

THE BIG IDEA



Director's Corner — Conversation

Many students, parents and faculty asked me questions about the IDEAs program. In this issue, I would like to share some common questions to help you learn more about the IDEAs program.

Q: Who could participate in the IDEAs program?

A: The IDEAs program is open to all engineering students. Our mission is to increase diversity and inclusive excellence in engineering and to improve enrollment, retention and graduation of engineering students, particularly students from the underrepresented groups.

Q: What does the program offer?

A: The program is considered as the base for underrepresented engineering students. The program has many components to enhance academic, professional and personal development of the engineering students, including Incentive Scholarships, Intrusive Advising, Furnished Tutorial Study Center, Tutoring/Mentoring Program, Freshman Seminar, Undergraduate Research, Community Services and Outreach, Workshops and Field Trips.

Q: How many students are there in the IDEAs program?

A: The program has graduated 248 students from underrepresented groups to date. In the fall semester of 2009, 126 students participated in the program.

Q: Is the IDEAs program a student organization?

A: No. The IDEAs program is one of the academic programs in the College of Engineering. The program director reports to Dean Haritos. Many program participants are members of National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) and Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE).

Q: Are there similar programs in other universities?

A: Yes. There are many similar programs in other universities. Some model programs include Minority Engineering Program (MEP) at Purdue University and Programs for Educational Enrichment and Retention (PEER) at Clemson University. In Ohio, Ohio State University has MEP program and University of Cincinnati has Emerging Ethnic Engineers (E3) Program.

Q: What kind of support does the program need from faculty and staff?

A: First, please allow me to take this chance to express our sincere appreciation to our faculty and staff for your continuous support. Please help us encourage students from underrepresented groups to participate in the program; promote the tutoring/mentoring program to all engineering students; refer students to become tutors/mentors; advise undergraduate researchers; become speakers at the workshops; and/or host high school visitors. Together, we will help our students succeed in engineering studies.



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THE BIG IDEA

The Right Start to College by Class 2010

The fall semester of 2009 was the first semester for most of us. The semester was short, but we learned a lot from our own experiences: the high school success really does not apply to college; the first weeks in college are so critical; and the transition to college really takes effort. We would like to share our experience, maybe some mistakes, with you, either incoming students or current college freshmen. We might not be qualified to offer tips for you to succeed in college, but we surely know how important the right start to college is.

My experience confirms that college is different from high school.

You will no longer have someone in your ear telling you when your assignments are due or when you should be studying. It is for once in your life — it is your responsibility to get things done as an adult. Get organized! — *Kaleshia King*

In high school, you could wait until the last minute to finish your assignment and still get a good grade. It does not work any more in college, especially in engineering studies. Do not procrastinate! — *Lateefah Muhammad*

Engineering students are not super nerdy like what I thought. They are just regular people like me who put their pants on one leg at a time. Studying engineering is not about aptitude but attitude. — *Andrew Chandler*

Teachers hold your hands in high school and continue to push you in preparation for the real world. Professors in college expect you to be prepared for everything. You have to understand such expectation. — *D. J. Ricks*

My experience suggests that you will have to improve your skills.

There are certain set of skills you need to have in college, such as time management, communication and money management. — *Nate Jackson*

You need to develop good study habits really early. I learned it in a hard way. Bad study habits usually have to do with bad time management skills. Talk to your instructors and let them know you — at least to make sure that your name is not just an ID on the list. Get to know your adviser. — *Bragonia Winston*

Read ahead of your class and write down any questions you have. Make sure to bring these questions up in class during discussion or your professor's office hours. This will help you to grasp the information immediately in class. In addition, it shows that you are serious about your education. — *Andrew Chandler*

Once you are sure that you know the concepts, see if you can apply these concepts and laws to solve problems. — *Robert Medina*

For commuters, stay on campus as much as possible and get involved with the campus life. — *Clive Ennin*

College is like a video game: in order to beat it, you need to acquire a good strategy to win. Choose your friends wisely to play this game together. — *Jordan Grant*

The last thing that a student wants is financial stress. Money management is the process of knowing where you are spending your money today, and having a well thought-out plan in place. The best way to manage money is to draw a budget. Another thing is to find a CAMPUS job. — *Henrietta Deny*

Yes! Your future is in your own hands.

Best use the college preparatory programs, even before your high school senior year. Take advantage of orientations or summer bridge programs. You will benefit more than what you expected. — *Jordan Parker*

Going to college will be challenging — anything could be out of control if you are not prepared. Set up goals, so when things come up, you could stay focused. — *Yvonne Frank*

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D. J. Ricks (Left) and Nate Jackson (Right) at the College Career Fair.



Kaleshia King (Right) and Henrietta Deny (Second Right) talked to upper-level classmates at the College Career Fair.

Community Services

High School Tutoring: with the financial support by the Office of the Associate Vice President for Inclusion and Equity/CDO, the IDEAS program has been offering the tutoring services to the students at Buchtel High School through Project GRAD Akron since the spring semester of 2009. Thirteen dependable engineering students were chosen as tutors by the IDEAS program. Total 276 and 365 tutoring hours were provided in 2009 Spring and 2009 Fall, respectively.



Phil Steele (left) and Curtis (right) were helping the students with OGT at the Project GRAD Akron study center.

This program not only provides the tutoring services to local high school students, but also exposes them to models of academic excellence. The program also benefits the tutors by enhancing a sense of pride for helping someone else and making connection to the community. When being asked about the values of such tutoring experience,

Phil Steele, sophomore in Electrical Engineering, said: “it is the most rewarding job for me. It offers me the sense of service and an opportunity to be part of the supportive environment that Project GRAD Akron creates in Akron Public Schools where I came from.”

Curtis Minter Jr., sophomore in Civil Engineering, said: “Tutoring allowed me to bush up on material I have not seen in years. Mathematics is a building process, so the more acquainted I am with the old stuff, the quicker I can learn the new stuff. I also found tutoring a very fulfilling experience and hope to do it again. When kids request you personally, it is a testimony to who you are and the standards you abide by.”

Tutoring high school students is the most rewarding job for me — offering me the sense of service and being part of supportive environment that Project GRAD Akron creates in Akron Public Schools.

– Phil Steele, Sophomore Electrical Engineering

IDEAs Engineering Preview: funded by the Ohio Space Grant Consortium and the College of Engineering, the IDEAs Engineering Preview allows high school students to explore engineering studies, experience student projects, observe the latest technologies and familiarize them with college life. The high school students may choose to participate in one or both events, Engineering Day and Shadowing a College Student.

On the Engineering Day, the program participants were invited to tour the Energy Lab in Chemical Engineering, the Turbine Lab in Civil Engineering, the Senior Design Lab and Battery Lab in Electrical Engineering, meet the Aerospace Design team, the Baja Team, the Bridge Team, the Canoe Team and the ECE Robot team, talk to the IDEAs students about engineering studies and college life, and learn more about the college and the co-op program.



Visiting the energy lab in the Department of Chemical Engineering.

Tutoring allowed me to bush up on material I have not seen in years. When kids request you personally, it is a testimony to who you are and the standards you abide by.

–Curtis Minter, Sophomore Civil Engineering



Visiting the senior design lab in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

On the Shadowing Day, the high school student shadowed the selected engineering students to go to freshman/sophomore classrooms, join the study group, tour the Honor Complex, learn more about scholarships at the UA, visit the Rec Center and have lunch at the Student Union.

In 2009, the program hosted 69 high school sophomore, junior and senior students from Garfield High School, North High School, Crestwood High School and Hoban High School.

The Right Start to College (Cont.)

Yes! Your future is in your own hands.

Relationships have their ups and downs and it is up to you as an individual to remain mentally stable and not to let the downside of a relationship affect your productivity. Anything external, outside of school, can have a major impact on your studies. — *Kaleshia King*

If you are not doing so well in the start, do not panic. Just relax! There is plenty of time for you to redeem yourself. — *Usama Taugir*

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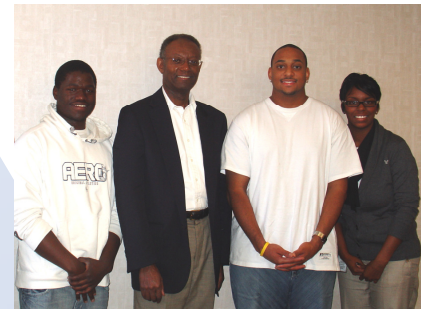
Guest Speakers

In the fall semester of 2009, two inspiring speakers, Dr. Frank Douglas (DrD) and Mr. Philip Thompson, visited the IDEAs program and met IDEAs students.



DrD is the CEO and President of the BioInnovation Institute in Akron. DrD is an award-winning industry veteran, with more than 24 years of experience in healthcare, pharmaceutical research, and biotechnology.

On October 22, 2009, DrD met a group of IDEAs students majored in Biomedical Engineering. He shared his own experience about hardworking. "The most successful student is not the student who is smart, but a student who works hard!" said DrD. He also encouraged the students to be involved with undergraduate research.



Mr. Philip Thompson (second left) met the IDEAs students: Mike Kyagaba, Phil Steele and Rachele Forney.

Mr. Philip Thompson, Electrical Engineering'72, is the retired IBM executive. He established the Philip S. Thompson Scholarship for Engineering Students in hopes of improving diversity in engineering.

On November 11, 2009, Mr. Thompson gave a speech to all IDEAs students. He encouraged the IDEAs students to build solid foundation in Mathematics and Science, become role models for other underrepresented minorities, and enhance professional and personal development.

Other Newsmakers

- New scholarship recipients: Mr. Uchekukwu Anozie was awarded with Goodyear Future Leaders Scholarship. Mr. Michael Croston was awarded with Dr. Paul C. K. Lam NASA/Ohio Space Grant Consortium Scholarship.
- The IDEAs Program was honored with two awards: Campus Partner Award by office of Multicultural Development and partnership to Achieve the Dreams by Project GRAD Akron.