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African American Education Program newsletter, 2005

Eastern Washington University. Africana Studies Program

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At times the line between the feelings of director and that of proud parent align. This happens when the pride of student accomplishments brings me near tears. Sometimes this is brought on by such things as successfully completing a difficult course, the admittance to graduate school or an engagement or the birth of a child. Winter and Spring quarters it was brought by students implementing events. Junior, Aislinn Edwards, brought her friend, Verna Bailey, the first African American woman to attend the University of Mississippi, to speak on "Maintaining Dignity In Turbulent Times." Derek Reddicks and Nicholas Russ organized the African American Heritage Celebration. This event included a keynote address by Brother Anthony Muhammad from Seattle, a moving closing address by Nicholas Russ, skits written and performed by EWU students, the WSU Gospel Choir, fraternities and sororities stepping and a dance presentation. Students worked diligently to put on the First Annual Block Party. The rain didn’t stop the fun! Faced with some difficult situations and events, our students responded with unity and positive actions. You will read more about these events in the newsletter. I am still drying my eyes.

Spotlighted during the first week of February were members of the African American Studies faculty. This spectacular line up included Scott Finnie, Angela Schwendiman, jenna williams, and myself. More inside.

Our program secretary, Trudy Weston, retired after 5 years of getting the office in shape and making sure we were doing what we need to do correctly and in a timely manner. This was no small task! She has been a mother to many students and a big sister to me. Even though we see her at our events, we miss her dearly.

New to the program is Lynn Burks-Herres, who many of you may know from Dining Services. We are very fortunate to have her as our new program secretary.

Look for updates on our website soon. I stated the need for this and my limited knowledge of web design when Aislinn Edwards said, “I’ll do it.” Our students are awesome!

When I became the Program’s director in 1998, African American Studies offered two or three courses each quarter and none in the summer. This winter we offered six. Spring there were seven and this summer six. We have grown from having one part-time faculty to a full-time tenure track faculty and five adjunct faculty. Our faculty advise five campus student clubs and organizations. We also have a graduate assistant who oversees our newly implemented mentoring program. Our advisor/recruiter position has increased from eleven months to twelve. We are currently developing a retention plan that will provide a retention specialist position to be funded by grants and/or private donations.

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Director's message continued......

Please enjoy the newsletter. If you ever have any questions please call me at 359-6150 or come visit our department. Have a great summer!

Trudy Weston, after spending 25 years working for EWU, celebrated her retirement on January 31st. Many students and staff came out to wish Weston well as she ventures into a new chapter in her life. Trudy has served in many positions here at EWU including the Body Shop, the Psychology Department, the English Language Institute and most recently in the African American Education Program.

Excerpts from the Easterner, FEB’05

Trudy will be truly missed by all who had the honor to meet her. She always wore a smile and was eager to lend a helping hand or a simple word of advice. Even after her retirement, Trudy still comes to visit the program and offers support and praise.

“THE CALL”
FIRST EWU NAACP CHAPTER NEWLETTER

Students in the NAACP EWU Chapter issued their first newsletter on March 1, 2005, named The Call. When editors Nicholas Russ and Tek Andeberhan were asked what inspired their newsletter, one of the students replied by saying the newsletter was a press and public platform to voice their opinions. They also responded by saying, “Our becoming forces people to respond and it gives a chance to voice our own views regardless if people wanted to listen or not.” The students were very proud to finish their newsletter, because people are always talking about doing something but taking no actions. Actions are being made! The poem of the month that was shared in their newsletter was by Tupac Amaru Shakur 1971-1996.

WESTON SAYS “GOOD BYE” AFTER 25 YEARS!

In the Event of My Demise

In the event of my demise
When my heart can beat no more
I hope I die for a principal
or a belief I have lived 4
I will die Before my time
Because I already feel the shadow’s depth
so much I wanted 2 accomplish
Before I reached my death
I have to come 2 grips with the possibility
and wiped the last tear from my eyez
I love all who were positive
In the event of my demise.

Keep up the good work Guys! We are looking forward to hearing more from you
A Thank You From the Cheney Outreach Board for the African American Education Program’s Annual School Supply Drive

On behalf of the Cheney Outreach Center board members, volunteers, and clients, please accept our appreciation for your generous contribution of school supplies.

Your support enables us, the Cheney Outreach Center, to offer direct emergency services to low income families. As of 31 December 2004, 1,905 families requested various outreach services and food from the Food Bank. Outreach is able to offer services including assistance with energy bills, transportation, food, clothing, rent, prescriptions, household and personal needs. Recently Outreach was able to create a program for cancer patients and other individuals who, because of medical treatment, need special assistance with energy bills, transportation, food, clothing, rent, prescriptions, household and personal needs. Outreach has designed programs for children, which include recreation activities, school supplies, school clothing, camp fees, and a Christian gift program. We also assist the community with information and referral services to various resources depending upon the service request.

The Cheney Outreach Center is supported by gifts such as yours, grants, private donations, and by the churches of Cheney. Your donation ensures continued assistance for families.

Thanks for your kindness and community support.

Sincerely,
Carol Beason, The Executive Director

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HIGHER EDUCATION DAY
(February 15th, 2005)

By Romeal Watson

When we all began loading on the bus at 4AM, we had received information folders about the achievements of the politicians that we were going to be meeting. Also included in the folders was basic information about EWU, our state capital, and our main concerns, posing on the behalf of EWU students. When we all arrived in Olympia around 9:00 AM we reported to the Red Lion to receive our briefing of the event by President Jordan, and several EWU administrators. Although many people came with many other questions regarding Higher Education, our main agenda was to focus on the tuition increase for college students. This percentage increase would make it harder for college students to pay off their school loans after graduation. Right now the interest percentage is at 3.12% and that is for many of the school loans, except for the Perkins loan, which is set at 5%. However, financial organizations claim that many of the students loans could possibly go up somewhere between 8-12%. My main reason for going was to raise questions about the K-12 education and how funding was being reduced or removed. These funds supported many of the after-school and extracurricular programs, which further prepare kids for higher education, not to mention the Express program which costs over one hundred dollars a month to join. So what is more important, lowering tuition rates for college students or allowing more affordable, accessible and excellence in the basic education, which increases the population of higher education in the long term? This seems to be the startling question that most of the politicians had to attempt to tackle. “Being that funding is limited, this question has much of a ‘pendulum effect’ to it, in that too much to either extreme would be........

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detrimental to higher education," states an anonymous state politician. Although I left with some of my economic and financial questions unanswered, I guess I will have to get in line on that one. (That very long line I might add) However, the overall trip was a very informative and motivating. I encourage all students to be a part of this event in the future. It is an excellent way to get information coming from a political perspective. For anyone who gets a chance to go on their own, I would recommend visiting the Bill Information Office, which is located on the first floor of the main building. This office will let you know about the progress of all bills that people/organizations have submitted. It's highly motivational to know what people are fighting for on a political standpoint.

REASONS TO JOIN THE BLACK STUDENT UNION

The Black Student Union (BSU) is a student organization that works closely with the African American Education Program to provide a variety of academic, social and cultural events on the campus and in the Spokane Community.

Special events commemorate Kwanzaa, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 's birthday, African American History Month and African American Awareness Week.

The purpose of the BSU is to give African American students at EWU a sense of community in an environment that is not very diverse. "More like a safe haven for African American students to come and express themselves on issues on and off campus, a primary African American Club," said Brandon Moore, president of the BSU.

The leadership experiences of former BSU officers have helped to complement their academic degrees and gain professional positions in their areas of interest. The BSU is not simply just another club for promoting diversity; it is also a strong positive force in the community and in the school. During the school year, as well as holidays, the BSU is involved in volunteer work, career days and food drives. Carter, a member of the BSU, exclaims the "BSU is interesting to me because it's an encouraging way for African American students on campus to come together." The BSU gets involved with a number of different activities and anyone is able to join. It is also a club that is concerned with the issues of African Americans, but it is not an exclusive club, as it is open to anyone with ideas for activities. The BSU usually meets every Friday at 3PM in Monroe 204, the African American Education Department's lounge.

EXPERTS TAKEN FROM THE EASTERNER

MEGAN WILLIAMS, JANUARY 10, 2005

CONGRATULATIONS 2005 GRADUATES!

Donna Boundy  
Joel Dumesle  
Donida Fowler  
Walter Green  
Malcolm X Havis  
Martese Henderson  
Alissa Hill  
Malik Kadir  
Jolene Knowlton  
John Little  
Lucinda Mack  
Aaron Matson  
Brandon E. Moore  
Felicia Moore  
Karisa Rice  
Barbara Barton  
David Schlegel  
Alvin Smith Jr.  
Linda Smith  
Tracy Eddy Confer  
Setota Teklu  
Tarimah Thomas  
Marcus Wallace  
Melissa Thomas-Masters

Natasha Carpenter  
Gilbert Danyo  
Malisia Gardner  
Monique Hall  
Bryant Hemphill  
Mattie Hervey  
Marquita Himes  
Lekeisha Kinard  
Merrell Ligon  
Charles Livingston  
Kay Mack  
Antwan Miller  
Brandon J. Moore  
Joseph Quansah  
Nicholas Russ  
Kris Leonetti  
Scott Sandberg  
Chenea Smith  
Venus Smith  
Tiffi Strong  
Romeal Watson  
Icis Thrado  
Erin Wade

We wish you well in your journeys!
EWU’s African American Education Program presented a lecture by Verna Bailey entitled *Maintaining Dignity in Turbulent Times* on February 11th, 2005 in the Music Recital Hall.

Bailey’s personal experiences grant her unusual insight into racism and the advancement of civil rights in America. Verna Bailey was born in Jackson, Mississippi and was the first African American woman to attend the University of Mississippi in the summer of 1965, three years after James Meredith became the first African American “Ole Miss.”

Personal experiences with the Civil Rights Movement are not limited to Verna Bailey; her father was a civil rights activist and close friend of Medgar Evers, a prominent Mississippi activist assassinated in 1963 by Byron de la Beckwith. She speaks proudly of her father’s commitment to his murdered friend, who he had been with the day Evers was killed, and how he gave up hope they would convict the man responsible. Bailey’s grandfather was kidnapped by the Ku Klux Klan and she recounts a further story of her great-grandfather conducting judicial proceedings under a tree during reconstruction for lack of a courthouse.

While attending the University of Mississippi she was subjected to racism and violent threats. She could have attended Jackson State University, a traditionally Black University. It was even near her home, but the University of Mississippi was always on her mind. The football team was on television and the liberal arts programs were broadly mentioned in the media. Famous writers, such as Faulkner, had attended school there. She made her decision to attend the “best university” in Mississippi, and attend she did.

Hearing Verna Bailey describe the events that unfolded as she attended “Ole Miss,” one couldn’t help but be drawn into her narrative. When she first entered the university’s cafeteria she described a rising “hiss” as the students turned and began hurling racial epithets at her, telling her to go home.

Listening to Bailey’s voice as she detailed another one-time experience at the university, attending a football game, the loss in her voice was colored by a certain ironic humor. “The game was against Georgia Tech, which had African American football players and they were beating us pretty badly and each time they would score it would be a young African American man with the ball and the other students would throw drinks at us.”

Through Bailey’s speech chronicled the harsh experiences of her youth, the core of her message was summed up in her closing lines. Speaking to the audience she characterized them as the future of America—its leaders, teachers and scientists, and with her voice resonant with quiet strength, she spoke, dream freely. Harmonize your differences. Live your life with grace and dignity.

In recognition of Dr Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the African American Education Program was honored to have Edgar Hargrow give his presentation *Like A Mighty Army: The Story of the Civil Rights Movement in America 1955-1968*.

Motivated by what he learned of the segregated South from other African American soldiers while serving in Vietnam, Hargrow studied the Civil Rights Movement for fourteen years. He traveled to the South, meeting many of the movement’s leaders. The presentation covered the Civil Rights Movement and the life of Dr. King. The 150 slides brought the events, some disturbing and others moving, to life. He also told how earlier African Americans, such as Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglas, and Jackie Robinson, helped lead to the Civil Rights Movement.

Dr. Scott Finnie returned Spring Quarter after a bout with cancer and a successful liver transplant. He states, “I would like to thank the entire EWU community for all your support and encouragement. I now feel fifteen years younger and hope to become a permanent fixture on campus, the Lord willing.”

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**Welcome Back, Dr. Finnie!**

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This year's African American Heritage Celebration began with a farewell to Trudy Weston, the program's secretary. The day featured make-your-own banana splits as Trudy "split" for retirement. Trudy's family was on hand for the day's festivities. Trudy was Sarinated with a singing telegram. Although she is retired, Trudy will always be a member of the AAEP family.

The remainder of the week featured members of the African American Studies faculty. Dr. Scott Finnie kicked off the lecture series with Dr. King and Malcolm X: Two Sides of the Same Coin. He explains how Malcolm X began to take on the philosophy of Dr. King while Dr. King took on that of Malcolm X. Finnie teachers a two-credit course during the summer, which goes into greater detail.

Taney Nelson Fletcher gave a stirring presentation, How Did They Survive: African American Slave Women and Song during which she showed how music was used to help the enslaved women overcome their nightmarish lives.

Jenna Williams's presentation on Black Face Minstrelsy, concluded with the shocking realization that the degrading images Black Face Minstrelsy are still being used and convincingly overlooked.

The week concluded with Angela Schwendiman's lecture Black Film Historiography. After stating that there is no recorded history of black film nor is there a definition of the subject, Schwendiman gave examples of what she defines as black film and why. Her course on African American film offers a wealth of additional information and films. As the producer of KEWU, Schwendiman included interviews on African American issues during February.

On February 28th, Derek Reddicks and Nicholas Russ presented the African American Heritage Celebration. This well planned event featured Brother Anthony Muhammad, from Seattle, Washington. His message was on Love, Hate And Identity Theft. The evening opened with Oscar Harris leading the audience in the African American National Anthem, accompanied by Jermaine Carlton on his base clarinet. Mr. Carlton then performed a beautiful original song called Chosen Pathway. Students presented a brief biography on many famous African Americans, some well known and others not. Each student stood as a separate person giving an inspiring script about that person. The WSU Gospel Choir moved the audience with their songs of praise and worship in the unique African American style. Zeta Phi Beta Inc., Omega Psi Phi Inc., Phi Beta Sigma Inc. all performed mini step presentations. Nikiya Dunmore, Cynita and Cyeeta Mott performed a fantastic dance routine. Orators Nicholas Russ and Derrick Reddicks spoke a few words for a call for unity and involvement from their peers and society. The words spoken that I remember most were by Derrick Reddicks, "If we are all branches from the same tree, then how can we deny our roots?"
Affirmative Action Bake Sale

By Nancy Nelson Fletcher

Despite outcries from students of color, the EWU Young Republicans were allowed to hold what they called an Affirmative Action Bake Sale. Spearheaded by the organization's president, Josh Fahrnkopf, the event was held under the disguise of showing how Affirmative Action puts European American males at a disadvantage. This was to be demonstrated by pricing the baked goods according to race, which is in violation of federal law, whether or not the prices are actually charged or, as Fahrnkopf claims, are for show. In his own words in an e-mail to attorney Brennan Beggs, Fahrnkopf states his real purpose. “we want people to be mad at what we are doing because if you dont like what we are doing you dont like affirmative action and that is the point that we want to express. also i planned this event when i did because everyone is all up in arms about free speech and i was planning to poke holes in their statements. the truth is that free speech is always protected and encouraged if it is on the left of the spectrum but the right always gets bashed or banned for their speech” (unedited). The original plan was to have prices for European American men and women, African American men and women, and other, thereby making the event an issue of race. Fahrnkopf claimed in the informational flyer the group distributed that “Minorites often fail out of colleges they get into because of Affirmative Action as they are not qualified to be there.” Race is not considered for admission at EWU.

Although it is sad that such an event was allowed to take place, the response by the EWU students, lead by NAACP President Ed King, was phenomenal. The students, along with some faculty, staff, and community members, staged a silent counter demonstration that included statistics in employment and wage earnings that clearly demonstrated that African Americans are still at the bottom. They also carried signs that were pro-Affirmative Action and others that were against the bake sale. Students and faculty spoke at a rally held that afternoon. I commend our students for the extraordinary response to this unfortunate event. I am including a response from our Dean, Dr. Mike Frumkin. Our students should be very proud of themselves.

Response from the Dean ............

You are amazing! Each of you was willing to invest considerable time and energy in turning your values and beliefs into positive action. What you actually accomplished was remarkable - you altered the entire dialogue and public perception of Affirmative Action as is clearly evidenced by the article that appeared in the Spokesman Review. Your efforts made a positive contribution to both the campus and general community. You should be extrordinarily proud of your commitment and actions.

The ‘Dream Continues’ Block Party

By Edward King

When is the Block Party? When is the Block Party? What is the Block Party? Those were some of the questions asked prior to the “Dreams Continues” Block Party held May 14, 2005 in Sutton Park. This event was a celebration of unity that a number of Eastern Washington University students experienced after a couple of questionable events occurred on campus. It took three minds to come up with the idea of a block party and a number of student organizations to assemble the items needed to accomplish the task. Once all the initial groundwork was in place, everyone was overflowing with anticipation.

The morning of the event was heartbreaking because it literally rained on our parade. This did not stop scores of students and community members from attending the event. After the tents, food, and games where put into place the park resembled a extravagant family reunion. It rained on and off throughout the day but it seemed to add to the reference of family. No matter how hard it rained, the abundance of food, smiles, laughs and fun grew. At the end of the day everyone went home with a full tummy and a sense of community that could last for days.

A special thanks to all the clubs and organizations and community organizations that supported this event!

A special thank you also goes out to Chicken-n-More who catered the event with delicious food!
The African American Education Program Needs Your SUPPORT!

We are seeking donations, in any amount, to help us continue to provide goods and services to our students that cannot be purchased with state funding alone. These donations will allow us to purchase tickets for students to attend community banquets such as the NAACP’s and AHANA’s, where they learn to network and to polish their etiquette skills, and to hear national speakers at other universities and in the community. They also pay for the food for our Welcome Lunch at the start of each academic year, other lunches, receptions, and the graduation celebration. We would like to be able to continue to do these things as well as add additional support for students such as sending them to regional conferences. If you would like to discuss making a donation, please contact Nancy Nelson Fletcher at (509) 359-6105. You can make your gift online at www.ewu.edu/supportewu. Please be sure to type “African American Education Program” under the heading “My contribution is designated to:” Or, if you prefer, you can send your check made out to the EWU Foundation, with African American Education Program in the memo section, to Hargreaves Hall Room 127, Cheney, Washington 99004.

Thank you for your support!

NOTE. EWU students who mark “Restrict Address” on registration documents anytime during their attendance at EWU, do not receive department mailings unless they request their name/address be added to AAEP mailing list (359-2205), OR the student goes to the Registrar’s (Sutton Hall), shows photo ID and asks that the restriction be removed, OR the student changes his/her status via EagleNET!

Students in music, athletics, art or whatever, distinguishing yourselves through awards or honors -- please let us hear from you! We want to share the news. Items included in AAEP Newsletters come to our attention via e-mail to (aaep@mail.ewu.edu), press releases, the Easterner, friends, etc. But we need YOU too, to tell us - don’t be shy - we want to share YOUR bit of good news!

If you MOVE, please notify our office with your new address so you may continue to receive newsletters!

Dr. Fred Larmie

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