

“I love what I do,” she confessed to me. The passion in her voice when she speaks will captivate you. The excitement she displays on her face when she discusses new projects for her students will thrill you. The optimism she releases into the atmosphere when she speaks about her future will inspire you. She has the attitude of a phenomenal woman. Who is she?

She is the lovely Justina Jones. Ms. Jones hails from Nashville, Tennessee. After graduating from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville where she double majored in communications studies and political science, her initial plan was to become a lawyer. However, she soon discovered that she was destined to do much greater things by impacting and molding the lives of young people. Continuing her educational journey at the illustrious Florida State University, Ms. Jones obtained her Master’s degree in higher education and student affairs. She began her career as an intern, but her diligent work ethic was noticed, and she now reigns as the Associate Director of the Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement at Florida State University. Although she is young and a woman, she is a leader in her field and allows her work to speak for itself.

“My door is always open, just stop by and say hi.” Ms. Jones enjoys talking to her students and discovering ways that they can help each other. She helps students understand that what they do now impacts the future and the younger people coming behind them. She understands the importance of mentorship as she credits her high school volleyball coach with being the first person to truly see past her façade and discover what was behind the smile she wore daily. It only took one person to believe in her and invest in her and this gave her the extra push she

needed. Ms. Jones is paying I forward by doing for other students what her volleyball coach did for her.

She views the Women Student Union as a safe place for women to bring awareness to the issues we face. Much like Women's Student Union, she promotes being proud of just being a woman without regard to ethnicity or social class. Like most of us, Ms. Jones is guilty of not always making herself a priority. She vows to work on this in the day to come and challenges other girls to do the same. She has learned that sometimes we must allow other people to be a good friend to us. As women it is innate in us to care for others, but we must remember to take care of ourselves in the process. Ms. Jones is someone who values her quality time with herself. "I'm fine with sitting in silence and not thinking about anything."

Motivated by knowing that it's not all about her and her purpose is much bigger, Ms. Jones will continue to make strides in the field of higher education and I know that one day we will see her as the Vice President of Student Affairs. Her perseverance and determination will spread far beyond Florida State University's campus and touch the hearts of many.