



College of Arts & Sciences

Newsletter

A publication for alumni and friends of the College of Arts and Sciences

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Grambling State University, Grambling, Louisiana

Fall 2009

From... Dean Connie Walton



This academic year will be filled with a lot of activities. We are excited about the pending completion of the construction of the Performing Arts Building. Efforts to make this building become a reality began in the mid 1980's, shortly after I completed my undergraduate degree at GSU.

At the beginning of this semester, the engineering technology department was notified that both programs reviewed by the Accreditation Board for Engineering & Technology (ABET) had been reaffirmed. These programs are Drafting Design Technology and Electronics Engineering Technology.

Many of you have indicated that you enjoy this newsletter. We welcome your continued support! Please feel free to contact me at waltoncr@gram.edu or (318)-274-4006.

Sophomore mathematics major does research in Africa



Duvar Retherford

Duvar Retherford, a native of Vancouver Washington, spent two weeks during the summer in Ghana working on a project that focused on fractal geometry patterns in Ghanaian art. This research project was done under the mentorship of Dr. Brett Sims, 2007-2009 William McIntosh Endowed Professor. Near the end of this summer experience Duvar presented his research at a workshop that was held on the campus of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology.

A typical day for Retherford started at 6:00am when he began his journey to identify art work in the local area. He traveled to the city of Bogatanga

and visited Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Church to study its art work. He also traveled to Sirigu, a village in north Ghana. Sirigu is known for its pottery and art work. Homes in this area are decorated with art that is traditionally painted by women.

Duvar also found time to sightsee. He visited the W.E.B. Dubois Memorial House, and several slave castles; Elmina, and the Cape Coast.

Duvar presented details of his research and overall experience in Ghana on Grambling State University's campus on October 22, 2009. Dr. Lucy McIntosh was in attendance.

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Senior chemistry major completes crime scene investigation internship

During the summer of 2009 Janeya Griffin completed the requirements for the forensic chemistry internship course by working at crime scene investigation units of two California state agencies; the Irvine Police Department and the Santa Ana Police Department.

Janeya worked six days a week for 8 weeks, working on average eleven hours per day. She gained practical hands-on experience in analyzing gun evidence by working with forensic experts in the firearms and tool marks division of the Santa Ana PD Crime Scene Investigation department. This division ranks high in linking guns to gun crimes. Janeya went to the scene of a crime, mapped out the scene using markers, and took a series of photographs. Back in the laboratory, she fired a gun that was collected at a scene, into a water tank. The bullet was retrieved from the water and analysis done to compare it with crime scene bullets.



Janeya Griffin with gear.

Investigators with the Irvine PD worked closely with Janeya in the development of forensic fingerprinting skills that could be used to confirm or exclude a suspect.

After reflecting on the experience, Griffin said “my desire to become a criminalist is stronger than ever. This experience has validated that I definitely want a career in this area.” Janeya Griffin is a senior chemistry major following the forensic chemistry curriculum.

Freshmen class helps get the word out regarding the 2010 Census

Dr. J. Russell Willis, sociology professor, has his First Year Experience (FYE) class working on a service learning project that targets the 2010 census. The FYE class will work in conjunction with Ms. Joyce Evans, KGRM director, and faculty in the department of mass communication to develop and implement a media campaign. The campaign will be centered on the slogan “The future is yours....You can change it!”

The intent of the campaign is to raise the level of awareness and participation of area residents in the upcoming 2010 Census. Print, radio, and TV broadcast spots will be created and target college students, low income rural Blacks, and the elderly.

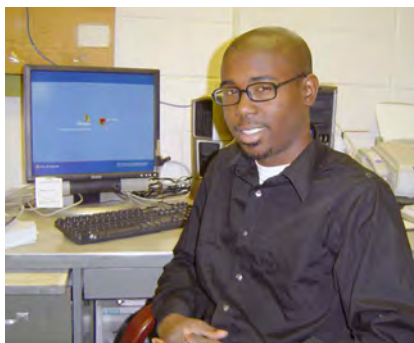


Dr. Russell Willis with students.

This will be done through a targeted campaign that utilizes *KGRM Radio*, *GSU TV*, and *The Gramblinite*. The goal is to increase the overall participation of area residents in the 2010 Census and to make sure they are counted.

Computer science major gains valuable research experience

At the end of Michael Terrell's freshman year, he began developing research skills by participating in the *Rising Sophomore Academy* that is sponsored by the Center for Mathematical Achievement in Science and Technology (CMAST). Participants in the Rising Sophomore Academy engage in structured mini-research projects that are designed to develop basic research skills. Soon after this experience, Michael determined that he was interested in having a career as a researcher. In conjunction with his advisor, Terrell sought research opportunities that would assist in the development of critical skills. In the summer of 2008, Michael was an undergraduate researcher in an Air Force funded



Michael Terrell

program that is housed in the College of Arts & Sciences. This project was directed by Dr. Yenumula Reddy, computer science professor, and focused on efficient communication between two computers using VPN package and routers. Michael was able to learn the basics of wireless

communications. He presented this research at the spring 2009 annual meeting of the Louisiana Academy of Sciences. During the summer of 2009, he completed an internship at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio working on a project that dealt with the basics of game theory and cognitive networks. Terrell is scheduled to present at the 7th *International Conference on Information Technology* that will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada in April 2010. The title of this presentation is Congestion Game Models for Capacity and Bandwidth Relation in Dynamic Spectrum Access. Michael is a native of Mansfield, Louisiana and currently in his junior year. He plans to return to Wright Patterson Air Force Base this summer and continue the

Freshmen engineering technology majors design flying device



Mr. John Frazier and his class completing construction projects.

The engineering technology department is piloting a project that is designed to increase the retention of majors from the freshman to sophomore year. The department is focusing on the integration of the completion of an engineering based project into introductory courses. The premise is a freshman student who experiences first hand how engineering technology can

be used to address engineering type problems, is more likely to remain with the program.

Mr. John Frazier, visiting faculty, launched this effort during the fall semester. Students enrolled in his engineering graphics course, ETC 103, designed a dish-shaped flying device (DDET-UFO). They used the principles and techniques that were taught



Flying device designed by students

in the classroom to hand-draw their design; followed by the use of Computer Aided Design (CAD) software to transfer the design to a digital format. The class constructed the flying device and after testing, modified the design to optimize flying ability. The DDET-UFO was unveiled to the public on October 15, 2009.

Theatre arts hosts productions that highlighted the great depression

The theatre arts department opened its season with August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, the first in his 10-play cycle that chronicled the African American experience throughout the 20th century. *Ma Rainey* takes place in 1927 as the country was perched on the precipice of the depression's initial decline. It chronicles the struggles of the legendary African American blues singer and her band as they clash with the producers, agents, and managers who got rich off of their work.

Grambling's production of *Ma Rainey's* was directed by Dr. King Godwin. The cast consisted of Tiana Alexander as Ma Rainey, Deron James as Slow Drag, Jonathan Jackson as Levee, Sean Turner as Sturdyvant, Jonte Smith as Dussie Mae, Jordan Gaither as Cutler, Dale Nelson as Sylvester, Cedrick Clarke as Toledo, Jobias McLester as



Cast of Ma Rainey's Black Bottom

the Police Officer and Princeton McCurtain as Irvin.

The production staff consisted of Steve Chapin as set designer, John Shadowin as sound designer, Teshia Lincoln as costume designer, Courtney Hickman as light designer, and Jamila Hickman as stage manager.

On October 27, 2009 the department hosted a symposium on the great depression, which included representatives from the history, English

and art departments. The symposium focused on the positive outcome the depression gave the arts. Those that were in attendance had the privilege of being entertained by emeritus faculty Dr. Lamore Carter, who focused on the life he led as a child during the Great Depression.

The great depression symposium, and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, were both partially funded by a grant from the Shreveport Regional Arts Council.

Smart laboratory to increase student success in acquisition of a second language



Students in foreign languages laboratory

The department of foreign languages received Title III funding to implement a project that will impact success of students enrolled in foreign language courses. This project will upgrade the foreign languages laboratory that currently has equipment that supports only "listening comprehension" to a smart laboratory. The renovated laboratory will be equipped with internet accessible desktop computers, a smart board, a flat screen TV monitor, and a computer projector. Dr. Ruben Gonzales, head of the department of foreign languages, says "This computer lab will aid the faculty in exposing students to

electronic technological advances in second language acquisition."

To support the development of communication skills in another language, faculty will be able to take a class into the laboratory, select music from the internet in a specific language and engage the student in an interactive lesson. Additionally, the smart laboratory will allow the teacher and students to view television programs in the second language that the student is acquiring.

To embrace the use of technology in the teaching of a language, this project will also convert four lecture rooms into smart classrooms.

Biology department receives grant awards



*From left to right
Chasity Dubose,
Dr. Felix Ifeanyi,
Jackie Gorham,
Jasmine Crane,
Cathryn Stevenson,
Arnesha Williams
Maudrella Jones,
Dr. Makram
Himaya*

In August 2009, the National Institutes of Health announced that the department of biological sciences was awarded a four year 1.1 million dollar grant. This award is in support of the continuation of the Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement (RISE) program. The purpose of the RISE program, which was first funded in 2004, is to prepare program participants to be more competitive in gaining admission to Ph.D. programs in

biomedical sciences.

“Lessons learned in implementing the first cycle of the RISE grant will be utilized to achieve greater success in placing current RISE students in Ph.D. programs,” said Dr. Felix Ifeanyi, head, dept. of biological sciences, and director of the RISE program. This program targets sophomore STEM students and provides activities that will increase their preparedness for success in graduate programs.

Ten students were selected for participation in the RISE program for the 2009/2010 academic year. The department was also the recipient of a State of Louisiana Board of Regents Support Fund Undergraduate Enhancement award for \$80,000.00.

The purpose of the grant award is to assist in the acquisition of equipment to enhance teaching and research capabilities of the department.

Planetarium open house held



Planetarium open house participants

During the spring 2008 semester the planetarium located in Woodson Hall was upgraded to a digital format. The 50 seat planetarium is powered by a Spitz SciDome system. This system includes starry night software that provides access to 13.5 million stars and more than 28,000 galaxies.

The open house was held during homecoming week. Alumni, students, faculty, and residents of the city of Grambling were in attendance. An overview of the system was given by Dean Connie Walton. The open house ended with the showing of a full dome movie created by the National Space Centre titled Astronaut.

The planetarium was a part of the original structure of Woodson Hall, built in 1969. Initially, it was managed jointly by the departments of geog-

raphy and physics. A 1980 Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) self-study report prepared by the department of geography describes how the planetarium was used. The report reads, “It permits the faculty in geography and other social science areas to demonstrate most of the phenomena associated with the earth-sun relationships and key concepts in astronomy. Students of area high and elementary schools and in-service teachers visit the planetarium and experience the use of the facility.”

The newly upgraded planetarium will continue to be used to support astronomy classes and supplement lesson plans of secondary teachers in local schools. Additionally, at least twice in a semester full dome shows will be featured.

GSU art faculty reach out to youth in the community



Mr. Rodrecas David and Downsville High School students

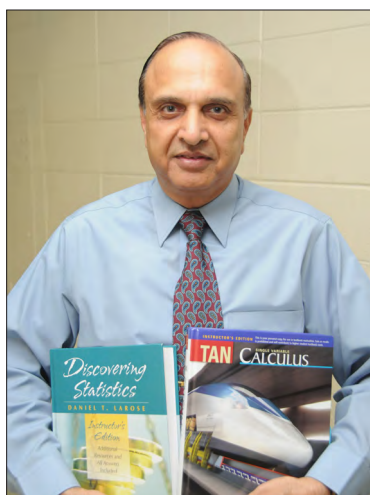
Mr. Rodrecas Davis, assistant professor of art, had his exhibit entitled *Idle Warship* on display at Louisiana Tech University's Bellocq Gallery from September 22 – October 14, 2009. For the exhibition, Davis converted the gallery to a chapel setting that addressed themes related to society's tendency to elevate secular images and phenomena of pop culture to the level of worship. On September 30, 2009, forty 10th grade students

at Downsville High School and their teacher met with Davis for a "walk through gallery talk" of the *Idle Warship* exhibit.

The students were engaged in a 35 minute dialogue about race, politics, power, violence, sexuality, religion and idol worship and the relationship of these issues to art, sociology and history.

On October 14, 2009 Ms. Donna McGee, head of the art department,

presented an oil painting demonstration for nineteen 7th and 8th grade students enrolled in Mrs. Linda Snider Ward's talented art classes at Ruston Junior High School. McGee demonstrated the indirect painting process which involves the creation of a tonal underpainting that is enriched with thin glazes of pigment to build up the color in the painting. This method was popular with master artists prior to the 18th century and is still used today.



Dr. Arun Agarwal

Mathematics professor serves as reviewer

In recognition of his scholarly work in mathematics, Dr. Arun Agarwal was selected to review book chapters of two recently published textbooks. The first book, *Discovering Statistics* by Daniel Larose was published by W.H. Freeman and Company. The second book, *Single Variable Calculus* is authored by Soo Tan; Brooks/Cole

Cengage Learning is the publisher.

Dr. Agarwal also serves as a reviewer for two international publications; Mathematical Reviews and Zentralblatt Math.

Dr. Agarwal is employed at Grambling State University since 1969 as faculty in the mathematics department.

Music professor uses classical music to reach out to the community



Mr. Ye Tao performing for senior citizens.

Mr. Ye Tao, assistant professor of music, believes that as an educator teaching at a publicly funded university, that it is his responsibility to reach out to the community. He routinely gives violin recitals that target senior citizens, performing regularly at the Northeast Louisiana War Vet-

erans Home and local assisted living centers.

Mr. Tao also reaches out to neighboring universities. On September 17th, he gave a violin solo recital at Emy-Lou Biedenharn Recital Hall on the campus of the University of Louisiana at Monroe. Mr. Tao's repertoire

included works from Sebastian, Bach, Niccolo Paganini, and Eugene Ysaye. The music chosen represents some of the most challenging unaccompanied solo violin works. Tao gave a violin solo recital at the Recital Hall of Louisiana Tech University on September 15, 2009.

Foreign Language professor named to editorial board

The Spanish literary journal *Baquiana* recently appointed Dr. Miguel Angel De Feo, assistant professor of Spanish, to their editorial board. He was granted full membership in recognition of his professional contributions.

Baquiana is dedicated to original manuscripts in Spanish American poetry, prose, short stories, essays, and literary criticism. This journal is published by Ediciones Baquiana and based in Miami, Florida.



Dr. Miguel Angel De Feo

Sociology students accepted to top graduate schools

Several years ago, sociology faculty set a goal of increasing the academic success of sociology students and increasing their GRE scores. The overall objective was to enhance competitiveness of sociology students for placement into graduate

programs.

Six students who had a major or minor in sociology and completed degree requirements during the 2008/2009 academic year have been accepted into graduate programs. Dr. Walter Davis, sociology professor,

indicates “Not only have we more than doubled the number of graduates entering graduate school, but at least four of the students will enter some of the most prestigious programs in the country.”

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Raafi Bell | Stanford University |
| Ashon Bradford | Cornell University |
| Domonique Casper | University of Iowa |
| Marlon Marion | Portland State University |
| Joseph Sly | University of San Diego |
| Eric Williams | Indiana University |



Dr. Walter Davis

Department of Physics receives NASA grant

Dr. Naidu Seetala, professor of physics received a NASA grant in the amount of \$415,758 for three years. This grant is a part of NASA's Curriculum Improvement Partnership Award for the Integration of Research. Dr. Matthew Ware, physics professor, and Dr. Danny Hubbard, chemistry professor, serve as co-principal investigators. The project focuses on integrating NASA related

research into the curriculum. This is being done in an effort to prepare students for future NASA careers. A bridge program between Southern University-Shreveport and GSU is also being established. Collaborations with NASA research centers are also targeted. A GSU faculty/student team will have the opportunity to conduct research during the summer at a NASA installation.

Public Administration professor presents at international meetings held in Chile & Ontario

The 21st International Political Science Association World Congress met in Santiago Chile, July 12-16, 2009. The World Congress invited Dr. Charles Mitchell to participate in a panel discussion as a part of the Psycho-Politics Research Committee. Dr. Mitchell's presentation focused on his research titled, *Political Change Explained: Validity and a Cognitive Perspective*. Mitchell was also invited to chair a panel on “Good Governance, Theoretical, Historical and Applied Perspectives.” This pan-

el consisted of presenters from Brazil, Germany, and India.

The American Political Science Association held their annual meeting September 3rd-6th in Toronto, Ontario. Dr. Mitchell was invited to present in four different divisions; *Teaching and Learning in Political Science*, *Qualitative Methods*, *Information Technology*, and *Political Science*.

Dr. Charles Mitchell is a faculty member in the department of political science and public administration.

Mathematics professor receives merit award



Dr. Aderemi Kuku

Dr. Aderemi Kuku received a Nigerian National Order of Merit award. This award recognizes outstanding scholarship and research that contributes to national development in the field of science. The President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria approved the conferment of the award to Kuku. A ceremony was held on December 3, 2009 at the presidential villa, Abuja, Nigeria.