



DeShawn Blanding

National FFA Southern Region Vice President

Age: 20

Birthdate: Dec. 6, 1996

Hometown and State: Manning, S.C.

Parents: Barbara L. and Carlton Blanding

Siblings: Katrina Lloyd, Donte Lloyd, Damien Lloyd, Darius Blanding

FFA Stats

Chapter: Manning FFA

Enterprise: Agribusiness, Vegetable Production, Agricultural Education

State Office: 2014-15 South Carolina State FFA Vice President

College Stats:

Year: Sophomore

Major: Biological Engineering, Natural Resources Engineering track

School: North Carolina A&T State University

College Activities: Student government senator, Collegiate FFA, Honors Program, MANRRS (Minorities in Agricultural Resources and Related Sciences)

Future Career Goal: To be a college professor.

DeShawn Blanding says FFA has taught him how to paint his own picture. "Four years of progressive leadership and growth and endless opportunities; I have been given a canvas to illustrate my story. As a state officer and with an introduction to agriculture and advocacy, I have been provided the platform to help others do the same," Blanding says.

Blanding was elected to the 2016-17 National FFA Officer Team as southern region vice president at the 89th National FFA Convention & Expo.

Majoring in biological engineering (natural resources engineering track) at North Carolina A&T State University, Blanding is a U.S. Department of Agriculture 1890 Land Grant Scholar; a Student Government Association Senator, representing the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences; and vice president of Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS). He is a member of the Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society, a mentor for the North Carolina A&T Honors Program and a starting builder for the Ashe Street Community Garden and Education Center.

Blanding served as the South Carolina State FFA Vice President in 2014-15, and while in high school, he served as president of the Manning FFA Chapter (2012-13 and 2013-14). His SAE was composed of several different areas in the agriculture curriculum, which enabled him to see agriculture from a farm-to-fork perspective in agribusiness and vegetable production. Blanding says his SAEs allowed him to experience the three-circle model through involvement in food preparation with locally grown products, as well as expanding his research through the creation of rooftop and raised bed gardens, greenhouse work and natuculture.

Blanding plans to attend graduate school to obtain a doctorate in a related discipline. He hopes to gain industry experience before becoming an agricultural education professor at the college level while conducting research on soil and water conservation and utilization.

"Through my year of service, I will strive to be the image of our organization and help our members paint their own pictures. I will give my full self. I will portray the image and diversity of FFA and agriculture to every person I encounter," Blanding says.