UC SANTA BARBARA

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For Scholarship, Service and Persistence

Three remarkable graduating seniors at UC Santa Barbara have been named winners of the university's top awards for their scholastic achievement, their extraordinary service to the university and the community, and their personal courage and persistence.

• **Jamelia Harris**, of Lancaster, is the recipient of the Thomas More Storke Award for Excellence, the campus's highest student honor, for outstanding scholarship and extraordinary service to the university, its students and the community.

• **Brandon E. Rose**, of San Diego, is the recipient of the Jeremy D. Friedman Memorial Award, which recognizes outstanding leadership, superior scholarship and contributions to undergraduate life on campus.

• **Alagie Jammeh**, of Bakau, Gambia, is the recipient of the Alyce Marita Whitted Memorial Award, which recognizes a nontraditional student's endurance, persistence and courage in the face of extraordinary challenges while pursuing an academic degree.

In addition, Heather A. Vest will receive the Yonie Harris Award for Civility in Public Discourse, which is named in honor of the former dean of students and is presented to a graduate who exemplifies the principles of free speech and respectful dialogue and who fosters a campus climate of civility and an open exchange of ideas. Edward

L. Trout will receive the Michael D. Young Engaged Scholar Award, which recognizes the legacy of Michael Young, former vice chancellor for student affairs, particularly his commitment to empowering students toward principled leadership. The award is presented to one student who has skillfully integrated his or her knowledge and/or values into action.

These and other student award winners will be honored at a University Awards Ceremony and Reception Friday, June 10, from 3:30 to 6 p.m. in the campus's Corwin Pavilion. The 2016 recipient of the Mortar Board Award, which is given in recognition of having earned the highest cumulative GPA of the graduating class, will be announced at the ceremony. The winner of the Storke Award will also be honored at the Social Sciences I ceremony at 4 p.m. Saturday, June 11, on the Faculty Club Green.

Jamelia Nicole Harris, the Storke Award winner, will graduate with Bachelor of Science degrees in Black Studies and sociology. During her time at UCSB she has contributed significantly to the campus community through her academic performance and her call for social and structural changes.

She has developed outreach programs, conducted impactful research and internships and has served as a powerful advocate for marginalized groups within her community. And she has accomplished it all while maintaining a 3.7 cumulative G.P.A. and achieving Dean's honors for six consecutive quarters. Harris's faculty nominator described her as a "careful and perceptive reader and a complex and self-reflective thinker. Her talents, skills, work habits, demeanor and commitments distinguish her as a person destined for success in life."

Harris's world experiences have shaped her interest in exploring the parallels between police brutality, over policing and U.S. urban schools. In turn, that interest inspired her research as a McNair Scholar, in which she assessed the impact of the Black Student Union's Outreach Program on African American students at UCSB, and in the UC system as a whole.

In 2015 Harris was awarded a fellowship to study the experiences of Black girls in the school-to-prison pipeline as a participant in the University of Wisconsin's Summer Educational Research Program. UCSB Professor George Lipsitz described her honors thesis as of "publishable quality and an invaluable contribution to the field of Black Studies."

Fiercely committed to justice and equality on campus and in her community, Harris served as a diversity intern in the UCSB Office of Admissions and as president of the Black Student Union. Her work led to the development of an internship with UCPD to create a diversity and inclusion program for officers, which continues today.

After graduating from UCSB, Harris will pursue a Ph.D. in urban schooling at UCLA where she was awarded the Eugene Cota Robles Fellowship, the most prestigious award for entering graduate students. Her goal is to become a professor and help shape the discourse on the experience of Black girls caught in the school-to-prison nexus.

Brandon Rose, recipient of the Jeremy D. Friedman Award, is recognized as an innovator, scholar, role model and deeply committed leader with a passionate willingness to invest in student success through mentorship, leadership and programming. A first-generation college student with the goal of attending medical school, he has demonstrated a commitment to UCSB students that is both substantial and far-reaching.

Rose served as a mentor to first- and second-year pre-biology majors, worked in the chemistry department's Leaning Assistant Program and spent three years as a resident assistant. Using his personal experience navigating the challenges of the biology major, he became a biology mentor and helped create a more welcoming environment for students. Faculty members frequently relied on his feedback, routinely sought his ideas and acknowledged his insights.

As a member of the Society for Undergraduate Biologists (SUB), Rose demonstrated extraordinary leadership. Identifying a need for better focus, he organized the members into a goal-oriented, service-based group. In his two years as SUB president, Rose worked to recruit members and mentor them to be leaders, and recruited faculty members to engage with the students. He is credited with elevating SUB into a visible position of professional development and mentoring for all biology majors.

Rose's nominator described him as "humble, having a good heart, a generous spirit and never passing up an opportunity to assist others." As a resident assistant, Rose showed his concern for and willingness to invest time in students through programming, especially for STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) majors. Through his highly successful SUB program at Santa Rosa

residence hall, four faulty members gave presentations on how to successfully manage the biology major.

As a UC Leadership Excellence Through Advanced Degrees Scholar, Rose received a scholarship that funded two summers of full-time research on UC campuses. His unwavering commitment to his own education, and his persistent dedication to support and empower other students, will leave a lasting legacy at UCSB.

Alagie Jammeh, recipient of the Whitted Award, has been lauded for his “inspiring action supporting the rights of the LGBTQ community,” which resulted in the loss of his Gambian government scholarship and threatened his ability to finish school.

After his public statements of support were discovered online by the Gambian government, Jammeh’s scholarship was revoked without warning. To get by, he exhausted his personal savings, sold most of his possessions and resorted to living in his car. Over time the community learned of his plight and rallied to support him through the completion of his Bachelor of Science degree is global and international studies.

Cut off from family and friends in Gambia, where the president there has signed a law allowing for lifetime imprisonment of LGBTQ individuals, Jammeh lived in fear of having to return home. That changed, however, when the U.S. Department of Homeland Security notified him recently that he has been granted political asylum.

Despite these hardships, Jammeh remained focused on his studies and his campus job, as well as his participation in the Black Student Union and as campaign manager for an Associated Students Senate candidate. He also has given back to the community by making presentations in classes and at local churches. On International Human Rights Day in 2015, Jammeh was recognized by the Human Rights Commission as one of four advocates and allies in the global equality movement.

Speaking of his experience, Jammeh has said that it “made me realize the importance of gathering together and committing as a community to the preservation of human rights for all. Human rights are not granted; they are not earned. They belong to us by nature of being born. We have a right to demand them from our leaders and to speak out when we see others being denied these rights.”

In the words of his nominator, Jammeh’s “commitment and activism for human rights, despite severe personal consequences, is an inspiration to our community.”

"dumb quote"

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.