



## WOC STEM Conference Recognizes FRCSW Employee

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FRCSW engineering technician Bethany Harris was recognized at the 2016 Women of Color (WOC) Sciences, Technologies, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) conference Oct. 13-15 for her work within the command's facilities organization. U.S. Navy photo

NAVAL AIR STATION NORTH ISLAND - A Fleet Readiness Center Southwest (FRCSW) employee was honored during the 2016 Women of Color (WOC) Sciences, Technologies, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) conference held Oct. 13-15 in Detroit.

Bethany Harris, an FRCSW engineering technician, was one of six STEM "Technology Rising Star" recipients. She received the award for her work within the command's facilities organization.

The WOC STEM conference is designed to help and provide women with methods to improve their careers and educational goals.

Harris began her career at FRCSW in 2004 as a wage grade (WG) entry level aircraft mechanic helper.

"Shortly after 9/11, the company I was working for began downsizing so I started applying to the website that is now USAJOBS. I had welding experience from a previous job I had at National Steel and Ship Building Company (NASSCO) and that was the experience that got



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me the mechanic helper position,” she said.

Her determination to contribute to the command led her to enroll in classes to earn certifications as a collateral duty as an “entry authority,” where she verified that the air and environment of confined spaces, like aircraft fuel cells, were suitable for artisans to occupy.

Eight years later, Harris transitioned to her current general services (GS) position via a 120-day detail that became permanent.

She is assigned to the Production Planning Division where her work targets the management of FRCSW’s facilities and the development of the command’s Facilities Master Plan which strives to efficiently manage, reconfigure and upgrade office spaces, furniture and equipment.

To that end, it was decided to standardize the command’s office spaces for budgetary advantages. Harris was initially assigned as the procurement project manager.

She said she arrived to a program that was lacking established processes, and in need of “...checks and balances.”

“When I got here I was asked to procure furniture for the XO. But then it became bigger, so now I’m in the process of establishing a purchase agreement (with the General Services Administration (GSA)) for furniture not only for our FRC, but for all of the FRCs,” she said.

“In doing this I had to create and standardize the process. Last year, we established the contract for the first procurement; there was no support, so I had to define the requirements for that and come up with a standard process.”

Harris said that the first Broad Purchase Agreement (BPA) for furniture was about \$976,000 for one year. After installation, the usable life of furniture is roughly 10 years, depending upon work space requirements.

Harris screens all furniture and appliance requirements to ensure that requests are within standards, energy conscious where applicable and avoid higher-end purchases in order to save the government money.

“Right now we buy furniture through GSA with up to a 25 percent fee for them to handle the process. This new BPA will set the fee at five percent; so whatever we order through this BPA will automatically save the government 20 percent,” Harris said.

The agreement is for one year with a four-year option.

As Harris works to fine tune the BPA and improve the command’s Facilities Master Plan, she also targets her own professional development and that of those around her.



**October 17, 2016**

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Having earned a bachelor's degree in business management from National University last year, she continued her educational achievements by completing a master's degree in organizational leadership just 16 months later, graduating with honors.

Since 2012, Harris has been a member of Naval Air Systems Command's (NAVAIR) African-American Pipelines Advisory Team which focuses on career planning, recruitment and retention of members from NAVAIR's African-American workforce through mentorship and lessons-learned programs.

"We try to identify barriers; including promotion and pay barriers," she said. "I champion that because a lot of people have problems transitioning from a WG to a GS like I did. There's no track you can take to get from a WG to a GS --- that's one of the things we're working on."



**NAVAIR News Release  
FRCSW Public Affairs**

San Diego, CA

October 17, 2016

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