Student Spotlight: Amber Cleggett 03/21

For the March DEI Student Spotlight, we are featuring Amber Cleggett who is an undergraduate student majoring in Animal Sciences and minoring in History. Amber is also the treasurer of the Ohio State chapter of MANRRS.

What is your field of study?
I am majoring in Animal Sciences with a specialization in Biosciences and am minoring in History.

How do you plan to use your degree in CFAES in your career?
I hope to be a food animal veterinarian that works at the intersection of public health and food safety. My degree from CFAES serves as the foundation I need to move forward in my educational career.

What challenges have you faced while achieving your goals?
Being a first-generation college student is both a challenge for me as well as a motivator. I've had to navigate college largely without the help of my family. I serve as a role model for my younger cousins, nieces, and nephews and that pushes me to do better. I have to show them what is possible with some when you work hard. Furthermore, my passion for making sure that people and animals are healthy keeps me going.

What experiences as a member of the CFAES community have helped shape you as a person?
I had the opportunity to complete study abroad in Panama and that was a life changing experience. I had never been on an airplane, on a beach, or out of the country before then. But more importantly, I was in Panama when I realized what I wanted to do for the rest of life.

What can the college do to continue to create an inclusive environment?
I believe that the college can create a more inclusive environment by reminding professors that not everyone has the same background. I am from Cleveland, Ohio. I had never been to a farm before college. I had very limited interactions with livestock before (and even during) college. The education I received before coming to Ohio State is not comparable to that of my peers. So when professors assume that I've seen certain concepts before, or have had particular experiences, it creates a disconnect that makes it harder for me to thrive. To create a more inclusive environment means that you have to step back sometimes and explain the things that you think are common knowledge. The college needs to actively seek out students, professors, and staff that do not all have the same experiences and knowledge, and be willing to bridge the gap by any means. Furthermore, the college needs to make these individuals feel like they aren't just being heard, but that they are being listened to.
What ways do you suggest that someone could get involved in DEI work in the college? Where do you wish more people would get involved?

As the treasurer for Ohio State MANRRS, I would recommend that anyone who wants to be involved in DEI work in the college join one (or more) of our meetings. This student organization was created to make multicultural students in agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences feel like they have a place here. By joining a meeting, this person will gain insight on the different perspectives that we hold. I would suggest that anyone interested in DEI work diversify their life. Try new foods. Read books authored by people of color. Get your news from a different media outlet. There isn’t a particular place that I wish more people would be involved. I just wish that more people would step outside the realm of complicity and get comfortable with being uncomfortable, having difficulty conversations, and actively working together.