



Winter 2003

The Access Point

News of the West Virginia Access Center for Higher Education, Inc.

WVACHE Honors Two Outstanding Teachers

The WVACHE has given its first-ever Outstanding High School Teacher Award to two West Virginia educators: Frances Tolley of Hurricane High School and James Walker of Braxton County High School.

The award recognizes individuals who have made exceptional efforts to encourage students to go to college. Examples of such efforts might include but are not limited to increasing the school's college-going rate, taking a special interest in increasing student achievement, and developing excellent relationships with college representatives and/or businesses. This is the first year for the award.

Frances Tolley teaches science at Hurricane High School in Putnam County. She was honored for her efforts to prepare students for college by encouraging them to choose courses that will better prepare them for college work.

"[Mrs. Tolley] is a dedicated and knowledgeable teacher," stated student Joseph Hanning in his letter of support for the WVACHE award. "She not only encourages students to pursue and reach their goals, she helps them reach those goals."

James Walker teaches English and Theatre at Braxton County High School. He was honored for his work in encouraging both mainstream and special-needs students to pursue a college education.

"[Mr. Walker] cares about his students and about the quality of education that they receive," noted colleague and Science Department Chair Sandra Hughes Burchett. "He can lead and direct in ways that enable students to grab hold of their lives and reach their highest goals."

The WVACHE Outstanding High School Teacher Awards were announced at the Ninth Annual OACHE/WVACHE Conference, held October 10–12 at Southern State Community College in Hillsboro, Ohio. (See related article on page 3).

Next year's award nomination forms for Outstanding Teacher, Guidance Counselor and Administrator will be distributed in spring 2003. Winners in all three categories will be announced at the Tenth Annual OACHE/WVACHE Conference, to be held in Lewisburg, West Virginia at Greenbrier Community College Center, a branch of Bluefield State College. Plan now to nominate an outstanding teacher, guidance counselor or administrator from your school! ◀



A replica of the WVACHE recognition plaque presented to each Outstanding High School Teacher.

WVACHE Access Projects Increase 2002 College-Going Rates

The nine current WVACHE Access Projects significantly increased their schools' college-going rates as a result of activities throughout the 2001–02 academic year.

According to year-end reports, 78 percent of the project schools have already increased their college-going rates by at least 20 percent over pre-intervention levels. Furthermore, in nearly half of the project schools the increase was over 40 percent. The Access Projects are now in the second year of their two-year grants.

"These tremendous increases in college-going rates are a credit to the many dedicated educators in our schools, who truly care about helping students achieve a better quality of life," noted Sarita A. Gattuso, executive director of the WVACHE.

WVACHE Access Project components include career exploration activities and resources, college and financial-aid information, field

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Mark Your Calendar!

The Tenth Annual OACHE/WVACHE Conference is scheduled for October 2–4, 2003 at the Greenbrier Community College Center in Lewisburg, West Virginia. Details and registration forms will be available this spring. Plan now to attend!

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WVACHE Welcomes New Board Members

The WVACHE is pleased to welcome one new member to its Board of Directors and three new members to its Board of Advisors.

Dr. David Perkins is director of the Greenbrier Community College Center, a branch of



Members of the WVACHE Board of Directors and Board of Advisors include: **(front row, l to r)** Tammy Wells; Jo Ann Harman; Sarita A. Gattuso; Dr. Linda S. Dunn; **(back row, l to r)** John C. Cardwell; Dr. Thomas H. Powell; Willie Rose; Wayne F. White; Dr. Albert L. Walker; Norris Kantor, Esq.; Dr. Robert E. Moore.

Bluefield State College. He occupies a new seat on the WVACHE Board of Directors.

The following three individuals have been named to the WVACHE Board of Advisors: **Dr. Deborah Akers**, Superintendent of Mercer County Schools; **Ms. Patricia Urbas Metheny**, Principal of Nicholas County High School; and **Mr. John Shott**, President of the Mercer County Board of Education. All occupy new seats on the board.

“We greatly appreciate all of our WVACHE board members for investing their time and effort to support the program,” stated WVACHE Executive Director Sarita A. Gattuso. “Their knowledge of and experience with West Virginia’s public-school and higher education systems are invaluable resources that will help us put the WVACHE on firm footing.” ◀

WVACHE Board of Directors

- Dr. Albert L. Walker**, Chair
President, Bluefield State College
- Wayne F. White**, Vice Chair
Executive Dir., Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education
- John C. Cardwell**, Secretary
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President, Eastern West Virginia Community & Technical College
- Dr. David Perkins**
Director, Greenbrier Community College Center
- Jo Ann Harman**, *ex officio*
Chair, WVACHE Board of Advisors

Access Projects (continued from page 1)

trips to college campuses and businesses, classroom assignments on college and career options, and other activities that help students and parents make informed decisions about higher education.

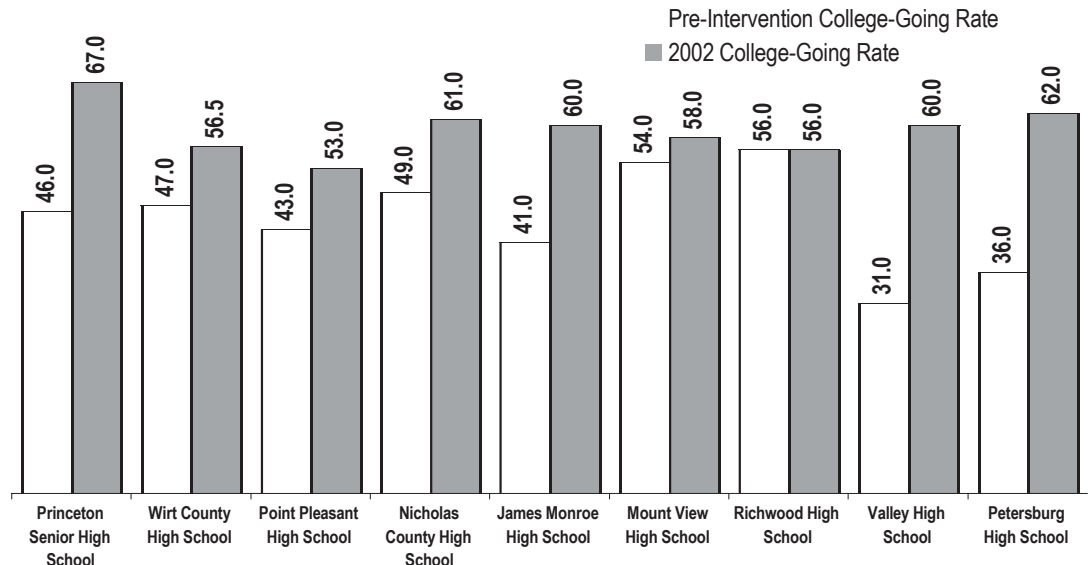
“The Access Projects are proving that West Virginia students can be motivated to go to college,” stated Gattuso. “All they need is the

information and a nudge in the right direction, in a supportive environment that helps them realize they can succeed in college.

“We hope to be able to help more West Virginia schools achieve these kinds of increases through our Access Projects in the future,” she added. “As the results show, the program works.” ◀

WVACHE Access Project College-Going Rates

Percentages



Ninth Annual OACHE/WVACHE Conference A Success

The Ninth Annual OACHE/WVACHE Conference was held at Southern State Community College in Hillsboro on October 10–12, 2002. The event, co-sponsored by the Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education (OACHE) and the WVACHE, also received financial support from KnowledgeWorks Foundation.

The conference drew nearly 240 participants from all levels of education and business, to share successful strategies for increasing educational attainment among Appalachian citizens. Conference offerings encompassed more than 20 breakout sessions including one by West Virginia author John O'Brien, plenary addresses by noted author and historian Allan W. Eckert and West Virginia Chancellor J. Michael Mullen, and tours of local historical and cultural attractions.



Chancellor J. Michael Mullen of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission addresses the Ninth Annual Conference.

A highlight of the conference was the annual awards banquet. Recognition was given to the K-12 Outstanding Counselor of the Year, Outstanding Teacher of the Year, and Outstanding Administrator of the Year for the 29-county Appalachian Ohio region. In addition, the WVACHE gave its first-ever Outstanding High School Teacher of the Year award for West Virginia. Two individuals tied for that award: James Walker of Braxton County High School and Frances Tolley of Hurricane High School (*article on page 1*).

Mountain Laurel Art Scholarship Awarded

WVACHE Executive Director Sarita Gattuso announced the winner of the 2002–03 Mountain Laurel Art Scholarship. The award, co-founded by attorney Becky Fillinger and book illustrator Henry Cole and sponsored by the Bluefield State College Foundation, was established to promote art studies in post-secondary education for students residing in West Virginia and the Appalachian Highlands of Virginia. The winner of this year's \$1,000 scholarship is Zachary Thomaselli, a graduate of Tyler Consolidated High School who is attending Kent State University majoring in art and sculpture.

Throughout the conference several valuable

door prizes were given away, including three Amish quilts donated by Tanner, Stone & Co., Portsmouth; two framed watercolor prints by artist and SSCC faculty member James Werline; an overnight stay at Mountaineer Racetrack & Gaming Resort; a Longaberger basket; Fiesta Ware; two Bob Evans Farm Festival baskets autographed by Bob Evans; Disney memorabilia; and college apparel.

On Saturday, both the OACHE and the WVACHE made formal awards to Access project schools for the 2002-2003 school year.

Next Conference To Take Place in West Virginia

Plans are underway for the Tenth Annual OACHE/WVACHE Conference, which will take place for the first time in West Virginia. The Tenth Annual Conference will be hosted at the

Greenbrier Community College Center in Lewisburg on October 2–4, 2003. The GCCC is part of the Community and Technical College component of Bluefield State College, host institution of the WVACHE.

More information about the Tenth Annual OACHE/WVACHE Conference will be available in spring 2003. Details will be provided in upcoming issues of the *Access Point*. To find out how you can participate in the conference planning effort, contact WVACHE Executive Director Sarita A. Gattuso at 304-327-4096 or sgattuso@bluefieldstate.edu. ◀



WVACHE Executive Director Sarita Gattuso (left) and Nancy Barnes, Access Project Coordinator at James Monroe High School, visit one of the dozens of K–12 and college tabletop exhibits on display at the Ninth Annual OACHE/WVACHE Conference.

WVACHE Board of Advisors

Jo Ann S. Harman, Chair
Retired Teacher

Dr. Deborah S. Akers
Supt., Mercer County Schools

Dr. Daniel Bradley
President, Fairmont State College

Dr. Hazo W. Carter
President, W.Va. State College

Patricia Urbas Metheny
Principal, Nicholas County High School

John Shott
President, Mercer County Board of Education

Tammy Wells
Principal, Valley High School



Appalachian Higher Education Network Visits W.Va. Access Projects

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We're on the Web! Visit us at
www.oache.org/wvache_home.htm

Sixteen Appalachian educators from Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee traveled to Ohio and West Virginia on November 11–14 to visit Access Projects of the WVACHE and the Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education (OACHE).

The attendees represented schools that recently received Access grants through centers established by the Appalachian Higher Education (AHE) Network to replicate the OACHE Access program in other parts of Appalachia. These schools are now implementing the model

Access Project used in West Virginia and Ohio.

The group visited Nicholas County High School (Summersville, W.Va.), Valley High School (Pine Grove, W.Va.), Washington State Community College (Marietta, Ohio), and Newcomerstown High School (Newcomerstown, Ohio). By observing the effective practices at these schools, the new AHE grantees learned strategies they can take back to their home states and use to implement successful model Access Projects in their own schools. ◀

Postcards from the Field



An important component of WVACHE Access Projects is taking students to visit a variety of college campuses, including both two- and four-year institutions. College visits allow students to experience environments that may be unfamiliar to them and consider factors they may want to weigh when choosing a postsecondary institution. Here, a group from Valley High School (Wetzel County) explores the urban atmosphere of the University of Pittsburgh.

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