ABAC Rural Studies Major Interns with Georgia Bureau of Investigation

TIFTON—Erica Cruse wanted to explore something out of the ordinary for her summer break from classes at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College this year. So the Blue Ridge native stayed focused on learning in a 12-week internship with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) Region 15 based in Sylvester.
Cruse, a Rural Studies major specializing in Politics and Modern Cultures, was conducting research into the field of criminal justice when she came across the information regarding the internship program last spring.

“The process of applying for the internship consisted of completing the application that included the Agreement of Guidelines for GBI Interns, the Authorization for Release of Personal Information, a Waiver of Liability, an Awareness Assessment, and an Apprentice/Internship Questionnaire,” Cruse said. “I was then interviewed by Region 15 Special Agent in Charge Kim Baker and successfully passed a polygraph test and background check.”

On April 14 Cruse was notified by letter that she had been selected for the program. Her initial expectations were to gain field experience and a better overall knowledge of both the Bureau and the criminal justice system. Cruse said the internship offered her exposure to a variety of operations within the GBI.

“I accompanied agents into the field on a wide variety of cases including narcotics, homicide, gambling, rape, and child molestation,” Cruse said. “Via the acceptance process, I had a firm outline of what this experience would entail and a solid understanding of what I would and would not be exposed to so none of it was a surprise.”

Cruse said the internship was what you made of it and with the help of the personnel at Region 15, she made the most of the opportunity.

“Region 15 went above and beyond to make my experience as productive and successful as possible,” Cruse said. “The Bureau offers a unique and valuable learning experience for college students whose interest lies within law and criminal justice.”
Region 15 of the GBI is a dual purpose office that covers investigations in the counties of Baker, Calhoun, Clay, Dougherty, Early, Quitman, Randolph, Terrell, Tift, and Worth and also has drug enforcement duties for the counties of Baker, Ben Hill, Brooks, Calhoun, Chattahoochee, Clay, Colquitt, Crisp, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Echols, Grady, Irwin, Lee, Lowndes, Macon, Marion, Miller, Mitchell, Quitman, Randolph, Schley, Seminole, Stewart, Sumter, Terrell, Thomas, Tift, Turner, Webster, and Worth.

Cruse received her associate’s degree in political science from ABAC and will graduate in December with her Rural Studies bachelor’s degree. She chose ABAC because she was looking for a change of scenery from the North Georgia mountains of her hometown.

“ABAC was and continues to be a great fit for me,” said Cruse.

Cruse is a certified lifeguard and is active in physical fitness and martial arts. Presently, she is weighing her options about what she would like to do after graduation.

“My future career goals consist of potentially staying with the GBI as a special agent or working as a narcotics agent with a regional drug task force,” Cruse said. “I am also considering joining either the United States Air Force or Navy as an intelligence specialist.”

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