

# PREVIEW

Newsletter of the College of Arts and Sciences Volume 2, Issue 1

*Fall 2004*



## From The Dean's Desk



### Greetings!

As your newly appointed Dean, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to a new academic year. With half of the semester behind us prior to this publication, it is obvious that the semester is off to a great start. It is an exciting time to be here at Prairie View. We are witnessing the rewards of successful recruiting, planned research projects, quality teaching and service. In the 130-year history of this great university, there has never been a more exciting era. I know we are all pleased to be part of the process. I am

excited about all of the positive possibilities that await each of us.

First, I want to thank the students, faculty and staff of the College of Arts and Sciences and the entire university for the support and words of welcome to me as I assumed the position of Dean. Even though I shall sincerely miss the day-to-day association with my wonderful colleagues in the Department of Music and Drama, I find this new appointment to be one with limitless possibilities for the opportunity to enhance student learning and achievement.

As I reflect upon years past, I often recall my first days here on this campus as a freshman in 1965. The late Dr. T. P. Dooley, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at that time, made compelling remarks to us as each dean was called upon to welcome new students during the freshman orientation assembly. Probably the most impressionable remark was his succinct statement, delivered in his deep, commanding voice: "In the College of Arts and Sciences, we strive for excellence." I vividly recall the tremors in my spine as he spoke those words. I began to ponder if I was worthy of the Prairie View experience; I even wondered if I qualified to be here. Those were downright frightening words to me! I have, however, grown to cherish the message which has remained with me for decades, and now I commend them to each of you.

As your Dean, I constantly observe excellence in our students, faculty and staff. That is what

has kept us productive for so many generations. My hope and prayer is that you will have a very successful year and that every one of us will be continually "Striving for Excellence."



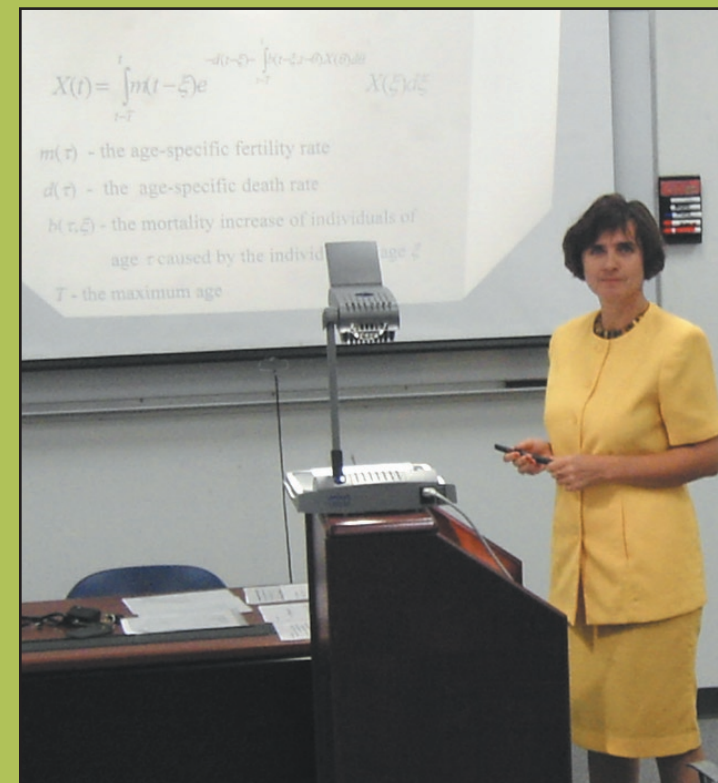
**Dr. Vera King, Professor of Mathematics, received the tenth consecutive Teacher Quality Grant Award (formally the Dwight D. Eisenhower Award in Mathematics &**

**Science) in April 2004. The \$80,000 grant is a 17-month award, supporting the department's in-service and pre-service teacher education program. Dr. King also made presentations at the Conference for the Advancement of Mathematics Teaching (CAMT) in San Antonio, TX. The topic, "The Mapping of Instruction and Learning Experiences," supported the CAMT 2004 theme: Strengthening Texas Through Mathematics." She made presentations on Utilizing Assessment Data To Foster Student Achievement, in July 2004, and at the Business Administration Teaching Conference on Utilizing the Web to Support Instruction, in Houston, TX, in October 2004.**

## Colloquium, Collaboration & the National Science Foundation

### Mathematics

The Department of Mathematics has been pleased to commence its third year of offering a colloquium, which provides a regular forum to discuss scientific issues, proposals, proceedings, and papers, to exchange ideas, and to find new areas of research and teaching collaboration. In the past years, the colloquium has become popular among faculty and students from many different departments and has been brought to national and international levels: last year the colloquium hosted speakers from several American universities and research centers, as well as from Russia, Jamaica, and Australia. All interested parties are welcome to attend the colloquia,



on Tuesdays at 11 a.m., in the W.R. Banks Building, Room 309. Contact the coordinator Dr. Natali Hritonenko ([natalia\\_hritonenko@pvamu.edu](mailto:natalia_hritonenko@pvamu.edu)) for more information.

The National Science Foundation granted a half-million dollar award in June 2004 to PVAMU's Science, Mathematics, Engineering and Technology (SMET) Enhancement Program. The project enhances enrollment, retention rates, and quality of undergraduate education of students studying these four disciplines. Freshmen enrollment in science and technology is up 35% since the program began in 2000. The director of the SMET Enhancement program, Dr. Kelvin Kirby of the College of Engineering, intends that the grant year that commenced September 2004 will emphasize enrolling transfer students.



Dr. Natalia Hritonenko, Associate Professor of Mathematics, was invited by the Université Catholique de Louvain, to provide collaborative research and speak at a special international meeting of Séminaire Economique in June 2004. Dr. Hritonenko presented the invited talk at the Fourth World Congress of Nonlinear Analysts WCNA-2004 in July 2004. She also gave professional talks at the Chancellor's Invitational Conference for The Texas A&M University Systems Academy for Educator Development, in Houston, in June 2004, and at the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, at College Station, in January 2004. Dr. Hritonenko recently published her fourth book Applied Mathematical Modeling of Engineering Problems (Kluwer Academic Publishers).

## Supporting Future Physicians

### Undergraduate Medical Academy

The new Undergraduate Medical Academy (UMA) was created by passage of Texas House Bill 85 and Senate Bill 1009. The initiative aims to increase the number of students optimally prepared for the study of medical sciences in Texas. The UMA will have a unique opportunity to prepare a new generation of health care providers, with the support of committed partnerships. The advisory board for the UMA will include presidents of national medical organizations (AMA and APHA), a former secretary of health, the State Health Commissioner, Medical School Presidents and a former CDC Director and a U.S. Surgeon General.



Dr. Dennis E. Daniels, professor and director of the UMA, joined Prairie View's faculty in spring 2004. In August 2004, Dr. Daniels conducted a forum to introduce new staff and

present an overview of the Academy's origin, purpose, goals, and methods. He noted that the Academy is an intense, specialized program that focuses on readiness for success in medical school. To fulfill this goal, the Academy will offer a summer enrichment program, a new degree program, research opportunities, and test preparation for medical school candidates.

The UMA begins its first semester with eighteen sophomores. The educational experience of these students will be enhanced by a close interface with the medical schools of Texas, mentor/research relationships with faculty, a mini-grand rounds, test-skill enhancement, new

course development (e.g., Human Disease and Epidemiology and Healthcare Among Minorities and the Underserved), scholarships (the 2004 class received \$8,000 each) and a new degree plan.

Already students of the UMA have received certification in the areas of hearing and vision for school age children. This effort will support the service component of the UMA to the City of Prairie View and Waller County. Other service initiatives include the University community via efforts on the UMA web page and the health and wellness campaign (including a CPR certification campaign, and the "eat wisely and exercise" promotion). The goal is to achieve optimal health at the personal, campus and community levels.

## Pre-LIMS Makes Its Case

### Division of SWBPS

Faculty members from the Division of Social Work, Behavioral and Political Science have begun to address the persistent under-representation of ethnic and socio-economic minorities in the legal profession with the establishment of Pre-Law Investment in Mentoring Students (Pre-LIMS). Currently, the U.S. legal profession is over 90% white, and enrollment in law school is 80% white, a disparity that inspired this collaborative effort by PVAMU and the Law School of The University of Texas at Austin. The long-term objectives of Pre-



LIMS include informing a wider variety of PV students of the opportunities, challenges, and advantages of a legal career, improving PV students' chances of admission to law schools, especially by increasing LSAT performance, and enhancing future success of PV alumni in law school. The first effort toward this goal was the creation of the 2004 Summer Pilot Program.

On-campus activities ranged from daily classes and workshops in legal history and constitutional law, led by Dr. Steven Wilson (Assistant Professor of History) and Dr. Anthony Coveny (Assistant Professor of Political Science). Students completed homework including heavy reading, essays, and briefing cases. The program also featured LSAT Preparation and Practice, taught by the Princeton Review. Pre-LIMS hosted visits from the University of Houston Law Center and Dean William C. Powers, Jr. the University of Texas School of Law.

The eight student participants visited a class at the University of Houston Law Center and attended a tour and lunch provided by the

Houston law firm Baker, Botts L.L.P., a visit that resulted in an article about the Pre-LIMS program in the *Houston Business Journal*. The capstone of the summer pilot was a trip to the United States District Court, Southern District of Texas, where students conducted a mock trial competition, with Hon.

Vanessa D. Gilmore, United States District Judge, presiding.

## Bridging the Gap

### Biology

The Summer Scientific Research programs, co-directed by Dr. Gloria Regisford and Dr. Laura Carson, successfully worked towards "bridging the gap" in science education and health disparities. Ten students from the Houston Community College System and seven PV students participated in one of three summer programs: the Bridging the Gap to the Baccalaureate Degree (BGBD); Project EXPORT (Bridging the Gap: Addressing



Environmental Justice through Science); and Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU). Students participated

in laboratory research, attended leadership and GRE workshops, and visited Baylor's Genome Sequencing Center and NASA.

The summer programs culminated in a Research Symposium held at the MSC on August 5, 2004, where the students presented posters of their research findings. Opening remarks were given by Dr. Joahanne Thomas-Smith and Dr. Albert Thompson, Professor of Chemistry at Spelman College, while Dr. Thomas Landefeld, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at California State University, Dominguez Hills, gave the keynote address.



*Improving the Writer, Not Just the Writing*



The Writing Center is entering its second year of operation. Currently staffed by English faculty,

the Center assists students in every academic discipline, whether they are interested in improving their writing skills for term papers, essays, lab reports, personal statements, or resumes. For the fall 2004 semester, Dr. James Palmer, Director of the Writing Center, is training four undergraduate and graduate students in English to work as effective peer-to-peer tutors. Tutors work one-on-one with individual students, and handouts are available on issues ranging from research

citation to sentence style. The Department of Languages and Communications hopes to expand the Center's operational hours in the spring semester, making its services available to even more Prairie View scholars. The Writing Center is located in Hilliard Hall, Room 118.



## Praise for NROTC

### Military Science

Commander Ann Rondeau, a rear admiral in charge of training in the U.S. Navy, recently met with approximately 30 of PVAMU's NROTC officers and students, in an effort to strengthen University-Navy ties, motivate the students, and publicize scholarship opportunities. Cmdr. Rondeau praised the students' commitment to service and advised them to focus, learn to navigate rough waters, and contribute to the team effort. Rondeau stressed the Navy's emphasis on diversity, noting that the "enlisted force is very diverse," while the "officer's corps is not . . . We are still a fairly monochromatic force." Rondeau said this is due in part to the military's history, noting that, with the great demand for engineers, mathematicians, and other technical experts, the U.S. Navy has to compete with industry offering attractive financial rewards. Cmdr. Rondeau suggested that HBCUs are a significant resource for changing things.

PVAMU currently boasts 74 naval scholarship students and college program students and belongs to a local NROTC consortium that includes Houston Baptist, Texas Southern University, Rice, and the University of Houston. PVAMU Professor of Naval Science Capt. Larry J. Watson manages the consortium, which is based at Prairie View and Rice University.

## Faculty Achievements

### Physics



In a ceremony organized for the same Conference, Dr. Kumar received the 2004 Academy for Educator Development Distinguished

Achievement Award, created to celebrate Academy members with significant contributions to education. Dr. Kumar's involvement in the Academy for Educator Development and Academic Roadmap Project led to the reformulation of the physical



science program at PVAMU and the creation of a Science Education Laboratory in the Physics Department. He

also has worked closely with multiple school districts on several issues: state and national standards; implementation issues; relevance of science in the global economy; necessity for increased enrollment in science, mathematics, and engineering; specific details of curricular alignments; and teachers' opportunities for funding and professional development.

**The Department of Physics' manager of laboratories Brian Cudnik has conducted research at the Prairie View Solar Observatory, which has resulted in several recent publications, including "Multi-wavelength CCD Observations of the 15 November 1999 Mercury Transit," Solar Physics 219 (2004): 197-216 and two papers in press at the journal Earth, Moon, and Planets.**

**Dr. A. Anil Kumar and Dr. Orion Ciftja (both of the Physics Department), and Dr. Linda L. Garner (Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling, College of Education), attended the 2004 Chancellor's Invitational Conference for the Texas A&M University System's Academy for Educator Development in Houston (June 24-26). They presented a talk entitled: "A collaborative approach to middle and high school science education via an integrated, interactive learning environment."**

**Dr. Orion Ciftja, Dr. Carlos Wexler (University of Missouri-Columbia) and Cintia M. Lapilli (graduate student, University of Missouri-Columbia) conducted a study of "liquid crystalline states for two-dimensional electrons in strong magnetic fields," which was published in Physical Review, B 69, 125320 (2004).**

### Grants Chemistry

The Department of Chemistry has received the following Research Grants:

\$ 247,743 NSF Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) grant for the acquisition of a 400 MHz NMR Spectrometer.

\$ 75,000 Welch Foundation departmental grant over three years.

\$ 175,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to support research in chemistry and chemical engineering departments, as a part of the partnership with the NSF-funded Center for Environmental Beneficial Catalysis. Other institutional partners in this project are University of Kansas, University of Iowa and Washington State University.

#### New Degree Programs in Chemistry

In addition to the traditional chemistry track, the Department of Chemistry now offers the following two new bachelors degree options: Biomedical Science, for students interested in pursuing training in the medical field and Forensic Science, for students interested in careers in crime laboratories and applications in chemistry.

### Performance Music & Drama

Dr. John Cornelius of the Department of Music and Drama was recently honored for contributions to new works for the lyric theater. Several selections were recently featured as part of the Kennedy Center's Page to Stage Festival in Washington, DC. This was Dr. Cornelius' third participation in the festival, which highlights works-in-progress as they develop from the writing process into fully-realized stage productions. Dr. Cornelius is also the recipient of an Individual Artist Fellowship from the Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County (CACHH) for the year 2004.

Jeff Freeman, Assistant Professor of Low Brass, performed with Austinbones on October 21, 2004, in the Hobart-Taylor Music Recital Hall. Austinbones is a Trombone Quartet founded in Austin, Texas, that emphasizes both performing and teaching (visit the web at <http://www.austinbones.com>). On October 26, Mr. Freeman performed a Faculty Recital featuring unaccompanied works for the trombone.

#### PV Debate Winners

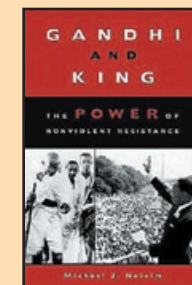
**The Department of Languages & Communications is proud to announce the PV Debate Team winners from the University of Houston Nov. 5-7 tournament: Tiffany Turner 3<sup>rd</sup> in Open Division; Megan Goodwin 2<sup>nd</sup> in Novice division and Laura Cochran 1<sup>st</sup> in Novice Impromptu Speaking**

### Gandhi & King Political Science



Dr. Michael Nojeim, associate professor of Political Science, has recently published the book *Gandhi and King: The Power of Nonviolent Resistance*

(Greenwood/Praeger, 2004). Reviewers have noted that the writing style likely will enhance the book's usefulness in courses on nonviolence. Moreover, Dr. Nojeim believes that no other book has sought to cover both Mahatma Gandhi and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Based on his authorship of the book, Professor Nojeim was invited to be a plenary speaker at the Gandhi Institute's conference on nonviolence, to be held in Memphis, Tennessee, on October 8-9, 2004. Dr. Nojeim's current book project, *Days of Decision: Milestones in U.S. Foreign Policy*, is due January 2006.



In an interview, Dr. Nojeim said that his students inspire much of his academic work. "My research and scholarship has always flowed from my teaching," he said. "Before I came to Prairie View, I taught a course on nonviolent resistance and this book was meant to service my students in that course."

### Prairie View Welcomes the Following New Faculty:

Harry Adams, Philosophy  
Hua-Jun Fan, Chemistry  
Kenneth Howell, History  
Ricjuane Jenkins, Music and Drama  
Daniel Kendie, History  
Joy L. Marshall, Biology  
Felix Moore, Music and Drama  
Jennifer Saxton, Music and Drama  
Mohammed A. Shayib, Mathematics  
Kevin Storr, Physics  
Major Carol Strong, Army ROTC  
Darryl Thompson, Music and Drama  
Corey W. Turner, Biology  
Deirdre Vaden, Biology



**Dr. Artemesia Stanberry, new to the university as an assistant professor of political science, recently published an article, "Capitol Hill Report: The Domestic Agenda," in Government and Politics Journal, Vol. II, 6th edition, 65-70.**



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Original cover art created using photographs of the Prairie View A&M Campus at different times of the day and throughout different seasons of the year. Thanks to our *Photojournalism* students for contributing their images.