

FEF FOCUS

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President's Message



Dr. Lawrence Morehouse

As a result of the deepening economic recession, revenue generated from taxes and investment returns have declined, thereby creating major budget deficits for the State of Florida. The Florida Constitution prohibits deficit spending and requires the State to

operate with a balanced budget. To comply with this Constitutional requirement, during the last two fiscal years, the Florida Legislature has reduced appropriations to all State-supported programs, including those in education. Further exacerbating the problems, according to the State's February 2009 economic forecast, to balance the budget for 2009-2010, the Legislature must reduce spending by an additional six billion dollars (\$6,000,000,000).

Though impacted by these budget cuts, the Florida Education Fund continues to strengthen its programs because of our long term planning strategies, sound asset management, and innovations. This edition of the *Focus* showcases that success.

At the pre-college level, our triumphs stem from the work of proactive and highly professional Center directors and academic coaches who help develop, implement, and secure financial support for flourishing programs.

Director of the Year James Green's successful fund raising campaign has helped increase the Palm Beach Center of Excellence's operating budget, enabling the Center to improve programs and serve more students.

In Tallahassee, the Lincoln High School Trojans' 24-year Brain Bowl championship legacy continues under the brilliant leadership of 18-year coach Levon Terrell.

All around the State, our student leaders benefit from opportunities to enhance skills through regional and statewide leadership conferences, like those organized and facilitated this year by dedicated COE Directors Kathy-Ann Lewis and Gloria McIntosh as well as FEF staff.

This collective effort, along with our students' own abilities and quest for advancement, each year, lead 94% of our National Achievers/Believers to graduate from high school and enter institutions of higher learning to earn college degrees or technical training certificates.

Likewise, at the Doctoral Program level, our McKnight graduates and matriculating Fellows owe their success in part to professors and mentors who equip and challenge them to research and address crucial economic, social, and scientific issues of our times.

Rising to the challenge, committed husband and wife team MDF graduate Dr. Mark Howse and matriculating Fellow Tashana Howse conduct research and work with students to help improve mathematics comprehension and promote interest in STEM fields. Realizing that critical shortages of skilled mathematics teachers make it difficult for students to receive adequate training, the Howses encourage more students to pursue degrees in mathematics as well as help both high school and college faculty improve their teaching skills.

Also answering the call, Fellow Yelenis Herrera researches the causes and prevention of stroke, as she searches for a drug that will reduce the number of resulting deaths.

We applaud the commitment, ingenuity and industry that have allowed our students, pro-

grams and staff to reach their goals. We will continue to labor each day to undergird the strong foundation the FEF has maintained during these financially difficult times.

2008 MDF Fellows Meeting

The Florida Education Fund excels at helping produce scholars who are committed to meeting the needs of a dynamic world. Toward that end, the Annual McKnight Fellows Meeting celebrates Fellows' achievements, provides job and networking opportunities, and promotes professional development through presentations, guest lectures, and speeches. It accomplishes all this while featuring groundbreaking research and connecting Fellows with the best and brightest scholars, university administrators, and public and private policy makers and researchers.

Three speakers at the 2008 Annual Fellows Meeting, Dr. Gyimah-Brempong, Mr. Parker Evans, and Dr. Melvin Stith, focused on the causes, impact, and solutions to the American and global economic crisis.



Dr. Gyimah-Brempong

American Monetary Policy and the Global Recession

Professor and Chair of the Department of Economics at the University of South Florida Dr. Gyimah-Brempong provided an insightful analysis of the causes of the American re-

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MDF Alumnus Mark and Fellow Tashana Howse Discuss Math Education

"Math is a gate-keeping discipline," says Dr. Mark Howse, 2006 McKnight graduate and Associate Vice President for Assessment at Bethune Cookman University. Dedicated to raising minority achievement, Howse knows that individuals who don't succeed at math may be blocked from access to college and many career fields that experts predict will lead the job market and drive local and national economies.

Howse traces his passion for helping students succeed in mathematics to days when, as a college sophomore studying aerospace technology and physics, he saw colleagues and friends struggle with the subject. A drive to understand "why" prompted his switch to a major in education.

It's a fervor shared with wife Tashana, a former high school math teacher who decided to pursue her doctoral degree in math education after reading his dissertation. Tashana Howse is now a matriculating McKnight Fellow at the University of Central Florida. They both recently discussed current issues in math education with FEF Communications Specialist Phyllis Reddick.

FEF: A substantial body of research documents a deficit of minority students in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) areas and particularly in math. To what do you attribute this deficit?

M.H.: The most detrimental contributing factor is the way math is taught in elementary and middle schools. There's too much factory style teaching, imparting knowledge without encouraging discovery and teaching procedures without ensuring conceptual understanding.



MDF Alumnus Dr. Mark Howse

Because math isn't taught appropriately, a lot of young people have accepted the notion that they can't perform. Because they've struggled, failed, or don't feel they understand the material, many become disenchanted. Math is developmental in nature, so not grasping basic concepts makes it difficult to understand more advanced math in future courses.

T.H.: Basically, teachers ask students to re-visit math subject matter instead of helping them understand concepts. So, when they get to high school or college, it becomes evident they really don't understand.

FEF: Last year, the National Mathematics Advisory Panel, appointed in 2006 by President Bush, reported that both traditional, teacher-directed instruction, which emphasizes drills on the basics and computational fluency, and reform instruction, which encourages student exploration and conceptual understanding, are

"The more you understand math, the more you know that every process has a mathematical base. When you understand that math is the basis of everything, it unlocks your potential, and there's no limit to where you can go and what you can do."

-- Dr. Mark Howse

necessary and mutually supportive. What is your position?

M.H.: Both approaches are necessary. To develop a conceptual understanding, a young child first must be able to manipulate content, and that requires "rote" learning, knowing basic patterns, number groupings, math facts, and multiplication tables. Developing basic skills in math is equivalent to memorizing letters in order to learn to read.

T.H.: Students need to master basic math facts so they recall them automatically. Then teachers need to focus on helping students really understand how to use those facts in various and increasingly advanced math processes.

M.H.: Math education should involve discovering new ideas, creating new knowledge. Why shouldn't math students be allowed to rediscover every day? They should go through life not accepting something because they're told it is true. They need to question, test theories and assumptions, and be eager to add to the body of knowledge.



MDF Fellow Tashana Howse teaches.

FEF: The National Mathematics Advisory Panel also concluded that students who depend on native intelligence learn less than those who believe success turns on how hard they work. "We need to change the current talent-driven approach to math that either you can do it or you can't, like playing the violin," said Panel Chair Dr. Larry Faulkner. Do you agree with this conclusion?

M.H.: I do believe in multiple intelligences -- the whole notion of native or innate intelligence, that some people have the natural ability to process certain kinds of information. However, I also believe all individuals, with some possible exceptions (there is emerging belief that some people have disabilities in some areas of knowledge), can learn math, given the right instruction that fits their learning styles.

There is no one technique or set of techniques that works for everyone. Every student has a different style of learning. In a classroom of 30 students, you may have 30 modes of learning. What we need are teachers who can channel all students to their domain and motivate them. It's much more work for the teacher.

T.H.: We need to enhance teacher education programs to help teachers become facilitators for student learning. Also, the math curriculum may need to include fewer topics to give students enough time to learn each concept thoroughly. This would alleviate the need to spend time on remediation in later grades.

M.H.: In order to raise achievement levels, we must emphasize STEM; we need to put a lot of energy and research into comprehending how to help young people understand math and its applications in everyday life.

The more you understand math, the more you know that every process has a mathematical base. When you understand that math is the basis of everything, it unlocks your potential, and there's no limit to where you can go and what you can do.

2008 MDF Fellows Meeting

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cession and its impact on world financial markets. Gyimah-Brempong defined a recession as a business cycle contraction or general slowdown in a country's economic activity over a sustained period of time. During recessions, production, as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP); employment; investment spending; capacity utilization; household incomes and business profits decrease drastically.

Over the last three quarters, all reliable indicators showed the American GDP declining by 6%, unemployment climbing to nearly 8%, stock investments and stock values decreasing rapidly, and a substantial slowdown in consumer spending,

Like many economists, Gyimah-Brempong attributes this current recession to actions taken to control the money supply. When the Federal Reserve reduced the prime interest rate to increase the money supply, the price of goods and services increased, precipitating a domino effect of increased inflation, reduced spending, decreased demand for goods and services, and declining profits. The Reserve thus tipped the delicate balance of money supply, interest rates, and inflation and forced the economy to correct itself.

Gyimah-Brempong presented data which showed that businesses then attempted to stabilize profits and earn enough to cover fixed costs by cutting production, employees, hours, and benefits. These cost reduction measures led to a decline in GDP, employment, con-

sumer spending, and consumption.

Mortgage Crisis and Declining Stock Market

Mr. H. Parker Evans, the Vice President and Senior Portfolio Manager with the Tampa Bay office of Fifth Third Private Bank, reported that the increased inflation led to significant crises in the housing market. As the price of houses escalated and unemployment rates increased, the demand for housing declined, leading to a reduction in the value of real estate and an increase in the rate of foreclosures. For the first time in many regions of the United States, mortgage debt exceeded owners' equity in their properties.



Mr. Parker Evans

According to Evans, rising prices for housing, oil, food, and other staples fueled inflation and created a market imbalance. In the late spring of 2007, when the market began to rebalance itself, it sent the United States into recession led by a stock market meltdown.

Evans concluded his presentation by advising the audience to maintain a well diversified investment portfolio in order to minimize losses and maximize gains. Successful investing requires designing, implementing, and maintaining a long-term investment strategy based on an individual's unique needs. Though no one knows what will happen in financial markets in the next week, month, or year, everyone needs to invest for the future, and proper asset allocation helps manage investments in uncertain times.

Solutions and Charges to McKnight Fellows and Research Universities

Dr. Melvin Stith, the Dean of the Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University, delivered the keynote address during the Annual McKnight Fellow's luncheon. Dr. Stith indicated that America is in a period of great transformation, and now is the time to implement a truly sustainable and renewable

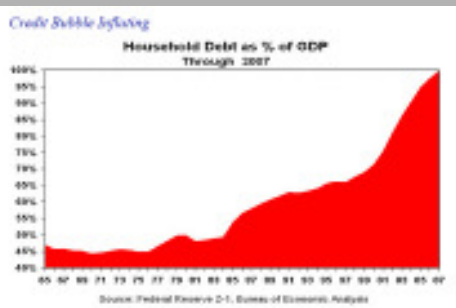
solution to the economic crisis. He agreed with popular calls for the United States to create more jobs, repair infrastructure, guarantee urban renewal, develop green energy manufacturing, and fund ecological technologies to reduce environmental pollution.

He also issued an important caveat: as policies based upon the principle of free market fundamentalism helped create the current economic crisis, a sustainable recovery plan will require oversight; risk management; and transparent, real time accounting, banking, reporting, regulation, and review. The United States can no longer allow corporate greed and the desire to maximize profits to interfere with necessary governmental regulation on behalf of the public good.

In closing, Dr. Stith reminded McKnight Fellows that, to effect positive change in a dynamic world, they must seek solutions to world problems, including the economic crisis. The fundamental purpose of the academy is to develop future world leaders and advisors. Increasingly, universities must emphasize curricula and activities that challenge students to look and think globally. They and we as scholars must strive for excellence by connecting to ideas, problems and professions. As we seek solutions to today's problems, we must understand and adapt to change and not fear it.



Dr. Melvin Stith



USF McKnight Doctoral Fellow Yelenis Herrera's Research Combats Stroke

According to the American Heart Association, stroke is the third leading cause of death in America, killing 160,000 people each year, and the leading cause of adult disability. On average, someone in the United States suffers a stroke every 45 seconds; and every 3 to 4 minutes, someone dies.

Aside from the financial burden, billions of dollars in lost work hours, hospitalization, and survivor care, the major cost of stroke is the loss of independence that occurs in 30% of survivors who find themselves dependent on family members and/or strangers.

Stroke can happen to anyone at any time, regardless of race, sex or age. A stroke occurs when a blood clot blocks an artery or

control, such as being over age 55, male, and African American, having diabetes, and having a family history of stroke. Stroke prevention involves minimizing certain risk factors by controlling high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, tobacco abuse, and diabetes.

Currently, tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) is the most widely used form of treatment for stroke, where clot-busting drugs work to reverse the stroke, but must be administered within three hours of stroke onset. Scientists have not found a drug that can treat the disease after three hours. University of South Florida McKnight Doctoral Fellow Yelenis Herrera researches to discover such a drug. FEF Publications Manager Rachael Nickie recently spoke with Herrera to discuss her progress and future plans.

FEF: Why did you decide to focus your Ph.D. research specifically on ischemic stroke?

Herrera: My family has a history of strokes, and I wanted to prevent others from experiencing the heartache of watching a loved one lose the ability to speak and become immobile. Two of my

uncles died from strokes, and my grandmother takes blood thinners to prevent stroke. I did not see myself as a medical doctor, treating patients, but I knew I could contribute scientifically by finding cures or treatments.

FEF: How will your research impact society?

Herrera: The hypothesis of my research is that sigma receptor

ligands, the type of drugs I study, potentially can be used for stroke therapy. They appear to activate sigma receptors, which in turn maintain normal ionic balances and prevent the influx of calcium that typically enters the brain after ischemic stroke, killing neurons necessary to the central nervous system.

I hope the drugs I have been testing can be used to treat the disease even after three hours of stroke onset. The name of the sigma receptor ligand I've worked with most is carbetapentane (CBP), which activates the sigma-1 receptor subtype. I have performed a number of *in vitro* experiments with cells. So, the next step is to try this drug *in vivo* in a rat model of stroke at different time points to determine whether we can obtain neuroprotection after three hours of onset and at even later points.

FEF: How has your upbringing shaped who you are today?

Herrera: I was born and raised in Cuba by parents who instilled in me great morals and family values. It was tough growing up in a communist country, and, after my twelfth birthday, my parents decided to emigrate so my brother and I could experience freedom and a better life, including a chance to earn an education.

Moving to the U.S., leaving family, friends and my culture behind, was most difficult, but my family's support helped me through. To this date, I keep a promise to myself that I will strive everyday to make my parents proud and earn the best education possible so they feel their decision was worth it. This promise will be fulfilled the day I graduate with my Ph.D.*



MDF Fellow Yelenis Herrera

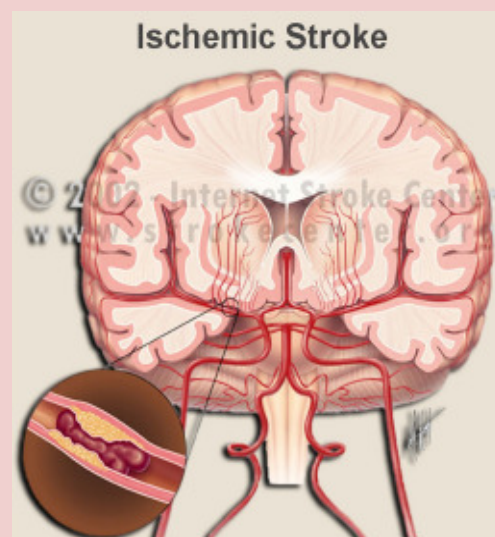
FEF: Once you complete your Ph.D., what are your plans?

Herrera: My short-term goals are to continue to further my research knowledge as a post-doctoral fellow.

I want to explore different research areas and learn as many techniques as possible. My goal is to use a comprehensive approach, which incorporates molecular biology and pharmacology as well as biochemical and physiological techniques, to study neuroscience-related diseases.

FEF: The FEF encourages Doctoral Fellows to teach at the college level. Is that a part of your plan?

Herrera: My long-term objective is to become a first-rate cardiovascular and neuroscience researcher in a medical school setting. As a professor, I plan to teach students in the classroom and in the lab. I want to share my knowledge and enthusiasm for research with others and help future students achieve their scientific career goals. My long term goals are raising a family and becoming a full professor in my own lab, influencing the lives and work of many graduate students.



Source: Internet Stroke Center

when a blood vessel breaks, either of which event interrupts blood flow to the brain, kills cells, and causes brain damage. Ischemic strokes account for almost 88% of all strokes and are caused by clots or other blockages within arteries leading to the brain.

Although everyone possesses some stroke risk, a few risk factors are beyond a person's con-

*On February 27, 2009, Dr. Yelenis Herrera graduated with her Ph.D. in Medical Sciences from the University of South Florida and accepted a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Texas, where she continues her neuroscientific research.

NAS State President Tavarus Andrews

When Tavarus Andrews joined the National Achievers Society (NAS) eight years ago, he did so solely to further secure his footing on the college track. He didn't know then that NAS and the South Florida Center of Excellence (SFCOE) would also help mold him into the exemplary leader and community servant he is today. He could not have known then that, utilizing skills, motivation, and discipline honed at home, church, NAS and the SFCOE, he, as 2008-2009 statewide NAS President, would help make NAS the strongest it has ever been.



NAS State President Tavarus Andrews at the 2009 Leadership Meeting

He has done so both statewide and locally, where he currently also presides over the South Florida NAS chapter. SFCOE Director Ms. Kathy-Ann Lewis says, "Tavarus' leadership competence and mature decision-making ability set him apart from other students his age."

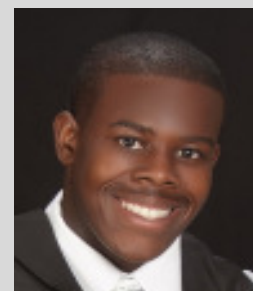
Andrews recently displayed those characteristics as he shared suggestions for increasing student participation and fundraising with COE directors at their quarterly meeting and with other NAS members at the biannual NAS Leadership Meeting. Among other suggestions, he recommended a peer mentorship program, an annual teen networking session, a NAS Alumni Association, and a NAS web page to promote more student communication. Andrews believes, through more interaction and joint projects, NAS can grow stronger and empower NAS members to better assist in building sustainable local communities.

Currently, Achievers across the State spend many hours working in those communities, and Andrews is no exception. For the past three years, he has volunteered at Cedars Medical Center in Miami, delivering medicine and supplies to the nursing staff. "Volunteering at the Center has increased my level of empathy for people in need. Knowing I make a difference in people's daily lives gives me a sense of satisfaction that money could not buy," says Andrews.

Andrews also participates in SFCOE group community projects as well as other activities. For six years, he competed on an SFCOE Math Brain Bowl team, serving as captain the last five years. He annually led his team to the State championship finals where they twice emerged as victors. "The SFCOE is like a second home to me," Andrews says. "The staff and activities have helped me develop myself as a leader

and pushed me to fulfill my goals."

At school, one such goal is to excel as the consummate scholar-athlete. He does so by maintaining a 4.7 GPA in the International Baccalaureate (IB)



Tavarus Andrews

program, while playing guard and tackle on the football team and throwing discus and shot-put on the track team. He also serves as Sergeant at Arms of the Sigma Beta Club, sponsored by Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, and steps on its Step Team.

When asked how he manages and succeeds with each of his many responsibilities, Tavarus credits his mother, who advises and motivates him; his family, who set high expectations; and his mentor. "My uncle is my mentor. We talk about life and he shares his experiences with me. Somehow his words always seem to correspond with the particular circumstances I'm facing at the time. His words encourage me, and I live my life according to his advice."

After graduating from high school in June, Andrews plans to attend either Hampton University on a full merit-based scholarship or the University of Central Florida on the Bright Futures Scholarship. He will pursue a career in either the medical or engineering field.

FEF Hosts NAS Leadership Meeting



NAS State VP Jasmine Holmes

In March 2009, NAS leaders from each of the COE's signed up to attend the FEF's 2009 NAS Leadership Meeting. Students traveled to Tampa to meet with FEF staff and South Florida COE Director Ms. Kathy-Ann Lewis, who served as guest facilitator for the day.

The group engaged in hands-on team building and leadership training activities and discussed strategies for strengthening NAS. All leaders pledged to work with their local directors and FEF staff to encourage more eligible members to participate in NAS and attend the April 18, 2009, and future NAS State Summits.

The Leadership Meeting agenda reinforced and built on progress made in regional conferences held earlier this academic year.



NAS State Treasurer Matthew Desir

Centers from South Florida convened on Saturday, November 8, 2008, at a retreat hosted by the South Florida Center, under the direction of Ms. Kathy-Ann Lewis, on Florida International University's South Campus. Twenty-five NAS members from the South Florida and Palm Beach County COE's participated. Conference workshops included an ethical choices inventory, leadership training sessions, and team building activities.

On January 10, 2009, Centers from the I-10 corridor met at the annual I-10 Connection Conference in Lake City, Florida, hosted by the North



2009 NAS Leadership Meeting. Top Row (from left): Stephanie Brown, Tavarus Andrews, Matthew Desir, and Jamual Thomas. Bottom Row (from left): Jasmine Holmes, Bridgett Walker, Lynze Booker, and Wesley Dixon

Florida Center of Excellence, under the direction of Ms. Gloria McIntosh. Ninety-five elementary, middle, and high school students and their parents from the North Florida, Santa Fe College and Tallahassee Coalition COE's participated in the meeting's college preparation and leadership skills workshops.

Lincoln High School's Trojans Continue Their 24-Year Winning Legacy



The 2006 Brain Bowl Champs pose with trophies in front of the Lincoln Trojan.

First formed twenty-four years ago, the Lincoln High School (Tallahassee) Brain Bowl team has achieved a remarkable history of excellence in local and statewide History and Culture Brain Bowl competitions.

Locally, under the direction of 18-year coach Mr. Levon Terrell, the

Lincoln High Trojans have won seventeen Big Bend Brain Bowl championships, their last in 2007, and three FEF State History and Culture championships for triumphs in 1998, 2006, and 2008.

Coach Terrell retired after the 2008 win, passing the reigns to protegee Ms. Audrey Smith, who served with him as Assistant Coach for seven years.

Following Terrell's lead, Coach Smith recruits team members from the Lincoln High Brain Bowl Club, one of the oldest clubs on Lincoln's campus. The Club holds an interest meeting each fall and selects only underclassmen who demonstrate willingness to sacrifice the many hours necessary to prepare to compete and maintain the Team's winning legacy.

Once the Team prevails at State and underclassmen

Team members win college scholarships, they may no longer compete on the Team. However, many remain active to advise new members.

Twins Darian and Darius Hand are notable examples. They have helped Lincoln teams prepare since their big win as freshmen in 2006. "My brother and I attend every practice and drill the Team on the material," said Darian. "We enjoy it, feel privileged to help, and are grooming others to take on our

advisory roles once we leave" said Darius.

In June, Darian and Darius will follow another Trojan tradition when they graduate and go on to attend college on Brain Bowl scholarships. For over twenty years, almost all Lincoln High team members have graduated and enrolled in colleges and universities, a number on four-year scholarships won at the FEF State Competition.



2008 Champion Lincoln High Trojans. Left to right: Coach Levon Terrell, Stenza Daniels, Jasmine Gray, Rasheeta Turner, Jazmyne Simmons, Sierra Robinson, Amber Barnes, and Assistant Coaches Maria Riles and Audrey Smith.

The FEF Annual Mathematics Brain Bowl Competition

Since 2001, students in grades 6 through 8, 9 and 10, and 11 and 12 have competed in the three levels of the FEF's Mathematics Brain Bowl. At each level, teams consisting of five members work together to solve challenging problem questions written in FCAT or SAT format and designed to enhance both computational skill and performance on standardized tests. Questions cover all five



MDF Fellow Carol Williams, far left, and MDF Fellows Quenton Bonds and Tony Price, in orange, officiate at the 2008 Math Brain Bowl.

Florida Sunshine State Standards mathematical strands equally (number sense and operations; measurement; geometry and spatial sense; algebraic thinking, and data analysis and probability).

After seven to nine months of training and preparation, led by a certified math teacher or applied math professional, teams test their skills at the State double elimination tournament, where a number of FEF McKnight

Doctoral Fellows serve as official proctors and scorers. Depending on the level of competition, winning teams receive four-year college and cash scholarships, a three-night, all expense paid trip to central Florida, gift cards, trophies and other prizes.



2008 Math Brain Bowl Competitors

FEF Sample Question

A street vendor sells two types of newspapers, one for 25 cents and the other for 40 cents. If she sold 100 newspapers for \$28.00, *how many newspapers did she sell at 25 cents?*

Mathematics Brain Bowl Competition

FEF Sample Question

In this rectangular coordinate system, if the area of right triangle *ABC* is 24, *what are the coordinates of point B?*

Mathematics Brain Bowl Competition

FEF Sample Question

In the figure, the smaller circle is inscribed in the square and the square is inscribed in the larger circle. If the length of each side of the square is *s*, *what is the ratio of the area of the larger circle to the area of the smaller circle?*

Mathematics Brain Bowl Competition

COE Director of the Year Mr. James Green Teaches Empowerment Through Education

If the FEF presented an award for the most improved Center of Excellence (COE), the award would go to the Palm Beach County COE, under the leadership of Mr. James Green. Green joined the Urban League of Palm Beach County (ULPBC) in October 2006 as the Director of Youth and Education and the COE. Since then, the Center has built a thriving National Achievers Society (NAS), inducting 120 new members, installing productive student officers, and recruiting a dedicated parent advisory board. His hard work has earned much recognition and, in December 2008, led his Fellow COE directors to select him as the 2008-2009 COE Director of the Year.



COE Director James Green

Green enjoys sharing his passion for educating young minds and hopes to expand opportunities within his department. He is making that possible by procuring significant additional funding and building relationships with local law enforcement, churches, community agencies, and schools.

"As his supervisor, I have witnessed James display sincere dedication to help disadvantaged youth and their families overcome barriers. James has a warm personality and is always eager to find a solution to a problem no matter the odds. He exemplifies the culture and values the Urban League represents," states Theresa Johnson, Vice President of Programs at the ULPBC.

Green received his bachelor's degree in Psychology from Auburn University and currently pursues his master's in Organizational Leadership at Palm Beach Atlantic University. He is a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Leadership Management Initiative, and local Neighborhood Mentoring Program. He aspires one day to own a business, earn a doctorate in Clinical Psychology, and publish a book.



Mr. James Green interacts with NAS members.

Prior to moving to the ULPBC, Green served as a counselor and director for Eckerd Youth Alternatives in Clewiston and West Palm Beach, where he noted a marked difference in the attitudes of students served. "In past positions, I worked with families who showed a lack of regard for education. Needless to say, there weren't many success stories. Working with NAS students is completely different. These kids possess a thirst for learning. You don't have to sell learning to them. They value education and know it equals empowerment," says Green.

"Mr. Green is a rare find. He is able to lead, manage, and motivate staff, parents, and students in a gentle and positive way," says Marie Sanches, Program Coordinator for the COE.

Green was raised in a home where his parents stressed the importance of positivity and lifelong learning and fostered his strong relationship with older brothers who remain his mentors today. He once planned to follow in a brother's footsteps and become an engineer, but his passion to help others learn and achieve took precedence.

In May 2008, one hundred and sixty-one (161) Achievers and Believers graduated from high schools across the State of Florida. Of those graduates, one hundred and fifty-one (151) or ninety-four percent (94%) have enrolled in institutions of higher learning, with seventy-five percent (75%) of those attending 4-year colleges or universities, twenty-three percent (23%) at 2-year colleges, and two percent (2%) at technical schools. The vast majority, eighty-eight percent (88%), chose to study at Florida schools, while twelve percent (12%) matriculate at universities outside the State.

FEF's 2008 National Achiever/Believer Society Graduates

Since 1985, through the Centers of Excellence (COE's), the FEF has acknowledged, rewarded and supported selected Florida students in grades 3 through 12 who achieve academic excellence. Each year, the COE's induct eligible students into the National Achievers Society (NAS) and sponsor activities geared to enhance and ensure their academic progress, college preparation and community involvement.

In 2000, the FEF created a related group, the Believers Society, to recognize and assist students who do not meet NAS' stringent grade point average requirements but show steady scholastic improvement and a desire to excel. By encouraging this "academic determination," the FEF believes it can help Believers become Achievers.



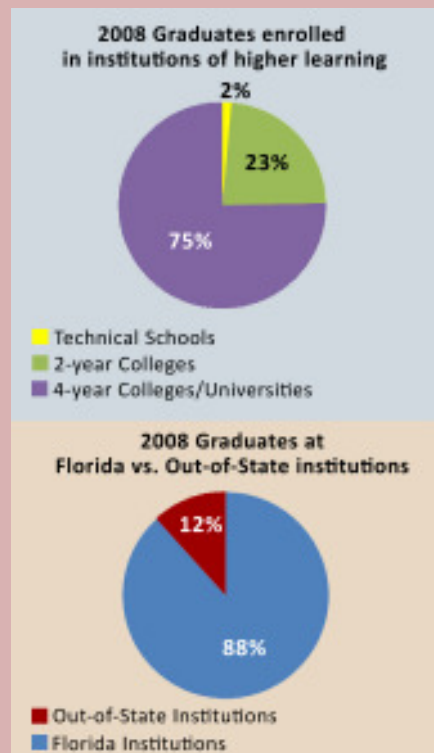
2008 Graduate Miguel Bravo - North Florida COE



2008 Graduate Meeka Houston - South Florida COE



2008 Graduate Nester James - Tallahassee Coalition COE



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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 FEF programs, please call 813-272-2772.

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