"In-The-Know"

Access & Equity Newsletter

South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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Vision of the Access and Equity Program

To achieve educational equity for all students and faculty in higher education. This means that success in college should not be affected adversely by a student's race.

Minority enrollment should be at least proportional to the minority population in South Carolina, and minority graduation rates should be comparable to the graduation rates of other students. Moreover, progress in the recruitment and retention of minority faculty should be made to enhance diversity among those who convey knowledge to our students.

S.C. Education System Hurting, Study Find

The State

Posted on Fri, Nov. 12, 2004

State losing black instructors

More minorities bypass education job for other career options

By GINA SMITH
Staff Writer

Quincy Samuel swaggers around his students' desks at Hyatt Park Elementary School, drawing his shoulders into a tight knot, bobbing his head and rapping. Yes, rapping.

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To teach his fifth-grade students the 50 states' capitals, Samuel penned an accelerated rhyme about Juneau, Alaska, Dover, Delaware, and the other capitals, then set it to a thumping beat.

The waiting list to get into his class each year is proof that Samuel knows how to get students to achieve. His classes have some of the highest standardized test scores in Richland 1.

But teachers like Samuel, an African-American, are in short supply. Since 1975, South Carolina has lost nearly half of its African-American teachers — down from 32 percent of the state's teaching force to 17 percent.

The downward spiral flies in the face of a growing body of research that says minority students do better in class when taught by teachers from their same racial or ethnic group.

Unless more minority teachers are recruited in South Carolina, the disparity may continue to swell.

The number of minority students in the state is gradually edging up. Currently, 42 percent of students are African-American and 4 percent are other minorities, according to state Department of Education data.

In South Carolina, the reasons for the declining teacher ranks are many.

"At one time, teaching was probably the easiest and one of the only ways for (African-Americans) to move from the lower class to the middle class," said John Lane, the principal at Hyatt Park Elementary who is black. "But now, (African-Americans) are doctors, lawyers. They're in the science field. There's more options."

And colleges aggressively recruit the best and brightest minorities, often convincing would-be teachers to jump ship.

While Samuel was enrolled at Benedict College, business school professors tried to convince him to switch majors.

"But by that time, I knew I wanted to teach," Samuel said.

He knew there would be no big salary — another common reason that people of all colors give for not entering the teaching profession. But that didn't bother Samuel.

"I thought of teaching as a calling," he said.

Minorities also list perceived discipline problems in the schools, required entrance and certification exams and a perception that teaching is a stereotypical profession for African-Americans as deterrents, said David Norton, program director for the S.C. Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement based at Winthrop University in Rock Hill.

Some black parents also advise their children against teaching, according to CERRA.

But several S.C. programs are working to reverse the trend.

The Call Me MISTER program, now operating in nine S.C. universities and technical colleges, trains, advises and works with male, African-American college students to become elementary school teachers.

If the 150 college students now enrolled in the program become teachers, it will double the number of African-American males in S.C. elementary schools.

A few graduates of the program are already thriving in schools around the state, said MISTER director Roy Jones based at Clemson University.

And while research may show that students learn best from teachers like themselves, many S.C. educators, principals and others agree that great teachers are successful with all kinds of students.

"Our misters have an impact across the board," said Jones. "We're not preparing African-American males to teach only African-American males. They're prepared to teach in any classroom in America."

Another possible solution: Catch minorities as they're leaving other professions.

South Carolina's PACE, a program in which professionals who have left the work force earn their teaching credentials, has a 44 percent minority enrollment.

Last year, South Carolina filled 9 percent of its teacher vacancies with PACE graduates. Turning the tide will take time, but it should be a priority, say educators like Samuel.

"Education was something that (African-Americans) fought for in the past. Now, there's a need for us in the classroom, and we need more (African-Americans) to see it."

Reach Smith at (803) 771-8378 or gnsmith@thestate.com.

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Posted on Sat, Nov. 06, 2004

Time to join together to seek 'economic rights'

By DARLA MOORE
Guest columnist

Editor's Note: This column is excerpted from Ms. Moore's speech to the Columbia Urban League's Equal Opportunity Day dinner on Oct. 27.

You honor me by asking that I speak tonight. You challenge me by requesting that I speak on the topic of "empowering communities through wealth creation" and, in particular, on ways to raise the per capita income among rural African-Americans.

In a report titled "The State of the South 2004" published by MDC, a North Carolina research foundation, the basic theme was: "Fifty years after Brown v. Board of Education, race still matters; but, poverty, regardless of race, matters even more." The solution was even more to the point: "The only road out of poverty runs by the schoolhouse." If those at risk would just believe that if they get a high school diploma and do not have children until they are married, they are virtually guaranteed they will not live in poverty.

For both people and places in South Carolina, education is a prerequisite for success.

The numbers are compelling. Let me start with my hometown of Lake City. In the 2000 census, the median family income was $19,417 for blacks but $54,539 for whites. Now, compare those numbers with the percentages of young people who graduated from high school — only 50.7 percent for blacks and 72.4 percent for whites. A revealing figure involves the standard eighth-grade reading test. Of every 10 who score proficient, eight will graduate from high school. Only 26 percent of eighth-graders in South Carolina score proficient.

The question that demands attention is, "Why isn't every community organization, every faith-based group, anyone who really cares

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offering outside reading opportunities for these young people?"

It is not China or India taking away our opportunities for higher-paying jobs. It is us. It is our failure to demand more from our students. It is our failure to have the basic economic foundation of a work force trained to be competitive in this global, modern economy. If ever there were a need for collaboration between the private and public sectors, across racial lines, and in each and every community, this is the issue.

We have to change what we are doing.

I invited all of the local African-American pastors to my farm to discuss these problems and to seek some solutions. After going over the numbers, I asked how they believed we could improve these conditions. The responses centered around the usual lack of funding, lack of responsiveness from state and local leaders and, of course, the racial problems. While all of these answers were probably accurate, my response was that talking about these problems had not brought about any real improvement in the statistics for the last 20 years. So, I asked them about actions they were taking that were working.

Many of them gave examples of programs their churches had started to help the community. Yet when I asked them how many times they had met to find ways to expand these programs and to collaborate with other groups to solve some of these problems, their silence was deafening. It is not just them. The lack of groups and individuals collaborating to bring more solutions to the table is pervasive throughout this state.

Addressing this issue is so critical to the well-being of our state that we simply cannot talk about it in terms of just another political problem.

"Economic Rights"

The coalitions and alliances we must develop, the demands we must place on our leaders, the work we must do in each community have to be considered a movement. Just as you responded to the social injustices in the '60s, so must you respond to the economic inequities and shortcomings of our state today. I am calling for an "economic rights" movement.

Now, let's talk about some very basic changes we need to consider: First, we must demand more of our leaders. I am not talking about just political leaders, but also faith leaders, leaders of organizations such as yours and community and local leaders. Demand results. If you don't get them, change your leaders.

Second, we have to stop waiting for another Martin Luther King to show us the way. It is your responsibility to lead the way now. We have to stop waiting for the state to fully fund our educational needs, particularly in poorer areas. It is not going to happen. We have to start finding solutions ourselves and not wait for someone else.

A team from the Southern Governors' Association working with the Rural School and Community Trust attempted to learn lessons from successful schools with high-minority and high-poverty populations. The schools visited included Shaw High School in Mississippi, where almost all students qualified for free- or reduced-price meals, and Swain County High School in Brunson City, N.C. The remarkable thing about the findings from studying these schools was the similarities in their actions.

They had excellent leaders in their principals. They all had up-to-date data about their students, and they used it. They had flexibility in financing.

Funds could be directed toward educational priorities without the usual red tape most schools have to overcome.

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But the most important similarity was that each school benefited from some type of school-improvement framework. The amazing thing was neither school had the same plan, yet both found the framework extremely useful as a road map to follow.

I mention the actions by these successful schools notwithstanding their limitations, because you know they do not have the resources some of the more prosperous, suburban schools have, yet they did not wait for issues to be resolved before they took steps to improve education.

Third, we must give our young people hope. We must do everything we can to prevent them from becoming disconnected. If a student makes the effort to graduate from high school and then seeks additional education and training, South Carolina should have an economy strong enough to offer them good job opportunities with solid wages and the chance for advancement.
For this state to have any chance to succeed, we have to build partnerships.

There is one final issue that many of us, particularly in mixed crowds, are fearful of discussing. I am talking about the continuing racial divide.

Leonard Pitts, a Pulitzer Prize-winning African-American columnist, summed it up remarkably in one of his columns. He stated that: "Blacks seldom publicly concede some of the dysfunction suffered by the black underclass is self-inflicted, for fear of giving aid and comfort to bigotry. So, when analyzing racial progress or the lack thereof, black folk tend to emphasize racism. Whites, on the other hand, are often loathe to concede racism remains the great ball and chain of black life for fear the admission will besmirch their benign self-image or be used to make them feel guilty. So they tend to emphasize dysfunction instead."

"Economic Rights"

Pitts went on to make this point: "Much as some white folk pretend otherwise, racism did not vanish one fine day long ago. It lives here, now, still. And it is, by definition, not something black people can cure through self-improvement.... And yet, this also is true: For all the woes it brings, racism is not the proximate source of all the ills that beset the black underclass."

On this nagging topic, I offer you the wise words of Jewell Jackson McCabe, founder of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, who said, "You factor in racism as a reality, and you keep moving."

This has not been an unfamiliar barrier in my own life. I have said it before, and I will say it again: The reason I have a voice in this state is because I have economic power. In my case, it was, "you factor in chauvinism as a reality, and you keep moving." Economic power is the only way individually and collectively you will ever have a sustainable voice too; and the only avenue to this voice is through education, hard work, building on one small success at a time and powering through the social biases that remain.

There actually should be a natural alliance between African-Americans and the business leaders. In the next 10 years, African-Americans and Latinos will represent the core of our young work force in the South; therefore, we both should want higher educational attainment and a more trained work force.

All over the state I hear of small successes — mentoring programs, after-school programs, family-involvement programs. They work; we just have to connect the dots and build on them.

Yet we do nothing to promote such alliances.

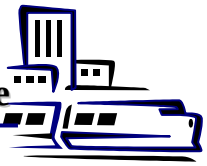
Continued on next column

You know there are some "good white folk" who really want to help. We all have to take responsibility, and we "good white folk" need the African-American community at the table.

The consequences for us of not improving the educational attainment of our young people are just not acceptable. You must accept the responsibility for building coalitions to support an all-out effort to improve our educational system. The Palmetto Institute and the Council on Competitiveness and others are taking responsibility for making sure that when you succeed, there will be jobs in this state worthy of keeping our children here. Working together toward a common goal — this is how we will give our young people hope.

Ms. Moore is chairman of the Palmetto Institute board of directors.

Institutions on the Move



On the next page is a publication, from the Association of American Colleges and Universities, Volume 8, No. 2 2004 – "Advancing Diversity in Higher Education – Diversity Digest", which features a profile of USC Upstate's (formerly USC-Spartanburg) diversity accomplishments.

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES Volume 8, No. 2 2004

Advancing Diversity in Higher Education

DIVERSITY DIGEST

The Lasting Legacy of *Brown*

By Mark Giles, editor, Diversity Digest

THIS ISSUE OF *DIVERSITY DIGEST* CONTAINS ARTICLES AND RESOURCES FOCUSED ON THE LASTING LESSONS, LEGACIES, AND SPIRIT OF THE 1954 *BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION* DECISION. THIS YEAR OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY, FILLED WITH CEREMONIES, CELEBRATIONS, AND COMMEMORATIONS OF THAT DECISION, HAS HIGHLIGHTED MANY WELL KNOWN AND LESSER KNOWN PEOPLE WHO FOUGHT FOR CHANGE AND REMINDED US OF HOW THEIR STRUGGLES TRANSFORMED THIS NATION. *BROWN* WAS A LANDMARK LEGAL DECISION AND A WATERSHED EVENT IN AMERICAN HISTORY. MOREOVER, IT INDELIBLY CHANGED THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE UNITED STATES.

Not only did *Brown* help provide legal momentum to the mass struggles for social justice of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, it also signaled a sea change in federal policy, directly targeting one of the most influential social institutions in the country: public education. Although the *Brown* decision mandated an end to racial segregation in K-12 education, it also had a direct and revolutionary impact on higher education and across American society. In addition, *Brown* was a touchstone for other disenfranchised minority groups who dared to dream that the promise of democracy as written in the Constitution would be fulfilled in everyday life. Clearly, *Brown* affected America's social, political, economic, and racial landscape from the civil rights movement of the 1950s through the oscillating legal decisions on affirmative action and desegregation of the past thirty years.

In This Issue

The articles in this issue of *Digest* explore a range of effects that the 1954 decision had on higher education. Vice Chancellor for Student and Diversity Affairs Leon Wiles of the University of South Carolina Upstate describes how the institutional commitment to diversity is a driving force for change and excellence. Charlie Nelms, vice president of institutional advancement and student affairs at Indiana University, shares excerpts from a speech he delivered at the Gary, Indiana, NAACP Life Membership Dinner. His words echo the importance of diversity and democracy and reflect a life and career lived on the front line of activism and leadership in higher education. Professor Heather E. Harris reveals the significance of using communication courses to advance principals of diversity for students. AAC&U staff member Daniel Teraguchi takes a slightly different approach and shows how *Brown* affected not only African Americans, but also Asian Pacific Americans and the movement to institutionalize Asian American studies.

> Brown v. Board of Education *left a lasting imprint on America and its notions of citizenship, democracy, diversity, and social equity.*

Scholar Marybeth Gasman's article explains the connection between *Brown* and historically black colleges and universities. AAC&U intern Sherwynn Umali shares her interviews with undergraduate student leaders at the University of Maryland College Park. She wanted to learn how they understood *Brown* and its significance to diversity and integration on that campus.

This issue also features campus-community connections and reveals the spirit of change that springs from democratic principles. Beverly Wright and Debra Rowe share a compelling story about an issue often overlooked in diversity conversations: environmental justice. Their article focuses on the empowering mission and work at Xavier University in New Orleans and the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice. Finally, Walter Clark describes initiatives at Middlesex Community College in Middletown, Connecticut, that focus on diversity-driven institutional transformation and preparing students to cross cultural boundaries.

Brown v. Board of Education left a lasting imprint on America and its notions of citizenship, democracy, diversity, and social equity. Second only to the post-World War II student enrollment boom caused by the GI Bill, *Brown* immeasurably transformed higher education, which continues to grapple with its complex implications. ■

INSIDE DIVERSITY DIGEST

University of South Carolina Upstate: A Model of Excellence and Diversity

By Leon Wiles, vice chancellor for student and diversity affairs, University of South Carolina Upstate

ON MAY 17, 1954, THE U.S. SUPREME COURT RULED ON THE HISTORIC CASE OF *BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION*. THE DECISION ELIMINATED COURT-SANCTIONED SEGREGATION OF THE NATION'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS. THE COURT'S DECISION PROFOUNDLY CHANGED AND CHALLENGED BOTH THE AMERICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM AND AMERICAN SOCIETY IN WAYS NO COURT DECISION HAD IN THE PAST. IN 1955, ARTIST-ACTIVIST PAUL ROBESON NOTED THAT OPPONENTS OF THE DECISION WERE ENORMOUSLY DISSATISFIED AND "RESPONDED WITH HOWLS OF ANGUISH AND THREATS OF RETALIATION" (QUOTED IN SMILEY 2004).

The historical record is filled with references to the staunch resistance to desegregation and social equity throughout the South. Educational settings became the primary battlegrounds across the state of South Carolina. The University of South Carolina (USC) Upstate, formerly the University of South Carolina Spartanburg, has emerged out of that contested past as a model of institutional transformation where excellence and diversity go hand in hand.

The city of Spartanburg has a direct connection to the 1954 *Brown v. Board* decision (Kluger 1987). In late 1954, when the United States Supreme Court sought to determine how difficult it would be to desegregate schools in southern communities, Spartanburg was studied as a typical southern city. Despite the Court's thorough analysis and consideration of the impact of its ruling, it would be nearly a decade before the first African American student would attend a public school with white students in South Carolina.

Furthermore, it was not until 1963 that the first African American student enrolled in a public historically white university in South Carolina. That student was the former mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina, the Honorable Harvey B. Gantt, who graduated with honors from Clemson University in 1965. It was during that same turbulent decade of the '60s that USC Upstate (Spartanburg) was established. The name Upstate refers to the common name given to the region of South Carolina where Spartanburg is located.

USC Upstate gladly opened its doors to all races from its inception. Today, the institution is widely regarded as a leading example of interracial cooperation, cultural pluralism, equal opportunity, access, and equity. This has come about as a result of the vision and commitment of senior leadership; a sustained and energetic collaborative effort from all levels of the institution; the development of a clear institutional strategy; and broad participation by faculty, staff, students, and community stakeholders.

USC Upstate: A Growing Metropolitan University

Although the university was ethnically and racially diverse from its beginning, minority and international student enrollment and minority faculty and staff representation were modest. However, in the early 1990s, with Upstate South Carolina's flourishing international environment and increasing levels of participation by African Americans and other minorities in higher education, the university's

leadership realized that a general regional mission was not enough to assure the institution a prominent and appropriate role as a resource for the development of the Upstate region. Moreover, diversity and internationalization are matters of institutional credibility in a metropolitan region where 30 percent of the population is African American. The Upstate region also has the largest concentration of international corporate firms in the state as well as a rapidly increasing Hispanic population.

With the recognition that the university needed to adopt a broader vision and achieve new goals to enhance its viability in the region, USC Upstate entered the conceptual framework phase of a four-phase mission change. This change included:

- Development of a strategic framework
- Early accomplishments
- Tactical realignment
- Goal achievement

Upstate maintained diversity as an essential component of the change process. In August 1994, following intense consultations during his initial weeks in office, the new chancellor, John C. Stockwell, delivered a speech to faculty and staff calling for institutional realignment as a "metropolitan" university. Since 1994, the university has continued to develop its metropolitan mission, which emphasizes a strong commitment to diversity. The university recognized and readily accepted the challenge of preparing its students to succeed in a pluralistic society and a global economy.

Strategic Framework

The university needed a comprehensive strategy to guide its campus community development efforts. The first three years witnessed tremendous accomplishments, including:

- creation of diversity-related courses;
- approval of cognates in ethnic and women's studies;
- establishment of the Center for Women's Studies and Programs and the Center for International Studies;
- inauguration of an annual multicultural conference for pre-service teachers;
- creation of a diversity incentive fund to support innovative faculty and staff efforts to educate students about various aspects of diversity and democracy;
- development of a campus-wide diversity dialogue series in which faculty and staff learn about other cultures, discuss participation in the American democratic process, and debate controversial issues such as affirmative action, religious differences, and gender issues; and
- recognition of extraordinary diversity-related achievements by faculty and staff.

Students at USC Upstate

In addition, the university focused on realigning diversity support structures. The chief student affairs officer was reappointed as the vice chancellor for student and diversity affairs and began reporting directly to the chancellor. Other structural changes were adapted to realign and sustain the institution's expanded commitment to diversity, such as the establishment of an equal opportunity office, a disability services office, and a nontraditional student program.

Achieving Meaningful and Lasting Goals

Upstate has enjoyed significant success since it first embarked on its diversity agenda. Minority faculty representation has increased from 8 to 14 percent. Minority staff has increased to 18 percent. Minority and international student representation exceeds 30 percent. All institutional processes have been revised to reflect an emphasis on diversity. Diversity accomplishments are considered in the evaluation of senior-level administrators. In-service diversity training is offered regularly to the campus community. In addition, the chancellor served as the first chair of the board of the Urban League of the Upstate.

The institution has excellent working relationships with the international and Hispanic communities, local political and religious leadership, civic organizations, and numerous school districts. In addition, *U.S. News and World Report* ranked Upstate among the top five southeastern universities for its diversity achievement and identified it as one of the best public

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University of South Carolina Upstate *continued from page 3*

institutions in the Southeast (1998-2003). Upstate has achieved recognition as the organizational leader in diversity and international initiatives across South Carolina, and has received several statewide awards from civic organizations in recognition of its commitment to diversity and inclusion.

It is hard to conceive of any of these changes without the landmark *Brown* decision. The focus on inclusion, diversity, and community is a result of the struggles of many people. We believe that students who attend and graduate from Upstate are rewarded with much more than a college degree. They are prepared for productive citizenship in an increasingly pluralistic society and shrinking global environment. Upstate is a model for other institutions seeking to create excellent and diverse environments in which to live, learn, teach, and lead. Our roots are southern and we are proud of what *Brown* did for the country and for our institution. ■

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