



# Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

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SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEAN

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Tom Wheeler, Chair  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

I am delighted to provide this letter of introduction to the Florida A&M University's (FAMU) School of Journalism & Graphic Communication's (SJGC) new, historic agreement with the Black Television News Channel (BTNC). Founded in 1887, FAMU is one of the nation's top universities with the historic mission of educating African-Americans.

The university's collaboration with BTNC is integral to the sustained success of SJGC's stellar record in providing relevant, state-of-the-art training to rising multimedia journalists and visual communicators. We invite you to come visit SJGC, which is housed in a 100,000-square-foot facility on FAMU's campus in Tallahassee, FL. SJGC is widely recognized among the worldwide university community for its prominent training programs for African-American university-level students and recent graduates. The training areas include broadcast journalism, visual communications, media sales and public relations. SJGC also trains high school students in the area of multimedia journalism.

BTNC has wholly embraced the vision of SJGC by agreeing to provide significant and varied opportunities to help train and mentor young, African-Americans through its internships, mentorships, tours of facilities, and other specialized programs, and also by agreeing to provide equipment and facility upgrades. As such, the school believes that our public/private partnership with BTNC presents an enormous and singularly unique opportunity to enhance the educational experiences of our students that are enrolled in FAMU and at other universities and colleges across the country, and better prepare them as they enter the field of journalism.

The school also believes that the launch of BTNC will create a number of job opportunities for African-Americans in this field.

I am providing you with a sampling of other FAMU SJGC training programs to provide you with a perspective of how these types of partnerships have resulted in strategic and successful careers in the vast media communications field, which remains lacking in meaningful participation by African American journalists:

- During the planning and staging of the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, FAMU's SJGC participated in a limited access consortium of historically black colleges and universities (HBCU). Its purpose was to train the next generation of African-American sports journalists for a segment of the broadcast industry where the opportunities and job placements had been dismal. As a management employee of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, I authored what was known as the HOST Broadcast Training Program. FAMU's student participation was extremely significant, and central to the success of our Games' pilot program initiatives. The pilot program for the Host Broadcast Training Program included on-site training initiatives that included sports broadcasting, video shooting techniques for sports coverage, and overviews of individual sports and specific countries' requirements.
- For several years, the National Association of Black Journalists and NBC/Universal have sponsored a three-day "boot camp" that partners university-level African-American multimedia students from throughout the country with award-winning communication professionals from television markets nationwide. Known as the NABJ Multimedia Short Course at FAMU, the intensive journalism workshop provides hands-on experience and practical guidance of what it takes to be successful multimedia journalists. During the March 2014 and previous Short Course sessions, each student produced a 30-minute newscast, as well as content displayed through webcasts, podcasts, website and other social media sites. In addition to benefitting directly from media professionals, the students benefitted through the training and instruction provided by FAMU faculty and technicians. The students also learn strategies on how to market their skills to secure a job after graduation. This is a very selective program, involving an application process and a nationwide competition for limited available seats. See <http://www.nabj.org/?page=famushortcourse> for a review of the program's objectives and requirements. To review two, five-minute newscasts from the March 2014 NABJ Short

Course program, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEHL2xPLvPE> and [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qmOUJ7i\\_p8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qmOUJ7i_p8).

- FAMU SJGC is also the site for the Dow Jones News Fund-sponsored High School Multimedia Workshop training. For one week each summer, SJGC faculty and journalism and graphic communication students provide specialized training to juniors and seniors in high schools. The highly successful program is highlighted by the multimedia work presented by the students from the 2013 program. SJGC's summer 2014 multimedia training program for high school students will expand with additional funding to assist impoverished students from Florida's Florida Gulf Coast area. See <http://famsjgc.wordpress.com>.
- In its second year, the SJGC PR Crash Course has proven its success. Each student from FAMU who qualified for entry into the inaugural Crash Course in 2013, received an internship or job as a result from this intensive, weeklong training program. The internship sites included the Congressional Black Caucus office, Edelman's Atlanta public relations office, and the city of Tallahassee's Regional Airport. See <http://sjgc.famu.edu/m/index.cfm/pr-crash-course/>
- For nine years, the first-ever partnership between the National Association of Broadcasters and the National Association of Black-Owned Broadcasters, has resulted in the phenomenal success of the FAMU Media Sales Institute. NAB and NABOB provide direct funding to FAMU to fully underwrite the Media Sales Institute, which includes full fellowships for its participants and tailored training from broadcast executives – not lower managers – in the media sales sector of the industry. With a career placement rate of an average of 70 percent, the program also boasts the only alliance between a Business School and Journalism School dean. I am happy to share in this partnership with my colleague dean, Dr. Shawnta Friday-Stroud from the FAMU School of Business and Industry. See <http://sjgc.famu.edu/index.cfm/news/2014-media-sales-institute-announcement/> and <http://sjgc.famu.edu/m/index.cfm/media-sales-institute/>.

The profile of our learners in the many workshops and camps sponsored at FAMU SJGC are that they are first-time-in-college (FITC) students and an average annual household income of \$40,000. FAMU SJGC graduates and other African-American trainees in our programs are able to exceed their total families' household earnings due largely in part to the organized and successful workshops and other initiatives.

There are several other programs and workshops sponsored by SJGC, including ongoing, professional development initiatives through the James L. and John S. Knight Foundation, the Hearst Foundation and the Garth Reeves Chair for Eminent (Journalism) Scholars. Some 22 years ago the Knight Foundation awarded FAMU SJGC its first chair to a HBCU. FAMU remains the only historically black university to retain the Knight Chair. Our 23 Knight Chair peer institutions include Northwestern University, Yale University, and the University of Texas at Austin.

In addition to the natural melding of BTNC's proposed, nationwide training and mentorship programs based at FAMU SJGC, the new African-American network will aid in the recruitment of the best and brightest students to our university and sister institutions. The retention and college/university graduation of African-American students is also pivotal in the long-term success of our nation to achieve its worldwide competitive edge in telecommunications and related entities, and more specific need for diverse voices, particularly in journalism.

The Federal Communications Commission has received a special request from BTNC that will benefit FAMU SJGC's vibrant curricula and experiential opportunities that expand beyond classroom walls. FAMU supports BTNC in its efforts to achieve its goal of FCC approval for an authorization that has substantial returns on its investment in the future careers of African American multimedia journalists and communicators. The immediate and long-term benefits of the 11-year agreement between the authorized parties of BTNC and FAMU will include:

- Curricula enhancements: Students interested in majoring in journalism or graphic communication will successfully complete an enhanced and specialized 'course of study' in FAMU SJGC's curricula that includes digital media, visual design communication and media management. Some of the proposed course offerings are virtual reality media, graphic and web design, long-format video production, enterprise reporting in diverse communities, and digital issues in global law.
- Upgraded equipment: FAMU SJGC will benefit from the generous contribution of Sony to BTNC's operations.
- Distinctive training opportunities: BTNC and FAMU SJGC will offer the nation's only partnership involving a cable network and a historically black university. The core missions of BTNC and of FAMU SJGC include informing and educating African American audiences and students. The specialized training as well as enhancement of existing core training through hand-on opportunities will include instruction involving active newsrooms, investigative reporting,

coverage of local events, newsgathering techniques, using social media tools, writing for different environments (on air, on the web, on social media platforms), researching and present in-depth reports, researching and presenting daily reports, interviewing skills and techniques, and a range of other opportunities.

- Internships and Mentorships: BTNC has agreed to provide career path training through a variety of financial and in-kind contributions by lending selected staff members to onsite training during internships and targeted professional-to-student mentorships.
- Career Placement: For students, BTNC will offer employment opportunities for eligible FAMU students and graduates who have demonstrated that their abilities and skills are relevant and needed for BTNC. Students will be expected to complete a required internship course as stipulated in the SJGC curricula.
- Providing Sorely Needed Programming: This is a truly unique opportunity for both the university, and for the public as a whole. We firmly believe that both the African American community as well as every other community will benefit from the production of high quality, original news programming geared to a particularly underserved audience – the African American community. We hope that the Commission will support this important initiative.

On behalf of Florida A&M University, I am honored to offer this letter of support on behalf of BTNC. Its initiative to improve information programming for a targeted national audience is historic and appreciated by a wide array of educational, business, civic and consumer audiences.

Sincerely,



Ann Wead Kimbrough, DBA  
Dean