FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT ELMIRA MANGUM, Ph.D.

FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY

OPENING TESTIMONY

THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

JULY 15, 2015

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Introduction

Good morning. Chairman Conaway, Ranking-Member Peterson, and distinguished members of the House Committee on Agriculture. Thank you, Representative Graham, for your kind introduction and your service to Florida and the nation.

On behalf of our more than 10,000 students, 3,000 faculty and staff, and 70,000 Alumni, including the Honorable David Scott, the Honorable Corrine Brown, the Honorable Alcee Hastings, and the Honorable Al Green. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this invitation.

Founded on October 3, 1887, we are proud of our 127-year legacy of providing access and opportunity for thousands who but for FAMU would never have had the opportunity to fulfill their dream of getting a college degree. More than 65 percent of our students are Pell Grant

recipients and come from households with income below $40,000 annually.

Agriculture, as you know, is a critical component of Florida's and America's economy. Data provided by your former colleague Commissioner Adam Putnam of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services show that Florida has 47,000 commercial farms, encompassing a total of 9 million acres, and contributes more than $120 billion to our state's economy and supports 2 million jobs.

The strength of Florida agriculture is due, in part, to the strength of the state's two land-grant institutions – Florida A&M University and the University of Florida.

With the research of these institutions, we've been able to improve our methods of production. Our extension services share the technologies and techniques born in the labs and classrooms with Florida urban and rural communities.

One such beneficiary OF FAMU's research is Jasmine Hall, a recent graduate. Federal funding allows FAMU to foster early research experiences to undergraduates like Jasmine. Working with Professor Violeta Tsolova at our Center for Viticulture & Small Fruit Research, Ms. Hall has earned public recognition as the first young scientist to clone a key gene from muscadine grapes. Identifying and using the

grape's antioxidants as a dietary supplement will help to reduce cancer, obesity and improve human health overall. Ms. Hall's breakthrough work will appear in an upcoming issue of the Journal of Biotechnology & Biomaterials.

FAMU holds the patent for the distinct cultivar of the muscadine grape plant, the Majesty Grape. The vines of this cultivar are vigorous, productive and disease resistant.

Our research programs through our four research centers contribute to the advancement of new knowledge and scientific discoveries that have national and international implications through a variety of initiatives, including developing biological strategies to control invasive pests and plants like the Tropical Soda Apple, Japanese Beetle, Asian Longhorn Beetle, Asian Black Carp, Hydrilla and many others that interrupt agricultural production, tourism, recreation, and commercial fishing. These invasive species also diminish local property values and threaten our $15 billion dollar honeybee industry.

Our researchers are also working on developing best management practices for efficient use of fertilizers in tomatoes and field corn that reduce groundwater contamination and enhance farm profitability.

Partnering with agencies such as the USDA National Resources Conservation Services – the NRCS, and the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, or APHIS, FAMU is poised to play an even

bigger role in helping to promote agriculture in Florida, the nation, and the world.

Our Vet Tech Program and Biological and Agricultural Engineering Systems (BASE) Program are just two examples of this partnership. At FAMU, the NRCS has been the lifeblood of the BASE Program and APHIS has been the lifeblood of the Vet Tech Program. I will talk briefly about BASE.

BASE is a biology-based engineering discipline that integrates the agricultural, biological, chemical, environmental, life, and engineering sciences. It focuses on solving problems and designing systems related to the preservation and enhancement of natural resources and the environment, as well as biological and agricultural production and processes. Because of this diverse background, BASE students are uniquely qualified to understand the many different facets of a project from an engineering perspective. This diverse background also enables them to function exceptionally well on multidisciplinary teams.

Approximately 65 percent of all African-American doctorates in BASE programs are graduates of two schools -- North Carolina A&T University and Florida A&M University. Forty-five (45) percent of all BASE graduates have gone on to pursue graduate degrees at over 21 different colleges nationwide; most were on undergraduate scholarships provided by the NRCS.

The Cooperative Extension Program at the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences serves as the outreach arm of FAMU. This program serves the entire state of Florida. A few examples of these programs include:

- Farm to School Program
- FAMU Statewide Small Farm Program
- School and Community Gardening -
- Family Resource Management Program

These programs have reached approximately 1 million children in Florida and six adjacent states, improved sales, developed community gardening and farming skills and assisted approximately 300 individuals with home ownership.

The transfer of 3,800 acres in Brooksville, Florida by the USDA Agriculture Research Service to Florida A&M University will be the single largest transfer of land to a historically Black college or university in history. The transfer will enable FAMU to develop educational training and developmental programs for new and beginning farmers and ranchers and to teach them the latest biotechnological innovations and other key initiatives.

With your continued and enhanced support, we will continue to use these resources to expand our teaching, research and extension programs to serve the increasing needs of our state and nation.

We have adopted a university wide commitment to advancing agricultural innovations drawing on the strengths of our Colleges of Agriculture and Food Sciences, Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, the Schools of Business and Industry and the Environment, and the Institutes of Public Health and Sustainability.

To realize our vision, FAMU will leverage its reach across the state of Florida, including extension programming at satellite locations and research and development at the Brooksville property.

With additional funding to support our research and outreach initiatives, we can help to provide solutions to our food security and safety, energy and water resource problems, increase agriculture output through new and improved farming techniques and biological pest control and management, improve local economies by training small ranchers and farmers, and address health issues by providing nutritional training and growing healthy food in our community gardens.

FAMU is well positioned to help Florida and the nation meet the agricultural demands of the 21st century and beyond.

Again, on behalf of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity.