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Contact: Erika Braxton-White 310/783-3549

Oakwood University Crowned National Champion at 19th Annual Honda Campus All-Star Challenge

The Best & Brightest Shine at Nation's Premiere Academic Challenge For Historically Black Colleges and Universities

ORLANDO, Fla. (March 31) – Proving that intelligence is more than just book smarts, Oakwood University leveraged teamwork and speed and knowledge to emerge victorious as National Champions of the 19th annual Honda Campus All-Star Challenge (www.hcasc.com). This event is the largest annual academic competition between the nation's leading Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and was held this weekend in Orlando, Florida.

Oakwood University showcased their skills and intellect by quickly and accurately answering questions on world history, science, literature, religion, the arts, social sciences, popular culture and African-American history and culture. Correctly answering the final question:

For reasons yet unknown, this disease correlates with biochemical markers called human leukocyte antigens. It does not, however, involve leukocytes but myelin sheaths protecting nerve cells. Name this crippling disease of young adults. (Correct answer: Multiple Sclerosis)

Oakwood University topped second place finisher Alcorn State University to claim the championship and take home \$50,000 in grant money for their school. "We have talent everywhere on the team and as captain I just need to know when and where to listen. This was a team effort, and with it, this win could not have been possible," said Oakwood College team captain Alesis Turner.

More than 320 college students from 64 HBCUs across the country gathered to compete in the three-day tournament to win grants and glory for their academic institutions. Now in its 19th year, the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge (HCASC) celebrates the proud academic heritage of the nation's HBCUs and showcases the great minds these institutions have produced.

"HCASC provides a platform for America's best and brightest from the nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities to come together as competitors and connect in this amazing bonding experience," said Marc Burt, senior manager, Office of Inclusion and Diversity, American Honda Motor Co., Inc. "This event allows students to compete, engage in teamwork, and establish long-term relationships that can be beneficial when applying for jobs or pursuing higher education. Honda is proud to be a part of this impactful experience."

During the three-day tournament, the 64 HBCU teams of four compete in a modified round robin format. The top two teams from each of eight divisions advance to the "Sweet 16," in a single elimination playoff. The final two teams then compete for the National Champion title in a best 2- out of 3- final series.

This year's HCASC theme, "Call to Action," encouraged students to take from this experience a greater understanding of what they can do personally to positively contribute to the society. Keynote speaker Sheila Johnson, president and managing partner of the WNBA's Washington Mystics, co-founder of BET, and a major philanthropist, encouraged students to heed the call to action.

The Oakwood University team included: Team Captain Alesis Turner, senior, electrical engineering; Marcus Cooper, sophomore, history and pre-law; Sherwin Faria, senior, computer science; Monique-Renée Pinnock, junior, biochemistry; and Michael Vance, senior, communications and journalism. They were coached by Dr. Rennae Elliott.

In addition to Oakwood University and Alcorn State University, student teams from Howard University and the Southern University-Baton Rouge also demonstrated their academic prowess by making it to the final four. The academic teams were joined by nearly 100 HBCU presidents, educators, alumni and community volunteers who attended the event to support and cheer on participating students.

American Honda Motor Co. Inc., is the proud founder and host of this academic challenge and provides more than \$300,000 in institutional grants each year to the HBCUs that participate in the competition.

For more information on the Honda Campus All Star Challenge, and, a list of the 64 participating HBCUs, please visit www.HCASC.com.

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About the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge

The Honda Campus All-Star Challenge is the largest national competition of its kind. Established in 1989 by American Honda Motor Co., Inc., the annual academic challenge has touched more than 50,000 HBCU students and awarded more than \$5 million in grants to HBCUs to improve campus life through facility improvements and expanded academic resources. The Honda Campus All-Star Challenge is one of many programs that demonstrate Honda's long-term commitment to the HBCUs.

Editor's Note: High resolution images of schools in your area at the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge available by contacting Erika Braxton-White.

2008 HCASC Sweet 16 Teams

Alabama A&M University
Alcorn State University
Florida A&M University
Grambling State University
Howard University
Langston University
Morehouse College
Norfolk State University
North Carolina Central University
Oakwood University
Prairie View A&M University
Tennessee State University
Tuskegee University
Southern University - Baton Rouge
University of Maryland Eastern Shore
West Virginal State University