



Lillian Dinkins, Tuskegee University- c/o 2020, Agriculture



Name : Lillian Dinkins

Your HBCU : Tuskegee University

Graduation Year : 2020

Major : Agriculture

1. Where are you from? Who introduced you to HBCUs?*

I'm Lillian Dinkins, from Atlanta, Georgia. I've always had a love for HBCU's. My mother went to Spelman and father went to Savannah State and hearing about their college experience and seeing the connections they made with people and going to homecomings with them made me want to have an experience like them.



Summer of 2018, I had my first internship in Miles City, Montana working as a range aid at the Eastern Montana/ Dakotas District for the Bureau of Land Management

2. Why did you choose an HBCU over a pwi?*

I felt like it was important for me to go to an HBCU for my undergraduate years because of the molding I knew I would gain. Being an environmental science/ wildlife major I know I won't have many times in my future career where I see people who look like me so being able to be surrounded by these people now is what's really pushing me to gain more diversity in areas of agriculture and environmental sciences. I also believe the history that HBCU's have is what drove me knowing that my past ancestors built the places where I walk daily gives me the motivation to carry on the legacy they started.

3. What is the story of your "experience" at Your HBCU given its heralded status as a stellar and prestigious institution?*

The Tuskegee family is like no other! I meet Tuskegee graduates and students all the time and the love is so real! While being at Tuskegee I of course have had my ups and downs but because of the environment I'm in along with the support of peers and alumni who've been through the same struggles as me there is always continuous support. Tuskegee has taught me how to network, how to get things done when it seems like it's no one to help, and most importantly how to be confident in a crowd. These skills that I've gained I keep near and dear to me because I really believe I couldn't have gained this confidence anywhere else.

4. "First time" experiences at your HBCU?*

The first time I drove through the gates of Tuskegee it was like the world lit up and the sun was shining down. I knew Tuskegee is where I wanted to go after attending the Vet Step II program

during high school. I also went to an open house and that sealed the deal! Tuskegee was my number one school and also the first school I got accepted to. Once I finally got on campus I remember hearing the SGA President at the time giving a speech about our class “keeping the 20/20 vision” and that’s stayed with me ever since.

5. Who are the professors that have impacted your life in and out of the classroom? How did they do that?*

I would first say Rodney Stone who is our 1890 USDA Liason, he is the one who talked to me about environmental science as a major and I’ve never looked back! My advisor Ron Smith who has been an advisor, mentor, teacher, and friend has been at Tuskegee for so many years and does so much for our small program by taking us on trips even driving long hours so that way we can connect and be familiar with other places to further our education in the future. My favorite teacher has also been Dr. Gregory Bernard! His Botany class was definitely one of the hardest classes I’ve had, but it pushed me, made me think deeper into the purpose of plants and also sparked a major interest into Botany.



Summer 2019, I had my second internship with National Oceanic and Atlantic Administration in Seattle, Washington working as the Hydrographic Survey Intern

6. What is your major? and Why did you choose it?

Originally I wanted to be an Animal Science Major. I took some time to think and knew I did not want to go to vet school but still wanted a major where I could deal with animals but on a larger scale while also making a bigger impact on the world. I talked with some people on campus (Rodney Stone) and he told me about the 1890 scholarship along with degrees we offer for environmental science. I was soon hooked and applied for the scholarship as well. I wasn’t selected but in return I gained a small family. Myself, 2 other wildlife majors, and 2 forestry majors. Our program has 5 individuals total but all together we have done so much job wise and work wise to get our department a lot of attention. Because of this broad major I’ve been able to work in places I never thought I would have been. My first internship being in Montana working with the Bureau of Land Management as a Range Aid and my most recent working on Seattle working with The National Oceanic and Atlantic Administration under the Greening Youth Foundation as a Hydrographic Survey Intern. I would not have been able to have these opportunities without getting out of my comfort zone, changing my major and realizing it’s okay to pursue a career where there are not many black females. My ending goal is to educate more people on the environmental sciences.