

# CAFS

MAGAZINE

WINTER 2017

## *Our* HISTORY IN AGRICULTURE AND WHY WE SHOULD BE IN AGRICULTURE TODAY



**OUTREACH**

- >> NEXT GENERATION HUNGER FIGHTERS
- >>> EDUCATION KEY FOR A FOOD SECURE FUTURE

**GLOBAL**

- >> STUDY ABROAD
- >>> CAFS STUDENTS IN SPAIN

**TECHNOLOGY**

- >> BSE
- >>> BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS ENGINEERING AT FAMU

**STUDENT SUCCESS**

- >> IMANI COOPER
- >>> HBCU ALL-STAR WHITE HOUSE AMBASSADOR



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MESSAGE FROM THE

# dean

..... ➔ ROBERT W. TAYLOR, PH.D.

### Greetings,

I hope each of you enjoyed the holiday season and that you were able to celebrate and spend quality time with family and friends. As we embark on a new school year, I am delighted to welcome new and returning students, faculty, and staff. Time away from everyday tasks can be refreshing and I am confident that everyone has returned with renewed zeal and vigor.

I am honored to continue to serve as your dean and to have the opportunity to work with all of you, including our alumni and industry partners. We are united in a common cause and share common memberships in a college and university community of remarkable resilience and energy. It is a community with an uncommon capacity to weather and learn from challenges, adapt and move forward. I have come to realize that this community is truly remarkable in its ability to enrich the lives of all its members, and because of this I feel privileged, honored and delighted to be a part of it.

The start of a new year provides an ideal time to reflect on where we have been and where we are heading. As I watched our graduating class of fall 2017 walked across the stage, I am reminded of the vast talents our graduates embody, and I am extremely proud and consider it a privilege that the college was a part of that effort. I know that they have a bright future and that they are equipped to take on the challenges which they will encounter.

Together we have made major steps forward in our tripartite mission. All of our successes to date are leading us on a path to a brighter and even more extraordinary future. If we are to realize our full potential, develop students with a deep understanding of complex issues and address areas of critical importance, we will need your support more than ever.

I want to express my most heartfelt thanks to our students, faculty and staff for your ongoing support, engagement and hard work on behalf of the college. Together we have been progressively transforming ourselves to be of greater relevance to a fast changing world and of enhanced value to the University.

**Best wishes for a productive and prosperous New Year.**

*Robert Taylor*

Robert W. Taylor, Ph.D.

Dean



## CAFS Magazine Winter 2017

### DEANS OFFICE

Dean and Director of Land-grant Programs,  
College of Agriculture and Food Sciences:

Robert W. Taylor, Ph.D.

Editor: Andrine Stanhope, Ph.D.

Admin. Assistant: Phyllis Moore

Assoc. Dir. Research: Wayne Walker

Asst. Dir. Research: Jenaya Anderson-Hayes

Coord. Admin. Services: Courtney Pilcher

### CREATIVE

Layout & Design: Charles R. Collins, III

### COMMUNICATIONS

Copy Editing: FAMU Office of Communications

### STAFF WRITERS

Satyanarayan Dev, Ph.D. Charles Magee, Ph.D.

Olivia Gilstrap Sierra Johnson

Cynthia Portalatin Jared Reddecliff

Joniya Vinson

### CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Byron Dobson

St. Clair Murraine

Laura Strungell

### PHOTOGRAPHY CONTRIBUTORS

Andrine Stanhope Charles R. Collins, III

Jorge Del'Angel Qwontanney Major

Jorge Montezuma @SecretarySonny

### OFFICE

Assoc. Dean, Research: Stephen Leong, Ph.D.

Assoc. Dean, Academic Programs: Neil James, Ph.D.

Director, Center for Biological Control:

Lambert Kanga, Ph.D.

Director, Center for Viticulture and Small Fruit

Research: Violeta Tsolova, Ph.D.

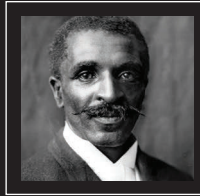
Director, Center for Water Resources:

Odemari Mbuya, Ph.D.

Director, Cooperative Extension and Outreach:

Vonda Richardson

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SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

# Sonny Perdue

“TALKS YOUTH INVOLVEMENT  
IN AGRICULTURE”

by Byron Dobson, Senior Writer, Tallahassee Democrat



▲ Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue (*left*) visits Florida A&M University. He is pictured here with U.S. Representative, Al Lawson (*middle*) and Florida A&M University President, Larry Robinson, Ph.D. (*right*).

# A



▲ (Back row L-R) Raven Goodman, Halimah Wynn, Sonny Perdue, Larry Robinson, Ph.D., Crenel Francis, (Front) George McNealy, Briyana Stewart, Boones Champa and Matthew Dismuke, before the round table discussion.



▲ (From L-R) Secretary Perdue talk's agriculture career with Biological Systems Engineering Sophomore, Raven Goodman and Agri-Business Senior, Boones Champa.

lot of youths question the importance of agriculture and job development and advancement in the field. They also do not envision agriculture as a lucrative career choice.

Agri-business major Rochard Moricette often finds himself explaining to his friends and college mates what agri-business is all about. "Most of them have never heard of that major," said Moricette. "It is a major where you can become well versed in marketing, economics and price strategies; it gives you flexibility in career options."

Moricette, along with Boones Champa, were the agricultural students who had a seat at the table on Friday December 8, with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. Perdue visited Florida A&M University (FAMU) to hear from students majoring in agriculture, their views on how to attract and increase pre-college students interest to study agriculture and the many career options it involves.

In addition to FAMU students, the roundtable included state representatives from 4-H, Future Farmers of America and extension officers.

"The goal is not only to get students to understand that agriculture is more than just farming," said Perdue, "but also to promote research at universities like FAMU, "to meet the future needs of agriculture."

Perdue, who was raised in a farming family in Bonaire, Georgia, said he was encouraged to see young people promoting urban gardens, studying water quality and environmental issues, and exposing the value of small farmers in the farm-to-table dining trend.

The former Georgia governor also was joined on the panel by U.S. Rep. Al Lawson, who

sits on House Committee on Agriculture, FAMU President Larry Robinson, Ph.D. and Robert Taylor, Ph.D. dean of the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences.

Perdue said it was "a great revelation" to understand the depth of research FAMU is conducting in water quality, agronomy and entomology.

He said he supports legislation proposed by U.S. Representative David Scott, of Georgia's 13th congressional district, and graduate of FAMU, that would provide more funding for recruitment and scholarships for land-grant universities.

"We believe we have money in USDA to support this," Perdue said, "We think it will be a great investment in the future of agriculture." ■



▲ Secretary Perdue (left) with Agri-Business Sophomore, Crenel Francis.

### Some of the suggestions offered during the visit included:

- ▶ Promoting involvement of middle- and high-school students in organizations such as Future Farmers of America and 4-H;
- ▶ Exposing high-school seniors to the vast college majors associated with agriculture;
- ▶ Incorporating agriculture in majors such as business, engineering and STEM courses; and
- ▶ Creating initiatives to educate parents on erasing the stigma of "farming."



# BSE

BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS ENGINEERING

AT

FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY'S  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SCIENCES

**Biological Systems Engineering** is one of the most rapidly evolving disciplines in the field of engineering. The Biological Systems Engineering (BSE) program in the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences (CAFS), at Florida A&M University (FAMU), is accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). Although biology is its main scientific base, a major in biosystems engineering could be viewed as a *mélange* consisting of chemistry, computer science and engineering.

The recent explosion of molecular genetics, genomics, and proteomics data—as well as of quantitative imaging studies of biological tissues—has changed the status quo dramatically, replacing a previous dearth of molecular details with a wealth of data that are difficult to fully comprehend. This flood of new data has been accompanied by its inherent complexity making biological systems seem to be like nothing previously encountered in the physical sciences. Thus, biological systems offer cutting- edge problems for most scientific and engineering-related disciplines alike.

Modeling biological interactions as dynamical systems (i.e., systems of variables changing in time) allows investigation of systems-level topics such as the robustness of patterning mechanisms, the role of feedback, and the self-regulation of size. The use of tools from engineering and applied mathematics, such as sensitivity analysis and control theory, is becoming more commonplace in biology. In addition to giving biologists some new terminology for describing their systems, such analyses are extremely useful in pointing to missing data and in testing the validity of a proposed mechanism. Indubitably, even the best mathematical models fail to incorporate full mechanistic details of biological systems. However, when derived from well-established physics and chemistry, these models can reveal general system behavior that is not easily supported by intuitive reasoning.

One can approach a biological system from an engineer's perspective. Engineered systems were designed with a particular purpose in mind, so it would be helpful to ask, "What is/are the purpose(s) of this biological system?" In BSE, these purposes are termed as "performance objectives," and determining what they are for a particular biological system is especially important in making decisions related to design trade-offs, and furthermore will provide clues to a system's behavior. In other words, when optimizing a large system with several performance objectives, any one objective taken in isolation, is simple to optimize. However, optimization of the whole system—that is, balancing multiple performance objectives—can ▶

**Some of the recent projects in which faculty and students are involved include:**

- ▶ developing intelligent models that assess and predict the vulnerability of agricultural systems to various factors including climate change
- ▶ building sensors to detect and track termites in live trees
- ▶ designing robotics sensors for determining cell growth in hydrogels for use in drug development and delivery studies
- ▶ mitigating air quality issues in manure to energy projects
- ▶ the use of predatory insect-based sensor for early detection of potential pest problems, to name a few.

**“Society has a great need for biological systems engineering. The BSE program at FAMU considers living systems when approaching problems in the natural world, which I think is very important given the current state of the world’s dwindling natural resources. Given its great faculty and curriculum, I know the program has prepared me to take on those challenges.”**

**Mikela Pryor**, a junior in the BSE program and President for the FAMU chapter of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Systems Engineers (ASABE).

be extremely difficult to achieve, especially because performance objectives are often at odds with each other. This is exactly what a student in the BSE program at FAMU-CAFS is trained for.

FAMU is one of the only two historically Black colleges and universities that have a Biological Engineering Program. Our graduates have high-impact careers, and usually get an annual starting salary in the range of \$50,000 – \$70,000. They leverage their understanding of engineering and biology to help address issues related to water quality, a secure food supply, and renewable energy – issues that are important to everyone. Biological systems engineers become hands-on problem solvers, who have a wide array of skills that they use to help people and communities. They are trained to solve problems associated with environmental protection, conservation of natural and renewable resources, and conversion of these resources to value-added products such as food, pharmaceuticals, polymers and biofuels.

“I chose the BSE program,” said Ornella Hare, a junior, “because it is one of the few engineering disciplines that covers a wide scope of subject areas related to, but not excluding natural resources such as air, water, and land; plants and animals; food; and infrastructure. Ultimately, I want to improve upon engineering designs; I want to make things more efficient either by improving the quality of a product, or by reducing the cost to make it. I think being able to understand how things work, and how to solve problems are essential tools that any individual should have. More now than ever Biological Systems Engineers are needed to help solve global issues such as climate change, food scarcity, the freshwater crisis and clean energy. The program prepares me for the advances in technology because it conditions me to adapt to these changes by incorporating current technologies that are relevant to the study.”

In the works is the development of a robotics team consisting of CAFS BSE and Mechatronics undergraduate students who will compete in international robotics competitions, such as the annual American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) robotics competition. A FAMU chapter of the National Alpha Epsilon Honor Society has recently been established and qualifying students were inducted into the society, November 2017.

Our BSE graduates from CAFS are fully equipped to focus broadly on environmentally sound and sustainable engineering solutions to meet societies’ needs and the global ecological challenges. ■



# BSE

BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS ENGINEERING

AT

FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY'S  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SCIENCES

This scholarship is to attract well qualified high school and transfer students to a Biological Systems Engineering (BSE) course of study at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU).

## APPLICATION DEADLINE

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*August 15th of each year*

# Scholarships!

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- ▶ To be considered for the \$16,000 scholarship, the applicant must have a 3.5 GPA, an SAT score of at least 1200 or an ACT score of at least 27 (verbal and math).
- ▶ Transfer students must have a cumulative 3.0 grade point average.
- ▶ All recipients must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0, be enrolled in fifteen (15) hours of undergraduate courses per semester, and pass all courses attempted.
- ▶ Must be a U.S. citizen.



# FAMU

COLLEGE OF  
AGRICULTURE  
+ FOOD SCIENCES

FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY

# AFRICAN-AMERICANS' PAST HISTORY IN AGRICULTURE and why we should be in agriculture today

The past history of African-Americans' involvement in agriculture in the United States of America began in 1619, when the first American slaves were brought to the North American colony of Jamestown, Virginia to aid in the production of such lucrative crops as tobacco. American colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries, and African-American slaves helped build the economic foundation of the new nation. When the Cotton Revolution started around 1690, African Americans were the engine that made the USA the greatest cotton producing nation in the world. During the Civil War, from 1861-1865, more than 700,000 Americans lost their lives over keeping African Americans in slavery and in America's cotton fields.

After the Civil War, nearly four million slaves were quasi freed. Quasi free because the former slaves went from outright slavery to a forced plantation or share-cropping system. These former slaves had no money, no animals, no material properties of values and no formal education. However, they did have an empirical knowledge for the production of such crops as cotton, tobacco, rice and peanuts. To keep from starving, the former slaves had to accept this quasi slavery arrangement. The former slaves were in dire conditions.

In 1862, Congress passed a land grant bill that had been introduced by Congressman Justin Smith Morrill

from the state of Vermont. On July 2, 1862, President Lincoln signed the land-grant bill into law and it became known as the Morrill Act of 1862. The Act provided for the establishment of an institution of higher learning in each state that must include the teaching of agriculture and the mechanical arts among their academic offerings. No African Americans were allowed to attend these institutions. However, members of the White industrial class were allowed to attend and receive an education in agriculture, and any other academic disciplines offered.

Recognizing the dire conditions of the former slaves and a possible humanitarian calamity in America,

Congressman Morrill introduced in 1872, a second land-grant bill to establish a set of institutions for higher learning that would offer academic disciplines in agriculture and the mechanical arts for former slaves and their descendants. These institutions were located in states where African Americans could not legally attend the White land-grant institutions established under the 1862 Land-Grant Act. The second land-grant bill did not pass Congress until 1890, and it was signed on August 30, 1890 and became known as the 1890 Second Morrill Act for the Negro Citizens of



"NO RACE OR NATION CAN BE COMPLETELY FREE IF ALL ITS GROCERIES ARE IN SOMEONE ELSE'S PANTRY."

CHARLES MAGEE

#### Facts about

# GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER

**BORN:** 1864 in Diamond Grove, Missouri

**PARENTS:** Giles and Mary Carver

**EDUCATION:** George attended Iowa State Agricultural College (ISAC), where he earned his bachelor's and his master's. He was the first African-American student to attend ISAC.

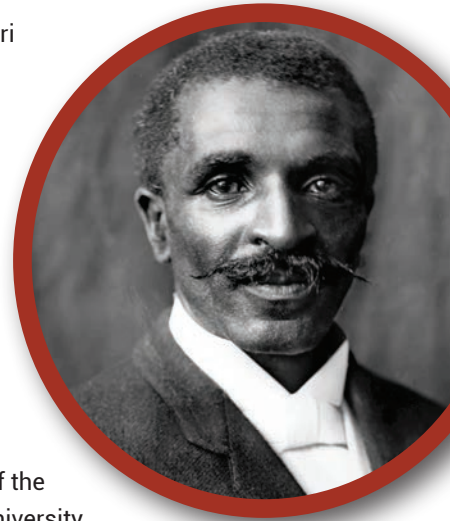
**CAREER:** In 1896, Carver was hired by Booker T. Washington as the director of the Agriculture Department at Tuskegee University in Alabama. Carver held the director's position for almost 20 years.

**RESEARCH:** Carver's research and innovative educational extension programs were aimed at encouraging farmers to utilize available resources to replace expensive commodities. Through his published bulletins and hands on demonstrations Carver taught farmers and students how to use crop rotation to ensure the soil did not lose its nutrients. Although his research was on several crops Carver is known mostly for his research on peanuts. He found hundreds of ways to use peanuts; such as dyes for clothing, fuel for cars, plastic products, cooking oil and peanut butter.

**CONNECTIONS:** In addition to Booker T. Washington, Carver's connections included Harvey Kellogg (of cereal fame), they both shared an interest in health foods; Henry Ford - Carver would visit Ford at Ford's laboratory in Dearborn, Michigan, and Ford would visit him at Tuskegee. Ford also gave funds to install an elevator in Carver's dormitory as the scientist grew weaker in his latter years; and Mahatma Gandhi would ask Carver for agricultural advice from time to time.

President Theodore Roosevelt and the United States Congress consulted George Washington Carver on agricultural matters because he was known as an expert around the world.

**DIED:** January 5, 1943 in Tuskegee, Alabama at the age of 79.



# AFRICAN-AMERICANS' PAST HISTORY IN AGRICULTURE

America. Eighteen institutions were originally established under the Second Morrill Act. These institutions made a significant contribution to the formal education of African Americans in agriculture and many other disciplines. African-American farmers became very proficient in the production of cotton, tobacco and peanuts.

During the decade between 1920 and 1930, there were more than 900,000 African-American farmers in the U.S., and they owned more than 15 million acres of farmland. This decade was the apex of African-American farmers and farmland ownership. To put this in perspective, today African Americans own fewer than four million acres of land. Why is farmland ownership so important to African Americans? We all have heard that old adage: "Give a man a fish and feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and feed him for the rest of his life." However, if you don't own the lake, it doesn't matter how good your fishing skills are, you will still go to bed hungry. African Americans are becoming a landless people. Another adage often stated is: "A nation without a vision will perish;" well, an analogous statement is: "A race without land and people educated in the food, agricultural and engineering sciences will also perish." Every race should have the knowledge and skills to feed itself.

After African Americans' agricultural production reached its zenith in the 1920-1930 decade, a decline started during the depression. It is believed by this author that some of the United States Department of Agriculture's

(USDA) agricultural policies contributed to this decline of African-Americans farmers and farmland loss. One particular policy that may have had the greatest negative impact on African-American farmers was the Cotton Allotment Policy, put in place in 1933. Similar policies were later developed and implemented for tobacco and peanuts. African-American farmers were very proficient at producing all crops. During the depression, cotton prices were very low and the USDA attributed the low prices to an over production of cotton. The USDA thought that a remedy to the over production of cotton was to limit the number of acres for each cotton farmer. In the 1920s and early 1930s, African-American farmers were very proficient in producing cotton due to their long empirical knowledge of cotton production from slavery, share-cropping and the plantation system of farming. Furthermore, African-American farmers had large families, which served them well as a source of labor for planting, cultivating, weeding and harvesting of cotton. In the 1920s and 1930s, the two main ingredients for good cotton production were large acres of fertile land and a large labor pool. Logic would dictate that when the USDA put the Cotton Allotment Policy in place, it took away the incentive for African-American farmers to acquire more land for cotton production. The White cotton producers had large acres of land; therefore, they were able to circumvent the limiting acreage policy by deeding some acres of land to their children and each child could receive a cotton allotment. Many of these children had no knowledge, equipment,

or skills for cotton production. Thus, the family patriarch would continue farming the same number, if not more, of acres.

The Cotton Allotment Policy probably enhanced and perpetuated the share-cropping system of farming. Out of necessity, many African-American families had to enter into a share-cropping arrangement with their White neighbors to increase their cotton production acreage. However, the African-American family did not share in the USDA payment for taking cotton land out of production. All of the money went to the White land owner.

The great migration of African Americans in the 1950s and 1960s to the northern states for better jobs and economic opportunities further led to the decline of African Americans in production agriculture. During this period, agriculture was becoming heavily automated and mechanized. Tractors replaced mules and horses for planting and cultivating, chemicals replaced hoes for the removal weeds, and cotton harvesters replaced humans for picking cotton. When the food and agricultural system depended largely on manual labor, African Americans were well represented. But, African Americans were virtually left behind when production agriculture became mechanized and automated.

Given our past negative history associated with the food and agriculture system; why should any African American consider a major or career in the food and agricultural sciences? There are several reasons

# and why we should be in agriculture today

why we should obtain degrees in the food, agricultural and engineering sciences, some of which are listed below:

1. This is where the future and present jobs are. If you don't think there are jobs associated with agriculture, next time you visit your local supermarket; ask yourself how did the 10,000 plus food products get there? Very few African Americans are involved in the fields and professions required to make these 10,000 plus products possible.
2. Perhaps the greatest reason of all for some of us to pursue degrees and careers in the food, agricultural and engineering sciences is our social and moral obligation to help our brothers and sisters who still derive their living from the land on a full-time basis. African-American farmers are becoming an endangered species. We should always remember: "No race or nation can be completely free if all its groceries are in someone else's pantry."
3. Hypothetically, if we, African Americans, were to become a separate country, it would be the third or fourth largest Black nation in the world, with a population of about 40 million. However, we would still be at the mercy of other races because we wouldn't have enough African-American farmers, food and agricultural scientists and engineers to feed ourselves. We will never prosper as a race until we learn that there is as much dignity in driving a tractor as there is in driving a luxury car.

In order for African Americans to have lucrative careers in the food, agricultural and engineering professions, we must first obtain degrees at all levels (bachelor's, master's and doctorate) in these STEM disciplines. Lack of money need not be a problem in deciding to pursue these degrees because at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences has more scholarship funds than any other college at the University. Yet, we have a very difficult time in finding qualified students to take advantage of these scholarships.

We should have a plethora of peanut butter scientists in this county because during Black History Month, elementary, junior high and high school students will identify George Washington Carver as a great African-American scientist who is renowned for developing more than 100 products from peanuts. Yet, his face does not appear on the jar of any peanut butter. This should prompt you to wonder why so few African Americans follow in the footsteps of Mr. Carver. Probably, not a single person reading this article can name a living African-American peanut butter scientist. Our society will put an African-American cook and athletes' faces on food products and other items, but it will not put Mr. Carver's face on a jar of peanut butter. On a broad scale, in food and agriculture, as a race, we have not made much progress because all we have done is go

from "Miss Ann's" kitchen to "Mr. McDonald's" kitchen. If you don't think this is the case, just visit any fast food place in the South. On the other hand, maybe we have made some progress, because today both Q'Erra and Jamal are working in "Mr. McDonald's" kitchen. There is nothing wrong with working in a fast food kitchen, but we need more African Americans working in the testing kitchen rather than the serving kitchen. Prior to desegregation only African-American females were allowed to work in "Miss Ann's" kitchen. During the days of segregation, if you saw an adult African-American male with a suit and tie on at 3 p.m., on a Monday afternoon, you knew he was either a school teacher, preacher, or he was probably one relative short. Thank God those days are gone; however, very few African Americans are taking advantage of the educational and career opportunities in the food, agricultural and engineering sciences. Hopefully, this article has presented a cogent case for why we need to increase the pool of African Americans pursuing degrees and careers in the food, agricultural and engineering sciences. ■

*Charles Magee is a professor in the Biological Systems Engineering (BSE) program at Florida A&M University. Dr. Magee can be contacted by emailing charles.magee@famu.edu.*



# FAMU USAID Farmer-to-Farmer Program Trains Farmers in India on Organic Waste Recycling and Composting Methods

Volunteer Spotlight – Jorge Montezuma

**F**irst-time, farmer-to-farmer volunteer Jorge Montezuma knows a lot about organic waste recycling and composting. In his current role with the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, he provides technical assistance to small and large composting operations and serves on the board of the nonprofit North Carolina Composting Council.

Montezuma's years of experience in the fields of solid waste engineering, international sustainable development and community development caught the attention of Florida A&M University's United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) Program team who recently selected him for the "Climate Smart Agriculture Project: Improving Organic Carbon in Saline Soil Using Organic Compost" volunteer assignment.

Montezuma said his volunteer experience was great, and that it helped him understand the enormous issues of saline soils and water availability faced by Indian.

"In Gujarat, increasing unfavorable climatic conditions, soil salinity and shortages of water have had a major impact on agriculture. However, population and urbanization have caused an increase

in the demand for food production," said Harriett Paul, FAMU's director of the Office of International Agriculture Programs.

"Improving the management and the efficiency of production is essential if Indian farmers are to meet the increasing demands for food."

As an F2F volunteer, Montezuma travelled to the state of Gujarat, India for two weeks, where he led seven training sessions held at Junagadh Agricultural University and the Vivekanand Research and Training Institute (VRTI) in Mandvi, India. He trained about 400 farmers, non-traditional learners, agricultural extension agents, and "train the trainers" on how to apply new composting training methods to local farming operations. Montezuma also drafted a pictorial manual for making compost and shared it with the VRTI who translated and finalized it to share with farmers during future training sessions.

"Every presentation began with questions to the farmers, in their native language; so the local context could be better understood," said Montezuma. "Farmers in this region typically incorporate agricultural wastes into the soil or burn them and do not make full use of the nutrients available."



by Cynthia Portalatin

▲ Farmer-to-Farmer training session at Vivekanand Research and Training Institute in Mandvi.

“Compost, with a high amount of organic matter, can help make that moisture last longer in the soil,” he said. “Improved composting methods have been identified to be beneficial to the communities.” ■



▲ Farmer-to-Farmer agricultural expert volunteer (left-right) Jorge Montezuma pictured here with Hasrhad Bhimani, Kantilal R. Bhimani, and Malay Joshi at the Jaralam farm near Mandvi.



▲ Women farmers gather for practical training on composting techniques, at the Vivekanand Research and Training Institute in Mandvi.



# Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteer Outreach Success in India

Volunteer Spotlight – Glyn Holmes II

**AS** a first-time international volunteer, F5 Farms owner Glyn Holmes II, of north Florida, admits he'd never thought of traveling to India. Yet when asked if he'd like to help farmers there improve their business skills and lend his skills and expertise in this area, he enthusiastically accepted the assignment with Florida A&M University's United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Farmer-to-Farmer Special Program Support Project.

His experience as a business owner of F5 Farms in Florida, and as an Agricultural Consultant with Florida A&M University (FAMU), are what the project's team leaders desired for the "Production Record Keeping" Volunteer assignment, one of 13 volunteer assignments completed during FAMU's most recent Climate Smart Agriculture Project in India.

Holmes teamed up with FAMU assistant professor Nathaniel Bailey, Ph.D., who served as a volunteer specialist for the "Improved Irrigation Technologies and Soil Moisture Management Strategies" assignment. Bailey is also program coordinator for FAMU's Biological Systems Engineering Program.

They each presented multiple training sessions to about 300 farmers and agricultural extension agents

in Anand and Mandvi, India. They were guided through the country with the support of Malay Joshi and his extension agents at the Vivekanand Research and Training Institute (VRTI).

"In Gujarat, increasing unfavorable climatic conditions, soil salinity and shortages of water have had a major impact on agriculture. However, population and urbanization have caused an increase in the demand for food production," said Harriett Paul, FAMU's director of the Office of International Agriculture Programs. "Improving the management and the efficiency of production is essential if Indian farmers are to meet the increasing demands for food." Paul led the project on behalf of FAMU.

"The high attendance of people in Anand really showed that the farming culture in India is taken very seriously," said Holmes. "This volunteer assignment has revamped my mind (about international travel), as I now think about visiting more Asian countries in the near future."

In between training sessions, Holmes and Bailey also visited seven farms at Anand Agricultural University where they met with farmers and extension agents to discuss ways to better fix problems farmers





**by Cynthia Portalatín,  
with contributions by  
Glyen Holmes II**

▲ Local farmers gather for training session by Farmer-to-Farmer agricultural expert volunteers, at the University of Junagadh.

deal with on a daily basis.

One of the most memorable sights Holmes recalls while travelling was observing damaging effects caused by monsoon season floods in Mandvi. He also noted how different traffic on the roads in India is compared to the structured, cars-only roads in the United States.

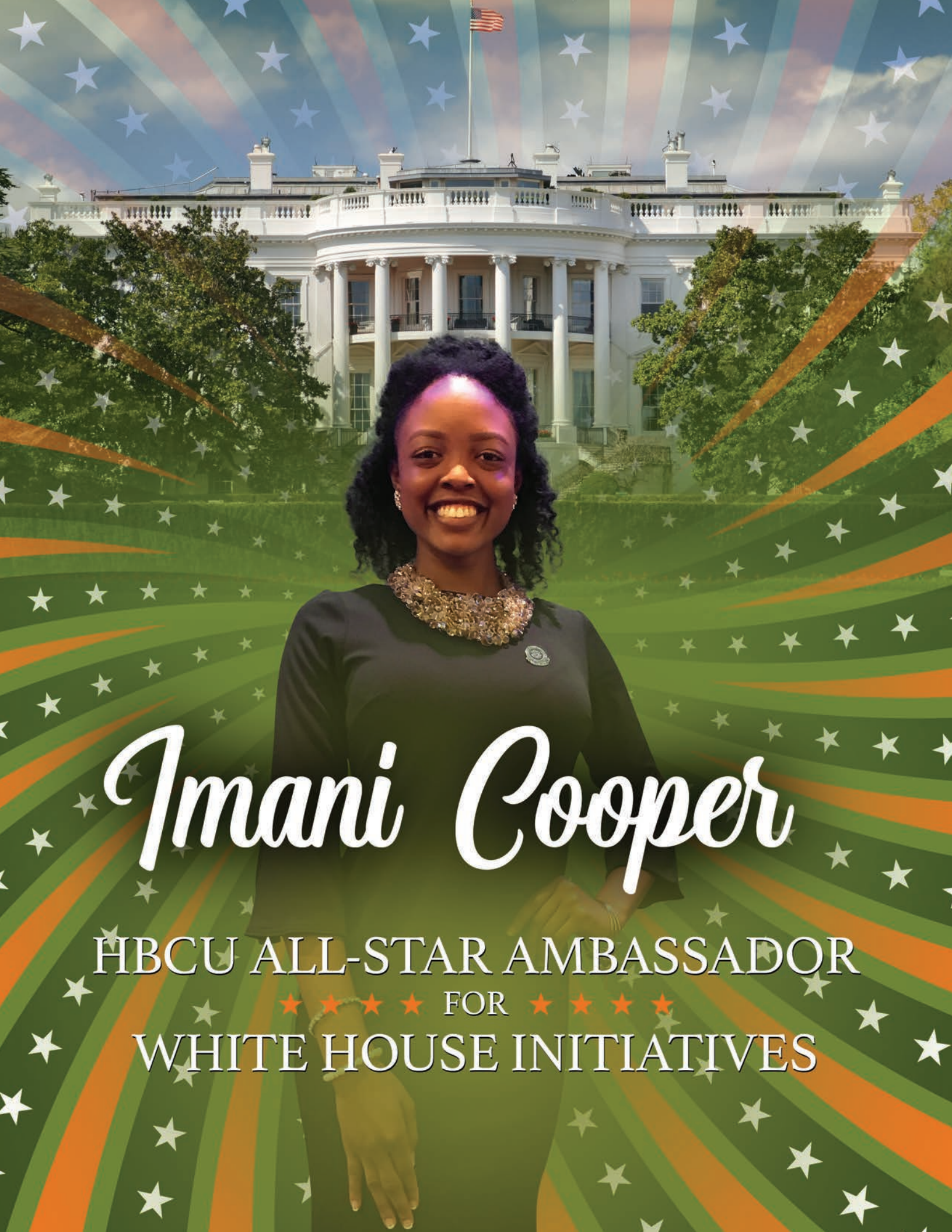
“While riding through the countryside, I was amazed when seeing animal herders with water buffalos, goats, sheep and cattle walking in the road alongside vehicles,” he said.

The FAMU Office of International Agriculture Programs (OIAP) is in its second phase in working with India partners on a follow-up project that will utilize 10 farmer-to-farmer (F2F) volunteers over an eight-month period through June 2018. FAMU USAID F2F volunteers will design and assist the VRTI in converting a five-acre plot into a demonstration farm to provide research and extension services in the Mandvi community where new or alternative crop varieties will be tested under local field conditions, and where farmers will participate in hands-on demonstrations to learn more about climate resilient production methods using new technologies. The

program will build on the existing capacity of VRTI and other local knowledge centers to create an integrated knowledge network for Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA). FAMU will also evaluate and scale-up the monitoring and evaluation tools and methods of the Center to help ensure program progress.

The FAMU Center for International Agricultural Trade Development Research and Training works in collaboration with two strategic organizations in India (National Council for Climate Change Sustainable Development and Public Leadership) and the VRTI whose primary mission is to help rural villages mitigate and adapt to climate change through the application of Climate Smart Agricultural (CSA) practices. ■

*FAMU CAFS OIAP: Harriett Paul, Director, (850) 599-8867,  
Harriett.paul@fam.u.edu. For information on USAID and F2F visit:  
www.usaid.gov, farmer-to-farmer.org, and vegalliance.org.*



# *Imani Cooper*

HBCU ALL-STAR AMBASSADOR  
FOR  
WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVES



**Imani H. Cooper** was born right outside of Charlotte, NC, also known as the “Queen City,” to parents David and Wendolyn Cooper. After several moves across the southern United States, along with her parents and three siblings Indya, Ilona and Isaiah Cooper, she landed in Tampa, Fla., where she graduated with her high school diploma from Vivian Gaither High School. As a young high school student, she dreamed of attending one of the largest, and at the time, more popular universities. Being at a predominantly–white high school, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU’s) were not widely accepted and often were looked down upon, which resulted in her own perception of HBCU’s to become negative.

After attending Florida A&M University’s recruitment event at Blake High School in Tampa and meeting the presidential ambassadors, royal court and hearing from several successful FAMU students and alumni, she began to fall in love with the HBCU more and more. In the last semester of her senior year, she made the decision to attend Florida A&M University.

Throughout her matriculation at FAMU, Imani has had various experiences as a leader and active servant of her campus and local community. On campus, she has served as a 2016 orientation leader, resident assistant, sophomore class chief-of-staff, Miss Gold for the Beta Nu Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated, Regional Technical Outreach and Community Help (T.O.R.C.H.), Chair for the National

Society of Black Engineers, mentor and instructor for the Program of Excellence in STEM (PE-STEM) summer program. Imani is also the founder of the FAMU Women Student Union, which serves to facilitate a network among organizations, departments, and services on campus to embrace, engage and empower all women on FAMU’s campus and in the community, to accomplish their personal, professional and political goals. Imani has accrued more than 500 community service hours from actively serving her campus and local community, from serving as a reading mentor for the YMCA Reads program to being a part of the Volunteer Services Program on campus that seeks to engage students in active volunteer opportunities throughout the year.

Recently, Imani was given the privilege to become an HBCU All-star Ambassador for White House Initiatives, representing as one of three FAMU students in the program. Throughout her ambassadorship, her focus will be food assistance awareness to inform her fellow campus and local communities about the food assistance programs available for those in need. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers several nutritional programs to assist individuals and families in need. Many people are not aware of or know how to become a part of the programs. Imani hopes to bring awareness to these programs and also initiate healthier lifestyle choices and diets for those on FAMU’s campus and in the community.

“God has been working in my life since I was born,” said Imani. “He continues to open up doors for me to minister and guide the individuals within my campus and local community to reach their fullest potential.”

Imani believes that God has allowed her to be of great impact in order to be the change that she wishes to see and believes is much needed within these communities. Upon graduating, Imani hopes to go straight into the doctorate program for civil/environmental engineering at the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering. Later, she would like to create her own STEM summer outreach program to expose youth to STEM disciplines and practices in hopes of sparking their interests in these areas, thus increasing the number of minorities graduating with degrees in STEM. She also hopes to one day work under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), using her concentration to further her knowledge on the current regulations and policies within our agricultural department. Imani believes that another grand issue infiltrating the Black community is the lack of awareness and accessibility to healthy and organic food options. She hopes to one day implement a program to reduce this issue and the factors that lead to the illness and death of many within our communities.

Imani is in her junior year, studying biological systems engineering with a concentration in bioprocessing and food engineering within the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences. ■



***NEXT***  
GENERATION  
***HUNGER***  
***FIGHTERS***  
CALL EDUCATION  
**KEY TO A**  
***FOOD SECURE***  
***FUTURE***

**"R**esearch into agricultural innovation and cross-sectoral partnerships are the stepping-stones to overcome challenges that threaten our ability to produce enough nutritious food to meet growing global demand," said Jorge Del'Angel, a freshman Biological System Engineering student in the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences. Del'Angel's love for agriculture started in Orville, Alabama, a small rural place where almost everyone has some agricultural involvement, be it on a small backyard garden or on a commercial scale. His passion for agriculture grew even more after being selected to attend a two-week program at Tuskegee University in the summer 2015 and again in 2016.

It was while at Tuskegee that Jorge learned about the World Food Prize Global Youth Institute and its offerings. A competitive process for high school students around the world, it was not until his second attempt that he was selected to be one of 200 students who got to participate in the annual three-day Global Youth Institute hosted by the World Food Prize Foundation. He got the opportunity to interact with global leaders, connect with student leaders from around the world, tour innovative industrial and research facilities and got involved with hands-on projects.

His participation in the Global Youth Institute made him eligible to apply for the prestigious Borlaug-Ruan International Internship. An all-expense paid, eight-week hands-on experience took him to the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT - Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maíz y Trigo), in Mexico where he worked and studied under the tutelage of some of the world renowned scientists and policy makers.

It was his internship opportunity with CIMMYT that made Del'Angel become aware of and learn about the issues regarding food security in the world. "I realized that the commercials on TV about starving children in Africa were not only taking place there, but other places too" said Del'Angel. "It makes me sad to know that so much food is wasted in the U.S., when there are so many people in the world who are forced to go for days at times without or with very little food."

While at CIMMYT, Del'Angel's research focused on weed management, specifically, finding effective and affordable herbicides to control broadleaf, grasses, and sedge weeds in crops such as corn, wheat, and beans. For crop growers, weed management is important to crop yield, and hence to local, national and global food security. ▶



“With our ability to feed ourselves facing intensifying pressures from resource depletion, mounting inequality and the challenges of climate change, the internship program provides important training for a new generation of agricultural champions,” said CIMMYT cropping systems agronomist Ravi Gopal Singh.

Del’Angel and his fellow intern Jonathan Poole believes that education is a vital component to fixing a lot of the global food security problems. But how can this be accomplished when the majority of the world’s youths do not find agriculture as an attractive avenue of employment. In addition to increasing access to education, major players such as policymakers, farmers, educators, scientists and businesses need to promote agriculture as an intellectually stimulating economically sustainable career, and at the same time making jobs in agriculture and food systems more attractive to youths.

Gone are the days of yesteryears back-breaking labor intensive agriculture, which had little room for career advancement. Today the career options in the field of agriculture are many and diverse and college students can explore options ranging from agribusiness management, agronomist, veterinarian, entomologist, research scientist, bio-processing engineer, and much more.

Achieving a world free of hunger and eliminating poverty are essential conditions to pave the way for lasting world



▲ Jorge at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center in Mexico. In the background is a monument of Luis Echeverría Alvarez, President of Mexico from 1970 – 76.

peace, and are an essential part of the U.N. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The World Bank estimates economic growth from agriculture is up to four times more effective at reducing poverty as growth originating from other sectors.

“The United States based internship program is unique in that it engages high school and college students in hands-on contemporary research at world-class institutions. It addresses food security issues at a time when they are deciding their academic pursuits and careers,” said Lisa Fleming, the director of International Internships and Career Development at the WFP.

“We endeavor to involve youth participants in ways that allow them to approach food security with a feeling of personal responsibility, understanding and engagement in a fashion that does not bore, frighten or leave them feeling hopeless or fearful for their future,” Fleming said. She added that for interns hosted at CIMMYT in Mexico, “it is evermore inspiring for our young interns to have the opportunity to walk the halls and test fields in Dr. Borlaug’s footsteps.”

Norman Borlaug, 1970 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and original hunger fighter, dedicated his life to working against food insecurity as a lead researcher at CIMMYT and with groups around the world. The Borlaug-Ruan internship stems from his legacy and places youth in real-world science, agricultural and food security issues, helping



▲ Jorge looking out at the experimental fields at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center.

to build an effective succession plan for identifying and developing new, innovative leaders to feed the world.

CIMMYT has hosted Borlaug-Ruan interns since the inception of the program in 1998, annually hosting numerous summer interns in Mexico with additional students mentored over the years in Turkey and Thailand.


My Social Experience in Mexico - Jorge Del'Angel

While at CIMMYT I made many friends, several of whom were field workers. Although working in the field was hard we found ways to make it fun. One of my most memorable experiences with them was lunch one Monday afternoon. I made two pans of banana pudding, which we ate for desert and they in turn shared their lunch with me.

On the weekends, I had the opportunity to explore Mexico. I went to several museums and historical sites where I learned something new at each site. One impressive site

was the Sun and Moon Pyramid. Being able to climb to the top was a major accomplishment as the structure is very tall and steep. Although this site was on my bucket list, I never dreamt I would have the opportunity to visit this early in my life—I am now able to check this site off my bucket list and before the age of 30?

Reflecting on my experience at CIMMYT I can truly say that the experience has really helped to prepare me for college. ■



# LIFE EXPERIENCES SHAPED MOBLEY'S PATH TO VETERINARY MEDICINE

Deciding on a career in veterinary medicine wasn't too difficult for Ray Mobley. The impetus was firsthand.

**HE** grew up on a 20-acre farm in Madison, Florida where caring for livestock was the norm. But the death of the family German shepherd, which succumbed to a case of heart worms, had an even bigger impact on his career choice. It wasn't until he was a freshman at Florida A&M University that he made his decision, though.

"That stood out with me and I felt like being a veterinarian was one thing I could do," Mobley said of the impact of losing his pet. "It left an impression with me."

"It was my desire to be a source of animal health and wellbeing because of my upbringing."

Decades later, Mobley has become a well-known veterinarian on FAMU's campus and around the state for his work. As a professor at FAMU, he also had a hand in molding aspiring students who have gone on to a career as veterinarians.

Mobley's work hasn't gone unnoticed. FAMU rewarded him with the distinction of being named Professor Emeritus. "I'm honored and humbled by it," Mobley said. "I think to be recognized at that level is something that you don't take for granted."

Mobley retired a year ago after 16 years at FAMU, but has since been called back to the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences (CAFS) on a part-time basis. He still has the same passion for his profession as he did in 2008 when he became director for the College's extension and outreach program.

As much as Mobley wanted to be a veterinarian, his involvement in the ROTC program at FAMU led to a 21-year military career. After going through the required ROTC program for freshmen, he decided to stay in the program.

The Army called, but he was fortunate to receive a four-year delay from serving. That was extended when he went to Tuskegee to earn





▲ Professor Emeritus, Ray Mobley, DVM, shares his life experiences and journey to becoming a veterinarian with FAMUANS.

a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, again with the military paying his way.

Not long after graduating from Tuskegee, Mobley began his military tour of duty at Fort McClellan in Alabama. Some of his other stops included Panama and Germany. Mobley left the Army with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and he received the Legion of Merit, which is one of the the highest military honors that can be received for non-combat.

Mobley's first job out of the Army was as a biological administrator with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. During his four years there, Lawrence Carter had an opportunity to see Mobley's work during a handful of workshops.

Carter decided to hire Mobley, giving him an opportunity to bring his talent to his alma mater. "He knew his area and what we needed at that time, so I knew he would be the person I needed to expand

my staff. Through his efforts, CAFS has received millions of dollars in funding," Carter said.

Mobley credits the days on his family farm for what comes naturally to him now. But his country boy lifestyle – working with pigs, chickens and other small animals – wasn't all that popular with some of his peers.

"Those were cherished days, though. I appreciate my pathway," Mobley said. "But if you ask me whether or not I enjoyed the farm life at the time, I would have told you not really because there was a stigma."

"I just wanted to pass on my experience at FAMU," he said. "It (his experience) was very, very positive. I had people that cared and people that nurtured me. Had it not been for that kind of encouragement I wouldn't have had the kind of success I had." ■



# Our Study Abroad Experience



Rabat

# Our Study Abroad Experience

Over the summer four students from the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences (CAFS) along with 14 other students from Florida A&M University (FAMU) had the opportunity to embark on a study abroad trip to Salamanca, Spain. The program, which was funded (except for airfare) by the University was open to students in the Honors Living-Learning Community (LLC) who met certain requirements. The Honors LLC is an application-based program for incoming freshmen of all majors to reside with one another and participate in educational and social activities to enhance their FAMU experience.

For one month, the students studied global leadership, Spanish history and culture at the Mester School. They were housed in "home stays," meaning they stayed with local families for their entire stay. What better way to appreciate and embody the different aspects of the Spanish culture. Each student shares their experience

## My Spain Experience

by **Sierra Johnson**  
Food Science Major



Here I was on my study abroad trip in another country, time zone and continent. I always knew I wanted to participate in a study abroad program. Although I did not know how I would afford it, or what level of financial support would be given, I knew I was determined to widen my global perspective through a study abroad experience.

Even though I was fascinated and captivated with everything Spain, what really enthralled me the most and as simple as it might appear was my "home stay" experience. For four weeks, my college mates and I lived in the home of local residents. My host mom was Esperenza. Getting to the city center and our university (Mester) was no hassle as it was a short walk to either place from her residence.

Living with a local family not only

gave me the opportunity to get beyond my "survival" Spanish language fluency, but also exposed me to various aspects of the Spanish culture. I was exposed to the differences like the size of meals; small breakfast, a large lunch and a medium sized dinner late at night. Every day, Esperenza would prepare two meals for us, lunch and dinner as breakfast was normally a grab and go snack. Lunch would be served at about 2 p.m., after which I would enjoy the food-induced lethargy of the afternoon siesta. Siesta is that "dead period" in late afternoon when everything shuts down so people can go to sleep. This is one of the most famous aspects of Spanish life. The shops and businesses would close from 2 - 5 p.m. Dinner would be served around 9 or 10 p.m., and although I consider this to be late for dinner, I

# My Experience Abroad



by **Olivia Gilstrap**  
**Food Science Major**

When the opportunity presented itself for me to study abroad, I was beyond excited. I imagined how I would be able to experience the culture of Spain, improve my Spanish-speaking skills, and on top of that, get to do it with some of my closest friends.

Each day was a new adventure. Every morning, I would eat breakfast made by my house mom before walking to my classes. During breaks I'd get to try new cafes and different tapas with café con leche. After classes, it would be lunch and then siesta (rest time), and in the evenings, we would go on mini excursions to different places such as museums and food tasting tours.

Each weekend we explored and adventured to a new place such as Segovia, Avila and Madrid, each with their intricacies, nuances and vibes. Some cities were more modernized with lots of tall buildings, restaurants and elite name brand stores, whereas others were small towns with stone roads and small shops. Either way, each city was remarkable. One of my most memorable trips was a weekend excursion to Morocco. What made it memorable and exciting was that it was the weekend of my birthday. Apart from going to the beach and museums, shopping at a Medina and going to a Hammam was an adventure.

Anyone going in a Medina has to put aside any phobias, allergies and fears of crowds as they are typically fortified cities packed with vendors and stalls on both sides with narrow maze-like streets that are typically

free from motor vehicles. The thrill of bargaining was a joy and I quickly learned the skill. The trick is to start at about a third of the price quoted and in the end you will end up paying 50 percent or less.

Going to a Hamman was definitely a wow experience, and mine was nothing like I had experienced before. A Moroccan Hammam is typically a series of rooms going from hot to cold, and usually divided into three steps. The first room was an extra hot steam room to open the pores; from there we went into another room and lathered with black olive oil soap and scrubbed with traditional kessa gloves to remove dead skin; at the final stop we got immersed in cold water for an invigorating finish. The result is a silky-smooth skin and a refreshed feeling to face the hottest of days in Morocco.

To sum it all up, my first study abroad experience will always be one to remember, and it's needless to say that I don't plan on it being my last. ¡No puedo esperar viajar otra vez! (I can't wait to travel again).

would say it fitted the atmosphere around us, as the time didn't start getting dark until about 8 - 9 p.m.

Esperenza would prepare common Spanish meals as well as a few traditional ones such as Paella and Tortilla Española. I experienced the value place on socializing; at meal time Esperenza would insist on hearing about our daily adventures and she always had stories to share about her childhood growing up in Spain; in addition to the many and diverse encounters she shared over the thirty years as a host Mom. Meal times were always an interesting time for me, as I would get to mingle and interact with other students seated at the table from all over the world, creating the perfect melting pot of various

cultures, dialects and languages.

The other thing I found to be fascinating was how Esperenza had our living arrangements worked out down to a science. Imagine thirteen students being accommodated in one household with only 2 bathrooms at our disposal. Well like I said she had it worked out down to a science. She would have us shower in shifts. Some would shower in the mornings, some before and after dinner.

It was a month full of unique experiences, great food, new friends and many life lessons. I lived and experienced although brief; a culture different from my own and came to appreciate the distinct aspects of Spanish Life.

# Spain Reflection

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by Jared Reddecliff  
Biological Systems Engineering Major

The study abroad trip I took to Spain has taught me many valuable things outside of the classroom. It was an invaluable and life-changing experience that has enhanced my academic goals. The experience has changed not only how I viewed the world, but also how I view myself. I gained a deeper understanding, developed an appreciation as well as become more open for differences in cultures and how these differences can impact my interactions with people of diverse backgrounds. At the end of the day, studying abroad is an amazing experience not only because of its inherent nature of adventure and exploration, but also because of how formative it is on a personal level. I highly recommend that if you are presented with the opportunity to study abroad, jump at it, it is something that cannot be fully explained, only experienced.



# From Montgomery Alabama to FAMU to Spain

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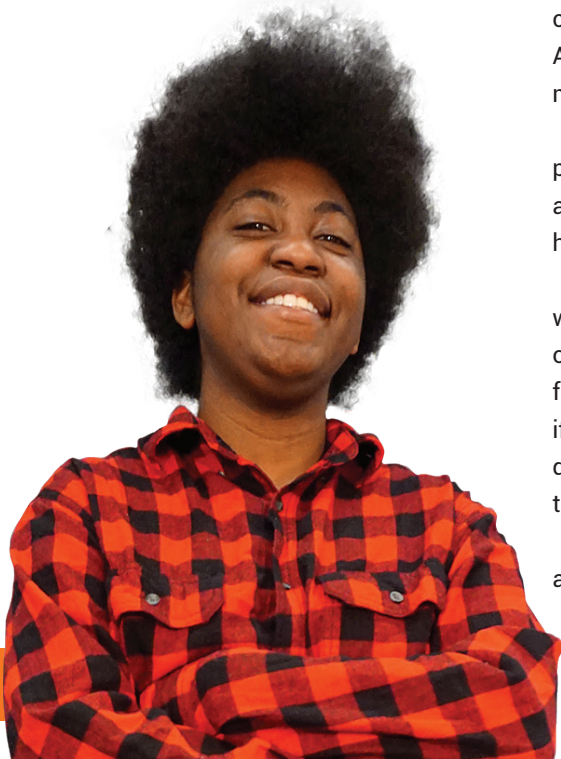
by Joniya Vinson  
Animal Science Major

Since I was old enough to read, I've been caught up in the adventure of traveling. I consumed books about the world, with as much fervor as I could. I dreamt about and to some extent planned the trips I wanted to take across the U.S. and the world, but no matter how many dreams I had, and all the planning I did, it seemed as if, I was stuck. Stuck in what I considered to be one of the most boring places in the world, Montgomery, Alabama. I had these grandiose notions of adventure to places on the map, but no tangible means to get there.

Fast forward to college, I came to FAMU fall of 2016, I settled in and had put my dreams of traveling the world on pause, it was time to hit the books and hard. Who would have thought that within less than one year I would have had the opportunity to travel out of the country, furthermore to Spain?

Being a part of the Honors LLC, I attended one of their activities, at which they were talking about trips that the University sponsors to travel overseas, for students who meet the requirements, and that it was for free (less air fare). My dream I had put on the back burner seemed as if it was about to come full frontal, and could actually come true, it all depended on me now. I worked my fingers off trying to make sure I met the requirements and as soon as did, I made my application.

When I found out that I had made the cut, I was ecstatic. Wow, I felt I was about to arrive...Salamanca, Spain, here I come.




Salamanca, Spain is described by many and which I have also found to be true, as the ideal study abroad location because of the outstanding academic possibilities, assorted cultural opportunities, and proximity to the capital city of Madrid. I believe literally that Salamanca was made for students. The city is home to the University of Salamanca, the oldest and one of the most prestigious universities in Spain. The city is small enough to navigate by foot, allowing you to gain an intimate understanding of the local landscape and culture, from my residence to class and everything else I needed was within 5 to 30 minutes walking distance. If I was ever bored in my room, not that I was ever, or had the time to, I could easily put on some shoes and go wherever I wanted – shop, eat, or just sit and people watch.

There were plenty of things to see, do and food to experience in Salamanca. For those who love art and history there are museums in the town and for those who like shopping, retail therapy and strolling could be done on Calle Toro and Calle Zamora, two major pedestrian streets. The City has a rich history and laced with buildings that are of architectural geniuses. Tapas and Paella are a must eat and if you are up for trying coffee, a Café con leche. Something that cannot be forgotten is that Salamanca has a rich night life and an avenue and time for socializing with friends. On weekends I used the opportunity to visit other cities such as Madrid, Segovia and Avila, because who knows when I will cross this path again.

So my time in Salamanca, Spain came to an end and I say this; the experiences I have had are truly unforgettable. I have gained a deeper understanding of and a greater appreciation for other cultures, and has really opened my eyes to the world. I met some amazing people and have made new friends from all over the world. To anyone considering study abroad, take the plunge, go beyond your comfort zone and explore the amazing world that is yours.

On behalf of me and my fellow colleagues, I extend thanks to FAMU and Honors LLC for making this possible.





*Throughout my college and professional careers, I learned how to be strong, courageous, determined and patient in order to position myself for success. I had to overcome doubts that surfaced from within and externally, and through each process I learned that there is a blessing in every struggle and a silver lining behind every storm cloud. After every milestone, I learned to give thanks to God and then set new goals for myself.”*

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CHRISTOPHER G. DAVIS, PH.D.,







**ALUMNI**

**SPOTLIGHT**

**CHRISTOPHER G. DAVIS, PH.D.**

# ALUMNI

Christopher G. Davis, Ph.D., a two-time graduate from the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences (CAFS) formerly known as the College of Engineering Sciences Technology and Agriculture, has been employed at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Economic Research Service (ERS) since 2002. Davis serves as an agricultural economist, in the Animal Products and Cost of Production Branch of the Market and Trade Economics Division. His areas of research focuses on domestic demand as well as international import and export demands for meat, poultry, fish and dairy products.

More recently, Dr. Davis has been chosen to work on a six-month detail assignment with the Office of the Under Secretary of Research, Education and Economics mission area as the deputy manager for USDA 2017 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) in the National Capital Area. The mission of CFC is to promote and support philanthropy through a program that is employee focused, cost-efficient and effective in providing Federal employees the opportunity to improve the quality of life for all. The CFC 2017 financial goal is \$1.5 million. His responsibilities are to manage coordinators and keyworkers from 17 USDA agencies and design strategies to help USDA exceed its CFC financial goal.

Davis also serves as ERS Distance Learning Coordinator, a program that shares policy relevant information with minority-serving institutions nationally and internationally. The project started as a pilot at Florida A&M University's College of Agriculture and Food Sciences and was funded in the amount of \$25,000 by the USDA-ERS to purchase equipment and facilitate seamless

communication between participating institutions. In March 2017, in support of USDA Strategic Goal 5 and Objective 5.1, he developed, planned and moderated a distance learning conference under the theme "Reaching Students through Research and Outlook Analysis." The conference was designed to facilitate a stronger relationship between ERS and minority-serving Institutions, with the primary purpose being to expose students and faculty members to the ERS work environment and provide them with deeper understanding of the work conducted by the Economic RS outlook analysts and research economists. More than 60 students and faculty from institutions such as Florida A&M University, New Mexico State University, California State University – Fresno, North Carolina A&T State University, Fort Valley State University, Tuskegee University, Prairie View A&M University, Virginia State University, University of the District of Columbia and the University of Maryland – Eastern Shore, attended the conference.

In 2008, Davis served as an Agricultural Fellow, in the office of the Honorable Congressman Sanford Bishop, Jr., representative of Georgia's Second Congressional District. Davis was involved in addressing issues related to farmers and citizens in Georgia's Second Congressional District as Congressman Bishop served on the House Committee on Agriculture.

Davis, elected chairperson of the Committee on the Opportunities and Status of Blacks in Agricultural Economics, a section within the Agricultural & Applied Economics Association and served from 2004 - 2007; and from 1997 - 1998, he served as the president of the Minorities in Agriculture,

# SPOTLIGHT

Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) Chapter at Louisiana State University. Davis was also a member of the student body that created FAMU's MANRRS chapter in the early 1990s.

He also served as guest editor of the International Food and Agribusiness Management Review for four years. As an analyst, he has published 25 academic peer reviewed articles, eight ERS peer reviewed reports, and one book chapter on dairy nutrition.

Davis served as an adjunct professor at American University from 2008 - 2011; Howard University from 2005 - 2008; Bowie State University from 2004 - 2008 and at Southeastern Louisiana University in 2000. He also served as a full-time economics instructor at the Baton Rouge Community College from 2001 - 2002.

For his commitment to USDA's outreach program in 2012, he was presented the Secretary's Honor Award for sustained excellence and foresight in developing a more diverse community with agricultural economists and policy analysts.

In 2016, he was nominated for the Best Paper Award at the International Food and Agribusiness Management Association-Wageningen International Conference on Chain and Network Management Conference. He received first place awards in poster research competitions in 2001 and 2008 at the Agricultural & Applied Economics Association conference and in 1994 at the 10th Association of Research Directors Biennial Research Symposium. He was presented with the Outstanding Alumnus Award in 2015 from

Louisiana State University (LSU) and in 2004 was presented with the Distinguished Alumnus Award from FAMU.

As a leader, Davis displayed a very strong commitment to addressing economic issues, which have become hot topics and prevalent issues within our society. Davis has spearheaded three Special Issues on Food Demand, Diet and Health: the Role Played by Managers of Agribusinesses, Factors Affecting Global Poultry Trade, and Assessing the Status of the Global Dairy Trade. Articles from these special issues contribute broadly to the knowledge base for private-sector decision-makers and public sector policy-makers for commodities that are growing in consumption, but face challenges such as global disease outbreaks (poultry) and significant and evolving trade barriers (both poultry and dairy).

Davis earned a bachelor's and master's degree from Florida A&M University in 1992 and 1995 respectively, and a doctorate in Agricultural Economics from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 2002. He also graduated from the USDA graduate school, Executive Potential Program (EPP), in 2001. The EPP is designed to help employees gain the necessary leadership skills through training and developmental experiences to move into executive leadership positions. ■

*A native of Albany, Georgia, Davis is married to Gailda Davis. Together they have two children a son, Christian who excels in chess and a daughter, Cierra who plays tennis and enjoys swimming.*





# Alumni Corner



## HAKEEEM HOLMES

Landed a job as an economist at the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. He was an agri-business major.

## JOHN E. WILLIAMS, PH.D.

Named assistant professor of economics at Medgar College, City University of New York (CUNY) in New York. He was an agri-business major.

## WILLIAM BOWSER, PH.D.

Named assistant professor of economics at Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona, Florida. He was an agri-business major.

## AUBREY MCCARTY

Outfielder and designated hitter was drafted by the Colorado Rockies in the 26th round of the 2017 MLB June Amateur Draft from Florida A&M University. McCarty majored in agri-business and interdisciplinary studies.

## MONTREL MILLER

Actor, producer and community servant, was the speaker at FAMU's 2017 Homecoming Convocation. Miller was an agri-business major.

# Congratulations Fall 2017 Graduates!



## UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

- Aaliyah Barrington-Johnson** B.S., Agri-Business
- Jiovan K Campbell** B.S., Agricultural Science; Major: Agronomy
- Jeff McDaniel** B.S., Agri-Business
- Gabrielle Dukes** B.S., Food Science
- Re'Neisha E Lee** B.S., Agricultural Science; Major: Animal Science
- Nina E Ford** B.S., Biological Systems Engineering
- Keondrea J Huggins** B.S., Agri-Business
- Sharonda McThay** B.S., Agricultural Science; Major: Animal Science
- DeJour R Monroe** B.S., Biological Systems Engineering
- Victoria R Roberts** B.S., Agricultural Science; Major: Animal Science
- Briyana R Stewart** B.S., Biological Systems Engineering
- Taylor Strauss** B.S., Agricultural Science; Major: Animal Science
- Jeffery Suber** B.S., Agri-Business
- Chelsea J Sylvester** B.S., Agricultural Science; Major: Animal Science
- Siera J Sylvester** B.S., Biological Systems Engineering
- Rahdeshia Wilson** B.S., Agricultural Science; Major: Animal Science
- Casey L White** B.S., Agricultural Science; Major: Animal Science

## GRADUATE STUDENTS

- Worrel Diedrick**  
*Degree:* M.S., Agricultural Science; Major: Entomology  
*Thesis:* Assessment of the impact of the egg parasitoid, *Paratelenomus saccharalis* (Hymenoptera: Platygasteridae) on populations of the kudzu bug, *Megacopta cribraria* (Hemiptera: Plataspidae)  
*Thesis Chair:* Lambert Kanga, Ph.D.
- \*Eutychnus Kariuki**  
*Degree:* Ph.D., Agricultural Science; Major: Entomology  
*Thesis:* Field host range, foraging depth, and impact of *Cricotopus lebetis sublette* (diptera: chironomidae), a biological control agent of *Hydrilla verticillata* (L.F.) Royle (hydrocharitaceae)  
*Thesis Chair:* Raymond Hix, Ph.D. (FAMU)  
*Co-Chair:* Jim Cuda, Ph.D. (University of Florida)

## Xavier Price

- Degree:* M.S., Agricultural Science; Major: Entomology
- Thesis:* Investigating the Co-acquisition of Pesticide Resistance in Honeybee Colonies
- Thesis Chair:* Lambert Kanga, Ph.D.

*\*Eutychnus Kariuki, earned his Ph.D. from the FAMU-UF Cooperative Ph.D. Program.*

# Retirement

Donna Jones, the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences wish you a very happy retirement after 35 years of service. Your hard work and dedication have greatly benefited our college. Retirement will surely offer you many new opportunities, which we know you will embrace wholeheartedly. We are wishing you the best in your future endeavors and this next phase of your life.



**SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 2018**

**10 AM—3 PM**

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