If you attended the AGEP Fall Banquet on October 6, 2014, you might have left feeling quite inspired by our guest speakers, who are all Purdue Alumni and former AGEP Scholars.

Dr. Kermin Martinez-Hernandez is an Assistant Professor in Chemical Education at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, NY.

Dr. Nahyr Rovira-Figueroa is an Adjunct Lecturer at St. John Fisher College

Dr. Ayanna Jackson is an Associate Scientist at Dow AgroSciences, and

Dr. Kiana Johnson is a Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Department of Pediatrics at The University of Minnesota. She is also the Chair and Founder of the Childhood-onset Lupus Education and Research Foundation.

After a delicious meal, our speakers captivated us all by sharing inspirational stories of their experiences with struggles and success. Then, AGEP scholars and banquet guests, including Science Bound high school and undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty and staff, participated in a question and answer session. Later, Dean Smith presented the Book “GPS for Graduate School, Students Share Their Stories” which was followed by a ceremonial book signing.

AGEP wishes everyone a Happy Thanksgiving!
The COMPACT for Faculty Diversity
2014 Institute on Teaching and Mentoring

On October 30, 2014, five AGEP Scholars and four AGEP PhD graduates attended the COMPACT for Faculty Diversity Institute on Teaching and Mentoring in Atlanta, Georgia. Also attending was AGEP Program Director, Dr. Kathy Dixon and Vice Provost Christine Taylor to recruit for Post Doctoral and Faculty Positions at Purdue.

The COMPACT for Faculty Diversity is a partnership of regional, federal and foundation programs that focus on minority graduate education and faculty diversity. This partnership consists of the following programs: the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), the National Science Foundation (Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate-AGEP), the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and the Office of Federal TRIO Programs, the National Institute of Health (Bridges to the Professoriate NIGMS-MARC), the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and the United States Department of Education (Ronald E. McNair Program).

Purdue AGEP Scholars share their experiences below:

Janie McClurkin is working toward her PhD in Agricultural and Biological Engineering and is seeking a faculty position in these areas.

Janie said she enjoyed COMPACT. “it was an opportunity to have conversations with like minded individuals who have been where I have been as well as those who are where I want to be. I especially enjoyed the session A Conversation with the Elders. During this session there was a panel of seasoned PhD minorities who opened the floor to our questions and gave direction according to their wisdom and experiences.” This was Janie’s second time attending the Institute.

Tyrell Conner will earn his PhD in Sociology in May, 2015. His primary focus of study has been social justice issues. He is currently searching for a faculty position.

Tyrell took advantage of networking opportunities at COMPACT and the very helpful interviewing workshops. “It was great! I made some connections and met some people. I actually met a representative from one of the schools I interviewed for and she put in a good word for me with the dean of that college which was great. I also learned a good amount last weekend about the interview process, what questions to ask, and how to negotiate salaries. All of the information was much needed and came at the right time because I had my first set of interviews this past Tuesday and Wednesday and have more lined up in the next two weeks. Thus, it was very beneficial to me, especially at this point in my academic career.”
Now that the hard copy of the book is published, we have been actively promoting it at various campus events this Fall here at Purdue. In order to do this well, we designed a very attractive and portable table-top banner (see image) using images from the videos and the EPUB3 version of the book. We debuted it at the AGEP table at the Graduate Student Resource Fair in September, and since then it has also served us well at the Purdue Advisors’ Resource Fair, the annual Big Ten Grad-Expo, and at various out-of-state conferences that Dr. Dixon has attended. Purdue University Press also provided a large poster of the book’s cover which now graces one of the walls in the AGEP office when not in use at a display. This means that the book is getting a good deal of exposure to the graduate student community here at Purdue and around the country. Mary Maxine has also worked with three chapters and their videos with the current LS-AMP group and given a presentation on the book to the monthly Registrar and Advisor Gathering for graduate advisors in the STEM fields. The book was also featured at the recent Fall AGEP Banquet with ten of the authors, contributors, and editors in attendance for an honorary signing of our copies of the book. We are still waiting for the eBook and its EPUB3 to be released from the publisher, but anticipate these will be available soon.

Get your copy at Purdue University Press, Barnes and Noble or Amazon.com.
Dr. Chasity Love-Nkansah earned her PhD in Chemistry in May, 2014 and is now an Analytical Development Support Chemist for Kremers Urban Pharmaceutical. She was featured in the “175 Faces of Chemistry, Celebrating Diversity in Science” while at Purdue. See the profile here: http://www.rsc.org/diversity/175-faces/all-faces/chasity-love. She was awarded a two year grant from Purdue to start a tutoring program in the Community. The program called “Love your Neighborhood Tutoring/Mentoring Program” teaches STEM subjects to children of all ages.

Dr. Love-Nkansah recently commented on her experience with AGEP:

“One of my most memorable times (with AGEP) was the scavenger hunt. The AGEP scholars were split into teams and had to create challenges for different locations all over campus. I really enjoyed myself because it gave us a chance to work with other scholars we don’t typically interact with, learn new things about each other, and take a break from research.”

Dr. Love-Nkansah advises current scholars to never stop networking. “You never know where an opportunity will lie. Also, take advantage of community service activities because it will help you learn to work with a diverse group of people.”

Life After Graduate School
What’s next for AGEP PhD Graduates:

Dr. Kirt Durand earned his PhD in Analytical Chemistry in August, 2014 and is now employed at Syngenta Crop Protection as a Senior Analytical Scientist. Dr. Durand graduated with valedictorian honors from Paul Robeson High School in Chicago, IL. He later received his B.S in Chemistry at University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and participated in the SROP summer research program at Purdue before applying to Purdue Graduate School. While working on his doctorate at Purdue he served as a mentor and tutor to incoming graduate students and volunteered in many organizations including NOBCCHE, LSAMP and Science Bound.

“AGEP was very helpful with workshops and providing financial support to attend conferences,” he said. He also adds that his most memorable moment as an AGEP scholar was when he traveled with other scholars to Indianapolis Public Schools to host a resume and mock interview workshop for Science Bound students. His advice to incoming and current graduate students is to work hard because it is definitely worth it in the end.