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AAMI Program Reaches Highest Number of Graduates

TIFTON—The African-American Male Initiative (AAMI) program at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College has reached a milestone with the highest number of students graduating from the program and earning a college degree since the inception of the program at ABAC. The AAMI is a University System of Georgia initiative designed to increase the recruitment,
retention, and graduation of African-American males within the system through strategic intervention. From fall of 2012 to spring of 2013, ABAC will give diplomas to ten students in the program.

“This is very exciting for the program,” said Terence Turner, project coordinator of AAMI. “When we started this in 2010 we only had two graduates and this year we have ten.”

Students who will be receiving diplomas in May include Jamhson Boliva, a computer science major from Immokalee, Fla.; Enorris Hadley, a human sciences major from Moultrie; Curtis Jones, a pre-law/political science major from McDonough; Jay Jones, an art major from Butler; Alfonso Roberson, an information technology major from Fitzgerald; Tony Tomlinson, a middle grades education major from Decatur; and Yves Tranquille, a political science major from Jonesboro.

Graduates who have already received diplomas in the fall 2012 commencement exercises include Tabius McKnight, a psychology major from Waycross; Omar Neal, a criminal justice major from Fitzgerald; and Deltrice Turner, a communication, journalism, and mass media major from Climax.

“The most amazing thing about the success of this initiative is how there is now a huge culture change among the students,” said Turner. “Students within the program aren’t just focused on going to class anymore. Graduation is the ultimate goal. That is their mindset and we tailor everything around that clearly-defined goal.”

Students enter the AAMI through Leaders Evolving and Developing (L.E.A.D.), which targets first semester African-American males with emphasis on first generation students. This initiative is designated to promote a successful transition to college life by providing outreach
support to both students and their families. Students stay in this program throughout their college career at ABAC.

“The big thing within the AAMI is to encourage and empower students to graduate from college,” said Turner. “Students need an outlet where they can get help and ABAC has provided the support and resources needed to accomplish that. It has been a campus-wide effort.”

Another reason for the high number of graduates the AAMI has produced this year is the students within the Brother 2 Brother program, a chapter of the Student African-American Brotherhood (SAAB) that emphasizes student success and provides the opportunity to create a positive peer community through engagement and personal growth activities. Over ninety percent of the students in the L.E.A.D. program also go into Brother 2 Brother.

“The students within these programs are now being accountable for their peers’ success,” said Turner. “The staff is no longer the only part of the college who are challenging them to reach their goal of graduation. Students within the program are encouraging each other to strive for that goal.”

For more information on the AAMI, contact Turner at (229) 391-4943.

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