

FAMU senior receives national academic honor  
By Stephen D. Price  
DEMOCRAT CAPITOL BUREAU

Darius Graham lives by a maxim: To whom much is given, much is expected.

The 21-year-old Florida A&M senior said since he was recently named by USA TODAY to the 2006 All-USA College Academic First Team, much will be expected of him.

"I was blown away," said Graham, of Charlotte, N.C., of the recognition. "It's kind of humbling."

Graham was chosen from more than 600 nominees in the 17th annual undergraduate recognition program. Forty nationwide runners-up were named to second and third teams.

Already on a leadership path, Graham was selected along with 13 Florida students to serve as a member of the 2005-2006 Gubernatorial Fellows program. He works with the Department of Children and Families to develop and implement statewide policy initiatives.

The All-USA College Academic Team honors full-time undergraduate students who excel in their studies and are active in their communities. Selections were based on the student's essay describing his or her most outstanding intellectual endeavor while in college, grade point average, academic rigor, leadership and extra curricular activities.

Winners receive a trophy and a \$2,500 cash reward.

"I am proud of Darius' outstanding achievement," Gov. Jeb Bush said in a statement. "His leadership will make a lasting impression on the lives of the children he serves."

In a statement, interim President Castell Bryant said FAMU was proud as well. "We are so sure that Darius will continue on this path and make a name not only for himself, but also increase the quality of life for citizens across this nation."

Graham, who has a 3.9 grade point average, has already made an impact on others locally. In 2005, he founded "Books All Around," which provides books for low-income children and creates libraries in local community centers.

"I grew up knowing the importance of school and reading and I want other kids to know it as well," said Graham, a political science major.

Graham also is the founding president of the Honor Student Association's Food for Thought luncheon forums, captain of FAMU's mock trial team and student coordinator of the city's "Day of Dialogue" race relations summit.

Graham is driven by the sacrifices his parents made.

"They made such inroads to give me a middle-class life They gave me opportunities they didn't have."

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