

## Lois Harmon, Florida A&M Graduate, to Begin Ph.D. Work in the Department of Education

By George Yatchisin

“The University of California recognizes the unique and important contributions that Historically Black Colleges and Universities make to the academy, our nation and the world. Through the UC-HBCU Initiative, the Office of the President encourages UC faculty to actively engage in collaboration and cooperation with faculty and students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.” (from [www.ucop.edu](http://www.ucop.edu))



Lois Harmon, UC-HBCU Fellow, with Dr. Patricia Marin (left) and Professor John Yun (right).

Lois Harmon is one of three University of California–Historically Black Colleges and Universities Initiative (UC–HBCU) Fellows starting at a UC campus this fall, beginning a doctoral degree at UC Santa Barbara’s Gevirtz School. Harmon participated in this summer’s Scholars Program, one of the key elements of “Connecting Networks: UCSB and FAMU (Florida A&M University),” an initiative funded in 2011 by the UC Office of the President’s University of California–Historically Black Colleges and Universities Initiative.

“We are very excited that Lois will be joining us at The Gevirtz School,” says Dr. Patricia Marin, Associate Director of the UC Educational Evaluation Center that houses the summer Scholars Program. “We are confident that she represents the beginning of a pipeline of amazing FAMU students who will

receive their doctorates from UCSB as a result of the UCSB–FAMU Partnership.”

The University of California continues to seek ways to attract and enroll scholars from historically excluded populations. At the graduate level, African Americans/Blacks are the most underrepresented group in relation to their U.S. population. The five-year average (2006-2011) for enrollment of African Americans in UC academic doctoral programs is 2.5%. In an effort to improve the representation of African Americans/Blacks in its graduate programs, particularly its Ph.D. programs, the UC is investing in cultivating relationships and establishing programs with communities and institutions that produce African American graduates from high schools, undergraduate colleges, and universities as well as institutions producing graduates with master’s degrees. The UC is investing in such collaborations both to demonstrate the value placed on cultural and social diversity throughout its campuses and to make meaningful, sustained progress in addressing longstanding inequities in access to UC. The goal of the UC–HBCU Initiative is to increase the number of scholars from HBCUs enrolling in UC academic doctoral programs.

Lois Harmon was born and raised in Gainesville, Florida. In April 2012 she graduated Summa Cum Laude with a B.S. in Elementary Education from Florida A&M University’s College of Education. Harmon will pursue her doctoral degree in Educational Leadership and Organizations in the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education. Harmon’s commitment to equitable teaching and learning and the improvement of elementary education for all students has sparked her research interests in literacy development at the elementary level. In particular, Harmon’s research focuses on effective literacy practices for Spanish-speaking English Language Learners in California. Harmon aspires to be a teacher-researcher and eventually become an educational administrator.