



Winter 2006

The Access Point

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

Twelfth Annual Conference highlights

More than 250 K–12 educators, college personnel, government officials and others attended the 12th Annual OACHE/WVACHE Conference, held October 6–8, 2005 at Rio Grande Community College in Rio Grande, Ohio. The conference featured more than 20 breakout sessions as well as noted plenary speakers, student performances, informational displays, and networking opportunities.

Jeannette Walls, a columnist with MSNBC.com and author of the best-selling memoir *The Glass Castle*, delivered the keynote address at the Friday-evening banquet. Walls, who spent part of her youth in Welch, W.Va., related her experiences in overcoming an impoverished childhood, graduating from college and carve out a better life for herself.

Outstanding Educator Recognized

During the conference banquet, the WVACHE presented its 2005 Wayne F. White Outstanding Educator Award to Ms. Carla Hunter, a guidance counselor at Jefferson High School. Ms. Hunter has been credited with helping Jefferson High School increase its college-going rate from approximately 57 percent to 70.5 percent.

In her nomination letter, Gail Woods, English teacher and public-relations specialist for Jefferson



WVACHE Executive Director Sarita A. Gattuso (left) and WVACHE Advisory Board member Tammy Wells present the 2005 Wayne F. White Outstanding Educator of the Year Award to Carla Hunter, a guidance counselor at Jefferson High School.

County Schools, noted that Ms. Hunter has “changed the mind-set of our students from ‘I don’t know what I’m going to do after high school’ to ‘I know I am going on to higher education.’”

Photos from the 12th Annual Conference are posted on the WVACHE website. Browse the gallery to revisit memories of the conference! You may also pick up ideas for your display at the 13th Annual Conference, which is slated for October 5–6, 2006 at Zane State College in Zanesville, Ohio. Registration information will be available later this spring. ◀

WVACHE Receives ARC Grant

The WVACHE has received a \$60,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to support its efforts to increase the college-going rate among West Virginia high-school students.

With the ARC’s financial assistance, the WVACHE has awarded Access Project grants to 13 high schools for the 2005–07 biennium. These schools will provide an estimated 1,600 students with activities and resources that encourage them to consider and prepare for higher education.

Typical activities in the model program implemented by WVACHE Access Projects include field trips to college campuses, business alliances, parent meetings, college/career fairs, utilization of college exploration software, and teacher visits to schools

and businesses. These activities help students and their parents explore college opportunities and career possibilities while, at the same time, demystifying the college experience and building students’ confidence and self esteem.

High schools funded in the grant cycle ending in summer 2005 increased their college-going rates an average of 40 percent over pre-intervention levels.

“I am so appreciative of the continued support we receive from the ARC,” said WVACHE Executive Director Sarita A. Gattuso. “When we truly believe and teach in a manner that all students can learn, then we give our students hope, especially those who never considered themselves college material. And where there is hope, anything is possible!” ◀

2005 Success Data

The 13 Access Projects funded by the WVACHE from 2003–05 increased their college-going rates by an average of 35 percent over pre-intervention levels. Congratulations to these schools, and keep up the great work!



The Access Point is a publication of the West Virginia Access Center for Higher Education, Inc. The WVACHE is funded by donations as well as a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission.

WVACHE, Inc.
c/o Bluefield State College
219 Rock Street
Bluefield WV 24701-2198

Phone: 304-327-4096
Fax: 304-327-4427

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

Spread the Sparkle!

It's inspiring to see the sparkle that appears in students' eyes when they realize that they *can* go to college. Spreading that sparkle to students throughout West Virginia is what the WVACHE is all about. Our proven low-cost, high-impact grant program has helped Access Project partner schools increase their college-going rates by an average of more than 30 percent.

As a not-for-profit organization the WVACHE depends on grant funding as well as donations from individuals and businesses to sustain its efforts. Your tax-deductible gift will help the WVACHE encourage more students to go to college. And when their educational attainment increases, it ultimately benefits all of us in the Mountain State. For more details on how you can help, contact the WVACHE's executive director, Sarita Gattuso, at 304-327-4096 or sgattuso@bluefieldstate.edu. Or fill out this tear-off portion and mail it, with your contribution made payable to the WVACHE, c/o Bluefield State College, 219 Rock St., Bluefield WV 24701-2198. Together we can spread the sparkle!

I want to support the work of the West Virginia Access Center for Higher Education! Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Postcards from the Field



The Point Pleasant High School Marching Band performs during the 12th Annual OACHE/WVACHE Conference in October 2005. The conference was hosted this year by the University of Rio Grande/Rio Grande Community College in southern Ohio.

West Virginia Access Center for Higher Education, Inc.

c/o Bluefield State College
219 Rock Street
Bluefield WV 24701