FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 14, 2008

George Foreman Tells TSU Summer Academy Students
“Don’t Get Knocked Out”

Former Heavyweight Boxing Legend and Houston businessman George Foreman delivered an inspirational speech to future TSU students who participated in the closing ceremony for the University’s Summer Academy/Amer-I-can Programs. Foreman’s “Don’t Get Knocked Out” speech sought to motivate students by advising them to stay focused, telling them how to overcome obstacles, and to understand that “You don’t have to necessarily fight with your fists, but you can also fight with your mind.”

Texas Southern University recently adopted admissions standards that have changed the University’s previous “open-admissions policy” by raising the bar for students upon acceptance. These changes will be phased in over the next year with the 2.0 grade point average and the required summer academic program going into effect for fall 2008 and SAT/ACT requirements phasing in by fall 2009.

For admittance to Texas Southern University for fall 2008, prospective students will be required to graduate from high school with a minimum 2.0 GPA and take the ACT and/or SAT (no minimum score). Students who graduate in the top 25 percent of their class will be automatically admitted. Any student who does not meet the University’s minimum requirements will still have the opportunity to enroll at the University after successfully completing a conditional summer academic program.

Texas Southern has developed summer academic programming to help those students in need of additional academic support. These summer programs give each student the unique opportunity to get a “jumpstart” on their college career by establishing the strongest foundation possible in Mathematics, Reading, and Writing. Participants also receive interactive, student-centered instruction in Mathematics, Reading, and Writing in preparation for the THEA exam, which is administered twice during the program to participants with acceptable attendance. These programs were designed to help students obtain the skills and confidence necessary to succeed in college level coursework and beyond. Summer Academy helps to prepare students for college, provides academic assistance in preparation for the THEA exam, and helps ease the transition from high school to college with various “Getting Ready for College” seminars, including study skills, financial management, managing instructors, etc.
Summer Academy students also received the benefits of the Amer-I-can Program, which includes the passion that NFL football Hall of Famer Jim Brown has developed for bettering the lives of today’s young people. Brown says that, “The challenge of achieving our full potential is compelling. This life-management skills training program is designed to empower us to do just that—-to enable us to take responsibility for our own self-determination. The beauty of the Amer-I-Can Program is that it is applicable to all people, as it transcends race, age, gender, religion, and socio-economic status. My belief is that teaching and sharing the program concepts related to self-esteem could significantly impact the problems our society faces today. I feel that the Amer-I-Can Program is, in many ways, a missing link that empowers those exempted from power and participation in the mainstream. We believe in and work effectively with those whom society disregards, contending that it is never too late to attain a full, meaningful life.”

Three of the programs’ outstanding students spoke out about their life experiences and their experiences during the program. The first student to tell of her experiences was Tamara Thomas, an 18-year-old MacArthur High School graduate and Education major. Her path to Texas Southern was not an easy one, but she did not let her personal situation take away from her goals. Ms. Thomas has been awarded a teaching contract for Aldine ISD upon her graduation as part of her participation in Texas Association of Future Educators (TAFE). When asked why she chose to be a part of the Summer Academy/Amer-I-can Program, she stated, “I knew that these programs were important and that I had to be a part of it all.” When asked to tell a little about her experiences in these programs her face lit up with excitement, “Where do I begin? The instructors really worked to build my confidence in math and English and shared their experiences with us – this helped me so much. The Amer-I-can Program has also helped me bridge the gap between high school and college and they taught me how to get rid of the homeboy and home-girl mentality.” Upon her completion of the programs she is now TEST PASSED and focused.

Francisco Sifuente, a 20 year old graduate from George Washington Carver High School and Business Administration major, stated that, “The Amer-I-can program helped me find my passion for business administration, and the courses helped to refresh my math skills, and enhance my writing and English skills.” When Mr. Sifuente came into the program he tested low on the writing portion of the practice THEA. After completing the eight-week program, he has successfully passed all three sections of the THEA and is now considered TEST PASSED.

Allyse Woods, a HISD graduate and Pre Pharmacy major stated that she was an introverted student during her high school years. Her greatest fear, she said, was making the transition from high school to college. Ms. Woods accredits the Summer Academy with helping her appreciate and understand people and all of their differences. “Amer-I-can has taught me that you can get more accomplished working as a team – People said that the program would be a waste of time, but now that I have participated in it, I would recommend this to all incoming freshmen!” As a result of her participation, Ms. Woods received the highest THEA scores to date in the Summer Academy program.

High school students, parents, TSU faculty and staff and the community were invited to the closing ceremonies with a special incentive – TSU enrollment application fees were waived if students sign up on the day of the ceremony. Classes for the fall 2008 semester begin August 25, 2008. Other program participants included: Dr. John M. Rudley, President of Texas Southern University, who delivered a charge to the each student to be, “academically ready at all times.” Terry Williams, Vice President of H.E.B., and Dr. Jacqueline Fleming, Director of TSU’s GUAC.

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