelle by CESTA faculty.

Hello everyone!

I hope this email meets you in the best of health and spirit. I feel very happy and proud to be sending you all this update for you have each made an indelible mark on my life and this moment would lose its splendor if I didn't share it with all of you.

Tonight I was officially inducted into Tau Beta Pi - the National Engineering Honors Society.

It is an academic society for engineers who are in the top 1/8 of their class in Junior standing or the top 1/5 of their class in Senior standing. Each member displays commitment to the uplifting of the community and the pursuit of academic excellence. Tau Beta Pi is the 2nd oldest academic society in the USA. Of 14 inductees, I was one of 3 black students and the only black female present! Also, so far it seems as though I am the only student from FAMU inducted this semester, and I feel very proud to be representing not only engineers of color but black females and this campus. I feel really good about myself- and I haven't felt this way for a very long time. Also, this weekend I was elected the Parliamentarian for the Southern Region of the American Society of Agriculture and Biological Engineers (ASABE) - who would have guessed? So far it’s been a great week, and again I am happy to share this update with you.

Thank you very much for all that you have done to motivate me and help me on my journey these past two years. I am always grateful for your kindness and wisdom.

Sincerely

Miss Janelle Lee Chee

Scenes from the Spring Graduate Reception, (May, 2009)
TALLAHASSEE, FL — Three engineering technology majors in the College of Engineering Sciences, Technology and Agriculture (CESTA) at Florida A&M University (FAMU) will be awarded the Eisenhower Transportation Fellowship in the fall, 2009. John Cannon (electrical engineering technology), Jamesa Marshall (civil engineering technology) and Philson Joseph (construction engineering technology) have been selected to receive $7,500 per student to support research initiatives relative to transportation education and research.

All of the recipients responded with enthusiasm and exhilaration upon learning about their selection as fellowship recipients. Cannon stated, “I am ecstatic to be a recipient. I give all praises to God.”

Jamesa Marshall responded, “I am excited to be a scholarship recipient because I really needed the financial assistance.”

Philson Joseph echoed their remarks saying, “It’s good! I am glad to receive this fellowship and look forward to doing more transportation research.

Makola Abdullah, Dean and Director of Land-Grants for the College stated, “I am proud to have the opportunity to be among the first to offer congratulations to our students for this outstanding accomplishment. John, Jamesa and Philson are all ideal role models for other students to work hard to excel in their studies in order to obtain support for scientific study in higher education. With a difficult economic forecast for the coming months, we need more students to step up to the plate and score high for their future despite challenges and obstacles.”

The Eisenhower Graduate Transportation Fellowships help sponsor students pursuing a master’s degree in a field related to transportation. The fellowship is awarded annually by the United States Department of Transportation through the Federal Highway Administration’s Office of Professional and Corporate Development.


For more information about the FAMU Division of Engineering Technology, please contact:

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