



## United States Is Average in Terms of Women's Role in Politics, Authors Say

Jeff Grabmeier, Research Communications

When it comes to political equality for women, the United States ranks "middle of the pack" compared to most other countries, according to the authors of a recent book on women and global politics.

The candidacy of Hillary Rodham Clinton for president has broken new ground in the United States, but the nation still trails many other countries in women's political representation, said Pamela Paxton, associate professor of sociology and political science at Ohio State.

"It would be groundbreaking for the United States if Hillary Clinton were elected, but it would still be following the middle-of-the road pattern,"

Paxton said. "A number of other countries have already had female leaders." Paxton and Melanie Hughes, a doctoral student in sociology at Ohio State, are authors of *Women, Politics, and Power: A Global Perspective* (Pine Forge Press, 2007).

In the book, Paxton and Hughes argue that during the past century, women have made inroads into every area of political decision making around the world. But they are still a long way from achieving equality with men in every country, and that includes the United States.

One important way to measure gender equality is to see the proportion of women in a country's

legislature or parliament, according to the authors. By that measure, as of 2005, the United States ranked 61st of 128 countries, with 15.2 percent women in Congress. Rwanda leads the world with 48.8 percent women in its parliament. Several countries had no women at all in their legislatures. "Women are still

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terribly underrepresented in the U.S. Congress, but there has been a marked improvement from 20 years ago when there was less than 5 percent women in Congress," Hughes said.

There are conflicting signs as to whether Americans are ready to elect a woman to the White House, according to Hughes and Paxton. On one hand, the percentage of Americans who say they would be willing to vote for a woman as president has risen steadily, from a low of 33 percent in 1937 to over 90 percent in most of the 1990s. But interestingly, the percentage dropped sharply in 2002, once viable candidates like Hillary Clinton and others started to emerge. "A lot of people may have supported voting for a woman in the abstract, but once there were real, viable candidates, they weren't ready," Hughes said.

Read the entire story at <http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/wompoli.htm>.

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The **College of Nursing** has created a **Diversity Book Club** designed to engage students, faculty, and staff in discussions about "cultural sensitivity, appreciation of differences, and the practice of health care within an increasingly global community." The college's diversity committee selects a critically acclaimed book related to diversity and cultural competence, and then book club participants read the book at their own pace throughout the quarter, post responses to an online discussion board, and attend a facilitated discussion at the end of the quarter. Whenever possible, a limited number of free books is made available to those who join the book club.

The **African American Heritage Festival reached a 30-year milestone** this year, and featured Aaron McGruder, creator of the award-winning animated comedy series "The Boondocks." A world-renowned cartoonist and political commentator, McGruder shared his insight on the creation of the series during a community forum. Throughout the week, Ohio State students participated in the ColumbusReads literacy program at area Columbus City Schools. Two campus favorites also returned to the schedule, the "Poetry Slam" and "Soul Time at OSU." The week closed with the 21st Annual National Pan-Hellenic Step Show.

### Outreach

**Ohio State Mansfield** hosted a **Minority Outreach** luncheon, which brought campus and community members together to discuss multicultural issues. At the luncheon, Mansfield announced that it would create a pilot algebra camp over the summer for eighth-graders who have difficulty with the topic. The camp is part of a national effort called the Algebra Project, which is geared



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toward helping low-income students and students of color successfully achieve mathematical skills that are a prerequisite for a college preparatory mathematics sequence in high school. The pilot is expected to begin in the fall. "The faculty and staff at OSU Mansfield have demonstrated their strong commitment to diversity," said Evelyn B. Freeman, dean and director. "We will continue efforts and initiatives with our community partners to achieve the diversity goals of the Mansfield campus and to serve the wider community."

Ohio State alumni and friends have raised more than \$67,000 for the **Recovery School District in New Orleans**. The Alumni Association established the Recovery School District Victory Fund prior to the BCS Championship Game in January. The fund closed with a fund-raising total of \$67,509.62, according to the Greater New Orleans Foundation. At the school district's behest, those funds will be transferred to the GNOF's existing Recovery School District Fund. The money raised by Buckeyes will be used to provide support services and academic

programs for the district's more than 23,000 students.

In a unique partnership with Columbus City Schools, community organizations, and university departments, the **Wexner Center for the Arts** presented a week of youth activism and awareness in conjunction with the work of two visiting African American artists: Spike Lee and Kerry James Marshall. Lee met with students from Film Studies and other academic departments to discuss his body of work's exploration of the complexities of contemporary life. In addition, nearly 1,000 students attended Lee's sold-out public appearance with novelist and musician James McBride. The goal of the dialogue and hands-on involvement with both artists was for students to explore ways they can creatively make social change in their communities. Students learned about the impact that the arts can have not only for bringing issues in their lives to the forefront but for challenging the status quo and becoming agents for change.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

# DIVERSITY UPDATE

S U M M E R 2 0 0 8



Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Vice Provost

## MESSAGE FROM MAC

Dear Friends of Ohio State,

As I write today I carry fresh in my memory the pleasure of seeing many friends who attended the most recent reunion of Ohio State's African American alumni held at the beginning of May. About 200 people attended the Welcome Reception and heard Trustee and alumnus Judge Algernon Marbley welcome alumni back to campus, and about 250 heard alumna Judge Yvette McGee Brown address the participants at a Gala Dinner on Saturday evening at the Hyatt. I enjoyed the dialogue throughout the event and mention it here because of the many alumni who told me that they read our quarterly *Diversity Update* and are grateful for the information about Ohio State included for them. Like alumni everywhere, these persons care about their *alma mater*, but there was special intensity, I think, in their continuing interest and personal commitment to Ohio State

that would not be found in many similar gatherings. I commend Archie Griffin and Nadine Holmes of the Alumni Association and the leadership of the OSU African American Alumni Society for their work for this event. We look forward to the next African American Alumni Reunion in 2010.

At the reunion I was able to report on many recent achievements of our diversity efforts—notably the move to Ohio State of the State of Ohio Commission on African American Males, and the appointment as its executive director of Samuel Gresham Jr. Sam brings broad and extensive experience in urban affairs to the efforts of the commission. He served as executive director of Common Cause/Ohio for the last three years after completing a 20-year run as president and chief executive officer of the Columbus Urban League. In this new role he will direct programming, research efforts, and policy initiatives. The

commission will be supported in large part by a transfer of 1.7 million dollars from the State, and we are grateful especially to State Senator Ray Miller for his support of this initiative.

We now have in place a partnership for action that is unique, I believe, at American universities. I refer to the conjunction at Ohio State of this commission, the Bell Resource Center on the African American Male, and the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. The work already done by these units and the promise of their synergy is remarkable. And they can serve as models for diversity efforts more broadly conceived. I look forward to reporting their future achievements to all our readers.

Sincerely,

Mac A. Stewart

## Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention



Mac Stewart, special assistant to the president for diversity and vice provost, hosted a reception honoring minority faculty who published books during 2007. (l-r) Alejandro Peregrina, Tony Mendoza, Patricia Enciso, Linda Lobao, Judson L. Jeffries, W.C. Benton, Sylvester Amara Lamin. (Not shown are Rudine Sims Bishop and Raquel Diaz-Sprague).

**Kathleen Starkoff** has been selected to become Ohio State's **chief information officer**, effective June 16. Starkoff's expertise and experience have included serving as the group vice president and chief technology officer for Limited Brands, Inc., where she provided leadership entrepreneurial enterprise with 180,000 employees. Her previous experience also includes serving as the senior vice president and chief technology officer of Bank One Corporation and as the senior vice president of Keycorp. She earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Kent State University and an MBA from Case Western Reserve University.

**The College of Engineering** hired **Carol S. Smidts** as a professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering in the college's Energy Systems research focus area. Smidts' most recent position was as an associate professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Maryland at College Park. Her research focuses on probabilistic

risk assessment, dynamic methodologies, continuous event trees, Markov analysis, software reliability modeling, automated software testing, software safety, human reliability modeling, and digital systems reliability. A 1991 graduate of the Universté Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium), Ecole Polytechnique, with a doctorate in engineering physics, Smidts has received several awards, including the NASA Flight Safety Award and Stellar Team Award from the Rotary National Awards for Space Achievements, both in 1998. She is cited in *Who's Who in the World* and *American Men and Women in Science*.

In February 2007, staff from Ohio State's **Facilities, Operations, and Development** office visited the Engineering and Science Expo Career Fair at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) to **recruit potential new hires**. It was there that they met Alejandro (Alex) Flores, who began work as a project manager with FOD's Design and Construction last July. Alex moved here with his wife, Maria, and his two sons. In March, Maria

started with FOD's Finance division as a project accountant. Both Alex and Maria agree that the outreach of staff and the Spanish-speaking community within Ohio State have made the transition easier. "When we were on our way here, people called us to make sure we knew where to stay. They took us around the city to see all of the neighborhoods before we made a decision about where to rent."

## Student Recruitment and Retention

**James L. Moore III**, a national expert on black males in education, has been named the first director of the **Todd Anthony Bell National Resource Center on the African American Male**. Created by the Office of Minority Affairs in 2006, it is one of the few academic centers in the United States to focus specifically on African American males. Moore will expand the center's mission, which is to understand and facilitate academic achievement, as well as professional, leadership, and personal development in pre-collegiate, undergraduate, and postgraduate African American males. Additionally, Moore will emphasize research and evaluation related to African American males in education, the work place, athletics, the penal system, and other social domains. Moore is an associate professor of physical activity and educational services in the College of Education and Human Ecology, where he serves as coordinator of the School Counseling Program. He also holds a faculty appointment at the university's Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity and has a faculty affiliation with the Ohio Collaborative and the John Glenn School of Public Affairs.

In related news, Moore has been invited to write a blog for DiverseEducation.com, the online version of *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*.

The College of Social and Behavioral Sciences will host a two-day workshop, July 14-16, for **underrepresented graduate students on the transition from graduate student to faculty member**. Workshop attendees will be PhD candidates from the Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) program who are working towards their doctoral degrees in economics, political science, psychology, and sociology. This workshop, consisting of panel presentations and interactive sessions, will cover a variety of issues including: Challenges Underrepresented Faculty Face; The Academic Job Market 101; Tenure and Time Management; Healthy Pathways to Publication; Efficient Teaching and Service; Life as a New Assistant Professor; Career Planning; and Managing Revise and Resubmits. Patrice Dickerson, director of diversity for SBS, is leading this effort.

The **freshman class of 2006** returned to the university last fall in record numbers. Ohio State's overall first-year retention climbed to 92.4 percent, up from 91.5 percent a year ago. The national average first-year retention rate is 76 percent. The gap between **minority and majority student retention** has nearly closed: 89.3 percent of first-year African American and Hispanic students returned last fall for their second year, an all-time high for Ohio State. The strength of the freshman class profile (once again the strongest in university history) is certainly a major factor in retention gains. Stronger

students are more likely to thrive in their first year and need far less remediation. (The percentage of students enrolling in remedial English and math classes has declined dramatically over the last decade.) Strong orientation and first-year programs also translate into better student retention.

The team of Gilbert Johnson, Jonathan Stone, Carson Peterson, and Carla Williams received third-place honors in the **2008 Minority MBA Student Case Competition IV**, presented by Key Bank in partnership with the Fisher College of Business, on February 28-March 2 in Cleveland. The Case Competition brought together teams from 16 colleges and universities to analyze business issues with diversity implications and to compete for cash prizes. The event, in its fourth year, was held at Key Bank's corporate headquarters.

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions and First Year Experience (UAFYE) has released new editions of the African American and Hispanic **"Making Our Voices Heard"** videos and is finalizing a third for international students. Each video features a faculty moderator and a panel of current students asked to talk honestly about their experiences at Ohio State. The African American and Hispanic versions are sent to prospective minority students in DVD format; the international version will be available on the Web only. For copies of the DVDs, e-mail Kristina Emick at emick.2@osu.edu.

## Academic Programming, Scholarly Activity, and Research

**Ruth D. Peterson**, Distinguished Professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences, presented *Violent Crime Across Racially/Ethnically Distinct Communities* at the African American and African Studies Community Extension Center. In promoting her talk, the center wrote: "Data show that there are close connections among race, crime, and place in U.S. society, with rates of crime in African American communities far exceeding those for white areas. Rates for communities composed of other race/ethnic groups tend to fall between those for blacks and whites. How can we understand the linkages between race/ethnicity and crime in the United States? Using data from the National Neighborhood Crime Study (NNCS) for a sample of large urban areas across the United States, Dr. Peterson will explore how the racialized structure of society is critical for understanding how differential rates of crime emerge across neighborhoods of different colors." Peterson's research focuses on community conditions and crime, racial and ethnic inequality in patterns of crime, and the consequences of criminal justice policies for racially and ethnically distinct communities.

The Department of **Women's Studies** is now offering a **graduate minor**. Women's Studies is an interdisciplinary field of research that focuses on gender and teaches students about the ways in which gender affects personal lives, artistic expression, social relationships, and politics, and the ways individuals think about themselves and the world.



Women's Studies considers the ways that class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age shape women's and men's experiences. They integrate scholarship and methodology from the humanities, social sciences, sciences, and legal studies in order to teach students how to approach questions from multiple perspectives.

## Leadership/Recognition

Ohio State has been named a regional winner of the **2008 Outreach Scholarship W.K. Kellogg Foundation Engagement Award**, which recognizes exemplary outreach and engagement partnerships implemented by four-year public universities. Ohio State, cited for efforts to forge unique partnerships that have helped **revitalize the nearby Weinland Park neighborhood**, is among five universities to receive the award and is now a national finalist for the C. Peter Magrath University Community Engagement Award, which will be announced in November. The Outreach Scholarship and Magrath awards were established in 2006 by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

**Bill Meezan**, dean of the College of Social Work, has been elected **president of the Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research** and will begin serving a three-year term beginning July 1, 2008. IASWR was founded in 1993 by five national professional organizations that represent the social work practice and education communities, to fulfill recommendations from a 1991 report

adopted by the National Institute of Mental Health's advisory council, which highlighted the need to strengthen social work research resources. Meezan is a strong supporter of diversity initiatives and has researched and published about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) issues as they relate to research practices.

## Awareness



The Department of Dance's Black Dance Alliance was invited to be a part of the performing arts assembly series at City Year's 2008 Spring Break Camp in Columbus. Camp City Year was held at Windsor Elementary School and focused on world cultures, according to Melanye White Dixon (Dance). Student members of the Black Dance Alliance—DeAngelo Blanchard, Erika Harris, Aureyl Pitts, and Robyn Young—performed a spiritual dance work and conducted a movement session with the campers in grades kindergarten to third grade. In the photo above, DeAngelo Blanchard (in back of room), who choreographed the dance, watches as Aureyl Pitts (dancer in back), Erika Harris, and Robyn Young perform for the youngsters.

In April, state and local public health leaders participated in a panel discussion, **"In Sickness and In Wealth"** at Ohio State. The event, which was part of Ohio State's College of Public Health's celebration of National Public Health Week, was based on a new PBS series called "Unnatural Causes,"

which explores America's racial and socioeconomic inequities in health. "In Sickness and In Wealth" was the title of the first installment of the series. The episode investigated how a person's work conditions, social status, neighborhood conditions, and lack of access to power and resources can actually alter their human biology and, similar to germs and viruses, make them sick.

A recent film screening at the Frank W. Hale Jr. Black Cultural Center featured *Tie A Yellow Ribbon*, which offered a rare view of a Korean adoptee who needs to reconcile her feelings on race, identity, and family. This film is one of the first feature films to address the abnormally **high rates of suicide and depression among Asian American women**. It was billed as a film that "entices and challenges us to look at the hard, imperfect struggles that Asian American women face on a daily basis."

**Gregory Williams**, the author of last fall's Buckeye Book Community selection, *Life on the Color Line: The True Story of a White Boy Who Discovered He Was Black*, spoke to first-year students as part of an ongoing speaker series. Williams, former dean and Carter C. Kissel Professor of Law at the Moritz College of Law, is currently president of the City College of New York. The event was sponsored by Ohio State's highly ranked First Year Experience.

(continued on back panel)