



AN ALLIANCE OF PARTNERS DEDICATED TO  
THE 21ST CENTURY WORKFORCE

# The Pioneer Pages



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## Academy Hits High Note

By COL (RET) JIM PAIGE

*Executive Director, Pioneers in Education Alliance*

PSLA 2006 was a huge success, due in large part to excellent staff planning and generous donations from our sponsors. We graduated an outstanding class of 32 diverse students, representing 19 States and the District of Columbia, 21 colleges and universities, and 23 different academic majors and disciplines.

Monitoring progress and tracking success continue to be our biggest challenges, thus, the need for the PSLA Mentoring Network. Our success measure is to match each intern with a mentor. As in the past, each student left the Academy with an assigned personal mentor, committed to working with that student throughout the year.

Dr. Mike Mullen, Associate Dean for Academic Programs, UK College of Agriculture, and a new PSLA mentor, captured the essence of PSLA's mentoring program: "I can serve as a person to bounce ideas off, make contacts, and provide a forum for life experiences." Along with 11 others, Dr. Mullen joined the growing list of PSLA mentors, all committed to helping students prepare for the 21st century workforce. Thirteen 2006 interns made personal contact with the UK graduate school and may attend in the coming years. Great news for both UK and the PSLA Mentoring Network.

This year, we extended our reach even further, to other similar programs. Five interns were from the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at Michigan State University whose mission is to assist migrant/seasonal farm worker students in their transition to university life. Andie Gonzalez of CAMP summarized her experience: "Thank you for giving me the opportunity to take part in such a great Academy. I made many friends, networked, and gained tools that will help me in my future. I am so grateful and honored to have you reach out to our youth."

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## Diversity at the Academy: *A Personal Story*

By BEN STROLE

*2006 PSLA Intern, Purdue University*

I remember saying to myself on the trip to Lexington, KY, "Please don't let me be the only white guy here." I was worried I would feel like an outcast. If only I had known I would end the Academy with the best new family a person could ask for.

During the Academy, I had numerous opportunities to learn about other people's cultures. From breaking down Native American stereotypes to learning the rich family values of a set of twins from Texas, I felt enriched and enlightened by the diversity of everyone here. One night in particular, I played basketball with six guys and one girl. Unfortunately, I wasn't blessed with athletic prowess, especially on the basketball court, but I did what I could to keep up and I enjoyed every minute. That night, I learned that absorbing culture and appreciating diversity doesn't always happen in a sit-down conversation.

On the Academy's Multicultural and Diversity Awareness night, I cried. I'm not afraid to admit this, because it was with the love and support of my newfound family. I talked about how I appreciated each and every one of them for taking time to share their beautiful culture with me. As a white, middle-class male growing up with a single mother stricken with heart disease, I never really developed a sense of family, the importance of culture, or appreciation for diversity. Coming to know and appreciate everyone involved in the Academy is without a doubt the most transformative event I have ever experienced. I cried out of love. I cried because I was thankful to everyone for enlightening me with their culture. I cried because I felt the strength of my 31 fellow interns and could speak honestly about how I felt.

Our last formal night as a family came to an end at the Academy's end, and I am left with memories of laughter, tears, good times, and early mornings at the peculiarly named "Good Barn," and our future as a family spread all across the nation. On departing Kentucky, I hope we've all learned that we are different, but we see that not as a roadblock but as a path to a brighter future.



## Tribal College President Shares Native American Heritage

By SARA WOOTEN  
2006 PSLA Intern  
Purdue University

Dr. Kim Winkleman, a member of the Lakota tribe of the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota and president of Comanche Nation College in Lawton, OK, gave the Pioneer interns a new perspective on Native American culture, discrimination, and the need for social justice. Dr. Winkleman, an educator, veteran and activist whose tribal name is "Bear War Leader," set the tone of his presentation by speaking in his native Lakota tongue.

Currently, he devotes much of his time to setting up tribal colleges around the country, working with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). The tribal college movement began in the 1960s and is gaining momentum due to the efforts of people like Dr. Winkleman. Tribal college curricula uphold Native American culture and values, and the non-assimilation of white societal standards. All are welcome at the 37 tribal colleges throughout the nation—Native American heritage is not a condition for acceptance—and courses are also available online.

## DuPont Sponsors, Honors Gulf Coast Interns

By DARIUS BELL  
2006 PSLA Intern, Hampton University

*"My Girlfriend Katrina stole my shoes, clothes, and home but not my SOUL! Look, I made 31 new friends from 21 states for life."*

Expressing the sentiment of his fellow interns whose lives were forever changed by Katrina and Rita, David Augustine, New Orleans native and 2006 Pioneer intern, gave special thanks to Alliance partner Dr. Phyllis Buchanan of DuPont during the Academy's Multicultural & Diversity Awareness night.

At Dr. Buchanan's encouragement, DuPont sponsored seven interns from the areas devastated by Hurricanes Rita and Katrina to PSLA 2006. "We wanted to express our care and concern to those families who sustained damage to their homes from the the hurricanes," said Dr. Buchanan. "We have several plants in the Gulf region, and we share the pain of their losses. These young students are a great return on investment for DuPont, and we are proud to sponsor them." DuPont is one of the founding partners in the Pioneers in Education Alliance, sponsor of the annual PSLA.



## Coach Smith Shares Time with PSLA

By JOE JESSEE OWENS III  
2006 PSLA Intern, Tuskegee University

"You can go from good to great with help and hard work," said Coach Tubby Smith, UK's Head Basketball Coach, as he shared his life struggles, sacrifices, and rewards with the Pioneer interns. Growing up on a farm in southern Maryland with strong parents, Coach Smith learned the value of hard work and discipline. "My father was a WW II veteran and taught all 17 of his children—12 girls and 5 boys—the value of hard work and leadership." Having just returned from visiting soldiers in Iraq, where he gained even greater appreciation for leadership, Coach Smith gave special thanks to the PSLA staff for developing leaders for the 21st century.

Going from being a role model on his small high school basketball team to being head coach of one the nation's premiere basketball programs gives him a great sense of pride and accomplishment, Coach Smith admitted. He acknowledged that his is a tough job, oftentimes almost overwhelming, but said he "wouldn't trade it for anything in the world." He encourages his boys (3 sons and 14 players) to play with pride and to keep things in perspective. This very busy coach showed his generosity by having lunch with the interns and taking time to talk with each one individually.

Thank you, Coach Smith.



One on one with Mike Quarles, '06 intern from Virginia State.

## “Clocking” How Teams Work Together

By EMILIO GARCIA

2006 PSLA Intern, Michigan State University

Dr. Christine Johnston commanded the first day of the 2006 Academy with two workshops: Let Me Learn, in which interns determined their particular learning styles—sequential, precise, technical, or confluent—and Team-building. In the latter, she had the student scholars break up into groups to create a water clock with just three items—a bowl, water, and tin foil. When Dr. Johnston called “time,” only one of the teams had correctly followed her directions in coming up with a water clock.

More an exercise in working on a team than in building a timepiece, the challenge gave interns the opportunity to share their learning styles from the morning Let Me Learn workshop with their team members. It was practice and learning the interns can carry into the workplace—from knowing how they function in a group to valuing the backgrounds, skills, similarities, and differences of their team members.

## The Value of Mentoring

By ANDIE LEE GONZALEZ

2006 PSLA Intern, Michigan State University

Dr. Jay Jackman, Executive Director of the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE), host of this year’s PSLA Academy, has been both a mentor and mentored. So he knows firsthand the difference mentoring can make in a career. Over lunch on the second full day of the Academy, he shared some thoughts on the subject with the Pioneer interns and the PSLA staff.

“Choose a mentor that will last, and stay in contact with your mentor,” he said. The advice was particularly appropriate, as each intern has the opportunity to mentor with a professional associated with the Academy—from the corporate, military, or government arena in a wide range of fields. He also covered the do’s and don’ts of working with a mentor, like keeping things on a business and not a personal level. In closing, Dr. Jackman noted that mentors come in all ages, and being mentored can last a lifetime.

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## GE Attorney Shares Words of Wisdom at Pioneer Academy

By CHEIDU ODITA

2006 PSLA Intern, Louisiana State University

“I speak with high-level executives on a daily basis, but I have to tell you this: I never get as nervous doing that as I am today standing before you. Why? Because you are the future. You are poised at the beginning of your careers, and you have the ability to significantly impact our society and to determine the kind of world we live in. What I say to you today can make a difference in how you do that. That’s a huge responsibility, and that’s what makes me nervous.”

With those words, Tyson Toles, Counsel for GE Engine Services, Inc., summarized not only his own challenge as a featured speaker, but also the challenge of the PSLA overall—to inspire, prepare, and guide a group of 32 young people who will soon enter the world of work where they have the potential to dramatically reshape the future. “That’s why programs like PSLA are a great investment for Corporate America,” said Toles. “They prepare you to enter the workplace with heightened awareness of the value of teamwork, the importance of communication, the potential impact you can have on the world around you. PSLA prepares you to be more productive members of the organization and society.”

“Every person is entitled to one person’s share of this universe. What each of us does with our share is up to us,” Toles told the students, quoting his father. “But if you think that you are too young or too inexperienced to make a difference, think again. Think about Apple Computer, Microsoft, and Napster. . .all of these were started by young people who never questioned whether they were too young or too inexperienced to make a difference. They just did it, and our world is a different place because of them.”

Toles continued, “The world is becoming increasingly complex and competitive. No longer are you competing solely against each other for jobs. In the global marketplace, you are now competing against the best and the brightest young minds from China, India, Malaysia, Central and Eastern Europe, and Africa. As a result of technology, the world has become smaller and much more dynamic.”

Drawing from his own experiences in law school at the University of Chicago, Tyson cautioned students not to be afraid or too proud to ask for or accept help. When you come into a new situation or when you’re facing the unknown, you can waste a lot of valuable time and energy trying to find your own way. “Learn to ask questions. Learn to ask for help. That’s why programs like PSLA are so valuable. They teach you the importance of networking, of reaching out, not only to those who can help you but also to those who might need your help. They help you discover your own potential for changing the world...or at least your own little corner of it.”

In closing, Toles challenged the PSLA students to be aware of their own potential, to accept it, and to act upon it.



## Pioneer Hi-bred: One Pioneer Teams With Another

By ROBIN FRANKLIN

2006 PSLA Intern, Maryville College

In 1926, farm journal editor and future U.S. Vice President Henry A. Wallace, along with a group of Des Moines, IA, businessmen, started the Pioneer Hi-bred Corn Company. Pioneer Hi-bred is the world's primary source of customized solutions for farmers, livestock producers, and grain and oilseed processors. It became a DuPont company in 1999.

In 1952 the company developed a philosophy called "The Long Look,": *We strive to produce the best products on the market. We deal honestly and fairly with our employees, customers, seed growers, sales force, business associates, and shareholders. We advertise and sell our products vigorously, but without misrepresentation. We give helpful management suggestions to our customers to assist them in making the greatest possible profit from our products.*

### Alliance Partner Receives Leadership Award

Thomas Phillips, retired Director of Community Investment at Pioneer Hi-bred, carried the vision and ethics of the Pioneer founding fathers to an organization with like-minded ethics, the Pioneers in Education (PiE) Alliance, when he became a PiE partner in [year?]. Phillips participated in both the 2004 and 2005 Pioneer Academies. He was co-recipient of the 2005 Lifetime Achievement in Philanthropy award, presented by the National Center for Black Philanthropy. At this year's Academy, PiE Alliance members presented Phillips with the 2006 Pioneers in Education Leadership Award for his contributions to the education of our nation's youth. Although now retired from Pioneer Hi-bred, Phillips continues to be active in the Pioneer Alliance and the PSLA.



ACADEMY HITS HIGH NOTE  
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Similarly, Orlando Avery, Pioneer intern and a member the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) student congress, will petition the AIHEC Advisory Board to work with PiE to develop a PSLA Leadership Academy for tribal colleges across the nation.

"This is exactly the kind of program we need in Indian Country" said Dr. Kim Winkleman, President, Comanche Nation College, who was a keynote speaker at the Academy. "I will recommend that we in AIHEC establish a formal relationship with PSLA."

Based on the Academy theme, "Building Tomorrow's Leaders Today," Enlightened, Inc. again sponsored the "Pioneer Leader Entrepreneurship Award," which will go to the student who writes the best plan for a start-up business. That award, along with the Pioneer Student Leader Award, sponsored by GEN (Ret) George Bowman, CEO, Straight Arrow, Inc., will be presented at PSLA 2007 at George Washington University, Washington DC. Both \$2000 awards celebrate and recognize the spirit of PSLA.

"This year's class was our best ever, a great return on our investment," said Phyllis Buchanan, PiE Alliance Partner.

## Interviewing Skills Workshop

By MICHAEL M. QUARLES

2006 PSLA Intern,  
Virginia State



Barbara Knight in a simulated interview

"You get one chance to make a good first impression." With those words, Barbara Knight of DuPont began her workshop on interviewing skills. "Your conduct at an interview will likely make the difference between getting and not getting a job." The purpose of the interview, she noted, is to obtain a maximum amount of information in a minimum period of time in order to evaluate a candidate—to measure his/her skills, knowledge, and ability to do a job. It gives the employer a snapshot of who you are, and it goes far in determining your future with a company.

Ms. Knight described interviewing methods and gave the interns tips on preparing for interviews. "The way you carry yourself and the way you dress can be deciding factors in whether or not you're considered for a job," she said.

With growing competition for jobs, that first impression is an opportunity to set yourself apart from your peers.

## Calendar

### 2006

Jun	PSLA 2006 Review	Wilmington, DE
Jul	Call Me Mister Leadership Institute	Clemson Univ
Aug	PiE Alliance Meeting	Clemson Univ
Sep	Alliance Quarterly Board Mtg	Alexandria, VA
Oct	PSLA Mentoring Network Mtg	Washington, DC
Nov	PSLA 2007 Planning Mtg	GWU, Wash, DC
Dec	NAAE National Convention	Atlanta, GA

### 2007

Jan	Alliance Quarterly Board Mtg	Alexandria, VA
	PSLA Mentoring Network Mtg	
Feb	PSLA 2007 Planning Mtg	GWU, Wash, DC
Mar	MANRRS Natl Conference	Birmingham, AL
Apr	NSTA Conference	St. Louis
Jun	PSLA 2007, GWU	Washington, DC