



AN ALLIANCE OF PARTNERS DEDICATED
TO THE 21ST CENTURY WORKFORCE

The Pioneer Pages



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Founding Pioneer Partner Opens Leadership Academy

HOUSTON, Texas—"The journey has just begun," said COL (Ret.) Jim Paige, one of the founding partners of the Pioneers in Education Alliance, to the 46 Academy interns at the June 14th Opening Session. On behalf of the four partners—DuPont, NASA-SEMAA, NMUSA and SECME, Inc.—COL Paige and SECME's Brandon Davis, co-founder of the Pioneer Leadership Academy, showed the 12-minute "Pioneers in Education" video produced by Will Harper of GlobalTouch, Inc., L.A.

"Effective today, each of you have an *alliance of friends* helping you prepare for the 21st Century Workforce" said COL Paige to the interns. "The Alliance is connecting people to people to

help you—that's networking—then we make sure those connections work."

After staff and intern introductions, COL Paige invited the interns to dedicate themselves to being at the Academy: "You're here because you're getting ready for the 21st Century Workforce," he said. That theme is sure to be repeated often throughout the coming days and weeks.



PHOTO—TOYIA BROWN

**COL (Ret.) Jim Paige of
NMUSA (National Museum
of the United States Army)**

Pioneer Interns Hear "Let Me Learn"

By ETOSHA CAVE
Pioneer Pages Staff Writer

On Tuesday, June 15, 46 Pioneer Leadership Academy interns from around the country took their seats in Room 102D at the University of Houston's Cullen College of Engineering, to learn about learning. "Let Me Learn" presenters Dr. Christine Johnston, Director of the program, and Dr. Gary Dainton, a certified Let Me Learn consultant and Operations Manager of Learning Connections Resources, helped the interns discover their individual learning patterns through exercises, and showed them how that knowledge can be advantageous in real world situations such as teaming in workplace environments. "Know who you are, enjoy your individuality, but share with others as a team," says Dr. Johnston.

The workshop began with interns noting their short- and long-term goals in the *Learning to Use My Potential* workbook. Their expressions ranged from writing to pictures to bullet lists, and even some combinations. The uniqueness of each person's

response, explained Dr. Johnston, represents a certain learning pattern, which is the foundation of mental processes and cognition.

Extending that to the workplace, she described learning in a corporate environment as using "mental processes in real time to take in the information, problems and possibilities that bombard in order to respond to each in appropriate, informed and exceptional ways."

Once the interns had identified their individual learning processes and shared their responses, Dr. Dainton led them through the "Learning Connections Inventory," to give them insight into how they connect with learning patterns. The results revealed their four different types of learning—sequential, precise, technical and confluent—and whether they use a particular learning pattern first, use it as needed or avoid it.

Armed with the knowledge of how they learn, the interns then heard from Dr. Johnston how to use that knowledge to their advantage. "You now have something unique to put on your resume," she said. "You can tell a potential employer that you know how you learn, and how this can be an advantage." It can help a person create accountability for their own learning, help them discover their sense of self and a sense of belonging, and serve as a foundation for future learning.

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

Pioneer Intern Assignments/Production Day with SECME

ExxonMobil Keynote

Financial Planning

Plenary: "Technology Tools for the K-12 Classroom"

See Let Me Learn, p. 4

Enlightened Owners Conduct Seminar in Entrepreneurship at UH

By WILLIAM DOBBS
Pioneer Pages Staff Writer

Antwayne Ford and Andre Rogers of Enlightened, Inc., Washington, D.C., brought entrepreneurship to the Pioneer interns on Thursday, June 17. Enlightened, a full-service Information Technology consulting firm, specializes in Custom Software Solutions, Business Process Improvement and Web Application Development.

Ford first asked the students what being an entrepreneur means to them, then defined entrepreneurship and illustrated it with his own story and the factors that led to his current success. In October 2003, Ford discussed the good and the bad of being an entrepreneur in an article in *Entrepreneur Magazine*. His company was named one of the fastest-growing small businesses in the Washington area that year.

Rogers and Ford went on to share the pros and cons of owning a business, and each cautioned that being an entrepreneur can place significant demands on one's personal lifestyle—like a lack of sleep and free time.

Several interns took the opportunity to ask questions about owning their own businesses. They ranged from how to get a business off to a successful start to what factors contribute to the passion and drive of an entrepreneur.

In closing, Ford threw out a challenge to the interns—submit their best ideas for a business, and compete for \$2500 in scholarship money. Enlightened and the Pioneer Leadership team will evaluate the submissions and select the winning entry. The scholarship will be awarded no later than September 1, 2004. Details of the "entrepreneurship challenge" will be available on the Pioneers in Education Web site.

Enlightend was invited to present at the Academy by DuPont.

Below: Enlightened's Antwayne Ford and Andre Rogers bring their "Entrepreneurship Roadshow" to Pioneer Leadership Academy interns. The pair will be back for a repeat performance the third week of the Academy.



Seminar on Interviewing Inspires Pioneer Interns

By MONICA RICE
Pioneer Pages Staff Writer

The Pioneers in Education Student Leadership Academy interns learned about interviewing and business etiquette from an industry professional, Donna L. Childs, an engineer at Lockheed Martin, Orlando, FL.

Childs explained that the purpose of an interview is for a company to develop a thorough understanding of an applicant's qualifications and determine if the company would be a good fit for the individual. Childs gave interns a list of commonly asked interview questions and things to avoid before, during and after an interview. With Childs' guidance, most interns will be more confident in their interviewing capabilities and less afraid to take that next step to success.



Donna Childs, an engineer at Lockheed Martin, gives the interns tips on interviewing and resume writing

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Etiquette Banquet a Hit

Pioneer Student Leadership Academy interns traded their shorts and T-shirts for business attire and filled a ballroom in Houston's Warwick Hotel Wednesday evening, June 16, to put their business etiquette and dining skills to the test.

Donna Childs, a guest presenter and an engineer at Lockheed Martin, kicked off the evening with a lively presentation on dressing for success and dining etiquette. The interns then put that learning into practice over a three-course meal, with Donna, along with the Academy staff, circulating as hosts. The interns will have further opportunity to use their new skills over the next two weeks of the Academy, at student portfolio presentations and an awards dinner.

Below: Academy interns dressed for success at Etiquette Banquet



Interns Work With Award-Winning Producer/Director to Document Leadership Academy

By SHANICKA JONES
Pioneer Pages Staff Writer

Hollywood came to the Pioneer Leadership Academy this week as Will Harper of GlobalTouch, Inc., a Los Angeles-based producer/director, shared his profession with Academy interns. Harper's interactive presentation had interns handling cameras, and lighting and sound equipment, and learning the language of his trade—grip, flashback, freeze-frame, cutaway and more.

Harper has worked on such high-visibility projects as VH1's "Behind The Music" and the annual Trumpet Awards. He also produced and directed the "Pioneers in Education" video, which features the Pioneers in Education Alliance partners—DuPont, NASA-SEMAA, NMUSA and SECME, Inc.

Harper also worked with the interns on how to conduct an interview. Interns will apply what they've learned throughout the Academy, filming and interviewing each other and the guest presenters. The videos will be used to produce a complete documentary of the inaugural Leadership Academy.

Harper and the interns have set up a Film Studio on the 4th floor of the Cullen Engineering Building #2, complete with a brand-new Apple G5 and AVID editing software. AVID Technology, Inc., a sponsor of the Pioneer Leadership Academy, provided a copy of the software for every intern.

AVID is the world leader in digital nonlinear media creation, management and distribution solutions, enabling film, video, audio, animation, games, and broadcast news professionals to work more efficiently, productively and creatively. The interns are gaining a valuable foundation in the communications industry by using AVID to edit 3-minute webcast video streams that will document the Academy day to day.



Will Harper of GlobalTouch

"May I Help You?": Giving Great Customer Service Interns hear how-to's from Professional HR/Customer Service Consultant

By MERTYCE DOLEMAN
Pioneer Pages Staff Writer

"I know how you feel," said Rosalind Jeffries, demonstrating to the Pioneers in Education Leadership Academy interns on Thursday how to show empathy toward customers. "It's how you separate good service from great service."

Jeffries has been a management consultant for over 20 years, so she knows what customers want. Her firm, Performance Enhancement Group (PEG), specializes in employee recognition and retention, and customer service. She gave the interns five criteria that customers look for from service providers: Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy and Tangibility.

"I thought it was very interesting because she gave us a lot of information about good customer service to make it in the real world," said 18-year-old Tiffany Johnson from Christian Brothers University in Memphis.

Grading yourself and building a positive customer encounter, along with knowing your products and services, are also key to providing good customer service. "What made her presentation more interesting was her hands-on activity, which was not only fun but pertained to the topic," said 15-year-old Kelsie Andrews from the Jacksonville, Florida Early College High School program.

Responses like these from the Pioneer interns send a clear message: Roz Jeffries definitely provided them with not just good service but great service.



Rosalind "Roz" Jeffries,
President of PEG

Putting on the H.E.A.T.

Jeffries emphasizes that excellent service starts with service awareness—seeing things from the customer's perspective, and understanding their needs and expectations. Although customer service should be common sense, she notes, it's not always common practice.

She suggests that when dealing with customer complaints, service professionals should apply H.E.A.T.

- Hear the customer out
- Empathize with them
- Apologize to them
- Take action

Most customers, says Jeffries, would rather have a representative apologize and empathize with them rather than hear them out and take action. The bottom line, she says, is treat your customers as you would like them to treat you.

by Marcos Ruiz and Andra Collins
Pioneer Pages Staff Reporters

Interns Learn That Agriculture is Real Business

By JEAN PORTER

Pioneer Pages Staff Writer

Friday, June 18, at the Pioneer Leadership Academy belonged to Carl Butler of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). Previously, Butler was Director of MANRRS, Inc. (Minorities in Agriculture and Natural Resources and Related Sciences) and now volunteers with the organization. Butler spends much of his time on college campuses around the country recruiting for the USDA, and he knows firsthand what it takes for college students to make a good first impression when interviewing for a job.

Butler started the morning session by putting his most important message front and center on a PowerPoint slide: "Education is a Good Investment." Then he began a lesson in shaking hands, making eye contact and other non-verbal cues that can make a first impression sink or swim. He had interns lined up along the walls of the lecture hall, introducing themselves to each other, and practicing their new skills.

He encourages students to help each other. "Life is like a cup," says Carl. "You can't give away what you don't have, whether it's money or learning, so fill your cup first."

One of his favorites tips, Butler said, is to write on the backs of the business cards he collects when and where he meets people. On the front of the cards, he draws an arrow pointing to the right to remind himself to look on the back.

Butler has quite a lot to say about resumes. He has seen the good, the bad and the ugly in his years of recruiting. He cautioned the interns never to send out a resume without a cover letter. To enhance a resume, he suggests listing your computer skills, noting that in this age of technology, potential employers will want to know you're computer literate.

Next, the session moved from handshakes and resumes into diversity, which Butler says can bring a whole new dimension to every organization's workplace. He noted that diversity can be

LET ME LEARN, *From p. 1*

Dr. Johnston noted that teachers often overlook the steps that occur before learning occurs, a concept illustrated by one of the interns. "I didn't do well in one of my math classes," she said. "I now realize that it was in part because I learned differently [than my teacher]."

For the interns, it was the tip of the iceberg, with another module of the "Let Me Learn" workshop scheduled for later in the week, and two-and-a-half more weeks of concentrated presentations, study and work experience at the SECME Summer Institute.

The Let Me Learn sessions are being sponsored by DuPont. Phyllis Buchanan, one of the founding partners of the Pioneers in Leadership Alliance and the Pioneer Leadership Academy, introduced the session.

The following Pioneer Pages staff reporters contributed to this story: Brandon Chaison, Ricky Ly and Christina Taylor

achieved by adding different ethnicities, genders, ages, or disabilities, and that discrimination—in any form—is illegal.

To give the interns a change of pace, Butler showed "Changing Lanes," starring Ben Affleck and Samuel L. Jackson, the story of a power struggle between two men and problems that arose as a result of "ignoring the small stuff." The lesson was that taking time to sort out and analyze the details can make a positive difference in a situation's outcome.

Two of Butler's MANRRS students attending the Leadership Academy—Marcos Ruiz, 2004/05 Undergraduate Student President, and Andra Collins, Region 4 Graduate Vice President—shared their experiences in MANRRS. Collins got the interns interested with her stories of conferences around the country and the many, varied careers available in the field. "Agriculture is all around you," said Ruiz. "What may seem like it isn't related, actually is."



Carl Butler of the USDA

A Caution From Security

Officer Martinez of the U of H staff cautions interns to be aware of their surroundings while on campus for the Academy. For assistance, interns should call **713-743-0600** (on campus, **3-0600**) or **911**. These numbers are staffed 24 hours a day.

Pioneer Pages Editorial Board Named

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The "Let Me Learn" Learning Process

- **Mull**—to work through what a person is experiencing, like stirring thoughts in the pot of the brain
- **Connect**—to connect the situation to a previous experience similar to the current one
- **Rehearse**—to be alone and concentrate on a person's ideas in order to make them ready for the public
- **Express**—to state the thoughts one has rehearsed
- **Assess**—to compare what was expected with what was actually produced (was it good? was it bad?)
- **Reflect**—to act like one is looking in a mirror and think about what just happened (was there a personal best? was the learning process used wisely?)
- **Revisit**—in a similar assignment, to keep what was effective in the previous situation

www.letmelearn.org

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