OPENING THE (GRADUATE) SCHOOLHOUSE DOOR AT UA:

21ST CENTURY NATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN AFRICAN AMERICAN GRADUATE EDUCATION

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2013
FERGUSON CENTER THEATRE
9:45 – 11:30 A.M.
Welcome and Historical Perspective on African American Graduate Education at UA

UA's year-long commemoration of the Stand in the Schoolhouse Door rightly focuses on two courageous undergraduate students — James Hood and Vivian Malone — who literally and figuratively stepped through the doors of Foster Auditorium and into history in 1963. But in 2013, as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of those keystone events, we also recognize and celebrate the sea change in the diversity and inclusivity of graduate education at the Capstone. Today we honor graduate student pioneers like Dr. Joffre Whisenton, who became UA's first African American doctoral degree recipient in 1968 and Dr. Art Dunning, who received his undergraduate, Master's and Doctoral degrees in the late 1960s and 1970s. And we seek to compare and contrast their experiences in the turbulent 1960s with a look at African American graduate education at UA today and into the future.

In 2003, during UA's internationally-chronicled celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Stand in the Schoolhouse Door, some observers lamented that, even after 4 decades of progress, African Americans were still underrepresented in many university programs, specifically including the Graduate School in that list. A look at the numbers — 2003 vs 2013 — suggests that a similar criticism of the UA Graduate School in September 2013 would be unfounded.

In 2002-03 there were:
- 338 African American graduate students enrolled (9.5% of the graduate student body) — nearly double the population in 1993
- 120 African American degree recipients (9.1% of all graduate degrees)

In 2012-13 we had:
- 687 African American graduate students (14.2% of the student body) and the 11th consecutive yearly increase, with growth in African American students accounting for 27% of the total graduate student population growth (1,311) during the decade
- 267 African American graduate degree recipients (13.7% of all graduate degrees) — similar to the total African American graduate population as recently as 2001-02 (277)
- National leadership in the Southern Regional Education Board Doctoral Scholars Program with more current Scholars (23) than many states have TOTAL students enrolled in the history of the program.
- Consistent Top 60 rankings in African American graduate degree production among all universities and top 5 ranking among the 50 flagship campuses

Welcome to our celebration, and I promise that we will do all we can to continue to move ever forward!

Best,

Dr. David A. Francko
Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

"One person can make a difference if that one person is committed to making a difference."
— JAMES HOOD

"Walking through the door that had been closed to me and others of my colour was a step toward ending segregation in the south. I thank God for selecting me for that purpose."
— VIVIAN MALONE JONES
Program

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Alumni Perspectives from Early Graduate Degree Recipients

Dr. Arthur N. Dunning, early Master’s recipient (1969; BA in Anthropology, 1970; MA Educational Psychology, Counseling, and Guidance, 1976; Ph.D. in Educational Administration)

Dr. Joffre T. Whisenton, UA’s first Ph.D. recipient (1968; Educational Psychology, Counseling, and Guidance)

Where are We Now and Where are We Going? Perspectives from Current Administrators, Faculty, and Graduate Students

Dr. Paul B. Mohr, Sr., (Alabama Commission on Higher Education/SREB Doctoral Scholars)

Dr. Viola L. Acoff, (Head, Department of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering)

Dr. Gary A. Hoover, (Assistant Dean for Faculty and Graduate Student Development, College of Commerce and Business Administration)

Dr. Roger B. Sidje, (Associate Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences)


Mr. Shannon F. Reeves, (Ph.D. candidate in Political Science)

Mr. Derrick D. Stokes, (Ph.D. candidate in Metallurgical and Materials Engineering)

Ms. E. Jean Swindle, (Ph.D. candidate in Educational Leadership, Policy, and Technology Studies)

Questions and Comments from Audience

Adjourn for Reception
Panelists

Arthur N. Dunning — Dr. Dunning is a Professor and Senior Research Fellow in the UA Educational Policy Center and previously served as Vice Chancellor of International Programs and Outreach for The University of Alabama System. He is a three-time graduate, earning a BA in 1969, an MA in 1970, and a Ph.D. in 1976. He was among the first five African American players to walk on to the 1967 football team.

Joffre T. Whisenton — Dr. Whisenton has served as President of Joffre T. Whisenton and Associates, Inc. He was the former President of the Southern University System and Associate Executive Director with the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. In 1968, Dr. Whisenton was the first African American to be awarded a Ph.D. at The University of Alabama.

Viola L. Acoff — Dr. Acoff serves as Department Head of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering and The University of Alabama’s Site Coordinator for the Alabama LSAMP Program. She has received numerous national and international awards and recognitions including the prestigious National Science Foundation CAREER Award.

Gary A. Hoover — Dr. Hoover serves as Assistant Dean for Faculty and Graduate Student Development, Professor of Economics and William White McDonald Family Distinguished Faculty Fellow in the Culverhouse College of Commerce and Business Administration Faculty Scholars Program.

Paul B. Mohr, Sr. — Dr. Mohr serves as Director of Special Programs for the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, Director of the SREB Doctoral Fellowship Program, and is a former President of Talladega College. He was awarded the 2013 Martin Luther King Drum Major for Justice Lifetime Achievement Legacy Award in Education.

Roger B. Sidje — Dr. Sidje serves as Associate Dean for Multicultural Affairs in the College of Arts and Sciences and is an Associate Professor of Mathematics. Dr. Sidje’s extensive service to the University includes chairing the Diversity Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Kia S. Boyd — Ms. Boyd is originally from Georgia and is currently an Ed.S. candidate in Educational Studies in Psychology, Research Methodology, and Counseling. Ms. Boyd serves as the Graduate School Tide Together Coordinator and held a Graduate Fellowship in the Center for Community-Based Partnerships.

Shannon F. Reeves — Mr. Reeves is originally from Madison, Alabama and is a recipient of the McNair Graduate Fellowship. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science.

Derrick D. Stokes — Mr. Stokes is originally from Southaven, Mississippi and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Metallurgical and Materials Engineering. He was a recipient of an Alabama LSAMP Bridge to the Doctorate Fellowship and is an SREB Doctoral Scholar.

E. Jean Swindle — Ms. Swindle is originally from Centre, South Carolina and is a Ph.D. candidate in Educational Leadership, Policy and Technology Studies. Ms. Swindle is a recipient of the McNair Graduate Fellowship.