PLUS Luncheon

On March 13, 2009, a luncheon was held for Provost Leadership Undergraduate Scholarship (PLUS) students, parents, donors and campus staff at The Auburn University Hotel and Dixon Conference Center. Students and parents had the opportunity to speak with donors and designated student speakers talked about the importance of the program and how it has helped them to mature academically and socially. Auburn University’s new provost, Dr. Mary Ellen Mazey greeted students and their guests while providing encouraging words.

The PLUS program attempts to increase diversity among the undergraduate student population at Auburn University, with the help of generous financial support from corporate partners.

The PLUS program also has a PLUS Retention Program component, which provides academic and social support to participants. The program offers a learning community that provides peer mentoring, leadership opportunities and training, time management and study skills, tutoring and counseling services, and an opportunity to enroll together in a series of classes throughout the freshman and sophomore years. The PLUS Retention Program works closely with campus administrative offices, academic units, student organizations, and other retention programs to ensure that participants succeed at Auburn University. Currently there are over 40 PLUS Scholars on campus. An additional 40 will be added for the 2009-2010 school year.

Congratulations Scholars!

From the Associate Provost’s Desk...

WOW, What a semester! Spring 2009 has been one of the busy semesters yet for the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs. With new staff appointments and new quality programs we are definitely moving forward despite the budget woes we all are facing.

We are looking forward to this summer and the summer programs that we will be apart of while planning for the 2009-2010 academic year as we continue to implement the AU Strategic Diversity Plan. Thank you for the work you do and the spirit of Auburn that promotes and sustains diversity as a core value.

If our office can ever be of service to you in anyway please feel free to contact us at (334) 844-4184 or send us an email at diversity@auburn.edu.

WAR EAGLE! Auburn

Your ODMA Staff

Shakeer Abdullah
Multicultural Center Director

Paulette Dilworth
Assistant Vice President for Access and Community Initiatives

Alberte Harris
Business/Administrative Services Coordinator

Donna Sollie
Assistant Provost for Women’s Initiatives

Curts Jelly
Diversity Faculty Mentor

Krystyna Kuperberg
WISE Faculty Mentor

Stephanie Seacys
Administrative Support Assistant

Associate Provost for Diversity & Multicultural Affairs

Florence Holland
Special Assistant to the Associate Provost for Diversity & Multicultural Affairs

Rabin Taylor
Diversity Planning and Assessment Analyst

Overtoun Jenda
Associate Provost for Diversity & Multicultural Affairs

Jocelyn Wilcher Vickers
Diversity Initiatives Coordinator

Bonnie Wilson
Diversity Initiatives Coordinator

ODMA has hosted two Minority Visitation Days this year assisting the Office of Enrollment Management in its recruitment of underrepresented, low-income, and/or first generation college students. The most recent Minority Visitation Day was held on Thursday, April 16 through Friday, April 17th. Over 25 students from Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Washington, and Texas were attendance. Students participated in departmental visits, campus tours, panel discussion groups, and social networking activities. Several parents actually attended the event as well. One parent stated, “What we appreciate the most as parents was establishing a minority network for the students.” This best practice for recruitment of students has proven successful and will become an annual event for ODMA.

We’re on the Web!
www.auburn.edu/diversity

“Diversity: the art of thinking independently together.”- Malcolm Forbes
Stoner Lecture Series Inaugural Lecture

The inaugural lecture of the Stone Lecture Series for Multicultural Understanding, Equality and Justice was held Wednesday, February 25, 2009. Dr. Cecile Coquet-Mokoko delivered an address on “Biracial Couples in France and the United States”.

Dr. Cecile Coquet-Mokoko, a professor of American Culture and African American Studies at the University of Tours, France, is currently on sabbatical at the University of Alabama to pursue research on biracial couples in the Southeastern United States. Prior to her appointment at the University of Tours, Dr. Coquet-Mokoko taught at the University of Aix-Marseille, France, and at Harvard University.

Dr. Coquet-Mokoko took a sabbatical to determine whether and to what extent there had been an evolution in the perception and self-perception of intercultural couples and families, aged 20-35. Her students in the Department of American Studies at the University of Alabama are currently providing rich and thought-provoking life stories about their own experiences as partners in interracial relationships and families or members of transracial families.

Dr. Coquet-Mokoko is confident that her study will contribute to further research and provide a more accurate representation of the remapping of racial interactions, if not in the whole Southeast or the state of Alabama, but at least on the campus of an Alabama university among the members of the younger generation.

The Stone Lecture Series supported with an endowed fund by Janet and John Stone. A lectureship will be awarded annually to individuals who have made significant contributions to, or are conducting research in, the areas of cultural and racial understanding, equality, and justice.

“We are extremely grateful for the generous support in establishing this lectureship endowment. The lecture series will go a long way in promoting multicultural understanding on our campus,” said Overtoun Jenda, Associate Provost for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs.

Student Receives National Education Grant Award

Cheron N. Hunter, a doctoral student in the AU College of Education’s reading education program, was awarded the third place prize in the American Association of Blacks Higher Education (AABHE) 2009 Doctoral Student National Conference Grant. The grant enabled the awardees to attend the National Conference, March 25-29, 2009, in Atlanta, Georgia. During the annual awards luncheon, awardees were presented a cash award, conference registration, and a one-year membership in AABHE. Ms. Hunter, along with fellow awardees, presented original research during concurrent workshops, and discussed its implications and impact on the future of African Americans in the academy. Ms. Hunter also introduced the 2009 Town Hall meeting entitled “Hip Hop in Higher Education” featuring distinguished panelists Dr. Mark Anthony Neal, author and professor at Duke University, Dr. Stephanie Shonekan, ethnomusicologist, director, and associate professor at Columbia College Chicago, and Christopher “Play” Martin, one-half of rapping duo Kid ‘N Play and star of House Party movies, who now serves as Artist in Residence at North Carolina Central University.

The American Association of Blacks in Higher Education (AABHE) is an outgrowth of the Black Caucus, which was established as a component of the former American Association of Higher Education (AAHE). Over the years, AABHE has been involved in numerous initiatives such as addressing the pipeline of Black faculty and staff in higher education, bringing issues pertinent to Black faculty and staff to the attention of the larger academic community and recognizing African American achievements and accomplishments to higher education.

Cheron is pursuing a doctorate in reading education to add to her Auburn bachelor’s and master’s degrees—and educational specialist degree and certification in educational leadership from Troy University. She taught for six years in Opelika City Schools as a second-grade teacher after earning her bachelor’s degree and working on her advanced education. In addition to representing the college as a Holmes Scholar, Cheron is serving in her first year as an AU College of Education Student Ambassador. As a doctoral candidate, she has served as an instructor and intern supervisor in the college’s Department of Curriculum and Teaching. Her research interests include early childhood and elementary literacy, multicultural literature comprehension, and instructional conversation.

Success Continues with Saturday Academies

Saturday Academies continue to be one of the best events ODMA holds throughout the year. These outreach activities continue to emphasize the importance of science and mathematics and knowledge related to college preparedness.

Saturday Academies are designed for students and their parents to learn more about the sciences, mathematics, and college preparation. The students participated in a GK-12 Science/Math EXPO and a variety of hands-on science and mathematics mini-courses including topics in polymer chemistry, geometry, and biological sciences. Participating parents had the opportunity to discuss what it takes for students to be well prepared for post-secondary education and what they can do to encourage their children to do well in the sciences and mathematics fields.

“This academy was a wonderful experience. It was very educational to me as a parent and upcoming student. I would like to attend again and also tell others about it. Thanks for all the information I have gained today.” commented one parent.

Participants for the Saturday Academies are from local schools serviced by the National Science Foundation (NSF) GK-12 Fellows in Sciences and Mathematics for East Alabama Schools project. The GK-12 Project is a collaboration between Auburn and Tuskegee Universities, includes schools from Lee and Macon Counties. These include Beulah, Loachapoka and Smiths Station High Schools, Lee County, and Booker T. Washington and Notasulga High Schools in Macon County.

ODMA will continue to host these academies with a goal of including more students and parents from surrounding counties. Four Saturday Academies were held during the 2008-2009 school year.
Women’s Leadership Conference Emphasizes Celebrating Diversity and Finding Voice

Keeping in mind the individual’s power to excite communal change, the student organizers of the 2009 Women’s Leadership Conference rallied Auburn’s campus around female empowerment. Dr. Mary Ellen Mazey, newly appointed provost, joins faculty and student leaders in congratulating the AU Women’s Resource Center for setting ideals into action. Themed “Redefining Womans Celebrating Diversity, Finding Voice,” this year’s conference was an opportune time to inspire each individual’s unique pathway to leadership, said Mazey.

The inaugural awards dinner held on March 30 provided Mazey and other mentors with the chance to address and interact with conference attendees. The ceremony honored distinguished alumnae Dr. Kathryn Thornton, former astronaut, as well as faculty member Dr. Sharon Gaber, AU Senior Associate Provost, with Women of Distinction Awards. Students Whitney Boddie, Dona Sollie, Wanda Lewis, president/CPO of lifeSTARTS youth and family services; Wanda Lewis, president/CPO of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Lee County; and Carolyn Golden, Vice Chancellor, Office of Advancement, AUM.

The conference’s evaluation reports offered students the opportunity to anonymously comment about their experience. One attendee commented, “I have gained a lot of information on how to take charge of my life and what it takes to be an excellent leader! I will take these past two days and apply them to my every thought, action or whatever so that I will excel in my life as a woman,” commented one attendee.

Another student said, “I felt exhilarated learning from the wonderful presenters and fellow attendees. The committee did a fabulous job.”

The conference’s evaluation reports offered students the opportunity to anonymously comment about their experience. One attendee commented, “I have gained a lot of information on how to take charge of my life and what it takes to be an excellent leader! I will take these past two days and apply them to my every thought, action or whatever so that I will excel in my life as a woman,” commented one attendee.

Another student said, “I felt exhilarated learning from the wonderful presenters and fellow attendees. The committee did a fabulous job.”

Members of the WLC planning committee voiced their appreciation for experiencing perhaps the ultimate leadership training while planning the conference.

The Multicultural Center and Access and Community Initiatives Celebrate Black History Month

The Multicultural Center and Access and Community Initiatives celebrated this past Black History Month by hosting three very empowering programs. The first program, held on Thursday, February 19, 2009 at in the Auburn University Student Center Ballroom featured, Dr. Michael Eric Dyson. A popular lecturer and professor at Georgetown University, Dyson bridged gaps between generations, connecting civil rights identity to hip-hop culture while fusing links between older and younger Americans, especially black Americans. Hailed as one of the nation’s most inspiring African Americans, Michael Eric Dyson has been credited with revitalizing the role of the public intellectual with the enthusiasm of an ordained Baptist minister. His books provide some of the most significant commentary on modern social and intellectual thought, interwoven with a combination of cultural criticism, race theory, religious, philosophical reflection, and gender studies. Works such as Making Malcolm X; I May Not Get There with You; Hollar if You Hear Me; and the recent Come Hell or High Water: Katrina Katrina and the Color of Disaster deeply probe social themes and cultural politics.

Dr. Dyson did not fail to deliver to the audience of more than 500 students, faculty, staff, and community members, as he spoke for nearly two hours on the topic, ‘Becoming Our Sister’s and Brother’s Keeper in the Post Civil Rights Era.’

Next, on February 20, 2009 Dr. No’m Akbar, CEO of Mind Productions and Associates, and Dr. James L. Moore, III, inaugural director of the Todd Anthony Bell National Resource Center on the African American Male, were among the speakers at the first ever Alabama Men of Every Color Leadership at The Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center.

The theme of this year’s symposium, ‘Becoming My Brothers’ Keeper,’” was geared towards uniting all men across racial, cultural, and socio-economic boundaries in Auburn University and across the state of Alabama by providing a platform and a venue for effective dialogue, leadership development, and social problem solving. The focus on this year’s conference was health and education issues as they relate to men. In addition to students from Auburn University, participants in attendance represented, Tuskegee University, Southern Union Community College, and local high schools from Lee and Macon County will sent students to participate as well. Visit http://newsinfo.iu.edu/asset/page/normal/5715.html for more information.

Finally on Saturday, February 21, at 11:00 a.m. the “Preparing Future Faculty” Lecture by Dr. James L. Moore III was offered specifically for graduate students interested in teaching at the collegiate level.

Dr. Moore is a tenured Research Professor in the College of Education and Human Ecology and is the inaugural director of the Todd Anthony Bell National Resource Center on the African American Male at The Ohio State University. The event was held in the Multicultural Center Conference Room and was co-sponsored by the Auburn University Black Graduate and Professional Student Association.