

NCIS Scholarship Program Helps Deserving Students

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Tavarus Young



Taelor Boston



Jaylen Williams



Mikaela Blackwood

The objective of the NCIS 1890 Scholarship Program is to enable deserving students to further their education and to expose them to the crop insurance business. The crop insurance industry is actively working to increase the diversity in its workforce, reflecting the diversity of the farmers they serve, and the NCIS scholarship program is a key building block in preparing and delivering an educated and diverse workforce.

The 1890 Land-Grant institutions are 19 historically Black universities that were established under the Second Morrill Act of 1890. The purpose of this scholarship program is to help qualified students at the 1890 Land Grant Universities complete their education and prepare them for careers in agriculture.

Scholarships are for \$3,000 spread over the four semesters of the students' junior and senior years. Because students begin on scholarship their junior year, they will benefit from their NCIS scholarship for four semesters as long as they meet the academic qualification requirements and continue as full-time students in good standing at their respective university.

The NCIS scholarship recipients are all academically strong and well-rounded students who participate in extracurricular activities giving back to their communities. They have an estab-

lished track record of excellence in the classroom and a sense of community citizenship that extends beyond campus borders. These students truly are exceptional young men and women, and NCIS is honored to know them.

Commenting on her experience, a previous scholarship recipient wrote: "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!"

For several years NCIS has had 10 students on scholarship; five students completing the second year of their scholarships and five students in their first semester on scholarship. Starting in 2023, NCIS expanded the program and is now offering a scholarship to a qualifying student at each of the 19 1890 Land Grant Universities. New recipients for 2023-2025 are:

Tavarus Young is majoring in Agricultural Business at the University of Arkansas Pine Bluff. He chose agricultural business as his major because he grew up around farming and hopes to one day own his own business. He has learned a great deal about the agriculture industry by working with the University of Arkansas Pine

Bluff's Small Farm Program and the Agricultural Demonstration Outreach Center in Marianna, Arkansas. Young is passionate about basketball and actively participates in his church. Family is his priority, and he plans to use his education to benefit their lives.

Taelor Boston is majoring in Urban and Regional Planning at the Alabama A&M University in Normal. She was born and raised in Birmingham and has a personal interest in improving communities. She chose her major to equip her with the tools she will need to make a positive difference in the quality of life for her fellow citizens. She is a well-rounded individual with considerable experience volunteering through community service, involvement in the Environmental Science Club, and participation in the Urban Planning Association, allowing her to exercise leadership in diverse ways.

Jaylen Williams is majoring in Environmental Natural Resources and Plant Sciences at Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama. He is deeply involved in agricultural activities at Tuskegee including Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS), agribusiness club, and the national soils judging team. His interest in agriculture stems from learning about his family history in farming

and the desire to challenge himself. He plans to share his knowledge with others with the goal of changing how the world views agriculture.

Mikaela Blackwood is pursuing a degree in Environmental Sciences from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore in Princess Anne. In high school, she was an intern and teacher's assistant for the Rutgers University Geoscience Summer Program. It was through that experience that Blackwood determined her major. She has experience doing research with several universities and has held leadership positions within her extracurricular activities. She hopes to find a job in water resource sciences or to continue working on research.

Elijah Edwards is majoring in Agriculture Environment Systems with a concentration in Agribusiness and Food Industry Management at North Carolina A&T University in Greensboro. He developed a deep-rooted passion for agriculture early in life while growing up on his family's hog farm, thus leading him to study agriculture. He is active in MANRRS and Collegiate Farm Bureau. Edwards is interested in learning about various agricultural practices and seeks to create innovative farming practices that enhance productivity while minimizing environmental impact. Upon graduating he intends to return to the family farm.

Mallory Douglas is pursuing a degree in Agricultural Science with a concentration in Business at Tennessee State University in Nashville. She developed a love for agriculture by watching her family maintain livestock and cropland. She wants to gain a comprehensive understanding of agricultural practices, crop management, and sustainable farming techniques. Douglas is active in her community and enjoys reading to children and helping at the nursing home. Her goal is to secure a job with the USDA and hopes to one day help create the Farm Bill.

Joel Barhorst is a junior majoring in sustainable agriculture at Central State University (CSU) in Wilberforce, Ohio. While at CSU, he has acted as treasurer for an on-campus group, has done research on growing pumpkins and research on whether certain flowers can be greater hotspots for Honeybee virus transmission. He has also spent time volunteering at two churches and a soup kitchen. Joel aspires to make the most of his educational experience and to maintain an honors status. Upon graduating, he would like to work for the USDA or run his own agribusiness.



Elijah Edwards



Mallory Douglas



Joel Barhorst

SCHOLARSHIP Specifics and Requirements

Amount: (\$3,000)–\$750/semester for four semesters

Funding: Provided by National Crop Insurance Services (NCIS). NCIS is a 503(c) not-for-profit crop insurance trade association whose membership includes all of the private companies offering federal multiple peril crop insurance.

- Qualifications:**
- Continuing status as a full-time undergraduate student at an 1890 Land Grant University.
 - Have completed the 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.

The scholarship program is just one of several activities NCIS engages in to build relationships and strengthen the association between the crop insurance industry and the minority community engaged in 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 13 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 13 companies, NCIS provides services to and for these insurance companies. Because crop insurance is a Federal program the industry has a duty 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 (HBCU) that have agricultural programs, Non-governmental Organizations (NGO), Community Based Organizations (CBO), and other allied professionals who work with and serve minority farmers across the country.