



TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

January 2026

# Vet Talk

STUDENT FOCUSED ENGAGEMENT MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

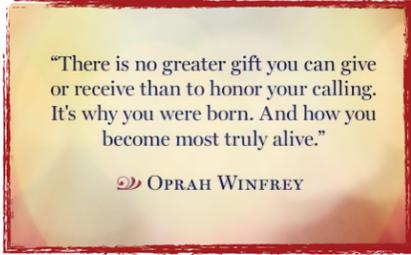
## ‘Food for Thought’

Shared By TUCVM Coordinator of Health and Wellness, **Tamara Cottrell**

Hey Students... “Today, we’re speaking about dedication and hard work and knowing where you’re supposed to be. Right here! There may be bumps in the road, but don’t get discouraged. Stay vigilant! Be an advocate for yourself.

😊 You don’t need to be fearless. You just need to show up fully. Give it all you’ve got—not because you’re guaranteed to win, but because holding back slowly teaches you to doubt yourself. Effort is never wasted when it’s honest. Even the days that break you are shaping the strength you’ll use later. You are allowed to want more. Give yourself grace. You are allowed to try again. You are allowed to be bad at something before you’re great at it. Do it tired. Do it scared. Do it messy. But do it with your whole heart. One day you’ll look back and realize the exact moment everything changed wasn’t when it got easy—it was when you decided you were done playing small.” Peace and blessings!

~ Tamara C. Cottrell, (334) 727-8307 Email: [tcottrell@tuskegee.edu](mailto:tcottrell@tuskegee.edu)



## Eight Veterinary Students Selected as Merck Scholarship Recipients for 2025-26



Merck Animal Health continued its intentional and long-standing commitment to the veterinary profession and promoting veterinary medical education at Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine through its scholarship program. Its collaboration with TUCVM in 2017 began with awarding five recipients. Since then, the program has grown such that Merck Animal Health has increased its support to the current amount of \$80,000 (providing 8 scholarship slots at \$10,000 each). This scholarship opportunity is available to all second- and third-year veterinary students who are enrolled in the veterinary medical program and are in good academic standing.

The recipients for the 2025-2026 academic year include the following: Brianna Anthony - 3rd Year, Joquarius Dancy - 2nd year, Sydney Fobbus - 2nd year, Asia Gilbert - 2nd year, Tahina Jean - 3rd year, Tiara Jones - 2nd year, Chelsea Lee - 3rd year, and Zachery Reese - 3rd year. Each student received a scholarship to further their education as they pursue careers in either companion or large animal veterinary care. Students receiving one of these scholarships are required to participate in the Annual Tuskegee University President’s Essay Contest and Recognition Program where they receive their official recognition for their achievement as well as meet with a representative from Merck Animal Health.

## TUCVM Students Shares Internship Experience Under Alums ‘The Vet Life Stars’



Second-year TUCVM student Aaliyah Hill (Class of 2028) completed a nine-week summer internship at Cy-Fair Animal Hospital in Houston, Texas, under the leadership of notable TUCVM alumni, Dr. Aubrey Ross II, Dr. Michael Lavigne III, and Dr. Diarra Blue (The stars of The Vet Life). Through this opportunity, she was able to work with a wide range of species including both companion and exotic animals and gain clinical and surgical hands-on experience while also enhancing both her client-communication and diagnostic skills. Ms. Hill’s

exposure included independently completing several feline and canine spays and neuters; serving as a surgical assistant and/or observing several other elective surgeries (ex. Splenectomy, Enuclation, Femoral Head Osteotomy (FHO), Perineal Urethrostomy, and Tibial Plateau Leveling Osteotomy (TPLO)). “My mentors were amazing and created both a comfortable and challenging environment where I was pushed beyond my limits. I am very grateful that I had the opportunity to enhance my clinical and technical skills with their guidance and support,” Ms. Hill said. She looks forward to completing several more internships under their guidance.



## TUCVM Student Camiyah Knox Started: The Playmakers in Vet Medicine



First-year TUCVM student Camiyah Knox (Class of 2029) and graduate of the TU’s College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Sciences (CAENS), had a vision that has now turned into reality. Ms. Knox created an organization on August 3, 2023, called The Playmakers in Vet Medicine. The mission of this organization is to create a space to connect, collaborate, engage, and learn to bring together students and animal professionals to help them navigate their journey together. Ms. Knox saw a need to support aspiring veterinarians by providing opportunities that aren’t always easy to access, along with a creative and meaningful approach to mentorship. “Veterinary medicine is not an easy field, and having someone to lean on for guidance and encouragement can make a real difference. I felt it was important to create space for service, collaboration, and hands-on experience, especially since many clubs at the time lacked those elements. Seeing that gap motivated me to take initiative and build something that truly supports growth, connection, and preparation for the field,” Ms. Knox said.

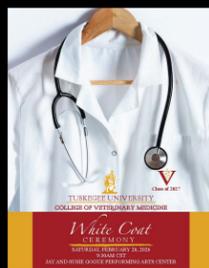


## TUCVM'S VBMA MEMBERS ATTEND NATIONAL MEETING/TRAINING



TUCVM students attended the Veterinary Business Management Association’s (VBMA) National Meeting and Officer Training on Jan. 16-18, 2026, in Orlando, FL. This training and national meeting is held every year and attendance by all the officer teams is required by VBMA as a requirement to maintain good standing in the organization. The TUCVM VBMA board members in attendance this year included: Kristian Hunt, President; Kendall Walden, Treasurer; Tiara Jones, Secretary; and

Tamia Bonner, Marketing – all are members of the Class of 2028. In addition, TUCVM student Haleigh Johnson (Class of 2027) was requested to attend the Regional Leader Training on Jan. 15-19, 2026. Ms. Johnson has the position of Great Plains Regional Leader. The Regional Leader position is part of the National VBMA team and is responsible for overseeing up to seven chapters nationwide. Regional Leaders support chapters and serve as a primary point of contact for questions, concerns, and challenges.



**COMING SOON!!!**  
**TUCVM ANNUAL**  
**WHITE COAT CEREMONY**  
**FEBRUARY 28, 2026**

Remember,

PLEASE  
SEND  
TO

SHARE YOUR NEWS!  
WE WOULD LOVE TO FEATURE YOU!



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Students: When Needing Help, please reach out to Veterinary Social Worker Chankia Berry, 334.724.4247, [cberry@tuskegee.edu](mailto:cberry@tuskegee.edu); Student Affairs Director Deetra Benn, 334.727.8304, [dbenn@tuskegee.edu](mailto:dbenn@tuskegee.edu).