

# DIVERSITY UPDATE

Winter 2006



Special Assistant to the President for Diversity  
and Vice Provost

## MESSAGE FROM MAC

Dear Friends of Ohio State,

**A**t the beginning of the academic year, it is important both to return to our basic institutional principles and to establish goals for the coming quarters. At the year's first meeting of the full staff of the Office of Minority Affairs, I asked colleagues to keep two words in mind that summarize both our major principles and our goals this year—namely, excellence and impact. From a university-wide perspective, these two words bear on the total effort we are engaged in to become one of the top 10 public institutions in the country. With respect to our research mission, we have already achieved that status.

This latest issue contains many examples of the strides that can be made when there is a continuing voice for diversity. You will see the usual examples of faculty and student recruitment, awareness, and recognition. However, you will also notice that we have included a feature story for you to enjoy—an interview with our Athletic Director Gene Smith (page 2). Please take a moment to review *Diversity Update* and reflect on the progress being made at Ohio State.

Sincerely,

Mac Stewart

## Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention

**W**illiam “Bill” Meezan assumed the role of dean of the College of Social Work, overseeing the faculty and degree programs, as well as field and continuing education. As dean, he works closely with the social work practice community, consisting of hundreds of state and local agencies and non-profit organizations devoted to a broad range of human service areas including child welfare, aging, poverty, mental health, domestic/interpersonal violence, substance abuse, and school social work. Previously, Meezan was the Marion Elizabeth Blue Chair in Children and Families in the School of Social Work at the University of Michigan. He has conducted, published, and received funding for research in the development, implementation, and evaluation of a broad range of community-based services for children, youth, families, and the traditional child welfare system. Meezan earned a Doctor of Social Work and Certificate of Advanced Social Welfare from Columbia University, a Master of Social Work from Florida State University, and a B.A. in psychology and sociology from the University of Vermont. He also has served as a Senior Fulbright Scholar and visiting professor to Lithuania, contributing to the College of Social Work's strong international focus, which includes study abroad programs in India and Poland. Meezan also is a strong supporter of diversity initiatives and has researched

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## Interview with AD Gene Smith



Ohio State's athletics director (AD) recently recapped his first months on the job and shared his vision for the future of the university's athletics program.

"I've focused on the internal staff, meeting stakeholders, and learning the culture," Smith said. "My philosophy is 'Seek first to understand, then be understood.' I am basically learning the environment, although I have many ideas that I'm confident will enhance our historical success."

The former AD for Arizona State University returned to his Ohio homeland in April to take the helm at what he deems the pinnacle of college athletics. Acknowledging former AD Andy Geiger's impact, Smith said, "With few exceptions, the facilities are in place, and the leadership and coaching staff are outstanding. Andy was a visionary. He was a great thinker and pushed the business to its limit, evident by the renovation of the Ohio Stadium, the construction of the Schottenstein Center, the addition of three women's sports, and the preliminary foundation for the integration of the athletics department into the institution."

Smith also addressed many of the controversial issues that plagued Geiger near the end of his tenure. "Ohio State may be the largest Divi-

sion I-A program in the country, but the issues are all the same. Every athletics operation must address personnel, compliance, budget, and student-athlete issues. Ours are just bigger," he said.

While the past few years under NCAA scrutiny may be a "difficult moment" for Buckeye fans, "it is a teachable moment," Smith said. "We may have this cloud over our basketball

programs right now, but in reality, there is no systemic problem in the athletics department.

This is not a culture rampant with people trying to breach the integrity of the institution. These are isolated cases, and once the NCAA investigation is done and the sanctions are levied, we'll put this behind us."

Smith said the current state of affairs in athletics is compliance consciousness. He has instituted a zero-tolerance policy for breach of any NCAA or Big Ten rule or regulation by staff and boosters alike. "There's a right way and a wrong way to help a student-athlete, and we have to do a better job of educating both staff and boosters," he stressed.

In addition, he says Ohio State took the right steps from the beginning by responding immediately to the investigation, self-reporting the majority of the allegations and issuing

the initial invitation for NCAA oversight of the matter. "This action fostered a solid collaboration with the NCAA that should bode well for the university," Smith said, "but regardless of the outcome, the decision of the NCAA will not affect our ability to move forward."

"I know what coaches and student-athletes go through," Smith

**"My philosophy is 'Seek first to understand, then be understood.'"**

said, speaking from his experiences as both athlete and coach. "The field, the court, the pool, the track—those things are easy. Most have it figured out in the classroom, too, but a few need our help to overcome deficiencies that may interfere with their potential for success at college."

Smith feels Ohio State's Student-Athlete Support Services Office, created to assist players with tutoring, life, and academic skills, will continue to play a critical role in transforming college athletes into college graduates. "The key is to focus on the student-athlete as a whole," he said. "I believe in broad-based programs that provide the maximum number of opportunities for student-athletes, and I'm committed to an

*(continued on back panel)*



## Faculty and Staff *(continued from page 1)*

and published about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) issues as they relate to research practices.

**Eric Hilton** joined the Office of University Admissions/First Year Experience (UAFYE) in October in the newly created position of **senior assistant director for Access and Diversity**. His role is to serve as liaison between UAFYE and the Office of Minority Affairs and college office personnel who are recruiting underrepresented students, including racial/ethnic minorities, first-generation college students, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Hilton also will work as part of UAFYE's pre-recruitment team, which delivers outreach programs designed to increase the college-going rates of central Ohio urban students by providing planning sessions to local community groups and schools with a focus on families of middle and elementary students. Hilton has a Ph.D. in higher education administration from Ohio University and is a graduate of Mifflin High School in Columbus.

## Student Recruitment and Retention

**M**ore than 200 high school students from the nine largest urban school districts in Ohio were on campus over the summer for the **Samuel DuBois Cook Summer Academy**. These Young Scholars, who are entering the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, lived in campus residence halls and attended academic classes during their stay. The students attended the Summer Academy as part of their year-long programming requirement. Students that successfully complete the program in 12th grade are guaranteed admission to Ohio State as well as a financial aid package based on their verified need. This fall, Ohio State en-

rolled 99 former Young Scholars participants who were part of an original cohort of 120 students. An additional 10 enrolled in one of the university's regional campuses, and five others chose to attend a community college. Typically, Young Scholars students who do not pursue higher education either enlist in a military service or seek employment after high school.

The Office of Admissions has produced a 10-minute DVD that will be used as a **recruiting tool for Hispanic/Latino students**. Titled *Making Our Voices Heard*, the DVD is a compilation of approximately three hours of conversation among six current Ohio State students who are of Hispanic/Latino heritage. The conversation focused on how these students find a community at Ohio State, what it means to be a minority student on a majority campus, and their experiences as Hispanic/Latino students at Ohio State. A copy of the DVD was mailed to approximately 5,000 students who are considering Ohio State for next fall.

The Office of Minority Affairs African American Male Resource Center hosted an inaugural orientation for African American freshmen. The three-day event included guest speakers, mentoring workshops, and panel discussions to introduce students to strategies and specific resources available to support their academic success. The event also included an opening luncheon with university administrators; a San Diego State football tailgate party with guest speaker Archie Griffin, president and CEO of the Alumni Association; and a closing luncheon. In related news, the university's Board of Trustees approved renaming the center the **Todd Anthony Bell National Resource Center on the African-American Male** to honor the late program coordinator. An All-American selec-

tion and four-year letter winner as a member of the Ohio State football team, Bell played for nine years in the NFL. He attended Ohio State during off seasons, earning his bachelor's degree in education in 1989.

## Academic Programming and Research

**A** new course offered autumn quarter examined women and gender in Islamic societies from historical, political, and cultural perspectives. The Honors course, "**Women and Islam: History, Politics, and Culture**," began with a brief overview of pre-modern societies, and then focused on the 19th and 20th centuries. The geographical scope spanned the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Topics included women's roles in production and reproduction, representations of Muslim women by Muslims and non-Muslims, and the development of feminist, nationalist, and Islamic movements.

New support services, part of the **Enrichment of Academic Skills for Minority Students in Dietetics or TEAMS Project**, are now being offered to minority students enrolled in the Department of Human Nutrition's Didactic Program in Dietetics. Extra tutoring in math, chemistry, biology, and advanced nutrition courses, as well as mentoring by minority professionals in nutrition and dietetics, are being supported by a grant from the American Dietetics Association. Associate Professor Anne Smith directs the Didactic Program in Dietetics, which is considered an important step in addressing the disparities in health care access and outcomes experienced by several minority groups. The objective of the TEAMS Project is to increase the number of minority registered dietitians. Minority enrollment in





the dietetics program has increased steadily from approximately 6 percent in 1999 to 25 percent in 2004, but the new focus will be on ensuring that minority students are admitted to and successfully complete the rigorous dietetic internships required to become registered dietitians. Students will be recruited from underrepresented groups in the health sciences, especially African American and Hispanic students who have strong academic and leadership potential.

While African Americans have made inroads into some parts of American society, they are still nearly invisible in many parts of the news media and the entertainment industry, according to an Ohio State researcher. Rudolph Alexander, Jr., professor of social work, argues in a newly revised book that the media often ignore African Americans in stories of both heroes and victims, even when they are an integral part of the narrative. In the book *Racism, African Americans, and Social Justice*, Alexander discusses the media coverage of Jessica Lynch, a white U.S. soldier captured while in Iraq and later rescued. While Lynch was widely celebrated in the media as a hero, much less attention was given to Shoshana Johnson, an African American woman who was also injured and captured along with Lynch. According

to Alexander, the same disregard of African American stories also occurs in the entertainment media, often taking a true story that centers on an African American and changing the focus to highlight the role of the white person in the story. Alexander also asserts that the invisibility of blacks in the media is just one example of how African Americans are still the victims of unequal justice in the United States from a variety of institutions, from schools to courts to law enforcement. The book includes chapters on institutional racism in the military, economic discrimination, and the controversy over reparations for slavery.

Researchers have identified a gene mutation that may increase the risk of **prostate cancer up to three times in African American men** who have a family history of the disease. The study, by scientists at 13 research centers, found that mutations in a specific gene occurred in 15 percent of African American men with a strong family history of prostate cancer. Prostate cancer rates are extremely high in African American men. They develop the disease 60 percent more often than do European Americans and are almost two-and-a-half times more likely to die of the disease. "This is the first gene mutation to be associated with familial prostate cancer in this group," says first author Rick A. Kittles, associate professor of molecular virology, immunology, and medical genetics. "Next, we must learn

more about how this mutation contributes to cancer, and we must screen for the mutation in a much larger group of African American men with prostate cancer to verify its association with the disease." Then, says Kittles, a specialist in prostate cancer genetics in African Americans, "perhaps we can begin using this mutation to help estimate prostate cancer risk."

Dr. **Electra Paskett**, professor in the School of Public Health, has received funding to support a research supplement **promoting diversity in health-related research**. As a part of the Centers for Population Health and Health Disparities, funded by the National Cancer Institute, these supplements are designed to promote the recruitment, training, and retention of those with disabilities, from disadvantaged backgrounds, and/or from underserved populations into academic research. Led by Assistant Professor Dr. Kimberly Kelly, the project will survey 25 Appalachian men for their understandings of colorectal cancer and cancer screening, and will conduct an intervention on 50 Appalachian dyads (e.g., mother-daughter, brother-brother) to promote use of cervical and colorectal cancer screening tests. Another award was recently given to Dr. **Eric V. Yang**, research scientist in the Institute for Behavioral Medicine Research and adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Molecular Virology, Immunology, and Medical Genetics. His study will contribute to the understanding of how stress can affect the development of one form of skin cancer that is the most common cancer in the U.S. This award will support Dr. Yang, who has



*College Summit Assistant Director Sharese Shannon, right, helps Dewayne Henderson from Marion Franklin High School, left, and Adriene Smith from Columbus Afrocentric School fill out their college applications at a summer summit designed to assist students from low-income families with college application materials.*



cerebral palsy, in his studies on the effects of stress on proteins that give tumor cells the ability to spread.

### Leadership/Recognition

**James L. Moore III**, assistant professor of counselor education in the College of Education, has received the Deanna Hawes Outstanding Mentor Award from the North Central Association for Counselor Education and Supervision. Moore was selected for being a significant mentor to graduate students, emerging professionals, educators, and supervisors. Moore's research interests include a focus on the influence of school counselors on the educational experiences and career aspirations of students of color. Last year he was honored by NCACES with the 2004-2005 Research Award for significant studies of counselor education. He also was selected as a 2004-2005 LASER Research Associate. LASER is a national research community that supports research that has a positive impact on children from culturally diverse or low-income backgrounds.

**Philip T.K. Daniel**, professor in the School of Educational Policy and Leadership, is the first African American elected to lead the University Senate Faculty Council. Daniel, who holds both education and law degrees, oversees the Faculty Council agenda and chairs its meetings. The purpose of Faculty Council is four-fold: to bring to the president and the University Senate matters of academic and educational policy; to monitor Senate actions concerning academic and educational policy; to provide a faculty forum on matters of academic and educational policy; and to select faculty membership on Senate committees. In addition to his responsibilities as chair, Daniel also teaches Legal Aspects of Higher Education Administration and Legal Aspects of Special Education.

Staff from the Office of Minority Affairs presented at the annual American Council on Education's (ACE) Educating All of One Nation conference. Now housed under ACE's **Center for Advancement of Racial and Ethnic Equity**, the conference is considered one of the nation's premier venues to engage in a national conversation about diversity and inclusiveness in higher education. Robert Decatur, Karen Alsbrooks, Linda Anderson, and Shannon Gonzales-Miller presented *From Middle School to High School to College and Beyond: Celebrating Success for Underrepresented Students*.

**Dr. Oliver McGee, III**, professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Geodetic Science, has been named to *Science Spectrum* magazine's Top Minorities in Science list. The "Science Spectrum Trailblazers" represent outstanding Hispanic, Asian American, Native American, and African American professionals in the science arena whose exemplary work on the job and in the community extends throughout and beyond their industry. Selected by the magazine's editors, McGee was awarded this honor for his "significant, quantifiable, and personal impact on the science industry, while making contributions to his community and maintaining a powerful position of influence regarding public policy for minorities in science."

**Jacquelin Holland**, a program director in the diversity enhancement program at the Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute, has been selected to serve as a consumer representative on the Food and Drug Administration's National Mammography Quality Assurance Advisory Committee. The committee is an advisory panel to the FDA on matters related to the quality, accreditation, and performance

of mammography centers around the country. She brings decades of public service and expertise to the post, having spent many years increasing the awareness of the value of mammography in the community and educating patients about the value of clinical trials. Her numerous professional honors include the President's Award and Mentorship Award from the Columbus Chapter of the Oncology Nursing Society and the William J. Hicks, M.D. Excellence Award from the African American Cancer Support Group.

### Awareness

The Ohio State University's office of GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender) Student Services, the Multicultural Center, and other campus departments and student organizations recently marked the 18th annual **National Coming Out Day** with more than a week of activities. Highlighting the series of events were two workshops on GLBT and disability issues facilitated by Eva Sweeney, the founder and director of Queers on Wheels, a Los Angeles-based organization that serves the physically disabled GLBT community. A "Sexuality Workshop" addressed sexuality issues affecting GLBT people with disabilities, but was open to anyone interested in learning about physical disability and sexuality. A second workshop, "Disability Sensitivity Training," educated GLBT people about disability issues, such as how to keep organizations accessible to everyone along with some etiquette do's and don'ts. Other National Coming Out Week activities included a panel of local Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Methodist, and Catholic leaders discussing how their religions address GLBT issues.

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## Interview with Gene Smith (continued from page 2)

environment that encourages them to reach for the ultimate title—their college diplomas.”

To communicate such expectations, Smith hosted Ohio State’s first annual all student-athlete meeting, bringing athletes from every sport together to talk about departmental policies, initiatives, and mission, and to introduce the athletes to head coaches, advisory boards—and each other. Smith said the student-athletes themselves also have created a program called the Scarlet Games, whereby each sport will identify a game or match that all the other athletes will attend. “This program will not only build camaraderie among our athletes but will be a great demonstration to our fans and donors of our cohesiveness,” Smith explained.

Equally important this coming year will be the department’s focus on sharing its many points of pride. One example, Smith pointed out, is the success of last year’s men’s basketball team. “Those players were denied post-season play because of the university’s self-imposed sanctions that they had nothing to do with. Think about the job that Thad Matta and his staff did to help those men between the ears and in their hearts get to where they could beat the number one team in the country that had never been beaten. That’s teaching at its highest level,” he said with conviction.

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### Awareness (continued from page 5)

The President and Provost’s **Diversity Lecture and Cultural Arts Series** kicked off the 2005-2006 season with a lecture by Dr. Robert Drago, professor of Labor Studies and Women’s Studies at the Pennsylvania State University and a performance by the American Indian group Daystar. Drago reported on recent research documenting biases against caregiving in the academy; how individuals strategically engage in bias avoidance to escape prospective career penalties; and ways colleges and universities, academic departments, and faculty and their families can effectively counter such biases to improve gender equity. Daystar’s performance, “Between Earth and Moon: Voices from the Great Circle,” paid respect to the intelligence and spirituality of the ancient ones through the use of song, dance, story, and imagery. Also scheduled for autumn quarter was Buck Buchanan, a consultant on diversity, violence, and conflict for the National Coalition Building Institute, who spoke on male stereotypes, men’s lives, and their impact on campus.

### Purchasing

Karen Whitson considered herself fortunate to have been one of the 10 minority caterers to participate in a Tasting Presentation at the Fawcett Center, sponsored by Ohio State’s Offices of Business and Finance, Minority Affairs, and Student Affairs. She took part in the two training sessions that preceded the event and was particularly impressed with the help she received on the process of becoming a state-certified **Minority Business Enterprise**. When she completes the task of gaining her certification, she looks forward to doing business with several of the food buyers at Ohio State.

*Caterer Karen Whitson participates in a minority catering presentation at the Fawcett Center.*

