

# University of Florida Celebrates Black History Month

By Shaniqua Thompson, Senior – College of Journalism & Communications



The University of Florida has made great strides towards honoring diversity since its integration in the late 1960's. **University of Florida Black History Month** is the largest student-run black history celebration in the southeast of the United States, which is embarking on its 34<sup>th</sup> year. During the month of February, the entire campus devotes daily activities towards the legacy that African-Americans have left within our society and community. The university also grants the program a \$200,000+ budget, which includes the daily programming, fashion show, and annual step show, which all take place during the month. This year, each major division of the Black History Month celebration is headed by young African-American women, which also makes this year a landmark. The director, LeAsia Lundy, is a graduating senior majoring in English; Jasmin Coaxum, the director the Fashion X-clusive, the month's fashion extravaganza, is also a graduating senior majoring in Family, Youth, and Community Sciences; and, finally, Shaniqua Thompson, the director of the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Step Show, is also a graduating senior majoring in journalism.



(Copyright: Cmays Photography 2009)



These three women collectively direct three different committees that total more than 100 people, while working their individual events in order to pull off a Black History Month Celebration that has never been seen before. Starting February 1, under the magnificent programming of Lundy, Black History Month kicks off its daily splendor of events centered on educating, mentoring, and uplifting the black community. The Fashion X-clusive show will be held on February 10, and the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Florida Invitational Step Show will be held on February 18.

Each year has seen the contribution of members of the UF chapter of the National Council of Negro Women. This year, that contribution comes from Paula Irvin, Eboard member and Mariah Prince, a graduating senior who began her affiliation with the NCNW during her sophomore year. *“My experience in the National Council of Negro Women contributed to my involvement with Black History Month,”* she said. *“As a member of NCNW, I was inspired by the rich history of Blacks, particularly Black women. I realized what an honor it is to be a Black woman. This led me to become a part of Black History Month because it is a month long celebration with the purpose of educating the University of Florida community about the history and accomplishments of Blacks.”* Prince, who is currently pursuing her nursing degree serves as the director of finance for this year’s Black History Month Celebration.

African-American women are truly making their mark on the University of Florida campus with the schedule of month-long programming that is sure to be timeless. *“I am excited to showcase the amazing celebration that my committee and I have planned, and excited to be able to witness the accurate displays of the legacy of our history and culture”* said Lundy, BHM director.

Further information on each event can be found on the University of Florida/Black History Month Celebration’s website, [www.ufblackhistorymonth.com](http://www.ufblackhistorymonth.com).



University of Florida \* 2012 Black History Month Committee

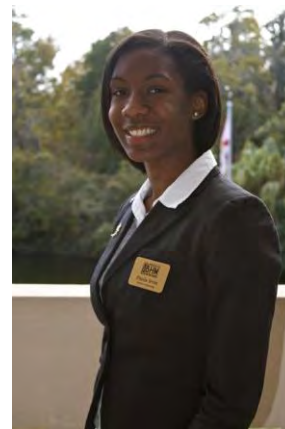


Shaniqua Thompson

### **NCNW U of Florida Collegiate Section Members**



Mariah Prince, NCNW Collegiate  
Section Member and BHM Eboard



Paula Irvin, NCNW Collegiate  
Section Member and BHM Eboard