The AGEP Spring Banquet

The AGEP Spring Banquet was held April 1, 2015 in the West Faculty Lounge of the Purdue Memorial Union. Dr. Venetria Patton, Director of African American Studies and Research Center and Professor of English was our distinguished speaker. Her audience was riveted as she described her academic journey. Dr. Patton's narrative was both motivating and inspirational. She is the author of *Women in Chains: The Legacy of Slavery in Black Women's Fiction*, the Co-editor of *Double-Take: A Revisionist Harlem Renaissance Anthology* and editor of *Background Readings for Teachers of American Literature*. In addition to her book, she has also published numerous journal articles and essays. Dr. Patton is the former Chair of the Purdue Black Caucus of Faculty and Staff and is currently a board member of the Hanna Community Center.

AGEP Graduate Students were honored at the Spring Banquet:

**Spring Graduates:**
- Mario Rubio, Masters, Mechanical Engineering
- Courtney Henry, PhD, Mathematical Statistics

**Summer Graduates:**
- Rachelle Henderson, Masters, English
- Tyrell Conner, PhD, Sociology
- Schane Coker, Masters, Family & Consumer Econ.
- JD McClurkin, PhD, Agricultural Engineering
- Reginald McGee, PhD, Mathematics

### AGEP-T PAI

The lack of African American, Hispanic/Latino American, Pacific Islander, and Native American STEM faculty is an issue of national concern. To address this problem, the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), Purdue, and ten other CIC member universities were awarded a National Science Foundation (NSF) AGEP-Transformation (AGEP-T) grant titled “Professorial Advancement Initiative” (PAI). The CIC, partnered with AGEP, will utilize the PAI to increase the number of underrepresented minority (URM) Postdocs entering the professoriate. The AGEP-T PAI will work to double the number of URM faculty members hired annually. The objectives are as follows:

1) Create a pool of URM postdoctoral scholars that have been well prepared and trained to enter the academy as tenure track faculty.
2) Educate faculty and faculty search committees about unconscious bias and the compelling benefits of having a diverse faculty.

The program is moving forward at a steady pace, and has reached several important milestones:

- The CIC–AGEP training team has developed a mentoring curriculum for faculty mentors.
- New web-accessible resources have been developed that include:
  1) “Gateway to CIC Faculty Positions” which allows postdocs to search for faculty positions available within the CIC member institutions.
  2) The CIC Doctoral Directory—a searchable database listing PhD recipients to be promoted among CIC Universities.
  3) Updates to the Purdue AGEP website including descriptions and links to PAI tools and a webpage dedicated to Post-doctoral resources.
  4) A Linked-in group for Purdue AGEP Postdocs and Alumni has been created to provide additional networking opportunities and resources to Postdocs and PhD graduates.
In late January, under the guidance of Wesley Campbell, Director of the Purdue Science Bound program, and Derrick Williams, Student Success Coordinator of the Purdue Science Bound program, I had the pleasure of participating in mock interviews with some of the brightest students in the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS). Having grown up in Indianapolis, I am familiar with the stereotypes about students in the Indianapolis Public Schools. Volunteering for the Science Bound program provided me with the opportunity to gain insight into the students’ potential and their indubitably bright futures. While interviewing, I was surprised by how many of the students did not credit themselves for how much they had already overcome in order to be where they are now. Although we did provide them with constructive feedback concerning their interviews, I believe the most important aspect of the evening was the mentoring that occurred between the Purdue volunteers and the high school students after the mock interviews. Being students ourselves, we were able to both empathize with their plight as students of color as well as show them that they could overcome any setbacks in order to make it to where we are and beyond.

I would recommend this experience for anyone who wants to give back to the community. Even as young adults the students were looking up to us and [hopefully] heeding the advice we gave them. I look forward to following up with them and seeing where they end up.

Dr. Janie (JD) McClurkin — From AGEP Scholar to Assistant Professor

JD McClurkin, Ph.D., Agricultural Engineering graduate, reported that she has verbally accepted an offer for California University of Pennsylvania’s Frederick Douglass Institute Post-Doc Scholar at the rank of Assistant Professor. Dr. McClurkin attended the COMPACT for Faculty Diversity, Institute on Teaching and Mentoring in Atlanta, GA last fall and met with California University of Penn faculty while there. When the application for the Frederick Douglass Institute Post-Doc Scholar was made available, Dr. McClurkin’s network of university faculty at the California University of Pennsylvania contacted her and encouraged her to apply for the position. She had a Skype interview and was invited to campus for an interview. In late March, she was offered the position. When she told us her good news she said, “I am grateful to AGEP for providing me the opportunity to attend COMPACT and make the connection which led to this position.”

Dr. McClurkin successfully defended her dissertation on April 10, 2015 and will graduate this summer.

Shana Hardy is a recipient of the AACR Minority in Cancer Research Award

Congratulations to AGEP Scholar Shana Hardy for being selected as a recipient of a 2015 American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Minority Scholar in Cancer Research Award. Shana is a PhD Graduate Research Assistant in the Department of Medicinal Chemistry and Molecular Pharmacology. In her application for the award, she wrote, “I would like to align myself with a mentor/scientist focused on health disparities in cancer research. My interest is in my community and I am particularly interested in how epigenetics influences health outcomes in the African American community. As a molecular biologist, I believe that epigenetics might provide us some insight on how certain ‘cancer predisposing elements’ may actually be the result of our predecessors’ lifestyles. I would love to do some work in inheritable epigenetic traits. This could open up new avenues when developing cancer therapies. I would also like to broaden my skills in genomics. I have a strong commitment to minorities in science. I also have a strong interest in the state of life science graduate programs in universities, in terms of curriculum and professional development. Ideally, I will continue doing basic science research while also serving in leadership roles to help cultivate the scientific community to be more inclusive, efficient, and impactful.”
Life After Graduate School: What’s next for AGEP Graduates:

Dr. Lauren Jewell Parker earned her PhD in Health/Kinesiology in August, 2014 and has recently accepted a position starting in July as a Postdoctoral fellow in the Drug Dependence Epidemiology Training Program at John Hopkins University. Dr. Parker participated in the Summer Research Opportunity (SROP) and AGEP Bridge Programs at Purdue. She is an author of the AGEP book, GPS for Graduate School: Students Share Their Stories. In an email to AGEP program director, Dr. Kathy Dixon, Dr. Parker wrote, “Thank you again for your support and encouragement throughout my time at Purdue. I can definitely say that my time at Purdue was enhanced by being part of the SROP/AGEP programs.”

Dr. Oscar Morales-Collazo earned his PhD in Chemistry in August, 2014 and is currently a Postdoctoral Scholar in the Chemical and Biomaterial Engineering Department at Notre Dame. Dr. Morales-Collazo obtained his Bachelor of Science in Chemistry at the University of Puerto Rico. While at Purdue, Dr. Morales-Collazo worked with the WEI Research Group in the department of chemistry. As an AGEP Scholar, he tutored LSAMP and AGEP students and attended COMPACT for Faculty Diversity. He also volunteered with NOBCCHE and was a teaching assistant for several semesters.

Quincy Clark receives ASEE’s 2015 “Best Paper”

Quincy Clark, AGEP Alum Scholar and recent MS graduate from the College of Technology, won American Society of Engineering Education (ASEE)’s 2015 Best Paper Award and ASEE’s 2015 Professional Interest Councils (PICs) Best Paper Award for her paper titled Hybrid Learning Styles. The best paper award is selected based on the quality of the research and the quality of the writing. Quincy will present two papers on her research at the 122nd 2015 annual ASEE conference in Seattle Washington in June. Quincy’s research involves assessing student’s learning preferences and developing software tools to automate the process of collecting and statistically analyzing learning preferences.

GPS For Graduate School: Students Share Their Stories- A New Approach to Advising

~ By Mary Maxine Browne

The AGEP book project took another step into the world at large at the Midwest regional meeting of the National Academic Advising Association in Indianapolis April 8-10. The poster, “GPS for Graduate School: Students Share Their Stories—A New Approach to Advising”, presented by Mary Maxine Browne, was one of twelve posters in the conference poster session. Approximately 650 college and university advisors travelled from as far away as Ontario and California to attend this interesting and enlightening meeting.

The poster presentation “GPS for Graduate School: Students Share Their Stories—A New Approach to Advising” focused on the inter-active learning process the book and its videos and activities make possible. As the book’s authors originally envisioned, the personal experiences related in the book chapters, its videos, and activities, lead potential and newly beginning graduate students through a process that clarifies their own perspectives on the challenges of graduate school. This process empowers students to approach the pursuit of a graduate degree fully aware of the demands of graduate school, and consequently meet these challenges more proactively. The poster features images from the Chapter 7 “Collaborative Research” video, “Who’s First,” and a photo of a group of students enthusiastically working on the role-play activity that solves the problem in this video. These images communicate the inner process students experience when they work with these materials. Information about the book’s creation and its content are also included, but play a supporting role to the poster’s primary focus of interactive learning. The poster was positively received by many who attended the poster session. The combination of the videos and their activities seem to be quite successful as an educational “GPS” system. Kudos again, to everyone who worked on this innovative book project.
2015 Spring AGEP Scholars

Oyeleye Alabi  
Brittini Brown  
Schane Coker  
Tyrell Conner  
Sana Hardy  
Fushcia-Ann Hoover  
Ashley Jacobs  
Reginald McGee  
Janie McClurkin, Ph.D.

Sean Natoli  
Canek Phillips  
Chris Pullium  
Darryl Reano  
Mario Rubio  
Kadari Taylor-Watson  
Fernando Tormos-Aponte  
Sasha Vega-Alvarez

GRE Test Prep Workshop
On March 23 Dr. Kathy Dixon, AGEP Program Director, along with Quincy Clark traveled to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to attend a GRE Test Preparation Workshop for Campus Educators. The workshop provided information needed to prepare and conduct test preparation workshops for students planning to take the GRE revised General Test. Members of the GRE Program and Assessment Development team provided an in-depth review of the revised test. Information obtained from this workshop will be used to conduct practice GRE tests for SROP and other student programs on campus.

Gone but not forgotten:
Remembering Mary LuAnn Jones
Mary (LuAnn) Jones passed away on Sunday, January 26, 2014. LuAnn was a graduate of Lafayette Jefferson High School and received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Management from Purdue University. She was an Office Manager at Purdue for 17 years and she worked with the AGEP and LSAMP program for several of those years. LuAnn especially enjoyed working closely with students. She was known for having a broad range of knowledge in many subjects, a compassionate heart, and an exceptional ability to connect and work with students. Many students and staff members have mentioned how much they will miss sharing great conversations, visits, and especially lunch with LuAnn.

AGEP Spring Recruiting Events

Events Attended:
- **February 20-21**—University of North Texas (UNT) McNair Scholar Research Conference and Graduate Fair at Denton, Texas
- **March 12-15**—University of Maryland McNair at Baltimore, Maryland
- **March 26-28**—MANRRS Career Fair & Training Conference in Houston, Texas
- **April 18**—California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education at Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California

Future Events:
- **May 31-July 25**—SROP
- **June 25-28**—SAEOPP McNair at Atlanta, GA
- **September 11-12**—UMBC McNair at Baltimore, MD
- **October 29-31**—SACNAS 2015 at Washington, DC
- **October 29-30-November 1**—COMPACT for Faculty Diversity at Arlington, VA
- **October 30-November 1**—MAEOPP Wisconsin McNair at Milwaukee, WI
- **November 19-21**—AISES at Phoenix, AZ

We are on the Web!
http://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/research/agep/index.cfm

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