

# Florida International Univ. hosts young African leaders

*University selected again as Florida site for Obama's summer fellowship*

*Special to The Miami Times*

For the second year in a row, Florida International University is the only university in Florida to host a select group of emerging leaders from Sub-Saharan Africa. The group has come to FIU this summer as part of the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders.

"We had a very successful first year, and are looking forward to providing the 2015 Mandela Washington Fellows a Worlds Ahead experience at FIU," said Susan Webster, who oversees the program and serves as director of training and international research initiatives at FIU's Division of Research.

The Mandela Washington Fellowship, the flagship program of President Barack Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), empowers young African leaders through academic coursework, leadership training, mentoring, networking, professional opportunities and support for activities in their communities.

Fellows are young leaders from Sub-Saharan Africa who

have a proven record of accomplishment in promoting innovation and positive change in their organizations, institutions or communities.

These young leaders will meet with President Obama during a summit in Washington, D.C.; select Fellows will also receive hands-on experience through six week place-

ments with U.S. companies, organizations and government agencies.

FIU are part of a larger group of 500 Mandela Washington Fellows being hosted across the United States this summer. Some highlights of the FIU program include participating in a public management curriculum developed by the Metropolitan Center. As part of their training at FIU, Mandela Washington Fellows will participate in site visits to various agencies in Miami-Dade County. Institute faculty will be drawn from a variety



The cohort of 25 fellows at

of areas including the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs, the School of Environment, Arts



—Photos courtesy of Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics

**African scholars visited Florida International University as part of President Obama's Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders. On Friday, June 26, students attended a site visit to the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics, where executive director Joseph Centorino led a discussion about the commission's various roles.**

and Society and the African and African Diaspora Studies Program. Mandela Washington Fellows will also participate in leadership training, community service projects and local cultural events.

On Friday, June 26, Miami-Dade Ethics Commission executive director Joseph Centorino led a discussion about past and current efforts to combat public corruption in South Florida and how emerging na-

tions can try to adopt similar practices. After a week-long series of classes and lectures at FIU, the Ethics Commission was the fellows' first stop at a public agency.

The representatives of more than a dozen nations — ranging from Angola to Zambia — will be in Miami for six weeks, then will spend a week in Washington, D.C. So far, during their first visit to the United States, they say they

are most impressed with free expression and transparency in government.

One gentleman from Cameroon was "astounded" with Florida's Sunshine Law that requires members of the same government body to refrain from discussing public business outside of a public meeting. Most said that a free press does not exist in their nations and that their court systems are "ineffective."