

FEF FOCUS

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President's Message



Dr. Lawrence Morehouse

While considering recent details of the world's growing economic crisis, I thought of two things. First, I thought about how well-equipped the FEF family is to help solve local, national, and world problems. Second, I was reminded of abolitionist Wendell Phillips' statement, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." These thoughts, while ostensibly unrelated, are in fact connected. We live in a country founded on the principle that an educated people will act for the common good. As scholars, we must use our knowledge to benefit communities. As educated citizens, we ought to do the same—by ensuring future generations receive the best education possible.

You will read in this *Focus* edition how research conducted by one of our scholars, McKnight Fellow Ruben Kertesz, will serve communities by reducing pollution from rain water runoff. You also will learn how scholarship on hegemony and world peace by another McKnight, Chaka Ferguson, will contribute to the body of literature addressing how to prevent conflict and maintain stability in the Middle East.

Both Fellows appear poised to beat the odds reflected in national studies on graduate education, which indicate only 47% of Ph.D. students earn degrees within seven years, with African Americans and Hispanics earning only approximately 12% of Ph.D.'s granted last year. The main cause of these poor completion rates is the lack of adequate financial aid for graduate study. The current economic crisis exacerbates this problem by further reducing resources available for doctoral support.

The crisis also reduces resources available for pre-college students. In Florida, cuts to the education budget continue to undermine efforts to provide quality education. As this edition notes, students lose most knowledge acquired during the regular academic year when they do not study during the summer. Despite this fact, most Florida counties have either reduced summer programs or eliminated them. You will read here how we help fill this void.

Our strategic plan anticipates such economic crises, allowing us to sustain support services. While this edition of the *Focus* provides only a glimpse of our successful programming, through our relationships with the Florida Legislature, universities, school districts, and the private sector, more students, both graduate and pre-college, will continue to receive financial support.

'07-'08 Annual Report Now Available

Chancellor Rosenberg Speaks at 2008 New Fellows' Orientation

Until recently, Dr. Mark Rosenberg served as Chancellor of the Florida Board of Governors, the body that oversees Florida colleges and universities. Dr. Rosenberg also is an eminent Political Science scholar and highly respected expert on Latin America and the Caribbean. At the 2008 New Fellows' Orientation luncheon on June 20, he honored the newest recipients of the McKnight Doctoral Fellowship with sage commentary on current challenges—environmental, individual, and institutional—in higher education.

Among the environmental factors, Dr. Rosenberg noted that globalization can lead to both unifying and fragmenting effects. Globalization means we more likely will work with people from other parts of the world as skill sets become more universal, but it also can fragment communities as income in-

equalities become greater and more obvious.

Another environmental challenge he identified was technology, particularly as the world quickly moves toward a "singularity" of human and machine cognition, brought about by the merging of information technology and human knowledge. For most professions, understanding and using technology already has become a mandatory skill for handling vast and quickly changing amounts of information. This rapidly expanding knowledge now raises new issues we must consider—questions of ownership, power, priorities, privacy and ethics.

The final environmental challenges Dr. Rosenberg cited were the societal trends exemplified by



Dr. Mark Rosenberg

this assortment of labels: internet marrieds, working retirees, extreme commuters, 30 wingers, pet parents, pampering parents, helicopter parents, mildly disordered, young

knitters, high school moguls, aspiring snipers, social geeks, new luddites, tech fatales, gamers, and home-schooled. As professionals and as individuals, our encounters once involved a relatively homogeneous, predictable group. Now we work and socialize with an array of individuals whose issues, interests, and goals we may not share.

At the individual level, Dr. Rosenberg cautioned the audience to be aware of challenges they may encounter in today's more student-centered educational environ-

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Alumni Spotlight: Dr. Kenyatta Rivers Wins 2008 FLASHA Award

McKnight Alumnus Dr. Kenyatta Rivers and his student mentees at the University of Central Florida have received eight research awards from the Florida Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (FLASHA). But it is Rivers' most recent "Honors of the Association" award, one of the highest honors FLASHA bestows, recognizing his service and contribution to the profession and to FLASHA, that has garnered the most attention.

FLASHA is dedicated to serving the needs of audiologists and speech-language pathologists in the State of Florida by providing support, opportunities for professional growth, and public awareness and advocacy of issues related to the highest quality care for the individuals they serve. "It is a tremendous honor to receive this award. This is most rewarding, in light of the fact that awardees are nominated and selected by highly respected peers from a profession representing numerous fields of specialty and varied demographics," stated Rivers.

FLASHA professionals attend to all clinical populations who suffer with language disor-

ders stemming from speech-language impairments, voice disorders, brain injury, mental retardation, and hearing impairments. A language disorder is the impaired comprehension and/or use of spoken, written, and/or other symbol systems. The disorder may involve the form, content, and/or function of language in communication. The importance of assisting people with these disorders is obvious.



Dr. Kenyatta Rivers

"A person can do very little in the world without effective communication skills," states Rivers. "The members of FLASHA touch so many lives on a day-to-day basis. Everyone needs to communicate effectively, whether through a spoken,

signed, or augmentative system. FLASHA professionals help individuals with challenges in these areas become productive members of society," he added.

Dr. Rivers earned his Ph.D. in speech-language pathology from the University of Florida in 1994, after which he took a position in the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders at UCF and later received the McKnight Junior Faculty Fellowship, which helped him obtain tenure. Now an Associate Professor, he holds the Certificate of Clinical

Competence in speech-language pathology from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association as well as State licensure from Florida's Department of Health. He also recently became one of a few scholars selected nationally to participate in the Communication Sciences and Disorders Clinical Trials Research Group.

An avid researcher and author in his field, Dr. Rivers' interests include language development in preschool and school-aged children, language literacy disorders in children, traumatic brain injury in school-aged and postsecondary students, multicultural aspects of communication disorders, and caregiver communication strategies with persons affected by Alzheimer's disease. He also has served as a reviewer for a number of professional journals, including the *Florida Journal of Communication Disorders* and the *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*.

In addition to his professional pursuits, Dr. Rivers has actively advocated for the McKnight Doctoral Fellowship Program. He also has served as a discussant for McKnight Fellows presenting their research and regularly presents at or attends MDF Annual Meetings.

Chancellor Rosenberg Speaks at 2008 New Fellows' Orientation *continued from page 1*

ment, including the ability to make one's self understood. He encouraged students to learn to communicate well, including listening well—a skill that involves watching body language and hearing what isn't stated as well as what is expressed aloud.

Dr. Rosenberg added that students can meet institutional-level challenges in many ways: know the university culture; understand the dynamics in their departments; secure a wise, positive mentor; stay focused on their goals (avoid distractions); and respect students and staff. They also should remain aware of the special complexity of

the 21st century university, due to the diversity of its skill sets and its role in accumulating knowledge, which is growing swiftly and has become vital to the economy.

In concluding his discussion, Dr. Rosenberg reminded the Fellows that their work is critical for universities. He also noted that new

scholars can transcend these environmental, individual and institutional challenges if the central goal of their work is to make life better for all and the university has strategies in place to support their efforts.

Fellows Discover Their Voices at the 2008 Summer Research & Writing Institute

"It was the 'Aha!' moment I desperately needed," wrote Fellow Iris Patten about her time at the Second Annual McKnight Summer Research and Writing Institute. With the 2008 Institute, held on the USF Tampa campus July 27 through August 2, the FEF refined the latest layer of its unified system of research and writing support for McKnight Doctoral Fellows.



MDF Fellow Brandi Tanner

The accomplishments of School Psychology Fellow Brandi Tanner illustrate the goals of

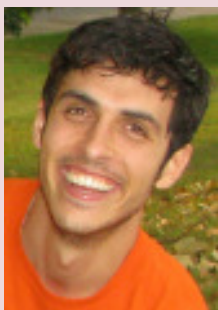
the Institute. At the pilot 2007 Institute, Tanner focused on her dissertation proposal, and she credits the Institute with giving her the foundation to get her proposal approved so she could begin her research. This year, she came to the Institute to work on the final drafts of her dissertation and to prepare for its defense. The Institute helped her see the dissertation "as a process instead of a product," freeing her "to approach individual tasks without being blindsided by the scope of completion."

Many participants echoed Tanner's sentiment, indicating they had hoped the Institute would help them understand the process of writing a dissertation or proposal. It "helped me organize my thoughts for my push toward completing my dissertation. There were questions I had, and I didn't know where to turn for answers," said one student. Another said the Institute "put everything in perspective and detailed the path I needed to take," while yet another student cited the Institute for "helping me regain my motivation for writing and become more focused and directed."

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UF McKnight Doctoral Fellow Ruben Kertesz Discusses Research on Thermal Pollutants

Any rain that falls on roofs or collects on paved areas like driveways, roads, or sidewalks is called stormwater. The stormwater system runs from outdoor drains down the gutters and into our natural waterways (creeks, rivers, groundwaters, wetlands, and the ocean). As stormwater travels over land, it picks up all kinds of chemicals and sediments that are not naturally found in our waterways. Some of these are poisonous, even in small



MDF Fellow Ruben Kertesz

amounts. Others, such as nutrients, are not poisonous but may be produced in such large quantities that they eventually can cause toxic pollution problems in our waterways. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, that is why only clean rainfall runoff should enter the system.

Florida's statutory water quality policy offers the most specific protection for the State's waters. It prohibits pollution of the stormwater system and our natural waters and contains general rules with which every person, business, and industry must comply.

In addition, stormwater management practices exist to control and cleanse excess runoff, often using water retention facilities to provide controlled release

into receiving streams, preventing harm to natural resources or human beings.

University of Florida McKnight Doctoral Fellow Ruben Kertesz conducts research on the environmental impact of thermal load from heated stormwater that runs off of streets, roofs, and parking lots. FEF Publications Manager Rachael Nickie sat down with Kertesz to discuss his research and future plans.

FEF: Why did you decide to focus your Ph.D. research on water resources?

Kertesz: One day, on my way to research plants and biotic matter to treat polluted soils (bioremediation), I ran into an engineer who had actually held a patent on a system very similar to one I designed and tested in my undergraduate biology program. He asked if I would help him design the treatment system, which is considered a water resources project. While working with him, I found the area of water resources offers many opportunities for future research.

FEF: What challenges have you encountered in your research?

Kertesz: With the unpredictable nature of rain storms, my *in situ* (situated in the original, natural place) experiment has been flooded by an intense rain event, and other times I've had to wait for hours without rain. Each event has

proved to be a time hole but has produced enlightening results.

FEF: Have you made progress in your research?

Kertesz: Yes. I've determined that thermal load is definitely a pollutant. Now we need to find a way to decrease pollution at the source. The next stage is to see the effects of thermal load on different materials like asphalt versus concrete.

FEF: How will your study on thermal pollution impact society?

Kertesz: It will help protect our environment. I think alternative pavement surfaces can serve to reduce thermal pollution load in stormwater runoff due to unique physicochemical properties. My research will provide quantitative information to help biologists, ecologists, and others.

FEF: Aside from your research, what other projects occupy your time?

Kertesz: This past summer, I was a part of an intercollegiate research program at UF that traveled to Italy to help install a green roof (roof covered with soil and plants) for thermal and moisture data gathering.

FEF: What are your immediate goals?

Kertesz: I would like to integrate my interdisciplinary stormwater monitoring network with a nationally acclaimed cyber infrastructure using the expertise of UF's Dr. Howard Beck to help develop a stormwater ontology.

FEF: Once you earn your Ph.D., what are your plans?

Kertesz: I would like to teach at the college level while working in industry. This is encouraged both by some of the consulting firms and many environmental engineering departments. Ultimately, I would like to create a nationally acclaimed research center in Florida where students and professionals can implement and validate the performance of various controls, adding quantitative measurements to current qualitative performance specifications.

FEF: How has your experience as a McKnight Fellow impacted you?

Kertesz: The McKnight Doctoral Fellowship allows me to research what I sought out to study rather than have to work solely on a project that brought in funding for my professor. It provides a freedom that

is necessary for more fundamental research or research that is not dependent on industry funding.



Kertesz helps plant a green roof.

Fellows Discover Their Voices at the 2008 Institute *continued from page 2*

One participant summarized the critical support offered during the Institute, noting that he could not find that help elsewhere. "The uniqueness of the Summer Institute is that presenters and mentors at the workshop are in the position to assist participants with



Fellows interact with Dr. Thomas Joiner at the 2008 Institute.

the 'nuts and bolts' or the 'how to do the work' part of completing the dissertation. This perspective is quite different from feedback that is received from dissertation advisors or committee members, which is often focused on the content of your work. This allowed me to focus on 'how to get it done'

because I realized I already knew the content." Along with the immediate goal of helping Fellows produce tangible research and writing products—dissertation proposals, dissertations, grants, and scholarly publications—an additional benefit soon became apparent. The Institute encouraged young scholars to engage themselves in the kind of long-term strategic planning and collaboration that is often key to high caliber academic research.

FIU McKnight Doctoral Fellow Chaka Ferguson Researches Political Hegemony

Neo-imperialism is the modern equivalent of empire-building, a process by which a strong government establishes its dominance over weaker governments through military, economic, and political might. The United States, by invading Iraq, has suffered enormous losses in lives, resources, and international standing. Through its inability to expeditiously stabilize Iraq's government and economy, which in turn benefited Iraq's hostile neighbor Iran, America contributed to a shift in the balance of power in this oil-rich, strategic, and volatile region. Unwittingly, America has weakened its own hegemony and enhanced Iran's political and economic influence, not only in the Persian Gulf but also throughout the world.

Ascending Iranian influence imperils American hegemony on all fronts—militarily, politically and economically. Iran possesses the potential military capability to dominate the Middle East, a political ideology to challenge the U.S. normative order, and an oil-driven economy that could destabilize the dollar by pricing oil in another currency.

Because of Iran's strategic location in the Persian Gulf region, its substantial supply of oil, and its burgeoning relationships with Russia and China, some experts view Iran as America's greatest threat. Iran's expanding relationships, coupled with America's dependence on foreign oil, will challenge the United States' capacity to maintain its competitive edge in the global economy, especially as it relates to commercial and financial industries.



MDF Fellow
Chaka Ferguson

McKnight Doctoral Fellow Chaka Ferguson, studies International Relations at Florida International University and researches how great powers like the United States create rules and establish order around the world. He aims to develop a systematic approach that incorporates neorealist theory to explain how hegemonic powers manage the international system of states.

FEF Publications Manager Rachael Nickie recently spoke with Ferguson about his research and goals.

FEF: How can the U.S. use its military, political, and economic powers to help regain its hegemony?

Ferguson: The U.S. must use its military power judiciously, resorting to force only in the face of existing threats or when core national interests are at stake. America also must temper its normative (value)-driven foreign policy and find a balance that safeguards human rights and the cultural integrity of other nations. This would address the fact that America's "cultural" hegemony is probably more disliked around the world than its military might.

The same applies to the advancement of neoliberal economic policies. Free markets might be the answer in the long-term, but for many countries deregulation of certain industries and sectors can precipitate disaster. America must employ more prudent foreign policy and realize that what works for the U.S. may not necessarily work for everyone else.

FEF: What challenges have you encountered in your research?



Ferguson presents his research.

Ferguson: Trying to account for every factor. As a theorist, you have to realize there will be exceptions to your theoretical framework. The goal is to explain as much as you can within your framework.

FEF: How has your experience as a McKnight Fellow impacted you?

Ferguson: The McKnight program and the support from former Fellows who now work as professors has been a tremendous resource. When you need guidance, professional advice, or just someone to listen, you can find it among the McKnight family. I've avoided a lot of pitfalls because of what I have learned at our conferences.

FEF: Once you complete your Ph.D., what are your plans?

Ferguson: I have three options: teach as a professor at a state school in Florida, work at a think tank, or serve as a policy analyst for the government. I also hope to write a few books that impact my field.

FEF: What advice would you offer the incoming President of the United States to curtail further conflict in the Middle East?

Ferguson: Because the United States is appreciably stronger than Iran in economic and military terms, it should use this leverage skillfully to persuade the Iranians to negotiate. The U.S. must realize that overwhelming force by itself can prove counterproductive, especially since using military power has failed in certain types of conflict (for example, Iraq). However, if the U.S. can accommodate Iranian interests without compromising national security, it might pacify Iran. Although accommodation can suggest weakness, belligerence can lead to catastrophic war. The U.S. must find the delicate balance between the two.

I would advise the United States to strike a grand bargain with Iran. Iran wants assurances that the United States will not seek regime change. In exchange for pledging not to violate Iran's sovereignty, the

United States could insist on economic liberalization by Iran and require that the mullahs (Islamic clergy) pledge not to interfere with the distribution and output of energy resources from the Persian Gulf.

By permitting Tehran a "sphere of influence" in the Middle East, the United States could

entice Iran to integrate into the world economy, tone down its anti-Western rhetoric and support for non-state actors hostile to Western interests, and work in concert to manage one of the world's most hostile regions. Such a strategy of rapprochement could spur the ascendancy of Iranian moderates, who would more likely reach détente than the current administration of hardliners.

I also would advise the next U.S. President to retrench U.S. forces from areas of the world that are not vital to U.S. national security. If America stations forces off shore, we should place them in regions critical to American interests and not near rival great powers (such as China and Russia) that would see nearby U.S. bases as infringing on their territory.

"The U.S. must use its military power judiciously, resorting to force only in the face of existing threats or when core national interests are at stake. America also must temper its normative-driven foreign policy and find a balance that safeguards human rights and the cultural integrity of other nations."

— Chaka Ferguson

Math Skills Draw Top Scholarship Dollars at the FEF's Annual Brain Bowl

Students who fail to develop proficiency in mathematics forfeit many future career options, effectively turning their backs on more than half the job market's opportunities. Those competing in the FEF's annual Mathematics

Brain Bowl Competitions promise to avoid such a fate, working tirelessly over several months each year to further master arithmetic, algebra, geometry and data analysis.



St. Pete College COE Pi Eaters

The Math Competitions reward superior skills, not only with prizes and trophies, but, for placing senior high teams, with four-year scholarships that fund ever-increasing tuition to Florida colleges and universities.



Regions Bank volunteers (in neon green) officiate at a Math Competition.

At the 2008 State Competition finals on Friday, April 11, the St. Petersburg College COE Dynasty triumphed over seven other teams to win some of those scholarships for the second

time in five years. In the Competition's two other categories, the St. Petersburg College COE 6th-8th grade team, the Pi Eaters, and 9th-10th grade team, the YES Senomas, joined Dynasty in the winners' circle for the fifth and third time, respectively, marking the first year teams from one COE have swept all three categories. The Pi Eaters and YES Senomas won a three-night stay in the regional winners' hotel, trophies, and individual Barnes & Nobles gift certificates valued at \$150 to \$200.



St. Pete College COE YES Senomas

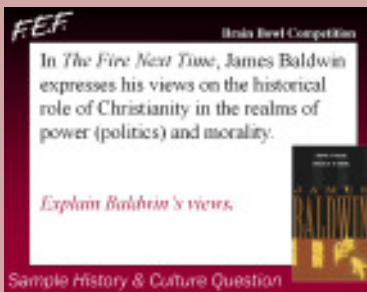
St. Pete College COE Dynasty

Students Use Critical Reading to Win the 2008 History & Culture Brain Bowl

On April 11, 2008, after 19 contests that led up to the final game, the Tallahassee Coalition COE Lincoln High School Trojans reclaimed their championship History & Culture Brain Bowl title, recovering from a devastating loss in 2007. The Competition tested teams' reading of college-level books with close to 200 vocabulary, comprehension and extended reasoning queries patterned after questions on the critical reading section of the SAT.



Sample History & Culture Question



Sample History & Culture Question



Sample History & Culture Question

To emerge as victors, the Trojans began reading and practicing for the Competition in the early fall, prevailed over several teams in local competitions, and then competed at State against nine other regional champions, edging out the 2nd place finishers, The Santa Fe

Community College COE Eyes of Ebony. The triumph earned them a three-night stay in the regional winners' hotel, trophies, and four-year scholarships to Florida colleges and universities.



Above: The crowd at the NAS Summit Opening Ceremony
Left: Jesús Jara from The College Board delivers the Summit keynote address.



Tallahassee Coalition COE Lincoln High Trojans

A Vision of Excellence Realized: the 2008 NAS Pre-College Summit

A "Vision of Excellence," the theme for the 23rd Annual Florida National Achievers Society (NAS) Summit set the tone for the 2008 meeting, which prompted many of the over 1000 attendees to offer positive feedback in program evaluations: "It was my first year and it was

great! Excellent job on workshops. The Summit was well organized, very informative," wrote one student. "Overall I would come again because the sessions were enjoyable. Everything was 100% pure excellence. Great job," another said. A parent added, "I benefited from this Summit and I know that

others can too. Great conference! Well organized and planned. All topics were timely and on point."

Focusing on one such topic, the conference keynote speaker, Mr. Jesús Jara, Senior Director of The College Board's Florida Partnership, spoke about equity and ac-

cess during his Opening Ceremony address. Mr. Jara shared his passion for widening avenues to quality education, as borne out by his accomplishments as a teacher and administrator in Florida and Massachusetts public schools. Most

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FEF Prevents Learning Loss With Intensive Summer Programs

Research spanning 100 years indicates that students experience significant learning losses during the summer months. In fact, according to researchers at John Hopkins University, two-thirds of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities. As a result, low-income youth are less likely to graduate from high school or enter college. Other research indicates that teachers typically spend between four to six weeks re-teaching material students have forgotten over the summer.



Students at an Orlando FEF SAT & College Prep Summer Camp

To prevent learning loss, improve academic outcomes, increase high school graduation rates, and better prepare students for an increasingly competitive college environment and job market, students need to engage in summer learning experiences. Even so, scarce funding has made it difficult for most Florida school districts to offer broad-based summer school programs. Unless students need to take remedial courses or recover credits, classroom opportunities for summer enrichment are few.

For the fourth consecutive summer, the FEF has sought to change that. In 2008, the FEF offered five intensive, for-credit, high school SAT/College Preparation Camps and four intensive middle school FCAT Camps. The programs enrolled 378 students in Apopka, Gainesville, Hawthorne, Lake City, Lauderhill, Orlando, St. Petersburg and Tampa and provided each SAT Camp student with an average of 106, and each FCAT student with an average of 67, hours of intense instruction.

Foremost, the programs aimed to teach and reinforce math, reading and writing skills and help students inculcate strategies to improve standardized test scores. As a result of rigorous, daily, three- or four-hour academic sessions and weekly simulated testing, they succeeded. Eighty-four percent of students who took both pre- and post-practice SAT's and eighty-eight percent of those who took FCAT-based pre- and post-tests increased their practice test scores. In addition, in program evaluations, 65% of students reported improved reading skills, 69% noted better writing skills, 85% acknowledged better math skills, and 90% indicated they learned new standardized test-taking strategies as a result of attending the programs. Most also reported that participation in the Camps altered their perspectives towards learning, with 68%, 67% and 77% citing positive changes in their attitudes towards reading, writing and math, respectively.

In addition to academic courses, each of the high school Camps included twelve college preparation and career exploration workshops. Three afternoons each week, local guidance counselors, college recruiters, and career professionals visited students to offer advice and

answer questions about college admission and requirements for various career fields. In program evaluations, students indicated they found the workshops valuable, with 90% noting they learned more about possible careers and how to better prepare for college as a result of the sessions. One commented that, "[t]he career speakers gave me more insight and made me think about issues that never crossed my mind before." Another said, "[t]he most important thing I gained from the Camp was the opportunity to talk with college people."

The Camps also provided opportunities for students to employ math and language arts skills through a variety of hands-on written and practical exercises. Students at the SAT Tampa Camp, for instance, participated in engineering or aerospace technology electives that required them to apply arithmetic, algebraic, geometric, and trigonometric concepts as they programmed computers or built and tested hot air balloons.

Also, with assistance from the local police department, FCAT Camp students in Lake City investigated a mock crime scene, testing science skills honed during the three-week Camp.



Television news coverage of the mock crime scene at the Lake City FCAT Camp

Further, to enable students to experience greater connections between academic skills and the real world, some Camps for the first time included field trips to educational venues. Students in the three SAT Camps in Orange County toured the University of Central Florida, explored Kennedy Space Center, and surveyed marine life at Sea World Orlando. Students at the Lauderhill FCAT Camp observed a live theatrical performance and interfaced with exhibits at the Museum of Discovery & Science. In program evaluations, students responded favorably to the trips and encouraged FEF to incorporate more field activities next year.



Pinellas and Orange County Camp students

Student Feedback on FEF's 2008 SAT/College Prep Camps:

- "This course was better than the SAT preparation course given at my high school during the school year."
- "The teacher changed my attitude towards math."
- "I learned strategies that will help me in the reading section."
- "I learned some math skills that I had trouble with in 9th grade."
- "It's a good learning experience, and it dramatically helped my SAT scores."
- "I learned how the SAT works, how it affects your chances of getting into college, and the importance of being well rounded and focused."
- "The teachers changed my attitude towards the SAT."
- "It really helped me get a feel for the SAT, so now I'm more familiar and comfortable with the test."
- "Before, I thought the SAT was scary and dreadful; now, I'm not worried about it as much."
- "It is a very positive and fun way to learn and improve your knowledge."
- "This has given me an advantage over students who were at home watching TV."

A Vision of Excellence Realized: the 2008 NAS Pre-College Summit *continued from page 5*

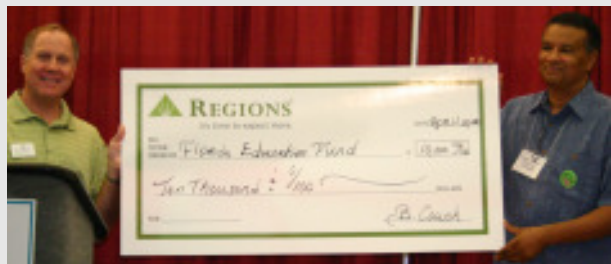
notably, he described how, while principal of the inner city High School of Science and Technology in Springfield, Massachusetts, he bolstered graduation rates, increased the number of college-bound seniors, and doubled Advanced Placement offerings, earning the school a nomination for most improved secondary school in the country. That work led to appointment to his current College Board post, where he oversees services that improve access for minority and underrepresented students throughout the State. He challenged Summit participants to make full use of tools provided by The College Board and other resources to gauge student progress and bolster the likelihood of scholastic success.

"The Career Fair was truly captivating. I enjoyed exploring different careers, especially Accounting," said one seventh grader.

In their workshops, high school students discussed the 2008 presidential election and examined the pitfalls and advantages of using the Internet. They also met with Florida college and university recruiters in the annual College Fair, which welcomed seventeen institutions, including Harvard College for the first time. One student said, "Excellent!...Everything was well organized and on task. I enjoyed everything we talked about in the Teen Summit on politics and the talks about text-messaging and Myspace and Facebook. I actually enjoyed this entire event from the Competitions to the Summit and felt very involved in the sessions...especially more than the past two years."



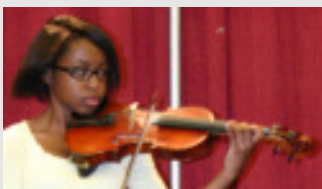
At the Summit College Fair, students and parents talk with recruiters from Harvard (above) and FAMU (below).



Regions Senior Vice President, Pinellas, Mr. Jim Watrous, presents a \$10,000 check to FEF President Dr. Lawrence Morehouse.

After Mr. Jara's speech, the Opening Ceremony concluded with new Brain Bowl and Summit sponsor Regions Bank presenting a check for \$10,000 to FEF President Dr. Lawrence Morehouse. In addition to the monetary support, Regions recruited fifteen invaluable employee-volunteers who officiated at the Math Brain Bowl, prepared Summit bags, registered attendees, and conducted a workshop session for elementary students.

After the Opening, participants dispersed to age-level workshops. Kindergarten through second graders spent the day performing with the Dundu Dole Urban Ballet and learning character principles from a team of puppets. Third through fifth graders talked about the electoral process and worked through money management exercises with Regions Bank presenters, while middle schoolers focused on building character and conversed with Career Fair professionals.



Senior High Talent Winner Cassie Hobbs from Orlando

Education. One parent stated, "The parental involvement workshops were valuable and well done. Each guest speaker and college recruiter conveyed information in a comprehensively simplified manner." "The parent workshops were just as informative as ever; I really appreciated the topics covered in the Internet Safety 411 and financial workshops," indicated another.

After the workshops, the FEF honored outstanding Achievers, parents, and Centers of Excellence. The FEF also presented prizes to talent champions and Laws of Life Essay

Contest winners Jada Leath from Tallahassee (4th-5th grade category), Melvin Roberts from Ft. Lauderdale (6th-8th grade category), and Brandon Williamson from Orlando (9th-12th grade category) as well as Word Wizard Winners Camille Kima from Gainesville (3th-5th grade category) and Thomas Coates III from West Palm Beach (6th-8th grade category).

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Upcoming FEF Events

February 20-21, 2009

MDF Mid-Year Research and Writing Conference, Tampa

April 17-18, 2009

24th Annual Brain Bowl Competition and
 Florida National Achievers Society Pre-College Summit, Tampa

June 2009

MDF New Fellows Orientation, Tampa

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The FEF's mission is to strengthen the larger community by creating and implementing programs and services that lead to greater educational advancement for historically underrepresented groups.

For information on how you may support the FEF's mission and programs, please call 813-272-2772.



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