

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

DIVERSITY UPDATE

W I N T E R 2 0 0 8



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,

I'm writing to you today encouraged by new statistics that indicate various initiatives and support services designed to keep African American males at Ohio State and increase their graduation rates are working.

Our retention rate for both male and female African American students who returned for their second year last fall increased from 89.1 percent to a record 89.3 percent. The retention rate for African American male students also marked a record level, jumping from 86.5 percent the previous year to 90.8 percent.

This indicates tremendous progress and shows that Ohio State is keeping its promise to make student body diversity a top priority. We're especially pleased that our efforts to provide academic resources and support services for students who are new to the rigors of college life are making a difference in retention rates.

Specifically, I believe the work of the university's Bell Resource Center on the African American Male can claim much of the credit. Established just three years ago, the center works with hundreds of students from the moment they reach campus, providing one-on-one interaction, access to campus resources, and enrichment and leadership programming. Clearly, we recognize our success with retention is a critical first step toward improving student graduation rates, and we are beginning to make a real difference.

As always, I invite you to read and comment on this issue of *Diversity Update*.

Sincerely,

Mac A. Stewart



Kirwan Institute's National Conference Hopes to Transform Public's Racial Mindset

By Adam King

The future racial makeup of the United States appears to be a colorful one, especially since 45 percent of people 18 and younger are non-white. How the country will handle this and continue to remain a vibrant democracy was a question the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity explored during its national conference.

"Toward a Transformative Agenda Around Race"

brought more than 600 people to the Columbus Hyatt Regency to explore ways of thinking, talking, and acting on race that allow people of different ethnicities to see themselves as part of the picture.

"We do need to talk about race.

The question is how to do it constructively," said Andre Grant-Thomas, deputy director of the Kirwan Institute. "For example, most racial justice advocates frame their appeals in terms of racial disparities. That approach often backfires. So how can we talk about it in a way that will unify us, rather than divide us or harm us?"

Four plenary sessions included notable scholars from Columbia, Emory, and Arizona; John A. Powell, executive director of the Kirwan Institute; actors Danny Glover and Felix Justice; and former Sen. Bill Bradley.

According to Powell, people want to move to a deeper and positive understanding of race. "But that's hard to do unless we get help and institutions are aligned to reflect this value," he said. "What the conference tried to do is

move us to not think of race in a narrow sense but how it affects who we are and how we organize our institutions. If we do it right, we'll have a new understanding of ourselves both individually and collectively."

The conference also covered a broad swath of issues such as the media's role in shaping the racial landscape, race and the criminal justice system, and how African Americans and immigrants might

break down barriers to create greater social and economic justice.

"Things will happen whether we're contributing ideas or not, and many things happening today don't bode well for our democracy,"

Grant-Thomas said. "The ideas we discussed here and in broader venues

will hopefully generate practices and policies at the local, state, and national levels that will bring about the multiracial future we want to live in. Diversity is the inevitable part. How we handle and negotiate that diversity remains to be seen."

The conference began with the Kirwan Film Festival. A dozen films dealing with race and ethnicity, gender, or class were shown.

"We wanted to get lots of students involved and for us all to learn to be better readers of film," Grant-Thomas said. "Popular culture in general is an arena for all sorts of ideas on how race operates. We had panel discussions about what the films were saying, how they were saying it, and what else they might say."

"We do need to talk about race. The question is how to do it constructively."

—Andre Grant-Thomas,
Deputy Director of the Kirwan Institute



Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention

The history department recently established the **Faculty of Color Caucus** (FCC), which provides a mentoring program for junior faculty, an ethnic studies working group to share research in progress, a series of professional workshops related to publishing and grant writing, a forum to discuss the challenge of teaching diversity, and a college-wide caucus to encourage faculty of color to engage in conversation and to foster policy recommendations. The FCC is now developing a position statement that expresses its goals, which include helping to recruit an increasingly diverse graduate and undergraduate student body to the field of history as well as promoting transnational and comparative approaches to studying history.

Linda C. Martin has been appointed to serve as **associate dean and director** of academic affairs for the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (FAES). As assistant dean of academic programs for over five years at Oklahoma State University's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Martin has implemented distinctive programs to support and enhance interactions between students and faculty. Martin previously served as professor at Kansas State University. She obtained an undergraduate animal science degree at Ohio State and completed her graduate work in animal breeding and cattle genetics at Virginia Tech and Colorado State University. Martin is currently completing her participation in The Food Systems Leadership Institute, a highly acclaimed national leadership development program.

Robert Kaufman, professor of sociology, has been appointed the new associate dean in Social and Behavioral Sciences and will be **spear-heading diversity initiatives** through the college's Diversity Committee. In addition, he will be directing efforts to increase the diversity of PhD students in SBS

programs with the support of a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for which he is the principal investigator.

April Pugh joined the veterinary student affairs staff in October 2006 as director of recruitment. In this role, she meets with prospective veterinary students and their families to discuss the admissions process, career opportunities, and expectations for successful completion of degrees. She also assists in developing and implementing procedures for the **recruitment of students of color**. "My goal is to provide student services that enhance student success and leadership as well as promote diversity by attracting and admitting a diverse student body," she said. Pugh received her bachelor's degree in science and psychology at Capitol University, then went on to earn a master's degree from Miami University of Ohio in college student personnel.

Professor **Elaine Richardson** joined the College of Education and Human Ecology as a professor in the School of Teaching and Learning. She is considered one of the top scholars in the nation focusing on literacy studies among African American youth, and she has created a culturally relevant model of composition instruction that brings cultural legacies of students to the forefront of the curriculum and helps them become proficient writers. The frequency of her speaking engagements and the many awards she has received for her books attest to the enthusiasm that the broad academic community has for her research. Richardson received her PhD from Michigan State University.

Also joining the School of Teaching and Learning is assistant professor **Valerie Kinloch**, formerly with Columbia University where she was an assistant professor of English education. Kinloch brings an interest in adolescent identities and youth digital literacies, writing research, urban education, and African American studies,

and she works with youth and teachers in local high schools to facilitate her research and professional development. Kinloch, who received her PhD from Wayne State University, has received funding from the Spencer Foundation and the National Council of Teachers of English.

The **Department of Extension** applied and was accepted to be a part of a national **consortium of states** that are working on addressing organizational change around **diversity and inclusion**. The Change Agent States Consortium, established in 2000, consists of 17 states actively engaged in using an outline for change. This framework consists of four areas: *leadership development*—making sure leaders of the organizations understand diversity and how to best support diversity efforts; *assessments*—each state conducts a climate survey for faculty and staff to establish benchmarks and then repeats the survey in five years to measure changes; *diversity catalyst team*—a cross section of the organization that works together with top levels of administration to implement initiatives based on the climate survey results to improve the organizational climate for diversity; and *diversity coordinators*—people who work closely with the catalyst team and administration to oversee the Change Agent States project within the organization.

Karin Musier-Forsyth joined the faculty of the Departments of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Ohio State as an Ohio Eminent Scholar. A graduate from Eckerd College (St. Petersburg, FL), she received her PhD from Cornell University and also was an American Cancer Society Postdoctoral Fellow at M.I.T. Previously, she was on the faculty of the University of Minnesota as a full professor where she was named Merck Professor of Chemistry. She currently serves on the editorial advisory board for *Accounts of Chemical Research* and on the NIH Molecular Genetics A study section panel.



Student Recruitment and Retention

The Office of Minority Affairs has proposed a cooperative program between Sigma Pi Phi **Lambda Boulé of Columbus** and the **Todd Anthony Bell Center on the African American Male**. (Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, also known as the Boulé, is the first Greek-letter fraternity to be founded by African American men. Its members already have received college and professional degrees at the time of their induction.) The program, to be known as Professional Partners in Education, will comprise a series of four evening events, each of which will focus on a single group of professions—medicine, dentistry, and the related area of law, business, and education. Each event will include a formal presentation by one or more members of the Boulé with a question and answer period to follow. The principal objectives of this program are to provide individuals to serve as role models and sources of information about careers for African American men in the major professions.

The **Breakfast of Science Champions** initiative continues as a way to introduce middle school students in central Ohio—many from underrepresented minority groups—to scientific careers and the concept of attending college. Students spend a morning on campus, where they meet faculty and graduate students from the sciences, mathematics, and engineering while enjoying a continental breakfast. Students then tour labs and participate in a variety of demonstrations. At the end of the school year, participants are invited back to campus for a “virtual conference.” Utilizing video technology, students at several different locations around campus are able to communicate with each other and present their experiences. This project allows students from urban school districts like Columbus to connect with those from suburban and private schools and is led by a team from the Colleges of the Arts

and Sciences, Engineering, and Veterinary Medicine and the Byrd Polar Research Center, who work closely with the Office of Economic Access and the P-12 Project.

The College of Social and Behavioral Sciences was awarded a \$309,500 three-year grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to increase the number of African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans who apply to, matriculate, and graduate from SBS doctoral programs. With support from grant and college funds, **Patrice Dickerson** was hired as SBS diversity director to coordinate these efforts.

The **Program for Advising in Scholarship & Service (PASS)** assisted students during move-in weekend as part of their service mission. PASS is a selective first-year academic learning community for students in the Colleges of the Arts and Sciences who have an interest in the intellectual, academic, cultural, career, community, and social benefits of diversity. The students volunteered at Creative Living, a nonprofit organization that encourages independent living for adults with severe physical disabilities.

Academic Programming, Scholarly Activity, and Research

Annie's Project, a risk management course for women in agriculture, will be offered again in Ohio this winter. The Cooperative Extension Service program is expanding and will be offered in Ashland, Ashtabula, Auglaize, Defiance, Erie, and Wood Counties. Annie's Project, launched in 2003 by the University of Illinois, is designed to empower farm women to be better business partners through networks and by managing and organizing critical information and increasing communication skills. The number of women who own farms, or are otherwise financially involved in a farm operation, has doubled since 1978, accord-

ing to the Ohio Department of Agriculture, and the number continues to grow.

Leslie Alexander, associate professor of history, is scheduled to publish the book *African or American? Black Identity and Political Activism in New York City, 1784-1861*. It brings together her interests in culture, community formation, and politics and examines the community of free blacks in New York during the period between the American Revolution and the Civil War. She also is collaborating with Professor Walter Rucker on *The Encyclopedia of African American History*.

Leadership/Recognition

Jessica Hanzlik, a senior majoring in physics and French, was named a 2008 Rhodes Scholar. The Rhodes Scholarship, which funds two years of graduate study at the University of Oxford, is awarded to 32 U.S. students each year who demonstrate superior academic ability, leadership, and the potential to make an effective and positive contribution throughout the world. Hanzlik is Ohio State's fifth Rhodes Scholar and the university's first female Scholar. She has conducted high-energy physics research and is now writing a senior honors thesis exploring the educational paths of and cultural attitudes towards women scientists in France. Hanzlik founded two student organizations, Women in Physics and Women in Math and Science, to promote gender equity in the sciences. She plans to pursue her doctorate in physics at Oxford and join the faculty at a research institution. Ultimately, Jessica looks to change the culture of science through policy and educational initiatives, increasing the number of women entering the STEM fields.

The Wexner Center for the Arts awarded the 13th **Wexner Prize** to filmmaker **Spike Lee**. The \$50,000 prize is given to a



contemporary artist in any field who has been consistently original, influential, and challenging to convention, with artists nominated by the Wexner Center's International Arts Advisory Council. Lee was at the Wexner Center February 11 and 12 for the ceremony and participated in a variety of events for Wexner Center members, Ohio State students, area teens, and the general public. In the past two decades, Lee has worked in a variety of film genres, from coming-of-age (1994's *Crooklyn*) to biopics (1992's *Malcolm X*) to documentaries (2006's *When the Levees Broke*, a devastating look at the effects of Hurricane Katrina) to musicals (1988's *School Daze*). In 1989 Lee was nominated for a Best Screenplay Academy Award for his landmark *Do the Right Thing*. Currently, he is working on a film based on James McBride's novel *Miracle of St. Anna* about black soldiers who fought in World War II. Lee will also be making his Broadway directorial debut in the spring with an adaptation of Billy Wilder's *Stalag 17*.

Hugo Melgar-Quiñonez, assistant professor in the Department of Human Nutrition and state specialist for human nutrition with OSU Extension Family and Consumer Sciences, was recently appointed by Governor Ted Strickland to sit on the **Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council**, a singular honor recognizing Melgar-Quiñonez' efforts to battle food insecurity and support healthful nutrition in Ohio and worldwide. Melgar-Quiñonez was also invited to join the Ohio steering committee of the Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease. The local chapter of this national coalition works in Ohio communities to reduce chronic disease through effective policies and practices.

The National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) and the members of the Division I-A Athletics Directors McLendon Minority Scholarship Steering Committee presented the inaugural **Induction of the Legends Class of Minority Athletics Administrators**. The celebration recognized **Gene Smith**, Ohio State director of athletics, and the Legends Class at a luncheon in December. The 2007 Legends Class consists of six minority administrators who have left their mark in athletics history. Smith, a former NACDA president, was among the honorees who were the first African Americans to hold the following positions: NBA general manager, Wayne Embry; NCAA president, Dr. James Frank; NFL general manager, Ozzie Newsome; NAIA and USOC presidents, Dr. LeRoy Walker; and MLB National League president, Bill White. Smith and his fellow members of the Legends Class also were honored at halftime of the Ohio State-Cleveland State men's basketball game.

Statement by President E. Gordon Gee on the passing of Bill Willis: "Bill Willis was a great Buckeye and a highly valued member of The Ohio State University family. I am grateful that we had the opportunity to honor him in Ohio Stadium by retiring his No. 99 jersey—an event that tugged on the heartstrings of all 105,000 fans in attendance. Bill's achievements in football helped pave the way for other African Americans in collegiate and professional sports, and his life's achievements made us proud to call him an Ohio State alumnus."

Phi Delta Kappa International has named **James L. Moore III** an Emerging Leader, the latest in a series of honors for the counselor education faculty member. Only 13 candidates worldwide will be given the Emerging Leader designation. They are scholars and educators who are under 40 years old, but already have impressive career accomplishments. Moore received the honor for 2007-2008 at a ceremony in Vancouver,

British Columbia. He is an associate professor of physical activity and educational services in the College of Education and Human Ecology and a faculty member at the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. His research focuses on factors that influence the educational experiences and career aspirations of students of color. In particular, he studies the impact of educational professionals, such as school counselors, and socio-cultural, familial, school, and community factors.

Rudine Sims Bishop, emeritus professor of teaching and learning, recently received the 2007 Outstanding Educator of the English Language Arts award from the National Council of Teachers of English. She is a pioneer in researching children's literature written about minorities and is credited with helping increase the number of published children's book authors of color.

Awareness

The Ohio State University Department of African American and African Studies Community Extension Center presented a one-day symposium on the life, death, and legacy of **South African civil rights activist Stephen Biko**, founder of South Africa's Black Consciousness movement to end apartheid. Speakers from Ohio State and institutions across the country examined Stephen Biko's life's work and the legacy he left behind. Biko, who was murdered 30 years ago, played an instrumental role in dismantling the system of apartheid in South Africa and urged South Africa's blacks to fight for their empowerment.

New York City's **Repertorio Español** made its Columbus debut October 12 at Mershon Auditorium, when it presented Gabriel García Márquez's *Crónica de una Muerte Anunciada* (*Chronicle of a Death Foretold*),

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bringing to life one of García Márquez's best known works. The recipient of the 1982 Nobel Prize for Literature, García Márquez is one of the leading Latin American authors of our time. The play provided a unique opportunity to enjoy a live theatrical performance in Columbus staged completely in Spanish, with an audio English translation available. The production company, Repertorio Español, included actors with roots in Colombia, Argentina, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. The event was organized by the Hispanic/Latino community at Ohio State in an effort to provide diverse Latino experiences for the university community and central Ohio.

Alpha Psi Lambda observed the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women** with a program at the Frank W. Hale center in November. The event marked the lives of the Mirabel sisters, who were incarcerated due to their political activism and then murdered for their beliefs. Born in the Dominican Republic, these women were political activists during the Trujillo dictatorship. In 1961, on a return journey from visiting their husbands who were incarcerated, the sisters were brutally murdered under the order of Trujillo himself. The program was initiated five years ago to bring awareness, educate, and give members of the community an opportunity to connect with the issue of gender violence.

Calestous Juma, professor and director of the Science, Technology, and Globalization Project at Harvard University, delivered two lectures to the campus community in October as part of the **Center for African Studies Speaker Series: Reflections on Higher Education in Africa**. Juma presented "Higher Education in Africa's Development: New Policy Directions" and "Biotechnology and Africa's Economic Renewal: Opportunities and Challenges."

American Indian Studies welcomed Lucy Murphy, author of *A Gathering of Rivers: Indians, Metis, and Mining in the Western Great Lakes, 1737-1832* and co-editor of *Midwestern Women: Work, Community, and*



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Leadership at the Crossroads, for a recent lecture. Murphy discussed American Indian women and the colonization in 19th-century Wisconsin, specifically how Native wives and mothers mediated among many cultural groups and took active economic and social roles in 19th-century America.

Nemata Eshun-Baiden from the **Sierra Leone Women's Working Group** spoke at Ohio State about recent work done by the group to help advance legislation in Sierra Leone for the rights of women. The 50/50 Group won the Madeleine K. Albright Award given annually at the National Democratic Institute.

Outreach

Ohio State hosted **The First Annual Big Ten Conference on Black Student Leadership** in January. The theme of the conference was *Bonded by Race, United by Vision, Striving Toward F.R.E.E.D.O.M* (Financial, Reform, Education, Empowerment, Diversity, Opportunity, Mission) and featured speakers, conference sessions, a gospel concert, social activities including a step-show, and advisor workshops. The intent was to empower participants to evaluate and consider their potentiality and contributions within student organizations

and local communities at their respective campuses.

The **2008 Office of Minority Career and Job Fair** was held on the Columbus campus in January. First offered in 1996, its purpose is to present students with an immediate opportunity to network and possibly secure a wide range of employment placements at several registered companies prior to and/or post-graduation. The career and job fair also serves undergraduate, graduate, and professional students from several universities in the Midwest. An average of 1,300 students and over 100 exhibitors attend the fair annually, making it one of the largest career fairs in Columbus.

The **Ohio Latino Work Force** is a growing group of Extension educators and FAES faculty and staff striving to address issues involving agricultural businesses and migrant labor throughout the state of Ohio. In 2007, the Ohio Latino Work Force hosted a seven-day trip to central Mexico to experience firsthand rural Mexico and Mexican agriculture and how they relate to Mexican migration in Ohio.

