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NAAIA Awards Four Leadership Awards and Chapter of the Year
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Washington, DC – The National African American Insurance Association (NAAIA) held its National Talent Development Competition on October 18-19 with fourteen (14) teams of undergraduate students participating in the two-day event. Now in its seventh year, students delivered a 15-minute pitch in response to the prompt: developing a diversity, equity and inclusion program to address recruiting and talent gaps for a fictional insurance company. Students proposed several solutions including employee training on unconscious bias and reducing microaggressions, developing mentorship and sponsorship programs, hiring racially diverse members of the company's board of directors, and establishing external partnerships with industry organizations.

Keanu E. Capers, Danyell Johnson, and Amyia J. White, students at Florida A&M University (FAMU), took home the top prize with their pitch themed "Reach the Future," with each earning a $1,500 scholarship. FAMU student Mailo Johnson served as the team alternate and provided tech support to his colleagues during the competition. The team was sponsored by Marsh McLennan Agency (MMA) who served as their corporate advocate and provided coaching to the students.

"MMA celebrates FAMU's student team for their well-earned recognition as the national champion of NAAIA's Talent Development Competition. We are proud to have partnered with these amazing students who demonstrated innovation, resourcefulness, tenacity and confidence," said Kira Kimball, MMA's Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Officer. "Their response to the case study was grounded in strategic-thinking and real-world information, which positioned them for impact. As the team proudly proclaimed in their presentation: they are our future. MMA couldn't agree more!"

"I'm overjoyed that FAMU was awarded first place! The team proved that the future is bright for our students and this young generation. We just have to give them a voice and an opportunity," said Rashada Houston Turner, Associate Instructor at FAMU's School of Business and Industry. "Our students' victory reflected their passion for diversity, equity, inclusion, and opportunity."

St. John's University students Christopher Bhola, David Ramdeen and Christel Wanchope placed second (sponsored by Axis), and North Carolina A&T University's Jacquoia Hunter, Yentell James and Mikayla McDaniel placed third (sponsored by Selective Insurance). All student competitors receive scholarships for their efforts, with higher place teams receiving higher amounts. Scholarship funding is made possible by NAAIA Partners, the NAAIA Foundation and the Spencer Educational Foundation.

"Each year, students in the competition continue to show us that we have incredibly talented young people ready to take on our industry's biggest challenges and lead us forward," said Omari Jahi Aarons, NAAIA's Executive Director & Chief Operating Officer. "If organizations are serious about looking for top talent, we say 'look no further'."

The competition was evaluated by guest judges Nicole Brewer, Corporate Vice President for Group Benefit Solutions at New York Life, Michele Lamarre, Vice President and Head of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging, QBE North America, William "Bill" Wharton, Head of Argo Insurance Bermuda, and David Williams, Senior Vice President and Chief Multinational Underwriting Officer at Liberty Mutual Insurance.

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ABOUT NAAIA

The National African American Insurance Association (NAAIA) was organized to create a network among people of color and others employed in or affiliated with the insurance industry. The association currently has 2,300 members and 24 chapters, with others in development, throughout the nation and its members represent every sector of the industry. NAAIA's focus is the professional development and personal empowerment of its members, and to serve as a gateway to diverse talent at every level of the industry.

Visit www.naaia.org to learn more.