

# **NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL STATE UNIVERSITY**

## **News Release**

May 18, 2016

## **N.C. A&T joins prestigious research alliance**

*GREENSBORO, NC* – North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University has become the 36<sup>th</sup> and only North Carolina member of the Leadership Alliance, the premiere coalition of the nation’s top research and teaching institutions committed to diversifying the higher education pipeline into positions in academia, the public and private sectors.

“North Carolina A&T has a legacy of accessibility and a commitment to diversity,” said Dr. Barry Burks, Vice Chancellor of Research and Economic Development. “Our faculty members hail from many countries, representing nearly every continent – and our student body is also a rich tapestry of diversity even though our enrollment is more than 80% African American. A&T is proud to join with other members of The Leadership Alliance to address the continuing shortage of graduate students, Ph.D. candidates and tenure-track faculty of under-represented groups in academia.”

For more than 20 years the Alliance institutions have worked collaboratively to train, mentor, and support underrepresented minority students from undergraduate through advanced graduate training programs. The primary purpose of the Alliance is to provide quality one-on-one mentoring for students, which has proven to be a critical component of academic and professional success.

“The distinctive feature of the Leadership Alliance is a time-tested partnership among leading minority-serving institutions that are top producers of STEM graduates, Tier 1 research universities and private industry. North Carolina A&T strengthens our alliance with a rich legacy of research and cultivating the next generation of scholars and researchers. Further, North Carolina A&T shares the commitment of our institutional members to address the continuing shortage of minority graduate students and tenure-track faculty in academia as well as preparing a diverse workforce in the public and private sectors. It is with great pleasure that I welcome A&T to the ranks of our dynamic alliance,” said Dr. Medeva Ghee, executive director of The Leadership Alliance.

A&T was elected to the board at the spring business meeting at the end of March 2016, becoming the only university in North Carolina to be a member of the Alliance. The consortium includes Ivy League schools and major-research and minority-serving institutions, including 10 historically black colleges and universities. Other Alliance member institutions include, Harvard University, Yale University, Columbia University, Johns Hopkins University, Stanford University, University of Maryland and Howard University.

A&T’s admittance into this elite group of the country’s leading research and liberal arts colleges will afford Aggie students the opportunity to study under professors at “Research 1” universities across the country.

The Alliance provides undergraduates from underrepresented groups a suite of programs offering mentoring, training, networking and funding for research opportunities. Additional opportunities exist for faculty members, including a program that promotes faculty exchanges with other Alliance faculty.

Dr. Tonya Hargett, director of undergraduate research and institutional coordinator of The Leadership Alliance program at A&T, says she is thrilled that Aggie students will have access to a program of this caliber.

"It is a great honor and privilege to be a member of the Leadership Alliance. Our students will have the chance to work alongside world-renowned faculty members from the country's top Research 1 institutions on a wide array of cutting-edge projects. By being invited to join the Leadership Alliance, A&T will be able to expand the scope of opportunities available to students," said Hargett.

As part of the Summer Research Early Identification program, undergraduates interested in pursuing a PhD will spend eight weeks under the guidance of a faculty or research mentor at a larger Alliance membership university. Through this program, students work with a faculty or research adviser to develop and conduct an independent research project while learning about preparing for an advanced academic career. Students have the opportunity to present their results at The Leadership Alliance National Symposium.

A&T has an impressive track record for producing graduates from underrepresented populations. The university is a leading national producer of African American engineers at the undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels

Currently, African American students account for 82 percent of A&T's enrollment. Together, all underrepresented groups make up 93 percent of the total enrollment. A&T leads the nation in the number of undergraduate degrees in engineering awarded to African Americans, according to an annual ranking of colleges and universities published in the *Diverse Issues in Higher Education Magazine*. The school ranks second in the country in the number of African American students graduating with degrees in agriculture, and holds the number three spot for the number of doctoral degrees awarded to African Americans in Engineering and in master's degrees awarded to African Americans in physical sciences, mathematics and statistics. The number of females constitutes 54.6% of the undergraduate enrollment total.

A&T's graduate school offers 9 doctoral and 29 master's degree programs in a wide range of disciplines. N.C. A&T offers 177 undergraduate degrees through eight colleges and schools, with an option to participate in our honors program or study abroad. Students interested in pursuing research opportunities with The Leadership Alliance should contact Dr. Tonya Hargett.

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