

DIVERSITY UPDATE

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Special Assistant to the President for Diversity
and Vice Provost

M E S S A G E F R O M M A C

Dear Friends of Ohio State,

As many of you probably know, President Karen A. Holbrook has announced she will retire when her existing contract expires in June 2007. She reached the decision in consultation with her husband, Jim, and cited a desire to spend more time with him after a 35-year career in higher education.

Undoubtedly, the university will miss her strength and leadership, but she is leaving us with a solid foundation on which to continue building. During her tenure, we experienced strong support and enhancement of our diversity programs. Recruitment

and retention efforts were intensified, especially in the wake of the recent Supreme Court ruling, and the president herself made phone calls to undecided minority recruits. New centers were opened – The Todd Bell Center for the African American Male – and existing ones like The Women’s Place and Multicultural Center were given more appropriate space and greater visibility. The President and Provost’s Diversity Lecture Series was broadened to include artistic performances so that we might experience, as well as hear about, different cultures. And the university named its first ever diversity officer.

This is not an exhaustive listing of all that we accomplished during the last four years, but rather a sample of the many achievements we made. We know we have more work ahead of us in matters of diversity, but for now we need to pause and thank President Holbrook for her unwavering support and dedication. I look forward to our next year of working together on issues related to diversity.

Sincerely,

Mac A. Stewart

Outreach program helps Somalis brush up on oral hygiene

by Adam King

Imagine brushing your teeth with a stick and calling that dental hygiene. That's a standard practice among many Somalis, and they continue to do it even after they immigrate to America.

Last year, Homa Amini, assistant clinical professor of pediatric dentistry at Ohio State, started a program that has begun to change those habits, thanks to a \$10,000 University Outreach and Engagement seed grant. The program is especially important since Columbus has the second-largest Somali community in the United States, behind Minneapolis.

When Amini brought her Oral Health Literacy Project to Somalis in the Community Refugee and Immigration Services, the Acculturation Program, and Somali Senior and Family Services, she found groups that had never used dental floss, didn't know what foods were good or bad for their teeth, and didn't know proper brushing techniques. "Access to a dentist on a regular basis might not have been part of their routine," said Amini, who brought her dental students to perform free screenings as part of the project.

"Some exhibited dental decay. Some had really good teeth and no cavities but they had gum problems, and others needed extractions," she said. "Some of that is the cultural belief that if it doesn't hurt, they don't need to see a dentist." But some Somalis were in pain, and being relatively new to this country with limited incomes, they didn't know where to go for

affordable care. Since many of the immigrants were parents too, that meant their children weren't getting the proper care either.

Amini's oral health project educated more than 300 immigrants through hour-long interactive sessions.

She purchased books on good oral hygiene written to a child's reading level so Somalis, who spoke little or broken English, could understand them and learn English at the same time. The books were read in class and then given to the Somalis to take home and read to their children.

During the sessions, Amini handed out dental floss and led the group through flossing practice. She provided snacks to demonstrate which foods do and don't cause cavities, and she brought photos of a dentist's office to dispel any fears. She also walked the Somalis through anticipated paperwork and referred them to low-cost dentists.

The project was also a way for the dental students to learn the importance of health literacy—relaying diagnoses and treatment to patients in a way they could understand. Because of their educational value, the screenings are currently being written into the College of Dentistry curriculum.





Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention

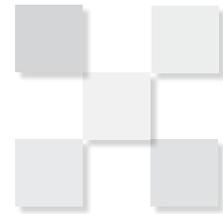
Patrice L. Dickerson joined the university in April as **diversity director for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences**. Dickerson plans to focus her efforts on increasing the number of women and minorities entering graduate programs in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences as part of a National Science Foundation grant. The NSF is providing funding to a consortium of six universities for two years to develop best practices to increase minority and women applicant pools. Dickerson received her B.S. in sociology with a minor in African American studies from the University of Cincinnati and has an M.A. in sociology from the University of Michigan. For the last five years, she has been employed as an assistant professor in the Department of African American Studies at the University of Cincinnati. Dickerson is a member of the Association of Black Sociologists, the National Council of Black Studies, the American Sociological Association, and the Society for the Study of Social Problems.

Julia Benz has been appointed the new **director of the Office of Student Financial Aid**, effective August 1. Currently, she is the director for the Office of Student Financial Aid at Rice University in Houston, Texas. Prior to that, she served as associate director for Student Financial Aid at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, and program director for Student Financial

Aid at the University of Minnesota. She currently is a member of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators and has been through five different software conversions in her 24 years of experience in public and private universities. Benz's experiences also include serving on a diversity task force, a strong background in technology, and experience facilitating staff development. Benz received her undergraduate degree from the University of Minnesota.

In the first year and a half of **William "Bud" Baeslack's** tenure as **dean of the College of Engineering**, he has appointed its first woman as a department chair and is making inroads hiring and appointing women and minorities to leadership positions. Carolyn J. Merry was appointed chair of Civil and Environmental and Geodetic Science, and Julie Higle was hired as chair of Industrial, Welding, and Systems Engineering. Baeslack recently

created an associate dean for Graduate and Professional Education and appointed Hazel Morrow-Jones from the department of City and Regional Planning to this position. Additionally, he appointed the first African American associate dean when he named Gregory Washington the associate dean for research.



Student Recruitment and Retention

More than 3,500 sixth-graders from Columbus Public Schools visited the Ohio State campus in April as part of CPS Day, a program to show **young students the opportunities for and advantages of higher education**. Guests included Gene Smith, Ohio



Mac A. Stewart is shown with some of this year's high achieving minority students: (left to right) Cherai Frazier, Young Scholars graduate who will attend West Virginia University for an M.A. in sports management; Joshua Everhart, Denman Scholar; Stewart; Jewel Romero, Young Scholars Program graduate who will teach in Mexico and Costa Rica next year; and Victoria Reyes who was recently named a Fulbright Scholar.



State's director of Athletics, and Gene Harris, superintendent of CPS. As part of the event, students also attended a college fair in Bill Davis Stadium and ended the day watching the Ohio State vs. Cleveland State baseball game.

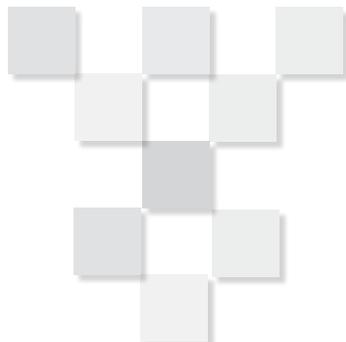
Ohio State has enrolled in MentorNet, the e-mentoring network for **diversity in engineering and science**, to offer one-on-one, e-mail-based mentoring opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral staff, and early career faculty in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. A web site allows faculty to enroll and volunteer as mentors. Ohio State's enrollment in this service is funded by the Colleges of Engineering, Biological Sciences, Mathematical and Physical Sciences, and Veterinary Medicine, and the Women's Place.

Academic Programming, Scholarly Activity, and Research

Gay men who are HIV-positive rarely regret revealing their health status to others, according to a new Ohio State study. The study, the first of its kind, could be important for clinicians who work with HIV-positive men who are often uncertain whether to tell friends, family, co-workers, or others about being diagnosed with the virus that causes AIDS. Julianne Serovich, the lead author of the study and chair of Human Development and Family Science in Ohio State's College of

Education and Human Ecology says, "I was very surprised at how little regret we found, because you see the angst in HIV-positive men who deliberate very carefully on whether or not to tell people." Serovich has studied HIV disclosure since 1997. In previous studies, she found that HIV-positive men who disclose their condition are more likely to get necessary medical help, to find out about new clinical trials and therapies, and are more likely to get social support. Those who reveal their status to, and get support specifically from, family members are less likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors and are less likely to be depressed.

Professor **Sherman Hanna**, Consumer Sciences, received a grant for \$140,880 from NASD, the world's leading private-sector provider of financial regulatory services, to conduct "**Research-Based Investment Education Guidelines for Black and Hispanic Households.**" His goal is to examine racial and ethnic influences on investment behavior and develop guidelines for effective investor education programs targeted to African American and Hispanic populations.



Leadership/Recognition

Robert M. Duncan, former judge of the Franklin County Municipal Court, has been named chair of The Ohio State University Board of Trustees, succeeding Daniel M. Slane. In addition to serving on the Franklin County court, Duncan is a former justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio, judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, and judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio. He is a retired partner of the Jones Day law firm. Duncan served as secretary of Ohio State's Board of Trustees from 1993 until his retirement in June 1996. Before that, he was the university's vice president for legal affairs and general counsel from 1992 to 1995. He earned both his Bachelor of Science and Juris Doctor degrees from The Ohio State University and an honorary degree, Doctor of Laws, from the university in 1979.

Rebecca Nelson, director of the Multicultural Center, received a Community Leaders Award at the **Organization of Chinese Americans** Columbus Chapter 2006 Awards Gala Celebrating Diversity. The banquet was held to recognize Asian Americans who have led and encouraged others through their commitment, involvement, and outstanding citizenship. Paul Igasaki, former vice chair and acting chair, Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, delivered the keynote address.



Brenda Jo Brueggemann, associate professor of English, recently received the “Great Communicator of the Year” award. This award is the highest honor given by the Columbus Speech and Hearing Center in conjunction with its annual Great Communicators event. Professor Brueggemann met a number of criteria in order to be considered for the award, including overcoming what others would deem obstacles, improving the quality of life of others, providing a positive impact on her community, and demonstrating a lifetime of accomplishments in effective communication. Brueggemann also has been instrumental in the development of American Sign Languages courses at Ohio State and serves as the coordinator of the American Sign Language Program.

According to the June issue of *Diverse* magazine, Ohio State ranks 26th among all higher education institutions—including historically black colleges and universities—in terms of awarding degrees to undergraduate students of color. The data, from the Department of Education, reports on degrees conferred during the 2004-2005 academic year and focuses on degrees awarded to African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians. The report found that degrees conferred on minorities continue to grow while the gap between white students and minorities is shrinking. Ohio State was the highest-ranking Big Ten school and tied with HBCU Clark Atlanta.

The **Women in Engineering Programs and Advocates Network (WEPAN)** has awarded The Ohio State University Women in Engineering Program with the 2006 Women in Engineering Initiative Award. This national award is presented to advocacy programs that serve as a model for other WIE programs and actively share experiences and materials with other programs; serve as a model for WIE programming for formal pre-college or retention activities/projects; demonstrate improvements in the educational environment for women in engineering; and provide programming that offers professional guidance to students and/or faculty who seek engineering and science as a career or profession.

Michael Rowland, director of diversity in the College of Dentistry, was recently appointed by the American Dental Education Association board of directors to the Minority Affairs Advisory Committee for a three-year term. The committee’s focus is to foster an understanding and enhancement of human diversity in dental education.

Cynthia Tyson, associate professor of Teaching and Learning, was selected by the 2006 *Who’s Who in Black Columbus* as being “Most Influential.” The book notes that she examines race and racism in qualitative research and the use of literature written for children and young adults when teaching for social justice. She teaches courses in social studies and global education while

researching the development of critical pedagogy and cultural competence in the social studies. She also has received numerous awards, including the Social Science Educators Young Scholar Award and the College of Education and Human Ecology Distinguished Diversity Enhancement Award. She is the diversity features columnist for the *Ohio Journal of English Language Arts* and is a consultant for school districts in the United States and for educators in the United Kingdom and in Mali, West Africa.

Awareness

The **Latino/a Studies Program** presented its year-end lecture celebration with a reading by two prominent authors, a book signing, and a reception. Ohio State English professor and award-winning author Frederick Aldama read from his most recent book, *Spilling the Beans in Chicanolandia*, about the changing works of third-wave Chicano/a artists and authors. In addition, renowned Los Angeles author and attorney Daniel Olivas read from his latest novel, *Devil Talk: Stories*, and discussed his life as a lawyer and writer.

Disability Awareness Month was celebrated in late spring. Hosted by the Office for Disability Services, the events featured artists with disabilities or art relating to disabilities and beep ball, an adapted version of a baseball game. At Ohio State, a host of adaptive

(continued on back panel)

technologies are available to students with disabilities, including computers that use Scan-to-Speech, Text-to-Speech, and Web-to-Speech software, as well as products that allow them to dictate directly to the computer with their words appearing right on the screen.

The **American Indian Studies** program presented the final three lectures in its new series, “Native Ohio: Leaders and Landscape in the Cradle of American Indian Studies.” Joe Saunders, Louisiana Archaeological Survey, Helen Hornbeck Tanner, senior research fellow at the Newberry Library in Chicago, and Jason Jackson, Indiana University Department of Folklore, were the featured lecturers.

John Hope Franklin, a nationally recognized historian, delivered “The Historian: Past and Future” as part of the President and Provost’s Diversity Lecture and Cultural Arts Series. Franklin, a professor emeritus of history at Duke University, is the catalyst behind the John Hope Franklin Collection for African and African American Documentation at Duke, which works to acquire, preserve, and promote the use of library materials bearing on the history of Africa and people of African descent.

The 28th annual **African American Heritage Festival** was held during spring quarter. The theme for this year’s celebration was “Ufanisi: Striving for Higher Heights,” which takes its name from the Swahili term for



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Office of Minority Affairs
102 Bricker Hall
190 North Oval Mall
Columbus, OH 43210

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prosperity. The weeklong celebration and activities focused on mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial growth. President Karen Holbrook delivered the welcome address at the Town Hall meeting, and Carl Mack, national executive director of the National Society of Black Engineers, was the keynote speaker. A Gospel Fest, featuring the Ohio State Gospel Choir, was held, and special guest, comedian Owen Smith, hosted the 19th Annual Pan-Hellenic Council Step Show, featuring African American fraternities and sororities.

The Third Annual **History of Black Columbus Conference** was held in May at the university’s African American and African Studies Community Extension Center. The conference tackled the theme of education—past, present, and future—and issues discussed included the impact of segregation and desegregation in Columbus, the relationship between education and

the black church, the historical impact of housing on black education, and emerging trends in today’s schooling options. A panel discussion on segregation included panelists James Upton, associate professor of African American and African Studies, Evelyn Luckey, a former Columbus superintendent, Ed Willis, a former teacher and principal, and the McCoy sisters, Emma and Lottie, who taught at local schools before and after segregation. Closing remarks were given by Kenneth Goings, chair of African American and African Studies.

The 12th annual **National Conference on Diversity, Race, and Learning**, “2006 and Beyond: Creating a Diversity Collaborative,” took place in May on the Ohio State campus. Featured speakers included Kweisi Mfume, former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus and past president of the NAACP, and Angela Oh, an attorney, teacher, and former member of Bill Clinton’s President’s Initiative on Race.