

# Spectrum

## Welcome to Spectrum!

It is truly my pleasure to introduce the first issue of Spectrum. This newsletter will be published quarterly and will serve as a source for information about various diversity initiatives at the college and in the community.

For many years Greenville Technical College has held various diversity programs on its campuses. Over the last few years, we increased our efforts in equal employment, affirmative action and diversity and saw great benefits. To continue to build on this success and to be more responsive to the needs of our faculty, staff, students and the community, Greenville Technical College recently hired me as vice president of administration, diversity and community Affairs. I am truly excited about the potential impact that our efforts can have on this area.

As we compete more and more in a global market, diversity is continuing to increase in importance to progressive communities. Our ability to appropriately address the various aspects of diversity will impact our overall attractiveness to businesses and industries looking for a community that can meet workforce demands and provide a healthy environment for the families of potential employees. Greenville Technical

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## Call Me Mister Program

The Call Me Mister Program is a collaboration between Clemson University and four historically black colleges (Benedict College, Claflin University, Morris College, South Carolina State University, and Clemson University) to recruit, train, certify and secure employment for minority males as elementary teachers in the public schools of South Carolina.

Since 70 percent of African Americans in South Carolina

who obtain a four-year degree go through the technical college system, the Call Me Mister Program realized that this was a logical place to start a program. This fall, the Call Me Mister Program launched at Greenville Tech with six outstanding young men from the Upstate.

## Habitat and Greenville Tech build partnership

Greenville Tech and Habitat for Humanity have been building a working relationship since 1995. That's when Habitat contacted Jay Pearson, Greenville Tech's department head for Building Construction Technology, asking for some help with home construction.

Since then, Pearson, instructor Shane Harvey, and their students have worked on countless homes, providing knowledgeable



assistance with floor systems, framing, trusses, foundations and shingles. This year alone, construction and masonry students have helped with foundations for eight homes and framing for three more. And as they work, they gain practical, hands-on experience that expands on what they've learned in the shop.

Habitat for Humanity's director of construction

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## Victims of Katrina rebuild in the Upstate

The water has receded. The troops have gone home. And much of New Orleans is beginning to rebuild in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, a storm that killed more than 1,000 people in Louisiana in August, 2005. But Lee Sami and his family have no plans to go back.

For now, the lifelong residents of New Orleans are staying in Greenville, where they have made a home since Katrina. Sami says his wife Charlene doesn't think she would ever be able to sleep near water again. It's too risky.

When the hurricane hit, Sami, his wife, and their 3-year-old daughter fled to Jackson, Mississippi, about three hours from home. But when the danger passed they, like many people, returned home. It was around two o'clock the next morning when the levees broke, water reached the tops of their beds, and the family scrambled to get out. They waded over to Lee's mother's house, where they took one of her cars and escaped. Coming back later, they recovered a few items they'd set on high shelves – pictures and a computer – but lost almost everything else.

Their destination was Greenville because Sami has family here. His sister met a man from Greenville during Mardi Gras.



Lee Sami

They later married and had lived in Greenville for eight years when Sami and family came to South Carolina.

Shortly after arriving in Greenville, Sami was riding down Pleasantburg Drive one day when he noticed a crowd of people at Greenville Tech's Admissions and

Registration Center. A college student before the hurricane hit, he had studied Criminal Justice, but at Greenville Tech, he thought the job market for Supply Chain Management sounded promising. Sami will graduate next spring.

Charlene, a Clemson University student earning a master's degree in Secondary Education, has one semester to go before she finishes.

New Orleans, Sami said, will probably never be the same, at least not in his lifetime.

So he and Charlene plan to sell the lot that will remain once their home is demolished. "It was a struggling city prior to the hurricane," he said. "And there's a lot of work to do."

The family, which now numbers four since a baby was born April 29, is making a home in the Upstate.

"I'm not going back to New Orleans," he said. "That's it. We've decided to stay up here."

## Dawkins joins Greenville Tech staff



Greenville Tech has appointed Richard Dawkins as interim community affairs coordinator.

Dawkins comes to the college with a background in community service, having spent eight years working with churches and community groups in the Upstate. He hosted the No.1 gospel show on WJMZ-FM and more recently served as operation manager for Praise 103.3.

As community affairs coordinator, Dawkins will work with churches, agencies, and businesses to establish GED, Employment Readiness and other programs for the community.

He will report to Curtis Harkness, vice president for administration and diversity. "We are excited about the experience that Richard Dawkins brings to Greenville Tech," Harkness said. "His efforts will ensure we continue to be the college that works with our community."

## Welcome (continued from front)

College recognizes the importance of providing education for a racially and ethnically diverse population, and for preparing its students for a diverse world. Therefore, the institution is committed to developing and implementing a comprehensive diversity program, and I am excited to be a part of it and to use this newsletter as a communication tool to assist with our goals. I truly hope that you enjoy the first and future issues of Spectrum.



Curtis Harkness

## Godfrey finds niche in Occupational Therapy program

It wasn't until Rusty Godfrey took his aunt, then in her 60s, for occupational therapy following a stroke, that he realized what the profession was all about. Before that, like many people, he thought occupational therapy involved finding someone a job.

He soon realized that occupational therapy involves teaching people to live as independently as they wish and that the word "occupation" in the job title refers to any activity in which a person engages, not just work.

Once he saw how much interaction there was with the patient, he realized that this was a career he would enjoy. At the time, Rusty was working what he calls a dead-end construction job. He and his wife decided that while he was in school, he would work at a convenience store to supplement her income. Now he waits on construction workers from behind the register and is thankful that he is heading in a new direction.

"You can tell with some of those construction guys that there's no fire in the eyes," he said. "It's such hard work and there's no guarantee of any jobs. With a health care field, I hate to say anything's guaranteed, but I feel secure with the field I chose."

The father of three says his children wonder why he spends his weekends doing homework, especially since they still have a fairly light load. "They'll be watching TV, and they'll see me in the room for hours doing homework, and they think it's kind of funny," the dean's list student said. "At some point, too, they think it's kind of cool."

When Rusty enrolled in the Occupational Therapy Assistant program,

he found himself the only male in a class of females. Since then, he has seen statistics indicating that the profession is 92 percent female and only eight percent male. Once he graduates and establishes himself, he would like to encourage other men to consider the field.

"I hope to influence more males to enter the program," he said. "I think it would benefit everybody. When you have such disparity on one side, it kind of hinders the profession. When people hear occupational therapy, they think I'm trying to find somebody a new job. It needs to be clarified. Once it is clarified, I think more males will go into it. Occupational Therapy is a great career for anyone who enjoys helping people and seeing them make progress toward recovery and independence."

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## Simpson pursues her dream through Greenville Tech

Shanika Simpson makes excellent grades in the Criminal Justice program at Greenville Tech. She's vice president of the Student Government Association, involved in a whole host of activities including heading up the college's March of Dimes fundraising effort.

She's busy with her church, driving home to Seneca every weekend to attend services. And she works about 20 hours a week at K-Mart.

It's a busy schedule, but one that she seems to manage with

ease. Her mother died when Simpson was just 11, and ever since, she's been goal-oriented. "When I set a goal, I try to accomplish it," she said. "I don't settle."

Her ultimate goal is to become a defense lawyer. So in January, she'll head to Anderson College to complete a bachelor's degree in an accelerated, year-and-a-half format. Then she plans to work in probation and parole, believing that she can help people who need a second chance.

Shanika shares an apartment with twin sister Takeesha, also a Greenville Tech student and also very involved with school activities. Living on their own, they value education and feel the need to achieve something wherever they are. "I found Student Government because I wanted to get more involved." Shanika said. "I've always been active. Going from school to work is hard, but I always do the best that I can."

## Community college graduate uses her story as a teaching tool

To be human!



Dianne Chidester uses many methods to capture the attention of her anthropology and sociology students. One teaching tool is sharing with them that she changed her life through education. At the age of 39, the one-time college dropout returned, attended a community college, and from there went on to earn a bachelor's and a master's degree.

It was a decision she made after the surgeon she worked for decided to retire and she realized that in order to get a good job, she would need a college education. The surgeon had decided at age 65 to attend

law school, and he encouraged Chidester to go back to school as well. "That's the kind of role model that I had," she said, adding that she still gets e-mails from students who have used that story as inspiration to pursue degrees of their own.

While Chidester relies on her educational background to get the students' attention, she also brings her hobby and the subject of her master's thesis – Middle Eastern dance – into play. This, she says, can be used to demonstrate ways of movement in different cultures and how styles of movement relate to the cultures. Using this dance form, she said, can spark

people's interest in learning more about the culture as well.

She also commands students' attention by making her classroom a place where discussion is welcomed. "There isn't anything I won't talk about, which I think is interesting for some of them" she said. "With anthropology and the study of humans, it's pretty wide open as far as what you can discuss. I have a lot of excitement for my topics, and I think that carries through."

At Greenville Tech for a year now, Chidester enjoys the students and has found her Honors sections to be especially interesting.

"You can kick it up a little bit and go into some areas, especially in the discussions that you don't always get to go into in the other classes," she said.

This semester, all of those tools are coming into play as Chidester teaches IDS 210 for the Honors program. "The topic is creation stories or origin myths. We're connecting how these origin stories affect people's world views. It's proving to be a lot of fun."

## Diversity Task Force meets to address college issues

Greenville Tech's Diversity Task Force, a group of 20 employees working to address diversity issues at the college, has been meeting monthly since December. The group is working to develop a mission statement and to sponsor events that promote diversity.

Dr. Reggie Bruster and Dr. Dianne Chidester, chair and co-chair respectively, have traveled to the University of South Carolina Upstate to look at what that institution is doing regarding diversity on campus. Still, the task force recognizes that each college

and university has different needs. "We're trying to see what others have done and yet make sure that what we do is appropriate for Greenville Tech," said Dr. Bruster, an English professor who chairs the group. "So it's a point of trying to figure out our culture here."

Task Force committees include legal, education, survey and administrative groups. The legal committee, chaired by second-year law student and director of the office of student disability services Sharon Bellwood, is working to define the term

"discrimination" as it applies to Greenville Tech. From there, task force members will find laws that are applicable.

At the Diversity Task Force's June meeting, a film festival was proposed as a way to promote understanding of different cultures, ideas, and lifestyles. English professor, Dr. Kevin Morris, has proposed that the films, free to students and the community, be introduced by someone knowledgeable about the topic in order to put the ideas in context for viewers.

## Dean of students has a background in discipline

A big part of the job is listening to students as they explain what led to a violation of Greenville Tech's student code. Another important part is determining whether discipline is required. For both parts, Brett Young-Gaffney, dean of students at Greenville Tech since February 2006, finds that a 20-year career in the Army Reserves comes in handy.

Gaffney retired from the reserves last year. Initially drawn to serve in the military because of three aunts who served as

role models, she found a few unexpected perks. Gaffney said she enjoyed the challenge, and she liked the uniforms.

Now uniform-free, this wife and mother of a 3-year-old is enjoying having weekends and vacations without obligations to the reserves.

A graduate of Lander University and Clemson University, she came to Greenville Tech in 1986, working in the Admissions Office.

Dealing with behavior issues at a four-campus college with

more than 13,000 students, Gaffney stays busy. Often, she said, students have a lot going on in their lives, and they need for someone to take the time to listen to their concerns. "A lot of the issues that I come across occur when students reach a boiling point and act out their anger. They really just need someone to sit down with them, to listen, and to talk it over with them," she said. "I'm a good listener, and I find that a lot of the discipline I've learned in the military helps me to discipline students here."

## Greenville Tech's James Williams named Golden Apple Teacher of the Year

James Williams, a Developmental Reading instructor at Greenville Tech, was named Golden Apple Teacher of the Year by WYFF-TV on May 16.

Williams, who joined the Greenville Tech faculty in 2000, was nominated by one of his students for a Golden Apple Award, which he received in December 2005. From the recipients of the weekly award given throughout the school year, five finalists were selected. Williams was the only nominee

to come from a post-secondary institution.

A graduate of Florida A&M University, Williams earned a master's degree in education from Clemson University. He has devoted his career to educating young people. Williams, a deacon in the Roman Catholic Church, spent 15 years as an elementary school teacher at St. Anthony Catholic School and several years as an adjunct instructor at Greenville Tech before joining the college faculty full-time.

## Greenville Tech on top in affirmative action

Greenville Tech is ranked number one among state agencies of its size (501 to 1,000 employees) and number one among South Carolina colleges in reaching the goal of Equal Employment Opportunity, according to the Report to the General Assembly released February 1, 2006 by the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission. This ranking is based on the fact that the college met 97.3 percent of its goals for hiring minorities and women. In addition, Greenville Tech ranked higher than the highest ranked performer among agencies of 1,001 employees and up.

## Habitat (continued from front)

Jeff Hommerding says the impact is tremendous. "Having the carpentry and masonry departments help us on our projects is huge," he said. "It's like having an additional staff basically. Every time I call Jay or Shane to see if they can help us out, they

always say 'yeah, no problem.' It's invaluable support."

Hommerding said Greenville Tech students are often able to expand the volunteer base for groups that don't have a large number of people helping with a project. Having instructors oversee their work takes volunteer work to a whole different level.

"Having Jay and Shane out on site is like having an extra site superintendent basically," he said. "Having guys that have some practical experience and know what's going on is also a huge help."

## Greenville Tech and USC Upstate team up to promote global understanding

USC Upstate's "Sociology of Families" students were studying how family life in the United States compares to family life in other countries, and they needed more than textbook materials. Greenville Technical College's English as a Second Language students were seeking ways to practice written English in a real-world context. So the two groups teamed up, joined by an ESL class from USC Upstate, forming the Global Families Program, a way for the students to learn from each other.

Conducted Spring Semester 2006, the Global Families Project brought together 23 USC Upstate students with 23 people from 11 countries. The Sociology students sent questions to the ESL students

once a month for four months on topics ranging from marriage and gender roles to the family and the outside world. ESL students wrote answers to the questions in English and e-mailed their responses back. The USC Upstate Sociology students then used the interviews to write a formal research paper describing family life in another country.

An informal survey conducted at the end of the semester indicated positive response from participants. Suggestions included making the project dual-directional, with ESL students asking questions of their USC Upstate partners and starting the project with a face-to-face meeting. Plans are underway to incorporate suggestions and revamp the partnership for upcoming semesters.

