Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University was founded as the State Normal College for Colored Students, and on October 1, 1887, it began classes with fifteen students and two instructors. Today, FAMU, as it has become affectionately known, is the premiere school among historically black colleges and universities. Prominently located on the highest hill in Florida's capital city of Tallahassee, Florida A&M University remains the only historically black university in the eleven member State University System of Florida.

In 1884, Thomas Van Renssaler Gibbs, a Duval County educator, was elected to the Florida legislature. Although his political career ended abruptly because of the resurgence of segregation, Representative Gibbs was successful in orchestrating the passage of House Bill 133, in 1884, which established a white normal school in Gainesville, FL, and a colored school in Jacksonville. The bill passed, creating both institutions, however, the state decided to relocate the colored school to Tallahassee.

Thomas DeSaille Tucker (1887-1901), an attorney from Pensacola, was chosen to be the first president. Former State Representative Gibbs joined Mr. Tucker as the second faculty member. In 1891, the College received $7,500 under the Second Morrill Act for agricultural and mechanical arts education, and the State Normal College for Colored Students became Florida's land grant institution for colored people. The original College was housed in a single white frame building and had three departments of study and recreation. At about this time, the College was relocated from its original site on Copeland Street to its present location, and its name was changed to the State Normal and Industrial College for Colored Students.

In 1905, management of the College was transferred from the Board of Education to the Board of Control. This event was significant because it officially designated the College as an institution of higher education. The name was changed in 1909 to Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College for Negroes (FAMC). The following year, with an enrollment of 317 students, the college awarded its first degrees. In spite of a setback caused by a tragic fire that destroyed Duval Hall, the main building which housed the library, administrative offices, cafeteria and other college agencies, progress was made when a gift of $10,000 was presented to the College by Andrew Carnegie for the erection of a new library facility. This facility held the dis-

During the years 1950-1968, the University experienced its most rapid growth. Twenty-three buildings were constructed and renovated with costs totaling more than $14 million. These facilities included the Dairy Barn, Faculty Duplexes, Law Wing of Coleman Library, Gibbs Hall, Tucker Hall, Truth Hall, Agriculture and Home Economics Building, Student Union Building, Demonstration School Building, Cafeteria, Health and Physical Education Building, Music, and Fine Arts Complex, High School Gymnasium, Stadium, and Health and Physical Education Building. The FAMU Hospital was completed and became fully operational in 1956, serving as the only medical facility for Negroes within 150 miles of Tallahassee. FAMU achieved a significant first by becoming the first Negro institution to become a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Enrollment grew to more than 3,500, and the number of faculty increased by more than 500.

The 50's and 60's were times of social unrest and change in the nation. The students of Florida A&M University were integral in sparking a boycott of the buses in Tallahassee that successfully staged integrated the city's public transportation. As a result of their courage and determination, the students of Florida A&M University established a legacy of social involvement and responsibility as a part of the collegiate experience for future generations of Rattlers.

The period following the turbulent 60's brought unprecedented growth to the University. At a time when federal laws were demanding desegregation, Dr. Benjamin L. Perry, Jr. (1968-1977) was credited with preserving the autonomy of Florida A&M. In 1971, FAMU was recognized as a full partner in the nine-university, public higher education system of Florida. The program and academic areas within the institution were expanded to include the Black Archives Research Center and Museum, established as a state repository for Black History and Culture; the Division of Sponsored Research; the Program in Medical Sciences (PIMS), in conjunction with Florida State University and the University of Florida; the development of the School of Architecture; a Naval ROTC unit; establishment of the cooperative programs in agriculture; and a degree-granting program in Afro-American Studies. Enrollment increased from 3,944 (1960) to 5,024 (1970).

The University was re-organized into academic areas instead of departments. The University's physical plants increased with the addition of the Women's Complex (apartment-type dormitory), Clifton Dyson Pharmacy Building, new poultry building and dairy cattle rearing shed, and renovation of University Commons, Coleman Library and Tucker Hall. The University Hospital, which was closed in 1971, was renovated and became the Foote-Hilyer Administration Center.

During the administration of Dr. Walter L. Smith (1977-1985), the University grew to eleven schools and colleges, and a Division of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education. In 1984, the University was granted the authority to offer its first Doctor of Philosophy degree, the Ph.D. in Pharmacology. The 80's also saw the expansion of the Gaither Athletic Center, which included the construction of a new Women's Athletic Complex equipped with a track, an Olympic pool, men's and women's weight training rooms, and softball and baseball fields. Bragg Memorial Stadium was renovated and expanded to provide seating for 25,000 spectators, and a modern field house was erected. The old laundry was converted into the Educational Classroom Laboratory. New facilities were constructed to house the Schools of Allied Health Sciences, Architecture, Business and Industry and Nursing. Construction and renovation projects amounted to more than $34 million. As the University prepared to observe one hundred years of its existence, the Smith administration launched the Centennial Celebration Fund to establish a University Endowment.

In 1985, Dr. Frederick S. Humphries (1985-2001) became the eighth president of Florida A&M University. The Humphries Years were heralded as a time of unprecedented expansion and achievement. President Humphries presided over the University's Centennial Celebration that began with his inauguration and ended with the burying of a time capsule. During Humphries' tenure, enrollment soared from 5,100 (1985) to 9,551 (1992). And by the 1998-1999 school year, enrollment had reached 12,662 students. Aggressive and competitive recruitment campaigns attracted more talented students, and FAMU consistently ranked nationally among the top five colleges and universities for enrolling National Achievement finalists. In 1992, 1995 and 1997, FAMU enrolled more National Achievement finalists than Harvard, Yale and Stanford. In 1999, Black Issues in Higher Education cited FAMU for awarding more baccalaureate degrees to African-Americans than any other institution in this nation.

Perhaps one of the greatest achievements came under the presidency of Dr. George W. Gore (1950-1968). The Florida legislature elevated the College to university status, and in 1953, Florida A&M College became Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. Obtaining university status meant restructuring existing programs and designing new academic offerings to meet the demands of producing quality students at the professional and graduate levels. Between 1953 and 1968, the Schools of Pharmacy, Law, Graduate Studies, and Nursing were created.

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During the 110th Anniversary Celebration, Florida A&M University was selected by the TIME Magazine-Princeton Review as The 1997-1998 College of the Year. FAMU was selected from among some of the most prestigious schools in the country to be the first recipient of this honor.

In 2001, as the State of Florida's education system underwent massive reorganization, Dr. Henry L. Lewis, III, Dean of the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences was appointed interim president. Later the same year, on May 17, 2002, the Board of Trustees of Florida A&M University appointed Dr. Fred Gainous (2002-2004), an alumnus, as the ninth president. Dr. Gainous returned to Tallahassee with a vision of Creating One FAMU.

On December 14, 2004, the Florida A&M University Board of Trustees made history by appointing Dr. Castell Vaughn Bryant as interim president. Dr. Bryant, an alumnus, is the first woman to lead the University in its 117 years of existence. President Bryant came with a vision of revitalizing and restructuring the University for the twenty-first century.

Originally designed to meet the needs of the underrepresented and the underprivileged, Florida A&M University continues to serve the citizens of Florida and the world through its provision of pre-eminent educational programs. These programs are the building blocks of a legacy for the hallmark of Florida A&M University: "Excellence with Caring." FAMU, Florida's Opportunity University, is committed to meeting the challenges and needs of future generations.

On July 2, 2007, Dr. James H. Ammons, became the tenth president of Florida A&M University. Prior to his appointment, he served as Chancellor of North Carolina Central University (NCCU) from 2001 through 2006 and as provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at FAMU.

While provost at Florida A&M University, he developed more than 22 baccalaureate, master's, and Ph.D. degree programs, and he worked to reestablish the FAMU College of Law. At NCCU, enrollment reached an all-time high during his tenure, climbing from 5,476 in 2000-2001 to 8,675 in 2006-2007—a 58.4 percent increase. NCCU became the fastest growing institution in the University of North Carolina System.

Since Dr. Ammons' arrival at the University, he has built a top-notch, strong leadership team. In addition, he secured accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education in which the board voted to reaffirm the College's accreditation status through June 30, 2010. Under his leadership, FAMU also received its first unqualified audit in three years from the Auditor General's Office; and this summer, the University will create a level and in some graduate degree programs. Further, the University has been directed to develop a set of academic programs to attract a statewide, rather than a more limited regional, student population, (CF Plans for Equalizing Educational Opportunities in Public Higher Education in Florida, February, 1974, Addenda, pp. 7+).

**Specific Purpose**-Within the Board of Governors' guidelines, the FAMU community endorses a more specific statement of purpose for the university.

Philosophically, the university is dedicated to the traditional ideals of learning, focusing its attention and efforts upon the creation, transmission, and application of knowledge. These ideals dictate that FAMU's primary purpose is to advance learning and, thereby, contribute to improving the quality of life for those individuals it serves and their society.

**Vision Statement**

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University will provide the citizens of Florida, the nation, and the world with inspirational teaching, relevant research, and meaningful service by offering opportunities to enhance humankind.

**Mission Statement**

The mission of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), as an 1890 land-grant institution, is to provide an enlightened and enriched academic, intellectual, moral, cultural, ethical, technological and student-centered environment, conducive to the development of highly qualified individuals who are prepared and capable of serving as leaders and contributors in our ever-evolving society. The University seeks and supports a faculty and staff of distinction dedicated to providing outstanding academic preparation at the undergraduate, graduate, doctoral and professional school levels, with a particular emphasis on integrity and ethical conduct. FAMU is committed to inspirational teaching, exemplary research and meaningful public and community service through creative partnerships at the local, state, national and global levels. The University is also committed to the resolution of complex issues that will enhance humankind.

While the University continues its historic mission of educating African Americans, persons of all races, ethnic origins and nationalities are welcomed and encouraged to remain life-long members of the university community. The University, through its diverse faculty and staff, provides a caring, nurturing, collegial and respectful environment.

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University holds the following values essential to the achievement of the University's mission:

- SCHOLARSHIP
- EXCELLENCE
- OPENNESS
- FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY
- ACCOUNTABILITY
- COLLABORATION
- DIVERSITY
- SERVICE
- FAIRNESS
- COURAGE
- INTEGRITY/ETHICS
- RESPECT
- COLLEGIALITY
- FREEDOM

**University Presidents**

- Thomas DeSaille Tucker (1887-1901)
- Nathan B. Young (1901-1923)
- W. H. A. Howard (1923-1924)*
- John Robert Edwards Lee, Sr. (1924-1944)
- Jubie B. Bragg (1944)*
- William H. Gray, Jr. (1944-1949)
- H. Manning Efferson (1949-1950)*
- George W. Gore (1950-1959)
- Benjamin L. Perry (1968-1977)
- Walter L. Smith (1977-1985)
- Frederick S. Humphries (1985-2001)
- Henry Lewis, III (2002)*
- Fred Gainous (2002-2004)
- Castell Vaughn Bryant (2004 - 2007)*
- James H. Ammons (2007 - Present)

* Served/Serving in an acting or interim capacity

**Governance**

Florida A&M University, a member of the State University System (SUS), is under the supervision of the FAMU Board of Trustees. The FAMU Board of Trustees is comprised of twelve citizens and one student representative.

The president of the university is appointed by the Board and administers the affairs of the university, with the assistance of administrative officers, faculty, and staff.