

Office for Diversity Programs Newsletter

Engineering Extravaganza to be held during LSU Day



April 24, 2010—Louisiana State University will celebrate its sesquicentennial with "LSU Day." The University will open its doors to the public for a free, fun-filled day of exploration and discovery, highlighted by performing arts showcases, tours, and exhibitions showing off LSU's history in all its purple and gold glory. Staged on the LSU campus, including the Quadrangle, Patrick F. Taylor Hall and Parade Grounds, the day of events will highlight LSU's achievements in engineering, athletics, research, the arts, academics and community outreach; and will provide a sneak peek of what this world-class institution has to offer.

As part of LSU's 150 commemoration, we are proud to invite students, alumni, faculty, staff, citizens, and representatives of Louisiana to explore and experience first-hand the benefits of Louisiana's flagship public research university. With more than 200 experiences, LSU Day has activities for all ages and interests. Bring your family and stay the day. Explore the campus, eat and play.

If you or someone you know is thinking about attending LSU or just interested in learning about our programs, then this event is for you. If you graduated from LSU and are looking to reconnect with your alma mater, stop by and let us know what you've been up to! See all the ways LSU has grown and changed since you were last here.

Engineering Extravaganza: Engineering Transforms Lives is one of the 200 experiences guests can enjoy. During this annual event, faculty, staff, alumni, and the student body of the College of Engineering will demonstrate various engineering fields with hands-on activities, student projects, and presentations.

Some of the Engineering Extravaganza activities you can view or participate in include: **Canoe Access for People with Disabilities**, see how LSU engineering students designed and built a removable pontoon-stabilized chair with adjustable seat and reclining back as well as a portable ramp system to make loading and unloading the canoe easier for students and caretakers. **Biodiesel Demonstrator**, the "Tiger Truck" converts waste vegetable oil to biodiesel and uses the biodiesel to power the truck and generate power. **Gumdrop Bridges** - learn about structures by designing your own bridges with gumdrops and toothpicks at the LSU Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering booth. **There's even more, stop by and see!**

For additional information please visit the LSU Sesquicentennial website <http://www.lsu.edu/lsu150/lsuday/#>

Diversity Making an Impact on the Community

In the fall of 2009, the College of Engineering's Office for Diversity Programs introduced a new program of service to recruit and inspire the next generation of engineering students. *Diversity Ambassadors* is a student-lead organization that operates to introduce K - 12 school students to the field of engineering and the opportunities it

offers. Vaneshette Henderson, pre-college programs manager, and student leader Glennwick Stewart formed the group of 26 undergraduate and graduate engineering students.

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Upcoming events

- *Diversity Advisory Board Meeting*
April 7, 2010
- *An Innovative Approach to Gender Equity in STEM*
April 21, 2010
- *Engineering Extravaganza*
April 24, 2010
- *Marathon High School Teacher Engineering Awareness Program*
June 7-12, 2010 8:00 am-5:00 pm
- *Recruiting into Engineering High Ability Multi-Cultural Students (REHAMS) residential camp*
June 13 - 19, 2010
- *Xploration Camp Inspiring Tomorrow's Engineers (XCITE) residential camp for girls*
July 11 - 17, 2010

For more information visit <http://www.eng.lsu.edu/diversity>

"Making an impact not just an impression"

Meet the Office for Diversity Programs



Kelly A. Rusch, PhD, PE
Associate Dean



Sarah Jones
College Programs



Vaneshette Henderson
Pre-College Programs



Akilah Taylor
Faculty Programs &
Development



Tira Ishikawa
Administrative
Coordinator

Sharon Cole Joins College of Engineering Hall of Distinction

Sharon Cole, site director of Dow, will be inducted into the LSU Engineering Hall of Distinction on Thursday, April 8, at the LSU Faculty Club.

In 1979, the College of Engineering established the Hall of Distinction to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the engineering profession. Criteria for election include distinguished professional achievement, dedicated service to engineering, and outstanding humanitarian activities. Eligibility is not limited to LSU alumni, although it is expected that nominees will have had some connection with, and shown interest in, LSU.

Cole will join the ranks of previous Hall of Distinction honorees. Generally, two achievers in engineering have been added each year. A graduate of LSU, Cole received a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering in 1981. She also completed the executive education program at Babson University School of Business in 1997.

Sharon Cole leads Dow's mammoth Plaquemine site, a 3,000-employee division with 23 plants, one of the state's largest petrochemical facilities. When she arrived at Dow 27 years ago, there were few female engineers, much less ones in leadership positions. "But women have come of age in engineering," she says, adding that Dow has been a bellwether with pro-family policies that benefit women and men juggling to meet work-life demands. Cole has served as a mentor, formally and also informally, to the growing number of women at Dow, and has led its women's network, one of several affinity groups with the company.

Cole serves as a Governor Jindal Appointee for the Louisiana



Innovation Council. She also serves on several executive boards including the Louisiana Chemical Association, LSU Engineering Diversity Advisory, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, Baton Rouge Chamber, and the Greater Baton Rouge Industry Alliance.

She has received the Louisiana Chemical Association Joe MacKenzie Award as the Most Valuable Player and has been a featured executive in BIC Publishing's Industry Achievers Publication and in Baton Rouge's "The Advocate" New Year Economic Outlook. Cole was also granted the Baton Rouge Business Report's Influential Woman in Business Award.

In the past, the engineers elected to the Hall of Distinction have come from widely varied backgrounds from the highest levels of engineering research to the top management of multinational corporations.

Diversity Making an Impact on the Community continued



Members of the Diversity Ambassadors and students at Bethany Christian Academy

The Diversity Ambassadors are comprised of students from several different engineering disciplines, but more importantly, from diverse backgrounds. It is the diversity in the group that allows the students to be successful in their efforts to increase awareness and recruit underrepresented students into engineering.

The mission of the *Diversity Ambassadors* is to:

- Increase diversity in Engineering
- Increase interest in science, technology, engineering, and math related fields
- Positively serve and impact the community
- Provide positive role models for minority and female K-12 students

In an effort to decrease Louisiana's high school dropout rates, through engineering awareness, the *Diversity Ambassadors* group encourages K - 12 school students to become engineers by visiting schools in the Baton Rouge community. *Diversity Ambassadors*

serve as role models, mentors, and tutors while conducting engineering demonstrations, hands-on activities and discipline talks.

So far, the *Diversity Ambassadors* have held discipline talks at Scotlandville Magnet and Bethany Christian Academy. During both visits, the *Diversity Ambassadors* provided the audience with information about the various fields of engineering, while also answering questions about college entrance exams, scholarships, and the college experience. In the upcoming weeks, the *Diversity Ambassadors* are scheduled to conduct engineering demonstrations at Istrouma High School and to return to Bethany Christian Academy for a second visit.

The positive impact provided by the *Diversity Ambassadors* does not only apply to K-12 students, it also applies to its members. The group members earn valuable experience that will help them in their professional and leadership development and in their future engineering careers. Gilbert Guerrero, an industrial engineering junior, says, "My affiliation with the Diversity Ambassadors allows me the opportunity to share my knowledge of engineering, and it helps me cultivate the necessary skills that I need to succeed in a professional work environment. This experience assists me in enhancing my teamwork, leadership, and communication skills--all of which are vital to being successful."

Alumna Claire Cagnolatti Promoted to Vice President

After 15 years of service at Solomon Associates, LSU alumna Claire Cagnolatti has been promoted to vice president of Chemical Studies. Cagnolatti received a BS in Chemical Engineering in 1978, and her MBA in 1982, both from LSU. Solomon Associates stands as the top performance improving company for the world energy industry. In her role as vice president of Chemical Studies, Cagnolatti will lead the company's dependable benchmarking studies in chemical manufacturing, as well as participating in individual consultations with petrochemical and refining clients.

When asked about the role LSU played in preparing for her career, Cagnolatti replied, "My degrees from LSU gave me a unique perspective. I was able to see and understand both the technical side and the business side of the chemical industry in which I worked." She went on to say, "I surely didn't imagine that a girl from Gonzales, Louisiana, would be traveling the world advising the petrochemicals manufacturing companies around the world on how to improve their performance, nor did I ever dream I would be speaking at conferences and seminars around the globe. But that is exactly where my LSU degrees and my career have taken me."



Claire Cagnolatti

With almost three decades of experience in the chemical/petrochemical manufacturing industry, Cagnolatti is a valuable addition to the management of Solomon Associates. Before joining this company in 1994, she worked for 14 years in chemical and petrochemical plant operations for such companies as Occidental Chemical Company, Allied Corporation, and Stauffer Chemical Company. Since 2002, Cagnolatti has presented over a dozen technical papers on various topics like energy and greenhouse gas emissions as well as plant maintenance and reliability. She also serves on several committees at LSU, including the Advisory Committees for the COE Office of Diversity as well as the Cain Department of Chemical Engineering. She is the Dallas Regional Committee Chair of the Forever LSU Campaign Cabinet and she is a part of the Band Hall Task Force, which spearheaded the campaign for the new Band Hall at LSU.

College of Engineering joins BP America in Diversity Partnership



BP Representatives talking with Jeffrey Robinson, president of the National Society of Black Engineers

BP America has embarked on a more strategic and targeted approach to develop their diversity pipeline and workforce through several universities and student organizations. In the spring of 2010, the LSU College of Engineering's Office for Diversity Programs and several diversity student organizations were selected to join BP America's Diversity Partnership. BP strategy includes the development of meaningful relationships with student-run organizations, as well as with faculty and the administration. BP has formed a strong strategic partnership with the LSU chapters of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) and the Society of Women Engineers (SWE). BP America has begun to organize and support annual professional and social activities to aid underrepresented engineering students in building professional, leadership and social skills, contributing to their success as engineers and potential BP employees. BP also established ten \$500 textbook scholarships to be awarded during the 2010-2011 academic school year for the LSU College of Engineering underrepresented student body and student organization members.

BP America assessed several schools to pilot their diversity effort. They evaluated the strength of the engineering program, the different disciplines offered, dedicated diversity efforts, and strength

of alumni and recruitment on campus. LSU is one of the four institutions selected across the United States: Georgia Technical Institute, the University of Michigan, and, collectively, three historically black colleges and universities located in the Atlanta, Georgia area: Morehouse College, Spelman College, and Clark Atlanta University. Although BP will continue to target and recruit talented diverse students across the country, there will be a heightened level of attention placed on the selected college campuses.

"We continued to be impressed by the caliber of students and the strength of the diversity programs at LSU as the relationship has deepened over the past few months," Elton Ndoma-Ogar, Diversity and Inclusion Manager for BP America, stated regarding why LSU was chosen. "BP is excited to be a partner with LSU; we are confident that our approach will yield mutually beneficial results for BP and LSU. We commend the Office for Diversity Programs at LSU and look forward to building a strong, healthy, long-term relationship."

The presidents of the student organizations at LSU are honored to partner with BP America to promote diversity. Jeffrey Robinson, electrical and computer engineering senior and president of NSBE, said "BP's partnership will allow NSBE members to create unique relationships with members of BP and foster learning how valuable diversity and inclusiveness is in the engineering workforce."

Dr. Kelly A. Rusch, associate dean for Research and Diversity Programs within the College of Engineering applauds BP's decision to make LSU one of its strategic Diversity Partners. Dr. Rusch believes, "The LSU-BP relationship truly recognizes the strength and breadth of the College's diversity efforts and the commitment of BP in taking a leadership role in diversity hiring practices. The College looks forward to further cultivating this relationship in the future."

Office for Diversity Programs Aid Students

The College of Engineering Office for Diversity Programs is designed to increase the number of diverse undergraduate and graduate students studying engineering at LSU. Since the office was established in 2007, the engineering staff has selected several Diversity Scholars each year to receive scholarships. During the 2009 – 2010 academic year, over \$218,000 in scholarships were awarded. Scholars are competitively selected to be part of the Diversity Scholars program. Some considered factors include academic and leadership achievements, educational plans and financial need.

Scholarships are just a part of what the Office for Diversity Programs offer underrepresented engineering students. The Office for Diversity staff works to provide underrepresented students with social and academic support as well as with career preparation. We are committed to offering students a welcoming environment and a strong support network in order to help them excel in engineering.

This is achieved through the monthly seminar series, sponsored by the Office for Diversity Programs, to present the skills and knowledge to help engineering students succeed academically and professionally. While the seminar series was developed to meet the needs of students who had received National Science Foundation scholarships, all undergraduates served by the Office for Diversity Programs are strongly encouraged to attend. Students are given opportunities to interact with faculty, fellow students, and alumni already in the engineering and construction management fields.

The series features a multitude of speakers to lead professional development and diversity topics. This February's seminar focused on interviewing skills. Ms. Del Dugas, LSU alumna and Diversity Advisory Board member, facilitated the session. Nearly 35 participants submitted resumes prior to the seminar. Information was presented on building and presenting a professional resume and students were provided with comments regarding their individual resumes. Ms. Dugas selected four "volunteers" to conduct mock interviews using their resumes as a reference. Participants were asked to provide critiques of the mock interviews.

Another seminar featured Bill Dabney of the Center for Academic Success, who spoke to students about various learning styles. Mr. Dabney is a favorite speaker amongst the students: he engages the participants through creative giveaways and his unique microphone. Attendees were introduced to study habits that matched their sensory preference: Reading/Writing, Listening/Aural, Interactive/Kinesthetic and Visual/Sight.

Lauren Thomas, industrial engineering senior and a undergraduate diversity scholar, gave feedback regarding the seminar series. "Being a diversity scholar, I am given the opportunity to positively represent the College of Engineering in many capacities. Being an upperclassman in the diversity scholars program, I have the opportunity to provide underclassmen with advice that may help them succeed at LSU," stated Thomas. "Meeting LSU Diversity Alumni through the seminar series, gives me an opportunity to network with community leaders and see how they are involved in their every day jobs."

The series will continue with seminars on Graduate School and "Having a Successful Internship." For more information or if you would like to participate in future seminars, please contact Sarah Jones, coordinator, Diversity College Programs at sjones@lsu.edu or 225/ 578-5705.



Bill Dabney and Diversity Scholars

New Diversity Textbook Scholars

The Office for Diversity would like to congratulate Fabienne Placide and Jean Michel Ngaleu on receiving the Minority Engineering Textbook Scholarship this semester. Each student was awarded \$500 to cover the cost of books.

Jean Michel Ngaleu is a petroleum engineering upperclassman. Jean Michel tells us "this is the first scholarship I have ever received." As a result he is "more motivated to succeed."

Fabienne Placide is a freshman in chemical engineering. "I am grateful for dedicated diversity alumni who give back," states Fabienne Placide. "It makes it easier for newer generation underrepresented students to pursue engineering careers."

During the 2010–2011 academic school year, the Office for Diversity Programs will offer ten additional \$500 textbook scholarships to underrepresented students. More information will be coming soon. Visit <http://www.eng.lsu.edu/diversity>

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*"Where excellence is
priority"*

Let Us Tell Your Story

Yes, we want your story! **Thanks to those of you who responded to participate in our first Diversity Alumni Book.**

Help us celebrate our outstanding women and minority alumni and the varied ways in which LSU has changed people's lives. **We are still seeking names and contact information for women and minority LSU engineering alumni to highlight in the first College of Engineering Diversity Alumni Book.** These profiles will allow us to show the many fields of engineering to underrepresented students. Our hope is that by showing prospective students and donors the numerous successful women and minority engineering professionals who have graduated from LSU, it will enhance our efforts to further increase diversity in the College of Engineering. If you know of any women or minority LSU engineering alumni that are particularly successful and/or respected in their careers, please forward their names and contact information to Akilah Taylor, ataylor1@lsu.edu, 225-578-0092.

Stay Connected!

We want to be able to keep in touch with you, to update you on activities of the Office for Diversity, and to share news about your professional accomplishments and other significant events in your life with fellow alumni and our students. Please send all updates to Akilah Taylor, ataylor1@lsu.edu, 225-578-0092.

Newsletter Available Electronically



Our newsletter is available electronically. Receiving the newsletter electronically will allow instant access—no more waiting for the postal service to deliver it. This option also saves trees and reduce costs.

To receive the newsletter electronically, call Akilah Taylor at 225-578-0092 or email ataylor1@lsu.edu

Should your travels bring you to Baton Rouge, please feel free to call Akilah at 225-578-0092 and schedule a time when you can stop by for a visit. We would love to share current happenings with you and also hear your ideas on how to make our programs more effective.



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