Director’s Corner

American Society of Engineering Education (ASEE) declared the year 2014-2015 as the Year of Action in Diversity. Recognizing the urgency to act, the IDEAs Program focused on student retention and inclusion. It is our belief that diversity and inclusion work together to harness our awareness of self and others which leads to inclusive excellence. With this excellence, student retention is reached, as a direct result of student success.

To advance student success in the IDEAs Program, it takes commitment from all levels at all stages:

- Faculty support: Every student in the IDEAs Program would give you at least one name of a faculty member who has great impact on their success. One example is Dr. Arjuna, who offered an undergraduate research opportunity to rising sophomore, DeGrafth Palmore, in the summer of 2014. This experience helped DeGrafth receive NASA research scholarships to explore engineering research.

- Alumni involvement: The Increasing Diversity in Engineering Academics Alumni Program was established by alumnus Nuwoo Smith, to “support average students who need financial assistance and mentoring in order to stay focused and on track”. If you would like to get involved in mentoring current students or financially support one student, please contact us.

- Donor support: We are extremely grateful for our donors who support our mission and enhance the lives of our students. Forty-one students will be awarded with donor scholarships of $98,500 in the academic year 2015-2016.

Inspired by our faculty, alumni, donors and friends, students in the IDEAs Program volunteered their time to mentor younger students in local communities and help with STEM initiatives. With our students’ commitment to their own success, our graduates will be well prepared for engineering workplaces.
Alumnus **Harry G. Holcombe** (B. S. Mechanical Engineering ‘59) was an invited speaker at UA’s The Eighth Annual Black Male Summit on April 10th. Mr. Holcombe is the first African American student to earn an engineering degree at UA—a bachelor’s in mechanical engineering. He also earned his MBA from the University of Dayton. After graduation, he joined the United States Air Force. In 1982, he retired from General Motors (GM).

Mr. Holcombe met with a group of underrepresented students and had a long conversation with them after his talk. During his studies at UA, he was a member of Tau Beta Pi, ASME and ROTC. He told students that his academic success was also because of study groups and peer support. He encouraged student leaders to become good role models and give back to local communities. Students were inspired by Mr. Holcombe and his career path.

**Read more stories about Mr. Harry Holcombe.**

Alumni **India Kaczmarek** (BSCE’12) and **Mario Garcia** (BSCE’13) reconnected with the IDEAs Program as invited speakers and mentors. On March 19, they organized an IDEAs Workshop on Engineering Professionalism.

India is a Roadway Designer in the Transportation Department at GPD Group and Mario is a Project Engineer at The Ruhlin Company. During their studies at UA, they were awarded with scholarships and finished their co-op assignments with GPD Group and The Ruhlin Company respectively.

**Alumni in the Spotlight**

*From left: Miguel Rodriguez, Elijah Fox, Harry Holcombe, Kamden Payton, India Huguely, Eric Leaks, Melisha Vaughn, Tra‘Vaunn Partlow, Joshua Thomas, Miles Walker, Ian Banks, Calvin Carter and Claudio Pena Fermin Jr.*
Leadership Development: NSBE and SHPE

- National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) UA Student Chapter sent 19 students to attend the 41st Annual Convention, Innovation & Excellence: Reimagining Your Future, in California. Two UA NSBE members were elected to serve the Region Executive Board.

- The Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) sponsored UA Student Chapter to attend the National Institute for Leadership Advancement (NILA) for leadership and chapter development. Sofia Chinchilla (left from the top right pictures) attended the training in August, 2014.

If you are interested in meeting NSBE and SHPE students, please contact Joshua Thomas (NSBE President) at jet56@zips.uakron.edu or Sofia Chinchilla (SHPE President) at sc118@zips.uakron.edu.

Congratulations to IDEAs Alumni!

Alumnus Moussa Souare (B.S. Electrical Engineering ’06) earned his doctor of philosophy degree from the College of Electrical Engineering Case Western Reserve in 2014.

Alumnus Antonio Samuel (B.S. Electrical Engineering ’10) earned his masters of business management from Baldwin Wallace University in 2014.

Alumnus Osama Elbuluk (B.S. Mechanical Engineering ’10) earned his doctor of medicine degree from David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA with a in 2015 and started his Residency in Los Angeles, California (right picture).

Graduation Bulletin

Congratulations to the Class 2015! Calia Battista (BSBME), Jamara Beard (BSCE), Brandon Bell (BSME), Daniel Beltran (BSME), Pele Cameron (BSEE), KiAsia Chambers (BSChE), Teresa Giralt (BSCE), Hamza Haji (BSChE), Julies Kere (BSCE), Joseph Knaus (BSME), Robert Medina (BSEE), David Malone (BSCpE), Richard Rubio (BSME), Joseph Fortunato (BSCS), Lan Le (BSEET), Theodore Munar (BS Accounting), Chibuike Anozie (BSCE), Erika Elizalde (BSME), Valentine Enow (BSME), Boubacar Ide (BSBME) and Krishna Subba (BSME).
Recently the IDEAs Advisory Council was established to provide a variety of opportunities to participate in the realization of the objective of the IDEAs Program and thus to develop a close working relationship between engineering leaders in the greater Akron community, the state of Ohio and the nation, and the administration of the IDEAs Program at the College of Engineering. Activities and goals of the council include philanthropy, professional support to students, enrollments, and retention. Industry executive leaders, who are interested to join the IDEAs Advisory Council, are invited to contact Megan Hopper (mhopper@uakron.edu) to learn more.

Student Voice: “My appreciation goes...”

Shafia Ahmad (Senior, Mechanical Engineering) My appreciation goes to scholarships, especially Anton Scholarship. Scholarships have financially helped me though my studies at UA. However, the biggest help I have received from scholarships is “peace of mind”. It gives me the ability to focus on my academics and not worry about tuition and loans. The Anton Scholarship has not only benefited me financially but has also given me experience in industry. I have worked at Swagelok for three co-op rotations.

Michael Jadue (Sophomore, Mechanical Engineering) The Anton Scholarship made it possible for me to attend UA and allowed me to really focus on my major. Along with the financial support, the internship associated with this scholarship has allowed me to grow in ways that are not possible in classroom. I was also given opportunities to make connections with other scholars. It is clear that this scholarship was an integral part in making my college experience enjoyable and successful.

Ruben Rodriguez (Senior, Electrical Engineering) The spring semester of 2015 has been the toughest one in my college career. I knew it would be difficult, but was not prepared to handle all of it on my own. Even though I made it this far through the curriculum, I really was thinking of giving up on my goal of becoming an electrical engineer. If it wasn’t for the support of the ECE faculty, I know I would not have had that motivation to go through the most difficult part of my life so far. Thank You!

Andrew Linebarger (Post Bachelor, Civil Engineering) I am so glad about the decision to continue my education in Civil Engineering at UA after earning a BS degree in Construction Management from Kent State University. The College of Engineering provides so many opportunities for me to achieve my career goals and ease my pressure: having a bridge program to gain my master’s degree is so student friendly; having a co-op at CT Consultants is an absolute standout; and I am so thankful for the scholarship donor, Mr. Thompson, for his trust and support.