BIRMINGHAM, Alabama (September 18, 2018) Imagine being able to showcase skills you learned as a student competing for a position on the world stage. For Lawson State’s very own Jihaaya Muhammad, it isn’t too hard to conceive, as she was announced the Golden Ticket winner of the Sweet Home Alabama Dessert Competition held at Jefferson State Community College as part of a culinary fair this past August.

Muhammad first learned of the competition at Lawson State Community College in the class of Culinary Arts instructor Chef Adam Elliott. The competition called for high school students, professional chefs and home cooks to “battle it out” to compete for a spot in the 2018 World Food Championships.

She didn’t have to search too far to draw inspiration for the type of dessert to create during the event, which included a team comprised of her mother and sister. “I chose a family recipe that we called the ‘Magic City Bean Pie’ for the competition,” said Muhammad, who also described the event as a family affair with her father in attendance to cheer everyone on.

Her mother is credited as being a big influence to pursue the Culinary Arts program at Lawson. “I wanted to broaden my education, and she encouraged me to do that.” Muhammad also praised the culinary program saying the opportunities for hands-on experience and learning the importance of teamwork helped her prepare for the competition. “It’s a great program to be in. The instructors genuinely care about you and your education.”
For someone whose future plans includes having a catering business of her own, Muhammad called the overall experience of competition exciting and said although the pressure was high, she was glad to have participated. Kristopher Hicks, a third semester student of the Lawson State Culinary Arts program, placed second in the competition with his rendition of Bread Pudding with Peach Foster topped with homemade Butter Pecan ice cream. Hicks entered the competition as a solo chef but was satisfied about the experience and said, “I’m very happy for Jihaaya. At least one of us won.”

Muhammad will be one of many competitors during the World Food Championships that will bring people from around the country and the world to Orange Beach, Alabama this year from November 7th through the 11th.

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ABOUT LAWSON STATE:
Lawson State Community College – host to President Barack Obama (March 2015); ranked the Nation’s #5 Community College (2013); recognized as a “Champion of Change” by the White House (2011); ranked as one of “America’s 50 Best Community Colleges.” (2010)
Lawson State Community College, with campuses in Birmingham and Bessemer, seeks to provide accessible, quality educational opportunities, promote economic growth, and enhance the quality of life for students. The college is dedicated to providing affordable and accessible lifelong learning opportunities in order to prepare students for employment and career advancement, or to transfer to senior institutions. www.lawsonstate.edu