FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS GAIN REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE AT ‘WE COUNT’ EVENT

(CHICAGO) - On Saturday, March 20, 2010, at Chicago State University (CSU), broadcaster Tavis Smiley moderated a national conversation examining the Black Agenda and the accountability of leadership to address issues facing African Americans. The “We Count! The Black Agenda is the American Agenda,” symposium drew more than 5,000 to the Emil and Patricia A. Jones Convocation Center, including local and national media covering the event.

While the symposium was not a University-sponsored event, many CSU students participated, including the Student Government Association President Raven Curling. Ms. Curling served as a panelist along with Tavis Smiley, Angela Glover Blackwell, Tom Burrell, Michael Eric Dyson, Minister Louis Farrakhan, Michael Fauntroy, Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., Dr. Julianne Malveaux, Ron Walters, Dorothy Tillman and Dr. Cornell West.

In addition to the Black Agenda topic, Ms. Curling, along with her fellow panelists, discussed a myriad of related topics from the current state of the economy to healthcare and education.

“We [African Americans] are at the bottom of the totem pole,” said Curling, 26, who is a senior at CSU. “It makes sense to focus on us, because as we move up, so does everyone else. Unfortunately, forty-two years after MLK’s death, the Black Agenda is still a priority for those who fight for liberty and justice in the name of Civil Rights, along with other causes.”

Noting that the panel comprised of distinguished intellectuals, whom Ms. Curling considers to be the most prolific, philosophical, spiritual, and electrifying leaders of today, she asked who was being groomed to take their place. She discussed the need to encourage young leaders to join the efforts in advancing the Black Agenda. She further noted that it is not enough for people to want change; they must actively participate in bringing change to pass.

Students from CSU’s Colleges of Business, Arts & Sciences, Education and Health Science also represented CSU well as they honed their entrepreneurial skills managing the Convocation Center’s concession stands. Students from the CSU-Television program operated cameras for WYCC television station gaining invaluable production experience. Others served as student ambassadors, accommodating visitors to the university.

Additionally, many students from CSU’s Presidential Scholars, Honors College and Student Government Association asked...
questions in the final hour of the program during the Q & A session. Students’ questions included why the Census is important to advancing the Black Agenda and how young people can prepare for leadership in the African American community. They also requested the panel address the “Black-on-Black” violence issue and give advice to students entering the job market during the current economic downturn.

CSU’s students proudly represented the University helping to show the community and viewers watching at home what a remarkably open and inclusive venue CSU can be to explore substantive and engaging conversations about the issues of the day that are impacting our nation.

If you weren’t able to attend on Saturday, you can watch the, “We Count! The Black Agenda is the American Agenda,” rebroadcast on C-SPAN2 Monday, March 29, 2010 at 8:30 p.m. ET. You can also view the symposium online now at Ustream.com, http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/5583448.