

# 1890 Scholarship Program

## Preparing a Diverse Workforce for the Future

By Dr. Laurence M. Crane, NCIS



Tashieka Smith



Mar'Kayla Bethea



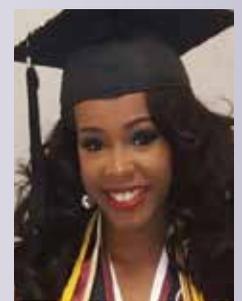
Jacquelyn "Nicole"  
Edwards



Helena Hollins



Charles Waller



Anissa Taylor

In 2001, the NCIS Board of Directors approved funding for a scholarship program, helping qualified students at the 1890 Land-Grant Universities complete their education. Since that time there have been 18 students from six different institutions receive scholarships. Without exception these students have been deserving, and very appreciative of the financial help and encouragement.

"We have experienced that sometimes when a student has financial difficulties, his/her GPA falls, not to mention self-worth because of the struggle to earn the finances to stay in college and not being able to associate with their fellow classmates," commented Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim, Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics at Fort Valley State University in Georgia. "Sometimes, this struggle leads them to obtain a full or part-time job off campus and those jobs usually (due to lack of study time) cause their academic performance to fall."

The scholarship program is just one of several activities NCIS engages in to build and strengthen relationships and strengthen the association between the crop insurance industry and the mi-

nority community engaged in agriculture. As the industry actively works to increase the diversity in their workforce to reflect the diversity of the farmers we serve, the scholarship program is a key building block to preparing and delivering an educated and diverse workforce.

"On behalf of our Lincoln University (LU) President, Provost and VP for Academic Affairs, faculty and students in the College of Agriculture, Environmental and Human Sciences, I wish to thank NCIS again for your continued financial support for our students and for helping LU's efforts in developing a competent agriculture workforce for the next generation," acknowledged Dr. Albert E. Essel, Dean, Research Director & 1890 Administrator, College of Agriculture.

Whereas most Federal programs are delivered to citizens through a Federal agency, the Federal crop insurance program is delivered to farmers through the private insurance industry. There are 15 Approved Insurance Providers who have a contract (Standard Reinsurance Agreement) with USDA to deliver (sell) crop insurance to farmers. As the not-for-profit trade association for those 15 companies, NCIS

provides services to and for these insurance companies. Because crop insurance is a Federal program the industry has an obligation to reach out to "underserved audiences." In practice this means small, limited-resource and socially disadvantaged farmers. On behalf of the crop insurance industry, NCIS' outreach activities work with the Historically Black Colleges and Universities that have agricultural programs, Non-governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations, and other allied professionals who work with and serve minority farmers across the country.

Over the years, NCIS has participated in several activities with the small farm program at Alabama A&M University and has awarded scholarships to four different students — Tashieka Smith, Anissa Taylor, Mar'Kayla Bethea, and Tatayana Kennedy.

"Alabama A&M University is truly grateful to have NCIS as a partner. Your support of our underserved students with serious financial need is noted with utmost gratitude. We look forward to our continued partnership," remarked Dr. Duncan M. Chembezi, Professor and

Director Small Farms Research Center, AAMU.

Tashioka Smith (2012) entered graduate school after finishing her BS degree. She got an MBA degree with agribusiness as her concentration. She then went to work for Archer Daniels Midland Co in Birmingham, Alabama. Anissa Taylor (2014) is currently completing her MS degree in Food and Animal Science at Alabama A&M University with a focus in food technology. She's expected to graduate this fall.

Dr. Chembezi wrote: "I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and NCIS for the scholarship which was awarded to Mar'Kayla Bethea in fall of 2015. I am pleased to report that Mar'Kayla has successfully completed her Bachelors of Science degree program in Food and Animal Science." She graduated in 2017 and has been admitted to an AAMU Graduate Program, focusing on geographical information systems (GIS) in the Biological and Environmental Sciences Department. "Mar'Kayla benefited enormously from the NCIS scholarship and was able to concentrate on her education. NCIS' financial generosity indeed allowed Mar'Kayla to achieve her goal of a quality education," noted Dr. Chembezi.

And finally, Tatayana Kennedy (2017) is doing well in her second semester on scholarship at AAMU majoring in Environmental Science.

As noted above, these scholarships not only help financially, but help to boost self-esteem as well. Charles Douglas Waller III, commented that this was the case for him and his scholarship experience at Fort Valley State.

"I was fortunate enough to receive a four-semester scholarship from the National Crop Insurance Services in the fall of 2016. I am very honored and blessed to have been chosen to receive such an award. This scholarship has helped me tremendously in a variety of areas, from buying books and school supplies; all the way across the board it has helped me." Mr. Waller further said, "Also in my situation, this was a confidence booster that led me to do even better than I have done in the past. It showed me that if I work hard enough that there are people and companies that will assist you financially. With the confidence that the NCIS scholarship helped build in me, I ran for Mr. Fort Valley State University for the 2017-2018 scholastic year, and won. So to NCIS, I say thank you for giving me a chance to be great and excel here at The Fort Valley State University."

Dr. Steve Zeng, Chair, Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Langston University (Oklahoma) expressed appreciation for the three scholarships NCIS has granted to stu-

# Scholarship Overview

## *Amount:*

\$5,000 (\$1,250/semester for four semesters\*). Scholarship money may be used for tuition, fees, books, and other related expenses. Payment is made directly to the university.

## *Required Qualifications:*

- Continuing status as a full-time undergraduate student at an 1890 Land-Grant University.
- Have completed sophomore year in college and are considered a junior (four semesters to graduate).
- Have a declared major in an agricultural discipline.
- Minimum cumulative 3.0 GPA.
- U.S. Citizen.

## *Must meet the following requirements each semester for scholarship to continue:*

- Minimum cumulative 3.0 GPA.
- Have an agricultural discipline major.
- \*Verification each semester from department head that student meets the above requirements and continues as a full-time undergraduate student in good standing at the University.

dents at Langston. "On behalf of all our faculty, students and staff, I want to express our sincere appreciation to you and NCIS for awarding this scholarship to our department for the fifth and sixth years in a row. The two previous recipients have gone on to great careers in agriculture because of this scholarship. We can assure you Ms. Hollins will not disappoint us and will make your company proud as she continues her college education in her senior year at Langston University. This scholarship will not only help her financially but also boost her confidence in her pursuit of a college degree and a career in agriculture."

Jacquelyn "Nicole" Edwards, was the third recipient of an NCIS scholarship (2012). Her experience at the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff and story summarize very well the positive impact this scholarship program is having.

"The NCIS scholarship was such a big help!" Nicole said. "This scholarship took away the burden of having to focus on how I would pay for college while trying to maintain my GPA and participate in multiple campus activities. I am be-

yond grateful for organizations, like NCIS, who support the educational dreams and aspirations of young people through scholarships."

Nicole graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Agricultural Business/ Economics Option and was hired as a Loan Assistant with the USDA's Rural Development agency. She then attended graduate school at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, graduating with a Master of Science degree in Operations Management. Currently she is employed in logistics as an Area Manager at a Wal-Mart Distribution Center.

Commenting further on her scholarship experience, she said, "Within the past year, I have served on two scholarship committees. I understand the importance of giving back and how invaluable a donation can be to helping someone's future, no matter how small. John Holmes once said 'There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up.' To the phenomenal people and scholarship committee of NCIS, thank you. Thank you for reaching down, lifting me up and helping me accomplish my goals!"