



## **Teonja Tatum, North Carolina A & T State University- c/o 2022, Communications with a focus in Public Relations**



**Name :** Teonja Tatum

**Your HBCU :** North Carolina A & T State University

**Graduation Year :** 2022

**Major :** Communications with a focus in Public Relations

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

I am from Newport News, Virginia! I don't really remember who introduced me to HBCUs...maybe my big sister Courtney!



My 2018 Senior Picture

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

I chose an HBCU over a pwi because I wanted to be around people who could relate to my struggles as a young Black woman in America. I didn't want to spend four years trying to find where I fit in. At A&T, I don't have to get in where I "fit" in because all the spaces here were made specifically for students like me!

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

I had went on a string of HBCU college tours with my best friend and my sister. On a Monday, I toured Howard University in DC & I had my heart set on being at the Mecca! I had already loved the city, but I still wanted to tour A&T so that Wednesday I took the tour. As soon as I stepped on campus I knew this is where I wanted to be, the atmosphere was so friendly and I had felt like an Aggie that day! I applied as soon as I got back to Virginia the next day! I got deferred because I sent the wrong test scores, but I didn't realize that until I bawled my eyes out LOL. I sent the right test scores and the next week I received my acceptance letter and that letter gave me the "OK" to wear and buy all the Aggie gear I wanted to! I couldn't wait to attend the #1 Public HBCU in the country, of course I was scared because I'd be going to a school 4 hours away from what I know, but I wasn't going to let that stop me from experiencing life as an Aggie & the rest is history...in the making!

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

One of my favorite "first time" experiences was when I went to my first football game as a college student! My freshman year I went to the homecoming game and here at A&T homecoming is called GHOE (Greatest Homecoming on Earth) and that experience was more than I expected it to

be! To be in the presence of alumni and students who love their school so much gave me chills because I realized now I'm a part of something bigger than myself! I love being an Aggie...we brag different!

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

My English 100 professor Ms. Adri-Anne Jones impacted me the most! One day during the first semester of my collegiate career, I was so stressed my grannie had passed two weeks before freshman move-in day, I was confused as to what I wanted to do with my life and I went to see Ms. Jones about a grade and I ended up telling her everything going on with tears streaming down my face and ever since then when I see her I talk to her about all the good that has happened!



My Induction Ceremony for the National Council of Negro Women (Fall 19)

**6. What sports and/or extra curricular activities did you do in High School? And why?**

In high school I was the Student Body President, Co-President of my school's Principal Advisory Committee, Treasure of the City Wide Student Council Association and the SkillsUSA Treasurer as well as a JV & Varsity Cheerleader! I wanted to make a change in my school which is why I decided to run for Student Body President. I went to one of the only high schools in a low income area and I noticed a lot of disparities between other high schools and mine. I cheered because I had cheered when I lived in San Diego, California and I loved it so I continued to cheer for little league teams until I could try out for my high school!

**7. Best restaurants on/near campus? Best dishes?**

Y'all I believe Greensboro is home to some of the BEST food trucks! My favorite is The Medallion they serve authentic tacos...yum! Also Pizzario across the street from campus directly in front of Dowdy is a little spot and they have some of the BEST subs...get a cheesesteak & lemon pepper wings fried hard!

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

I chose journalism because my junior year of high school I decided to take a telecommunications class and I ended up loving it! I also gained 9 college credits from Norfolk State University while taking those classes which I transferred to A&T!

**9. How are you positively active on campus? (e.g. clubs, SGA, etc.)**

I am a campus ambassador for Impressions of Beauty, a student representative for the Office of Student Development, an active member of the National Council of Negro Women and an incoming student ambassador for NCAT's Multicultural Student Center for the upcoming 2020-21 school year!

**10. What and where are the historical places on campus?**

The A&T Four Statue in front of the Dudley Building on the south side of campus! They're one of the reasons for the string of sit-ins at segregated restaurants in the south during the 1960s. Look them up!

**11. What type of household did you grow up in?**

I grew up in a single parent household with 3 siblings! I have an older brother, Kqua, an older sister, Courtney, and I also have a younger sister, Trinity, she's three years younger than me! My mom, Sonja/Missy, did everything in her power to make sure I always had the best and without her I probably wouldn't be at A&T.

**12. How did you overcome your nervousness about going to college?**

Going out of state was so nerve wrecking and I took it head on! I joined groupchats, connected with people on social media so when I got on campus I had a few people I could hang out with. Shout out to my first A&T friend Bianca everyone needs a friend like her!

**13. What advice would you give high school students filling out college applications for the first time?**

Don't apply to schools you do NOT want to go to! Just because your friends are going does not mean you have to as well! You can always make more friends while keeping in touch with hometown friends! Trust me I've done it. It was scary, but what's life without a little adventure? You're not alone in anything, there's always someone who went through what you're going through. Ask for help, your HBCU family is here for a reason. We love you!

**14. If you could only speak two sentences to the youth coming after you what would you say?**

If you're going through a tough time, it won't last forever that's why it's called "going through it."  
& You're loved, go places you're appreciated and don't waste your time in places you aren't.