

WAVES

Dr. Tony Atwater, President • A Semi-Monthly Newsletter for Faculty, Staff, Alumni and Friends of Norfolk State University • October 2011

Achieving Excellence...Success Beyond Measure

President Atwater's Initiatives for the Hampton Roads Region

Dear NSU Family,

Recently, I created two educational initiatives that will soon place Norfolk State University in an advanced academic position. In my opinion, the **Spartan Crusade for Academic Success (SCAS)** and the **Academic Excellence, Partnerships, Institutional Advancement and Enrollment (APIE)** programs will undergird NSU's historic mission of access and affordability as well as impact and build a stronger Hampton Roads and Virginia.

Because I want you to discuss these initiatives with community members and friends, I'm providing you with a snapshot of both. I will keep you updated on these as well as other programs in upcoming issues of *Making Waves*.

NSU's historic mission of access and affordability continues to be a vital and significant priority. This mission is beset by many challenges including student financial difficulties and lack of college preparedness. If President Barack Obama's "Race to the Top" goals for postsecondary education are to be achieved, increased college graduation rates will be required at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. As one of the largest HBCUs in the U.S., Norfolk State University is well positioned to assume a leadership role in advancing educational attainment in the Hampton Roads region and engaging fellow HBCUs in this national imperative.

Summary of Program Objectives:

SCAS will be a multifaceted strategic initiative to promote educational success and college preparedness at elementary, middle grades and high school levels. To effectively address the relatively low, postsecondary educational attainment challenge, NSU proposes a major institutional initiative involving its faculty, students, the School of Education, other academic units and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs to strategically promote academic success for low-income and minority students at elementary, middle grades and high school levels in the Hampton Roads region.

This initiative, the Spartan Crusade for Academic Success, will involve strategic alliances with regional school districts, high schools and community colleges and other external partners. SCAS will deploy multiple interventions at various levels of student development (K-16). A five-year funding cycle is proposed to effectively implement and monitor the impact of SCAS, which will be envisioned as a sustained NSU initiative and collaborative beyond the funding cycle. In addition, SCAS will provide enhanced academic support programs for NSU students to significantly increase student retention and student graduation rates. As we go to press with this publication, I am proud to announce that soon Booker T. Washington High School will sign on as NSU's first SCAS-partner school.

My second initiative is **APIE**.

Academic Excellence

- Increase the academic quality of the curriculum throughout the University
- Strengthen and expand NSU's program mix and on-line learning instructional offerings
- Strengthen and further develop the graduate program with a focus on graduate-professional programs
- Promote faculty and student research and scholarship
- Facilitate and increase applied research and technology transfer

Partnerships

- Increase NSU's role in regional, state and national economic development partnerships
- Leverage NSU's strengths in STEM and applied research to support state employment and economic development
- Enhance and promote alumni programs

and partnerships in support of NSU's fiscal health and vitality

- Increase and promote collaborative efforts with military partners in the Hampton Roads region
- Strengthen and increase partnerships with regional community colleges and high schools
- Increase and promote partnerships in the creative arts to enhance cultural life in the region

Institutional Advancement (External Support)

- Strengthen NSU's institutional profile and brand regionally, statewide and nationally
- Strategically promote NSU's major academic strengths and centers of excellence

- Strengthen and increase fundraising and external support to sustain and increase academic excellence
- Promote alumni engagement and alumni initiatives to increase external support for NSU

Enrollment

- Manage strategic enrollment growth commensurate to NSU's resource capabilities
- Strengthen and increase student retention and student graduation rates
- Facilitate strategic growth of graduate students enrolled at NSU
- Promote enrollment of adult learners and community college students at NSU



APIE

Sincerely,
Tony Atwater, Ph.D.
President

Cleanroom Offers Cutting-Edge Research and Hands-On Experience

By Regina Lightfoot, Office of Communications and Marketing

At Norfolk State University, there is a \$6.5 million facility where devices with features smaller than the dimensions of a human hair are being created. The Micro- and Nano-technology Center is a 6,000 square-foot cleanroom located in the Marie V. McDemmond Center for Applied Research. It has the capability to create and bring new products to the marketplace, give NSU graduates an edge in the work world and expand

the research capabilities in the Hampton Roads region.

"The cleanroom allows our faculty and students access to state-of-the-art equipment in an environment where they can make devices on the micro- and nano-scale," says Frances Williams, associate professor of engineering. "Having this facility allows our students to get advanced learning in emerging fields such as microelectronics and optoelectronics."



Frances Williams, associate professor of engineering, serves as the team coordinator for the state-of-the-art research-grade cleanroom facility.

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Welcome to the inaugural issue of President Tony Atwater's new semi-monthly newsletter, *Making Waves*. This newsletter has been created with you—our NSU family—in mind! As you know, NSU is one of the largest HBCUs in the nation. Our STEM initiatives are cutting edge, our nursing program continues to graduate medical experts who serve throughout the country, and our students go on to positively impact the world. This University is accustomed to *Making Waves!*

Each issue of this publication will contain news and information to keep you updated and informed. If you have a story to tell, please submit it to marketing@nsu.edu. We would love to tell it first! We encourage your feedback and input, so be sure to let us know what you think.

New Lyceum Series

The Honors College and the Honors College Discipline-Specific Honors Programs presented several speakers as part of the annual New Lyceum Series for fall semester 2011. These special events were free and open to both the NSU family and the public.



Rose Mapendo, a survivor of genocidal violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, shared her story of survival, forgiveness and advocacy. Mapendo, (center) poses with her daughter Nangabire (behind her), students and Tim and Daphne Reid (far left) who helped sponsor her visit to NSU.



Michelle Alexander, (right) lawyer and author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, spoke to the campus about the impact of Black men's high rates of imprisonment on American society. Here Alexander talks to a guest who attended her speech.



Spike Lee, actor, director and producer, talked to students about the importance of education.

Freshman Reader Initiative to Build a Sense of Community



The freshman reading program provides first-year students with a shared academic experience and an introduction to the University's academic expectations.

You are what you read, and Spartans will soon be shaped by some great common readings. From the moment new freshmen step on the Norfolk State University campus, they will become part of an academic community of critical thinkers and lifelong learners. NSU President Tony Atwater is initiating a university-wide freshman reading program in which first-year students read a specific book (or books) the summer before they enter NSU and then discuss intellectual content and recurring themes after they arrive.

While freshman reading programs differ at each college, they typically provide first-year students a shared academic experience and an introduction to the University's academic expectations. It is an early spark meant to keep students intellectually engaged for their whole college career. Participating in these types of reading programs helps to strengthen oral and written communication skills, and to enhance critical thinking, the focus of NSU's Quality Enhancement Project (QEP).

The NSU freshman reading selection has not been determined yet. Page Laws, dean of the NSU Honors College, said that generally the selected book is an acknowledged classic of world literature or a classic-in-the-making that deals with contemporary issues. Laws is spearheading the freshman reading program, which she believes is a great concept. Regardless of the theme, scholars agree that the book selected should connect with a large number of students and set them on a course of lifelong learning.

Throughout the academic year, faculty will be encouraged to incorporate the book into freshman classes. The students will also participate in events and activities related to the book, including faculty-led discussions, lectures and presentations from the author, field trips and online community discussions. ▲

Cleanroom

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Williams explains that the facility can produce devices such as micro sensors, neural probes and micro-electromechanical systems (MEMS). Additionally, the cleanroom is also open to researchers throughout Hampton Roads at other universities, government agencies and private companies. "In making it a user facility, we are able to expose a greater audience to what we do at



Those who work in the \$6.5 million cleanroom must wear protective gear to prevent particles from possibly destroying the miniscule devices that are being created.

Norfolk State," she says. "We're providing researchers in the region access to a facility that they wouldn't otherwise have access to."

Because the devices being made in the cleanroom are so small, they must be protected from dust, hair and the oil on fingers. To ensure that foreign particles don't invade the space, those who work in the facility are covered in white suits from head to toe. Other protective measures include using positive pressure and filtering the air that circulates in the cleanroom.

The Class 100/Class 1000 facility is the only full-scale cleanroom at a Historically Black College or University (HBCU). For NSU students, Courtney

Smith and Doyle Baker, that's a huge advantage. "Being able to go into the cleanroom and apply the theory you are learning gives you a fuller understanding and it's deeper than what you would learn in a textbook," says Smith. Baker sees his cleanroom experience as providing him an advantage with future employers. "Working in the cleanroom helps provide an individual that goes to an HBCU the resources to compete with graduates from a higher profile school," says Baker. "We may be from a smaller school, but companies that have cleanrooms won't have to train us because we already have the experience." ▲

MAKING WAVES

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NSU Receives \$50,000 Models of Success Grant

By Regina Lightfoot, Office of Communications and Marketing

Two NSU programs have been recognized for their successful practices. The Academy for Collegiate Excellence and Student Success Summer Bridge and Faculty Communities of Inquiry programs recently were awarded a \$50,000 grant under the Models of Success program, which helps students finish their degrees at minority serving institutions. The two programs will use the money to expand their current levels of operation.

The grant was awarded by the Lumina Foundation for Education, USA Funds and the Kresge Foundation with the expectation that these programs can be used for retention and achievement at comparable universities. Of the 60 institutions that submitted competitive proposals, NSU was the only public Historically Black College or University awarded funding.

The summer bridge program, administered by First Year Experience/ACCESS, helps academically challenged students admitted to



Models of Success Grant—Leroy Hamilton, executive director of First-Year Experience and ACCESS, talks with students.

Norfolk State make the transition from high school to college. The four-week program introduces first-year students to the expectations and rigors of college academics. Sophomore Brittney White said the program prepared her

for the amount of course work that college requires and allowed her to begin her freshman year with a high grade point average. "It also helped me learn different study skills that I applied to each course during my freshman year and will apply to all of my classes now and in the future," she said.

Since 2007, participants have tripled, going from 38 students to 106 in 2011. Additionally, nearly 100 percent of the summer bridge students enroll in Norfolk State in the fall semester with three-quarters of them going on to enroll in the spring term. From 2007 through 2010, approximately 80 percent of the participants returned to NSU for their second year.

"We have a group of faculty and staff that are committed to the success of this program, which helps to foster an environment that motivates and inspires all students to achieve academic success," said Leroy Hamilton, executive director of First-Year Experience/ACCESS. "Additionally,

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Nursing Program Meets the Challenges of Today

By Misti Goodson, Office of Communications and Marketing

The Department of Nursing and Allied Health is continuing to expand upon Norfolk State University's tradition of producing competent and caring nurses. For more than 55 years, Norfolk State has provided opportunities for women and men to enter the healthcare profession. Today, under the leadership of Bennie Marshall, chair of the Department of Nursing and Allied Health, several initiatives have been put into place that strengthen student success.

These initiatives include the Nursing Success Institute, the Nursing and Allied Health Leadership Institute and a University-wide advisory group. The Nursing Success Institute, an orientation program started three years ago, provides programming in test taking, critical thinking, learning strategies, study skills, assessments and math.

Initiated in summer 2011, the Nursing and Allied Health Leadership Institute is a program designed to foster leadership skills in nursing and allied health students. The University-wide advisory group, which is comprised of representatives from key areas has also been established to ensure a holistic approach to leadership development. A host of Nursing Success Seminars led by faculty members and dynamic speakers are also regularly held to reinforce select nursing topics and ensure student success.

Interest in the nursing program continues to grow. Marshall, who has chaired Nursing since 2003, has seen an exponential increase in the number of students who desire to become nurses and the number of faculty who have doctoral degrees, which positions the department to expand its BSN program and plan for a master's degree program.

This semester, 750 NSU students have expressed an interest in the University's highly competitive associate and bachelor's programs. Admitted students have the opportunity to pursue three bachelor degree tracks



NSU works to ensure that nursing students have a variety of learning experiences.

including a second degree for individuals with non-nursing degrees; a licensed practical nurse (LPN) to bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) and the registered nurse to bachelor of science in nursing for individuals who have earned an associate degree or diploma in nursing. In addition, approximately 100 students are admitted to the associate degree in nursing (ASN) program each year. This includes persons admitted to the generic associate degree track as well as students admitted to the LPN to associate degree track.

"This fall, we have about 250 students in the ASN program and 120 students actively enrolled in the BSN programs," said Marshall. "Students choose our accredited nursing program because it is a program of opportunity that facilitates their success."

As the program moves forward, Marshall is making sure that the goals of the nursing program are aligned with the recommendations of the 2010 Institute of Medicine of the National Academies' Future of Nursing Report that focuses on nursing education. The report recommends that the leadership of schools of nursing

work to increase the diversity of the nursing workforce; increase the percentage of nurses who have B.S. degrees in nursing; increase the number of nurses with doctoral degrees and ensure that nurses engage in lifelong learning. "We are actively doing all of these things," said Marshall. "Of the nursing programs in Virginia, NSU has one of the most diverse faculty, staff and student populations. We are positioned to make our good program even greater."

The department strives to continue graduating nurses who are making a difference by "leading change and advancing health," while actively reducing health disparities among vulnerable populations. NSU's nursing program has many accomplishments to tout. In Hampton Roads, nursing alumni serve in key leadership positions in management, entrepreneurship, healthcare, and academia. "Our students are able to see that our graduates excel, advance, and assume positions in leadership," said Marshall. "They know they will graduate with requisite competencies for the workforce, confidence to become advocates for change, and the desire to give back." ▲

NSU Students Learn Cross-Cultural Lessons While Studying in Cuba

By *Misti Goodson*, Office of Communications and Marketing

For many people of color, traveling abroad is a thought that has never crossed their minds or often times a dream deferred. For 13 Norfolk State University students, this summer, the dream of studying abroad became a reality. They took classes and lived in student dormitories at the Casa de Las Americas, a prestigious intellectual and cultural institution, in Havana, Cuba.

"I heard a lot of negative things about Cuba," said Tyneshia Stanton, a 21-year-old NSU English and foreign languages major with a concentration in Spanish. "I wanted to visit the Caribbean and experience Cuba for myself."

For decades, obtaining an academic license to travel from the United States to Cuba was limited. "Norfolk State University became the first Historically Black College or University to gain a license from the U.S. Department of Treasury to sponsor a study abroad program in Cuba and one of the few institutions to qualify," said William Alexander, professor of history and director of international programs at NSU. "What an amazing opportunity for our students," he added.

Led by Geoffroy de Laforcade, an associate professor of history and academic coordinator of international programs at NSU, students took five, three-credit hour classes in

Spanish, the history of Cuba, religions in Cuba, visual and performing arts and Afro-Cuban identity and the musical heritage and transnational dialogues of Cuba. During the first four weeks of instruction, de Laforcade helped translate the lectures for the students. Shortly after, NSU students quickly caught on to the classes, which were

“ I navigated the city like I was a Cuban. I walked a lot of places, visited cafés, night clubs and parks.

– Tyneshia Stanton ”

taught in Spanish by Cuban professors and by Claudia Kaiser-Lenoir, a guest professor emeritus from Tufts University and international programs consultant who contributed her expertise and insights to the study of Cuban history, institutions, social processes, policies and reforms from 1959 to the present.

In addition to their classroom experiences, students were granted clearance to participate in the academic



Thirteen Norfolk State students studied in Cuba during the summer.

portion of an international Caribbean festival in Santiago, and visit and confer with community activists, official Cuban representatives and ordinary citizens.

"I navigated the city like I was a Cuban. I walked a lot of places, visited cafés, night clubs and parks," said Stanton. "It was pretty simple."

By the close of the trip, de Laforcade noticed that the students had significantly improved their Spanish language skills; forged a deeper connection to the studies of the African diaspora; developed personal, academic and professional connections; and walked away with an unforgettable cross-cultural experience.

"Educationally, I learned how to speak Spanish more fluently and learned some slang. I also learned that Cuban religion, culture, history and art are all interconnected," said Stanton. "Personally, I learned to value the things that I have and not to take things for granted."

The trip was such a success that Casa de Las Americas has reserved a spot for NSU to participate in a four-to five-week program next summer. "We hope to use this experience to institutionalize this and other flagship programs that will create exciting new international learning experiences for our students; sustain partnerships with Casa de Las Americas and other institutions in countries like Brazil and Senegal; and to work with the University to explore ways in which our privileged and pioneering relationship with Cuba can benefit the University at large," said de Laforcade. ▲



NSU students enjoy spending time with Cuban children.

Campus SNAPSHOTS



Bobby Scott Career Fair



Tony Atwater and Gov. Bob McDonnell discuss campus initiatives



President's Ice Cream Social



Student Services Center Ribbon Cutting



Light Rail Grand Opening



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Achieving Excellence...Success Beyond Measure

Models of Success Grant, *Continued from page 3*

we monitor the activities of the participants to ensure that each student is equipped with the necessary tools to achieve success.”

Expansion of summer bridge will consider making it a year-long program with faculty and peer mentoring as well as service to the extended community.

The second program receiving funding is NSU’s Faculty Communities of Inquiry, which is part of the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching, Learning, and Advising (CETLA).

The communities of inquiry engage five to 10 faculty and staff members in a collaborative environment for a year. During that time, they share ideas, pool intellectual resources, find solutions and develop innovative teaching methods that support student learning and development. The program encourages risk-taking when it

comes to engaging students in the classroom, yet it has specific expectations, intended outcomes and deliverables such as reflection papers by members and students. Originally started in the 2007-08 academic year, with four groups, the communities of inquiry have grown to 11 groups which focus on a range of areas that include active and collaborative learning, critical thinking assessment and scientific reasoning. “The educational paradigm has shifted completely,” said Enrique Zapatero, CETLA director. “We have moved from being teacher-centered to being student-centered with the implication that teaching is not enough if there is no learning that transpires out of this process.”

Sidika Nihal Colakoglu, a member of the service-learning community of inquiry, shared the feedback received from the Entrepreneur-in-Residence

class, which worked with a nonprofit organization. The idea for the creation of the course started to take shape within the service-learning community of inquiry. Students said they liked the hands-on experience. “I enjoyed the challenge of creating something from nothing,” said one student as part of their reflection on the class. The student continued, “I especially liked doing realistic research to create an actual feasibility analysis to help a nonprofit organization.”

Additional initiatives include documenting, capturing and sharing the impact that the communities have in the classroom and establishing an advisory council that includes business representatives to ensure alignment between academic and industry needs. ▲