

# Virginia Tech Conductor

A GUIDE FOR OUR JOURNEY TOWARD EXCELLENCE, EQUITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

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## After September 11 International students' response sets example

by Kim V. Beisecker, director, Cranwell International Center

The events of September 11th will long be engraved in our minds and our hearts. As we stood in front of the televisions in disbelief, many realized the impact this might have on our campus and began the process for support and safety of our students.



The emotional support and welfare of all students and staff on this campus was the focus of many efforts. The Dean of Students Office in conjunction with Squires, Cook Counseling, and RDP, established support centers to offer comfort to students throughout the first night.

There was an immediate concern for the safety and welfare of our international students. The Virginia Tech Police Department showed concern and sensitivity in dealing with situations and individual students, providing safe environments for all types of activities including those of prayer. Cranwell International Center staff and volunteers became a center of activity providing safety information, counseling, and answering the calls of many international students and parents.

Many international students experienced the need to teach our community the differences between culture, nationality, and religion. With personal safety concerns, these students had to carefully choose their words and/

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## Educator, scholar, leader Johnetta Cole to be Black History Month keynote speaker

Johnetta Cole, Presidential Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, Women's Studies, and African American Studies at Emory University, will be keynote speaker for the Black History Month 2002 celebration at Virginia Tech Feb. 27.



From 1987 to 1997, Cole served as the seventh president of Spelman College. She was the first African American woman to lead this historically Black College for women and helped to lead Spelman into the ranks of American's outstanding colleges. Spelman was named the number one regional liberal arts college in the South in *U.S. News & World Report's* annual college issue.

In the fall of 1998, she joined the faculty at Emory. A leading educator, anthropologist, and advocate for people of color and women everywhere, Cole was named one of America's most outstanding African Americans in the 20th anniversary issues of both *Essence* magazine and *Black Enterprise* magazine. She is featured in the book, *I Dream A World, Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America*.

Cole began her college studies at age 15 when she entered Fisk University in an early admission program. She completed her undergraduate degree at Oberlin College and earned an M.A. and a Ph.D. in anthropology from Northwestern University.

*All American Women*, and *Anthropology for the Nineties*, textbooks edited by Cole, are used in classrooms throughout America's colleges and universities. Her book, *Conversations: Straight Talk With America's Sister President*, was published in 1993. *Dream the Boldest Dreams: And Other Lessons of Life*, Cole's newest book, was published in 1997.

Cole is an active participant with numerous community, civic and corporate boards and organizations including The Carter Center of Emory University, The TransAfrica Forum, and The United Way of Metro Atlanta. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, The Links Inc. and the National Council of Negro Women. She is a trustee of Gallaudet University and the Rockefeller Foundation. She also serves on the Board of The Center for Research on Women at Wellesley college. Cole is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Anthropological Association. She is a director on the Corporate boards of Coca Cola Enterprises, and Merck & Co.

In 1998, President Clinton appointed Cole to a the commission on The Celebration of Women in American History. In 1999 she was appointed to Governor of Georgia Roy E. Barnes' "Education Reform Study Commission."

Cole has received honorary degrees from 45 colleges and universities. She is also the recipient of man awards, most recently the TransAfrica Forum Global Public Service Award, the Dorothy I. Height Dreammaker Award from the National Council of Negro Women, the Radcliffe Medal from the Radcliffe College Alumnae Association, and a 1999 Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill medal.

## Reflections on diversity after September 11

by David Forman-Barzilai, director, the Malcolm and Diane Rosenberg Program in Judaic Studies

As I watched the twin towers crumbling down before my eyes, I knew instantly, like many, that nothing would be the same again. Among other things, I was aware that the airplanes that targeted the buildings did not intend to discriminate between people on the basis of race, gender, or religion. As the horror settled into some kind of realization, as I observed the suffering, I began to feel that this terrible action was a great equalizer, since among the victims were many women, many members of minority social, economic, ethnic, cultural, and religious groups.

Indeed, along with leveling the buildings, this crime leveled us together as human beings, and more particularly (in this

country) as Americans, and as citizens of a free and democratic state. We saw clearly that what unites us is greater than what separates us. We were strengthened by the realization that we are living in a society which, although it has still a long road to go to overcome radical racial injustices and prejudices in its past, has come a long way — and that the present tragedy presented us with ample evidence that we continue in the right direction — maybe too slow, maybe clumsy at times. But the general trajectory is pointing toward a steady progress, and hope for the future.

We look to Colin Powell during these dark times, admiring and trusting him more than anyone else; and we await anxiously to hear Condoleezza Rice's insight and advice — and this, without perceiving their status as unusual or extraordinary. We respect them as human beings and as leaders. This fact should not be underestimated in a nation that so short a time ago refused African Americans the right to vote. The same sort of openness can be seen in other cases, such as the Presidency of John F. Kennedy, the recent candidacies of Joseph Lieberman for Vice President and of Elisabeth Dole for President. The examples are endless. I

am not trying to paint a rosy picture. As I write this, I know of too many ordinary individuals who suffer severe prejudice, overtly and not-so-overtly — people who are paying with their lives or with their well being. Any toll, even one case of human suffering, is too much. But as the saying goes, "Rome was not built in a year" — and this is even more true when it comes to uprooting deep social prejudices that have dominated the Western consciousness since it first encountered the Other.

Yet, emerging from the tears and anguish, I feel we have become more determined and more committed to bringing our society faster to the "promised land" of social justice to all.

Having said that, I would like to focus on the challenge and maybe the opportunity that this tragedy has opened to us.

I know of only one way to communicate about these kinds of subjects — to share my personal thoughts and my experiences. I happen to be an Israeli, who is not only familiar with living under the constant threat of terrorism, but with the challenge of building a just and democratic society in a setting that shares many characteristics with the United States. Israel is struggling, from its inception, to be a democracy based on foundations of equality and justice. Like the United States, Israel is a society of immigrants, a mosaic of groups very different and many times opposing each other: religious and secular, rich and poor, privileged and deprived, and many other relevant oppositions and tensions.

Moreover, Israel for many years had to chose between the concept of the "melting pot" and the concept of the "salad bowl." In my youth, in the '60s, every Israeli was under pressure to adopt a homogenous Israeli image. Everything Israeli was good; everything from outside, everything that came from exile (the diaspora), for example, was bad, and had to be given away. The old gave way to the new. Language, tradition, even traditional

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... protect your interest while committed to the minimum damage to others.

# Lucky us - A high school student was available to help with fuel cell research

by Susan Trulove, Multicultural Fellow

A program designed to help high school students with disabilities who are interested in science and technology fields has resulted in a database that will be a resource for researchers worldwide.

Niklas Olson, a junior this year at Blacksburg High School, applied for a position with the High School/High Tech program after his mother saw a newsletter that accompanied his report card. "I was interested because I would be paid hourly."

As a result, he spent the summer working for the Material Response Group (MRG), researching the life expectancy of different types of fuels cells and developed a web site, "Durability Online," that allows people to learn about the durability of different fuel cell systems. It is the first time the information has been pulled together and made available in one place.

How did Niklas land the job? "Just luck," he says. "Dr. Ken Reifsnider noticed that the companies I applied for had backed out. So he offered me a job."

Reifsnider, who holds the Alexander Giacco Chair in engineering science and

mechanics and is a member of the MRG, says he was the one who was lucky. "Niklas has done a good job and been an inspiration to the Virginia Tech students in the group. As an employer, I couldn't be more pleased."

A lot of people are doing a lot of research on fuel cells, Reifsnider explains. "We're learning how to make them, and how to make them better. We need to know how long they last. No one had collected that information for the different materials and different kinds of fuel cells. The web site will allow people to see what has been learned."

Niklas, who has a strong background in science and is particularly interested in physics, began in mid June to gather data from researchers worldwide who have studied fuel cell durability. He found research in Japan and Europe, "and anything I could find" and assembled it in one place for the first time.

"I learned a lot about fuel cells," he says. "I didn't even know they existed, although I knew about hybrid cars."

Now he can tell you about innovative fuel cell projects, such as the fuel-cell powered building in Times Square. "If the lights go out in New York, there

will be one building with lights still burning."

Niklas' last day was Aug. 17, but he comes in occasionally to maintain the Durability Online site.

His other interests are karate, which has been doing since he was 8. He's 17 now. He's also interested in photography.

Reifsnider said he learned about the HS/HT program from attending an award ceremony. "They had people talk about what they'd done. It's a great opportunity to help people with an interest in math and physics. And, considering the expertise the high school students bring with them, it's a bargain."

John V. Wright Jr., meteorologist-in-charge at the Weather Forecast Office, located on Forecast Drive at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center (CRC), and Joe Meredith, CRC director, are board members and responsible for starting the HS/HT program locally. Martha Reifsnider, assistant dean of the Graduate School at Virginia Tech, has also recently joined the HS/HT governing board. Nancy Landes coordinates the

program for Montgomery County Schools.

HS/HT is a year-around program. Niklas

is a member because he has attention deficit disorder (ADD). The students meet regularly throughout the year, work in the summer to get some experience with high tech type of jobs, participate in other activities geared toward getting them into college, and take field trips.

"We are planning three field trips this year: NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in November, NASA's Wallops Island Facility in February, and "Space Congress" at Cape Canaveral in May," says Wright.

Virginia Tech hopes to work with this program in conjunction with the College Bound program, a collaborative project run by Virginia Reilly and Sheridan Parker of the Equal Opportunity Office, Jane Warner and Susan Angle in the Dean of Students Office, and with Jeananne Dixon at New River Community College and Maureen Ware at Radford University. The HS/HT and College Bound Program are also aligning with the Minority Academic Opportunities Program coordinated by Larry Moore and Randy Grayson.

"There will be more interaction between Virginia Tech and the students this year," says Wright. "There is a possibility that collegiate involvement may expand to include Radford University and New River Community College. We currently have six high schools participating and that number could increase. We had 27 students in the program last year. The HS/HT board is asking that up to 40 students be identified for the 2001-2002 school year."

Individuals interested in sponsoring a student should contact Wright or Meredith. Wright can be reached at 552-0084 for voice mail, 552-1041 ext. 222 or e-mail [John.Wright@noaa.gov](mailto:John.Wright@noaa.gov). Reach Meredith at 961-3600 or e-mail [joe.meredith@vtcrc.com](mailto:joe.meredith@vtcrc.com).

**'It's a great opportunity to help ... And considering the expertise the high school students bring with them, it's a bargain.'**



High School/High Tech students are a resource for Virginia Tech researchers. Here, Niklas Olson shows Ken Reifsnider the site he developed to consolidate the results of research worldwide on the durability of different fuel cell systems. This year's program will have even more students available for internships, but even more institutions want them.

Photo by Rick Griffith

## Reflections...

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family names, were rendered obsolete. When my family emigrated to Israel in 1957, it was "the right thing to do" to change our non-Hebraic last name to a Hebrew one. In the last 20 years, and this I regard as a sign of maturity, this attitude was criticized, and the cohesive and coercive picture of a "homogenous Israel" changed rapidly, giving way to a more inclusive and open society. Of course, there is still much to be done in this direction.

Yet, the most difficult challenge inflicted on Israel, as a state and as a society, is to maintain and protect its democratic principles and values while facing an enemy from outside and from within. How do you respect and protect diversity in spite of a clear and present danger?

Let me address the most urgent and painful issue of all — profiling. Profiling is especially problematic given the connotations attached to it with regard to racial profiling, which I could not be more vocal in rejecting, tout court. Still, the profiling of those who are attacking our societies is not of our making. It is a fact that all those who participated in the September attacks on the United States were young Arab males, most of them students, most of them from Saudi Arabia. It would be imprudent, to say the least, to ignore these facts and to overlook them when someone fitting these characteristics is, for example, boarding a plane. Yet, as long as it is not proven otherwise, John Stewart Mill's principle still holds sway: "that the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually and collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection." Some have referred to democracies that embrace this principle as "Protective Democracies."

But, you might say, this is nice in theory, but how can you apply it in practice. For that I suggest the practical principle of a "demarkation line." This principle holds that since there is no way to avoid absolutely any negative consequence to your action, you will do everything necessary to protect your interest while committed to the minimum damage to others. This means that in any given time, the yard stick for any action — and profiling is one of them — is that it is a necessary evil, inflicted because of "self-protection," and implemented while doing the least harm possible.

The devil is in the implementation of these principles. And it is as true in Israel as it is in the United State. For example the security system in the Israeli airline EL-Al, screens every one, and interviews every one. Only after screening the relevant data of every individual, is a further interrogation considered. Is it a perfect system? Definitely no. But given the constraints of our particular reality, and given our extreme sensitivity to treating human beings with dignity, we can live in peace knowing we did what had to be done.

## About 'The Conductor'

*The Conductor* is produced twice during the fall and twice during the spring semesters by the Multicultural Fellows and is published by the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

All members of the university community are invited to contribute. Please submit articles to the editorial board at [multicultural@vt.edu](mailto:multicultural@vt.edu). Back issues are online at [www.multicultural.vt.edu/conductor.html](http://www.multicultural.vt.edu/conductor.html).

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The deadline for the next issue is February 15.

# Researchers explore history of slave cemetery at Reynolds Homestead

by Joanne C. McNeal, director,

Reynolds Homestead, [jcmcneal@vt.edu](mailto:jcmcneal@vt.edu)

What name do we give a cemetery with 61 graves, when only five are marked with names? How do we find out who is buried there?

This cemetery is part of the historic Reynolds Homestead on 717 acres, located in Critz, Va. The historic house and outbuildings were restored by the Reynolds family in 1970 and entrusted to the care of Virginia Tech, with management shared between the Colleges of Natural Resources and Arts and Sciences for different parts of the property.

Many local people have visited the historic house and outbuildings for tours, or at Victorian Christmas or Spring Frolic. But few people know there are two cemeteries here. One is a formal Reynolds Family Cemetery close to the old house, with large headstones dating back to 1836, within a spiked iron fence. The other cemetery, unmarked and located across a field from the historic house, is presumed to be where former slaves and their descendants were buried. It has sunken indentations with rough stones marking the head and foot of most graves. It was rustically fenced 30 years ago to keep it from further logging activity, and trees have grown up within it.

One day, a lady came into the continuing education center office and asked, "Do you have a slave cemetery here? I think I might be related to some of the folks who are buried there."

We walked over to the cemetery and reverently walked across to the marked graves. The woman was obviously moved to see the names on the graves, and she talked softly about her relatives.

Such a visit to the 'slave cemetery' can be very moving. It seems quite spiritual — this beautiful but humble place with a distant view at the big house across a field. It is very different from the family cemetery with its large marker stones. I felt overwhelmed by the juxtaposition of the two cemeteries — both hold the remains of human beings that lived and worked here, and they both require respect.

Only five graves in the 'slave cemetery' are marked with names. The last person buried there in 1958, Valle Penn, was of African-American descent and evidently lived in the kitchen building for an undetermined number of years before he died. Who was he? Who were the other 60 people buried there? How can we find out who they were?

Virginia Tech has been entrusted with caring for this former slave-holding plantation. The historic six-room brick house was built in 1843 by Hardin Reynolds.

## Who were the other 60 people buried here? How can we find out who they were?

Once called the Rock Spring Plantation, it is now a National Historic Landmark. Sixteen children were born here — R.J. Reynolds among them, and some of the original furniture remains. Just five outbuildings still stand — a log granary, a three-floor brick kitchen, a log ice house, a brick milk house, and a tobacco barn. Hardin Reynolds owned as many as 88 slaves.

The historic part of the property, with a modern continuing education center, was endowed by the Reynolds family to serve as a cultural and educational resource for the region, the state, and the nation. It is managed by the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, through the Virginia Tech Foundation, and has a staff of three full-time and two part-time people plus weekend guides. The surrounding 710 acres are managed by the College of Natural Resources and used for forestry research.

A site evaluation of the Reynolds Homestead was completed in December 2000 by Leni Sorenson, who has evaluated slave quarters at Williamsburg and Jamestown. Now an instructor at Virginia Tech, Sorenson is completing her doctoral dissertation on antebellum slavery in Richmond. She said of the Homestead site, "The Reynolds Homestead has the opportunity of creating an exciting and compelling story of African American life in the late antebellum on a rural plantation."

So, there is an exciting new opportunity to provide a glimpse into a part of African American history right here in Patrick County. The Homestead applied for several grants and the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities provided \$3,000 to begin work last spring. The slave cemetery was mapped by archeologists Michael Barber and Michael Madden in August of 2001. They found, measured, and mapped 61 graves, many of them rather small. Why are some oval and others square? The archeologists were excited by what they found here at this "pristine and unspoiled spot."

A Community Advisory Committee of concerned African Americans has been formed to provide direction for the research.

The committee agreed on a name -- Rock Spring Plantation Cemetery of Slaves and Descendants. The Virginia Tech sign shop is preparing a sign, which will also include the archeologist's map. We will write an information brochure about the cemetery and hold a re-dedication service next spring for those buried here.

The work on the 'slave cemetery' is also the start of a community research project to discover as much as possible about what life was like for slaves 150 years ago. We are looking for a graduate research student to take on this project as an internship.

Reynolds family members have begun to find out about their ancestors. They gave us a photo of Kitty Reynolds, born 1839, who worked as a midwife and slave on the plantation, and who is credited by Hardin Reynolds with saving his life. She is the great great great grandmother of attorney Kimble Reynolds Jr., a VT graduate and president of his class, who is now practicing in Martinsville.

The Community Advisory Committee members are looking for information about the 'slave cemetery' and about anyone who might be buried there. They are asking people to check their bibles and family papers to see if there's any mention of relatives buried there. If any such information is found, please call me at the Reynolds Homestead, 276-694-7181.

The Historic house is open for tours through the winter by appointment, and weekend tour guides will again be on site as of May 1, 2002. However, the grounds are always open and visitors are welcome to respectfully visit the outbuildings and cemeteries of this regional legacy and treasure. The Reynolds Homestead is located a few miles north of Hwy 58 between Martinsville and Stuart. Watch for brown signs to direct you there.

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or remain silent during this time. On September 13, the student leaders of the international organizations came together to compose a letter to the Virginia Tech community. They used diplomacy and understanding to put aside political and religious differences and compose a letter stressing the world nature of this tragedy and encouraging VT to remain a united community.

As time has moved forward, events around the world affect each of us in different ways. The international students face many difficult decisions about their futures, the immigration risks associated with travel, and their own responses to the continuing world events. These students, many of whom have had unpleasant experiences over these last two months, have chosen to deal with maturity and diplomacy, setting an example for people around the world.

## Letter

# Religious Studies Program offers resources

*To the Editors,*

The Religious Studies Program at Virginia Tech offers resources that relate directly to the present crisis. We share with others deep sorrow at the loss of life in the recent attacks. We also share with others the hope that in our response to these events we will not lose our appreciation for the rich cultural and religious diversity that have become such an important part of our national heritage.

Our teaching and research engage

the issues of traditions, conflict, and identity that presently hold international attention. We have courses on major religious traditions (including Islam and Christianity), religious ethics, modernity, violence, women and religion, religion in America, the Bible, and other topics. We reside in the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies and offer a minor that can be part of an interdisciplinary major or any other undergraduate program. This year we are co-sponsoring a speaker series, "Crossing Boundaries," that addresses issues of religious diversity in the premodern world.

**Our teaching and research engage the issues of traditions, conflict, and identity that presently hold international attention.**

The subject of jihad, for instance, has received considerable attention recently. The Qur'an stipulates the following: "Fight for the sake of God those that fight against you, but do not attack them first. God does not love the aggressors" (Sura 2:190). The task that we face is to understand how such passages are interpreted by specific people for specific political agendas and to

explore the possibilities of thinking against interpretations that can wreak such havoc and misery. For a survey of

historical understandings of jihad in Islam, see Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Princeton, 1996).

Religious Studies is one of several academic programs and organizations at Virginia Tech that can serve as a resource for accurate knowledge and much-needed dialogue on the current crisis. After all, that's what a university is all about.

For further information, see the Religious Studies Program Web site at: [www.cis.vt.edu/rel](http://www.cis.vt.edu/rel).

*The Religious Studies Program Faculty  
Center for Interdisciplinary Studies*

## How can we make the university a more welcoming community for all?



Virginia Tech has put a lot of effort into improving diversity on campus in terms of race, culture, and ethnicity. I applaud these efforts, hope they will continue, and certainly know we still have a long way to go before a diverse campus climate is more automatic – not requiring external influence. However, if part of our mission is to increase underrepresented groups *and* to create a climate that is welcoming to **ALL** students, faculty members, and staff, I think we have quite a ways to go.

I'd like to see us become more aware of and sensitive to the disparity still present among several groups in our university community. The number of women (of any color) in leadership and administrative positions is still very small. The female voice is seldom heard; their perspective seldom modeled for younger students and professionals at Tech. I wonder if we might benefit more from the talent, experience, and intelligence of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender members of our community if they were invited to be more visible? It's hard to recruit and retain great leaders, thinkers, and doers if they have to go underground once they get here.

I worry that with our sights set on becoming a top 30 research institution, our undergraduate population will be slighted – especially if you are an "unfocused" 18, 19, or 20 year old, which is probably the majority of students here. Granted, I'm biased because I provide academic advising for students who do not have clear academic and career goals or who change their academic and career goals once they discover more about themselves and what it will take to reach those goals. But, I wonder how inclusive and welcoming we are or can be if we continue to neglect this part of our population?

Finally, it is sad and frustrating to witness the class system in which we are so entrenched here at Tech. Of course, I know this is primarily a "Richmond problem" and indicative of a much greater social problem -- one that trickles down to Virginia Tech and leaves us somewhat powerless. Nonetheless, for us to *truly* be a more welcoming community for all, we will have to address and improve upon the disparity in income, benefits, and assigned value between our classified staff, many administrative and professional faculty members (excluding presidents, VPs, provosts, and the like), and the teaching and research faculty members on this campus. The inequities are obvious and significant and the climate, I'm afraid, is more antagonistic than it is hospitable.

So, if I were queen, these are some of the ways I would want to help create a more diverse and welcoming university community.

Kelly L. Cottrell  
Academic Advisor



It is the responsibility of all VT students, faculty members, and staff to make the campus community welcoming and comfortable for all. Through the

development of the University Diversity Plan, our administration has demonstrated a commitment to enhancing the campus climate. It is incumbent upon the administration to put the plan into action by 1) inviting more students, faculty members, and staff who are underrepresented in higher education into the VT family; 2) acknowledging and celebrating the individual and group distinctions that are inherent in a true multicultural environment, and 3) offering sure and swift responses to actions and policies that counter Virginia Tech's Diversity Plan.

Karen Eley Sanders, director  
Center for Academic Enrichment & Excellence



You asked, what could the university do to make Virginia Tech a more welcoming environment. I suppose there are policies, procedures, and programs the university could implement

that might address environmental issues. But the university is an institution and institutions don't create environments – people do. Policies and procedures do not produce a sense of comfort – people do. It is the people at Virginia Tech who can make the university more welcoming and I believe they can do so by taking three basic steps. First, ask those who are new to our community how they are doing. Second, listen to their concerns. Finally, address those concerns. Often, these simple steps can make a person feel welcome. Making the campus more welcoming for one person starts us on a path to make it more welcoming for all.

Joan Hirt, associate professor  
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies



I believe the institution does a great job of trying to make the environment a comfortable place for minority students. It is my belief that the other efforts need to come from the hearts of individuals. Most individuals around campus do what they need to do to make the environment a comfortable place for minorities because it is politically the "right" thing to do, not because it is in their heart.

Sabrina Y. Armour, student

## Diversity Moments: How we can educate ourselves all year

by Barbara Pendergrass,  
Dean of Students

Over the years, the tradition of employing experts to provide diversity education has been sanctioned as a necessary practice. This traditional way of providing diversity education makes it inaccessible to many departments. For those departments with the luxury of resources, it is often viewed as an occasional event that happens every two or three years. Even where resources might be available, a diversity education consultant is rarely brought in every year due to competing needs. Thus, at best, most departments get a dosage of diversity every other year or so. Of course, every three years is better than no education at all.



Administrators seeking diversity education for their staff need to look no further. They no longer need to be hindered by the limitations of their budgets. They don't need to embark upon a tedious search to find the right outside expert. They don't need to risk creating discord in their staff who might be resistant to being required to attend a separate meeting devoted to "that" topic. Administrators simply need to draw upon staff members' expertise. Employees are more than capable of educating each other on matters of diversity. In essence, they only need the permission and structure to do so.

Collectively, staff in most departments cover many aspects of diversity and each understands perhaps a

different aspect of diversity. Some have awareness of differences related to race, gender, age, accent, geography, religion, health, physical characteristics, etc. The topics they can share with each other are endless. Their personal experiences, coupled with their interests, will prove to be a fertile ground for discussion. Providing the opportunity for all members of a department to provide leadership for diversity education conveys that diversity is natural. It communicates that it is a phenomenon that belongs to all of us and is shaped by what we bring to the table.

Under the leadership of Associate Dean Tom Brown, director of staff development for the Dean of Students Office, "Diversity Moments" has been adopted as a permanent fixture of the agenda of our weekly staff development meetings. A sign-up sheet is circulated to allow everyone an opportunity to sign up for "Diversity Moment." Staff members who sign-up assume responsibility for facilitating a "mini-discussion" or sharing a perspective on a specific area of diversity. The topic category is open and determined completely by the individual's interests. Typically the diversity moments are between one and five minutes. Topics that require more than five minutes are presented in two or three sessions. Topics to date have varied but have been equally powerful. Examples of topics that have been shared are:

- How to support the caregiver of an Alzheimer's patient
- Accents and hiring practices
- An ethnographic profile of a bully
- Doctoring publication to include racial diversity: An ethical dilemma or practical solution
- The danger with generalizing and stereotyping

- The Indian Mascot controversy
- The inherent danger of only being concerned about your own kind

## University community invited to Fifth Annual Diversity Summit

by Barbara Pendergrass, Dean of Students

The Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Multicultural Affairs will hold the Fifth Annual Diversity Summit Jan. 21, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. in Squires Commonwealth Ballroom. The event, coordinated by the Dean of Students Office, provides us an opportunity to reflect on our progress toward becoming a more inclusive and welcoming community. Initiated to observe Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, in four years, the Summit has heightened our awareness of various communities by listening to the voices of our students, staff, and the faculty.

Once again, students, staff, and faculty members are invited to participate by signing up as a community (e.g., organization, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, student leaders, Greeks, cadets, etc.) — which requires at least six people, by signing up to sit with a particular community, or by agreeing to be assigned by program administrators.

For a sign-up form, contact Judy Whitenack in the Dean of Students Office, 152 Henderson Hall – 0255, 231-3787 or TDD 231-8718, before January 15.