Jesse Jackson Jr. gets out the vote

Students have the power to focus the national debate on issues that directly affect them — but only if they are registered to vote, Jesse Jackson Jr. told some 90 people who gathered at UD for a "Strategies for Success" conference sponsored by minority student affairs Sept. 19.

"We ought to have a moratorium on excuses. On Nov. 3, stop complaining about what you don’t have, students, and use what you got. Vote about it," Jackson urged.

Jackson, 27, is a student at the University of Illinois School of Law and president of the Keep Hope Alive political action committee. Calling for a coalition and "a unity of ideas," Jackson said, "this campus is a training ground from which you address larger problems."

Jackson urged students to look beyond their individual concerns. Noting that "homelessness is a bigger problem than campus housing," he encouraged students to focus on poverty, unemployment, women's issues and affirmative action.

"If you're unregistered to vote, you're absent from political discourse," he said.

Toni Cade Bambara: real writer

"How many writers are there in this room?" Toni Cade Bambara asks a classroom of students. Not many people raise their hands. "Oh, come on!" sighs Bambara, who has written several short story collections including Gorilla, My Love and The Seabirds Are Still Alive. "A writer is a person who makes up stories, who sees a person on a bus and makes up her biography, who eavesdrops on a conversation and constructs a whole story around it. Now, how many writers are there in this room?"

The students grin and hands wave at Bambara from around the Miriam Hall classroom.

Bambara spoke informally to a group of several English classes Sept. 17 before she gave her formal address in Boll Theatre as this year's Scholars Author.

"I'm here in case you thought that all writers are white, male and dead," says Bambara. "Writers are live. They do laundry and stuff."

Bambara, who grew up in Harlem during the 1940s, says writing has been part of her life since she was a young child. Weekly trips to the library which her hero, Langston Hughes, frequented gave her a respect for writers and made her realize that they are just people.

"I liked Mr. Langston Hughes," Bambara remembers, "because he always broke the library rules. First, he would not take his hat off when he walked in the door because his arms were always full of papers and books. Then he would do something really odd; he would come into the children's section and sit down at a table with us. His legs were really long, so his knees came up to his chin when he sat down. Then, he would do the one thing no one ever dared to do. He would talk, loudly, with children."

Another important part of Bambara's childhood was her early involvement in political rallies.

"As a kid, I was fast and I was smart, so I ran errands. I took minutes at rallies. I came of age in that period. I got involved. That's how I became literate. It's also how I became responsible."

Film series looks at multiculturalism

Multicultural issues, including the Rodney King verdict, will be discussed during a film series being offered as a minicourse this fall.

Each week a film will address a different culture — African-American, Native American, Hispanic and Asian-American — and will be followed with a discussion by a multicultural panel of students, faculty and community members. Participants can receive academic credit for the minicourse.

Next semester, a series of retreats will further explore multicultural issues.

"Students are still trying to process that verdict," says Debra Moore, director of minority student affairs. "What has happened with the Rodney King incident is the course of our history has been changed. We were the warriors 20 years ago. We thought we were the generation after the riots. Our current students are now the new warriors with new perceptions."

This spring, the minority student affairs office and campus ministry co-sponsored a "Peace, Justice and Healing Mass" immediately following the verdict.
Kente cloths wrap up a new commencement tradition

Caps and gowns may qualify as traditional graduation garb, but recently black graduates have added a new commencement tradition: Kente cloths.

The cloths, woven by the Asante people of Ghana, are given to graduates to be worn at commencement as a "symbol of celebration, achievements, gifts and talents," explains Debra Moore, director of the University's minority student affairs office.

"It’s a way of linking some component of culture on this predominantly white campus to our African-American experience," Moore says.

Moore says how the cloths are worn — draped around the shoulders or tied around the waist — give different cultural meanings. The minority student affairs staff decided that since the cloths are symbols of pride and respect, they shouldn't be worn with blue jeans.

"They should be worn for revered celebrations which are uplifting to the culture," Moore says.

The Kente cloths have been given to graduates for the last couple of years at the University's November soul food dinner and its spring recognition and awards banquet. It was at this year's April commencement, though, when Moore noticed the cultural statement really beginning to catch on.

"I think this says a great deal about African-Americans and where we are in American culture, yet we know there is still a linkage with those wonderful African traditions," says Moore. "It says you have the capacity to lead and to learn, and we want to affirm you within the context of culture."

Students get work experience, thanks to outstanding alumnus

Raynell Adams laughs when asked about the mentoring program he's established for UD students at his office — Montgomery County's pre-trial services department.

"I don't refer to it as a program. It's just something I do," he says simply.

He brings students into the judicial system where they "ideally do whatever my officers do," says Adams, a 1983 criminal justice graduate. That can include interviewing clients in jail and helping monitor the county's house arrest program to the more mundane tasks of typing and filing. It all adds up to some valuable experience for students, two of whom now have full-time jobs with the county.

"I pounded the pavement after graduation," Adams recalled. "My first couple of interviews I was practically thrown out the door. Then I finally got a call."

Adams thinks his campus and community involvement (as a member of Big Brothers/Big Sisters and as a volunteer at St. Joseph Children's Treatment Center) helped him land his first job. Now he wants UD students to take advantage of those same opportunities.

"We need to network more and we need those lines of communication open. I like to know that even though I left UD, I can still stay involved."

His involvement earned the Washington, D.C., native the Minority Student Affairs Outstanding Alumni Award at this spring's recognition banquet.

"Fifteen minutes with a student may not allow you recognition from our broader community," says Debra Moore, director of minority student affairs, "but we appreciate it."

Says Adams: "I enjoy it, and it gives me the biggest thrill when they go off and do well."

Grad places UD students and alumni on career paths

Gregory Hayes is out to change some perceptions about the University's Career Placement Center.

"It's only for graduating seniors."
"Alumni should look for their own jobs."
"To use the center, students just sign up for interviews."

Wrong, wrong and wrong, says Hayes, the center's new director and a 1972 UD graduate. He encourages students to begin using the center as early as possible. Students who aren't looking for jobs may find internship or cooperative education positions through the center — positions, Hayes says, that often lead to permanent jobs.

His other priorities are forming alumni networks in cities around the country as a resource for students seeking job contacts; working with UD's alumni office to encourage graduates to use the center; and expanding the number of companies recruiting on campus.

His last task won't be easy, given the state of the nation's economy. But Hayes tells student job-seekers not to lose hope.

"There are jobs available. I think we have to ... give students the necessary tools to conduct their own job search. Get them to contact companies directly. We need to work a little bit harder and a little bit smarter on students' behalf."
Building skills to reach the goal: graduation

Bonita Terry’s friendly manner could make any first-year student feel more comfortable in a new and challenging environment.

But Terry, a graduate student who works on academic support programs in the University’s minority student affairs office, emphasizes serious messages about responsibility and rewards.

“Students need to know they are responsible for their own success. I always tell them, ‘don’t blame anyone else.’” Terry helps students who need help with the skills required for academic success. But she also works on self-esteem, multicultural awareness and communication.

“Students may drop out if they don’t have some reinforcement of the positive aspects,” she said.

The first year for students is critical because this lays the foundation for the remaining four or five years, said Timothy Spraggins, associate director of minority student affairs. The office follows first-year African-American students for a full year, watching grades, class schedules, attitudes and feelings. Students have a mentor they can turn to for any problem, someone with whom they can also share successes. “Our emphasis is on academics but we respond to other problems, ranging from being homesick to having problems with a roommate or instructor,” he said.

The office also provides a road map for understanding the complexities of a university system.

A semester-long academic seminar stresses causes of academic problems and helps first-year students adjust. While it is open to any UD student, the seminar is directed from an African-American perspective.

Not all students feel comfortable coming to the office for help, Spraggins said. “Ethnic minority students seem to have a stigma about using support systems,” he said. “I feel very strongly about removing that whole stigma. Needing a tutor in calculus or engineering has nothing to do with the fact that you are an African-American.

“We have to get beyond the stereotypes and look ahead to what’s important — which is graduation.”

Serving students’ quest for spirituality and fellowship

One of the new faces at UD is the Rev. Walter J. Green, graduate assistant in campus ministry and minority student affairs as well as a student at the United Theological Seminary.

Green said his job is to “bridge the gap between academics and spirituality for minority students.” He hopes to teach African-American students to appreciate diversity among themselves.

Green, who is originally from New Orleans, earned a bachelor’s degree in mathematics with a minor in secondary education from Southern University at New Orleans in May 1991. He was ordained in July 1991 at the Christian Unity Baptist Church in New Orleans.

“Building and empowering minority students mentally, socially, psychologically and spiritually to enable them to survive in society” Green said, was his primary reason for applying for the job.

He plans to encourage this through four areas of programming: Protestant worship services, Bible study, Protestant fellowships and socials. Worship services will focus on teaching an appreciation of worship and relationships to God and exposing African-American students to the ceremonial ministries that exist in the church, Green said.

Fellowships will be held to foster unity among students and to “teach the need to have diverse gatherings to permit students to share in each others’ struggles,” he said. Social events will give alternatives to secular experiences that may not be conducive to academic well being.

Green says a personal goal of his is to see a “concerted effort by African-American students to become a community and support system for each other without being called together by a group for a function.” He wants the students to realize that he’s at the University to serve them and that he understands the struggle of undergraduate students for spirituality.

“I’ve been where you are, and I know together, we can survive.”
Rayford Blakeney
Major: Political Science
Hometown: Masury, Ohio
Year: Senior

He's the senior class senator for UD's Student Government Association, a member of the prelaw fraternity and the Model United Nations Club. After law school, a career in politics seems likely.

"I want to work for the government," Ray Blakeney confirms, "the State Department or maybe one day be an ambassador." He pauses, then grins. "Or a sports agent."

A self-avowed sports nut, Blakeney became enamored with the agent idea by a friend's father who is the principal negotiator for the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team. "I thought, 'I could do that.'"

Blakeney has accomplished most everything he's set his mind to. Born in Seoul to a Korean mother and an American father in the military, Blakeney's childhood was spent traveling the country. When his parents divorced, he settled in Ohio with his grandmother before coming to UD, where he funds his own education.

Last summer, he worked in Jackson Lake, Wyo., where "I had a better understanding of how people want to preserve our national parks." This summer, he was one of 41 students selected from a group of about 500 nationwide to participate in the Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass. The academy, which seeks to swell the ranks of minorities with Ph.D.s by drawing students of color to graduate school, is four weeks of intensive reading, discussion and reflective writing. Blakeney loved it.

"The motivation was different. There was no competition. We had a 4-to-1 student-faculty ratio, and they always looked at the positive aspects of whatever you did."

Blakeney is exploring law school, but thinks he'll work for a few years before heading back to the classroom. He's lived on both coasts, but prefers the west.

"That's where I can watch every baseball game, but still be to bed by 11 o'clock."

Dorene Wilbur
Major: Secondary Education
Hometown: Pittsburgh
Year: Sophomore

When Dorene Wilbur first came to UD she felt homesick. It was difficult to adjust to a new environment. Now, one of her goals is to help other students, especially minority students, make that adjustment.

"It is difficult to be minority students on a predominantly white campus," Wilbur said. "It's a big transition, and some can't handle it. We need a sense of family and unity so that we can lean on one another."

Wilbur works with minority student affairs to help minority students at UD participate fully in all the campus has to offer. She and others are working to make a multicultural Mass with African influences a regular event on campus. She is also on the Distinguished Speakers Series committee and has worked with campus ministry.

An aspiring writer, she's working on a novel and writes poetry, sings with the Ebony Heritage Singers and recently was awarded the Martin Luther King Scholarship for her service to the
community and for her campus involvement.
She hopes to teach high school English and
drama and wants to help "people speak out."

For now, she wants to bring her campus
community a little closer together.

"I'd like to be known for helping to bring all the
cultures on the campus together," she said. "We
shouldn't attend only black affairs or just white
affairs. We want to be heard all over. We need to
voice our opinions all over." 

Tammy McGhee
Major: Law enforcement
Hometown: Dayton
Year: Sophomore

Growing up on Harriet Street by the UD Arena,
Tammy McGhee would walk to UD's summer
sports program with her friends. Now, at 32 and
with three children, McGhee is fulfilling two
childhood dreams — to go to UD and to study to be
a lawyer.

"I said I would be going here one day, and my
plans just got a little bit sidetracked for years," McGhee said. "But now I'm back on that same
track, and I feel really good about that."

McGhee put her education on hold after she
married and had children. "I thought it was
important for me to be a full-time mom to them," McGhee said. "At that time I was married. Right
now I'm separated, I've been for a while. And I
thought, if life is going to be like this, then I need to
do something where I can help support my
children."

Majoring in law enforcement and going to law
school would also enable
McGhee to do something
for others. "I see how
many problems that are
going on in the world
right now with drugs, and
parents not being able to
control their children, and
I want to help other
people."

McGhee can only take
12 credit hours a semester
so that she can arrange
her schedule around
caring for her children.

Not "satisfied with ... just getting by" in her schoolwork, she hopes to set an
example for her children, George, 13; Tatum, 8; and
Jennifer, 7.

"Sometimes it gets very frustrating, but I know
what my main goal is, and that's to show them that
if I can do it, then you guys can do it." 

Maurice Ingram
Major: Journalism
Hometown: Cleveland
Year: Sophomore

"I like to see how much I can handle," says
Maurice Ingram, who enjoys the challenge of
"being responsible for other people and being
responsible for yourself" as a resident assistant in
Stuart Hall. The job also provides the chance "to
help change some perceptions about minorities. I
like to give certain people the chance to say, 'he is
not like the guys I see on TV.'"

Since coming to UD,
Ingram's changed some of
his own perceptions.
"Contrary to my initial
belief, it's a nice place for
a minority student to be.
The school seems commit­
ted to bring more minority
students to campus, and
they do their best to make
them feel they belong," he
says. He finds a feeling of
family closeness among minority students on
campus, fostered particularly by the minority
student affairs office.

Journalism has always fascinated Ingram, who
remembers that when he was a small boy, he and
his grandfather would read the paper together and
discuss the television news. He'd like to write for a
newspaper or magazine in his hometown, but
doesn't rule out using his journalism degree to step
into television. "Not all people in broadcast know
how to write a story," he points out. Ingram's
getting plenty of practice — his work appears
in this issue of the Black Alumni Chronicle
and in the Black Perspective.

Ingram also is active in community service.
He's served food to the homeless at the
St. Vincent Hotel, volunteered with the Boys
Club and Girls Club, and helped paint a house
during Into the Streets, a full day of service.
He also serves the University of Dayton: as a
panelist for college preparation seminars for
Dayton-area high school students and as a
member of Campus Connection, student
volunteers who write and make phone calls to
prospective students and tell them about UD.

"I'm not out to build up any kind of track
record," he says about community service. "I never
know — one day I might need the help."
Alumni Profiles

Alumni engineer the future

Joseph E. Davis '60

Joseph Davis graduated from UD's electrical engineering program when "I think that I was one of three black students living on campus," he said. This setting prepared him for the future: "It gave me great insight into dealing with the majority community. It forced me to be outgoing, so my communication skills were more than adequate when I entered the job market," he said.

Davis worked for the Federal Aviation Agency for five years before settling with IBM Corp. in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. He worked in middle management for 27 years before joining the newly formed IBM subsidiary, Employment Solutions Corp., which handles the hiring for IBM.

His new position involves college recruitment on East Coast campuses. "I really enjoy what I am now doing because it gets me back into the college arena where there is a diversity of opinions and diversity of environments," he said.

Davis graduated with a master's in public administration from Pace University in May. He stays active in the community: he is chair of the Poughkeepsie Republican Committee and on the board of directors for the Astor Home for Children in Rhinebeck, N.Y. He said he sees involvement in these activities as his duty.

"It is a responsibility that we all have to participate in the community in which we live, a responsibility that I enjoy."

Patricia Russell Fagbayi '77

"Engineering is not an easy subject, but if that's what you want to do, then don't limit yourself simply because you're black or female. Don't look at your race or sex; look at your dreams," says Patricia Fagbayi, a process excellence manager at Eastman Kodak and one of UD's first black women engineering graduates.

Fagbayi, who lives in Rochester, N.Y., with her husband, Mutiu, a 1976 engineering graduate, and their two daughters, came to UD from the Bahamas. Growing up near an oil refinery there, she became interested in a career in chemical engineering early in life.

Even though she was the only black woman engineering major at UD, she found that race was never a big issue in the classroom.

"People noticed the gender difference more than the racial one," she says. "Being the only woman in engineering classes with six or seven men was interesting, but there was never any tension."

Fagbayi did find discriminations to be an issue outside of the UD community, however. "My plan after graduation had been to return to the Bahamas and work," she says, "but the type of job I wanted was out in the field. At that time there weren't any women working out there, so I was only offered jobs in a lab. That's not what I wanted."

Instead, Fagbayi returned to the United States and took a job as a process engineer at Xerox. In 1982 she moved to Eastman Kodak, a company she likes because it promotes ethnic diversity.

Eastman Kodak's diversity is due partly to Fagbayi, who has been instrumental in forming several organizations which focus on gender and racial issues, including Network North Star and Kodak Women's Forum. Fagbayi's two daughters have inspired her, also, to help form a working parents league.

"If I had seen myself as black or female, I would have built a barrier I could not overcome," Fagbayi says. "For example, when choosing a mentor, I may have only looked for black mentors. That's limiting. A person should follow her dreams."

Jerome Harris '88

If Jerome Harris can steer inner-city youth to college, he's happy. If they choose to study engineering when they get there, he's ecstatic.

Harris, an engineer at Cincinnati Bell Inc., has spent the past four summers mentoring youth from Cincinnati's public high schools in a weeklong outreach program designed to get them excited about science and technology.

At Cincinnati Bell's training center in Erlanger, Ky., the students build radios, speaker phones and digital clocks as Harris offers pointers on soldering and safety and talks about his job as an engineer.

"At first they're kind of lost," he said. "They don't know what to expect: 'How can we build a clock from scratch?' But once they get into it, we can't pull them away."

And that's the point of BEST, which stands for Building Enthusiasm Through Science and Technology. The Cincinnati Bell-sponsored
program, which started with 15 students in 1988, has more than quadrupled in size. Its students aren't at the top of their high school classes, and that's deliberate. "We look for middle-ground students, those who need a confidence booster," said Harris, recently selected as a YMCA Black Achiever for his community service work. "We try to treat the experience like a job. We pay them between $100 and $150 a week."

Harris "virtually walked into" his engineering job at Cincinnati Bell four years ago after majoring in electronic engineering technology at UD. As a student, he interned for three years with AT&T in Cincinnati.

Harris didn't need programs like BEST to stimulate his interest in engineering. "My brother was an engineer. I was always a good student, particularly in math. It was just a natural decision to go into engineering," he said.

Jill Davis Parker '87
Paula Davis '87

Sisters Paula and Jill Davis both earned dual degrees from the University of Dayton and Wilberforce University, majored in electrical engineering, roomed and studied together, were members of Delta Sigma Theta, and graduated in the same class. Separated in age by only 11 months and often mistaken for twins, the sisters were accustomed to having professors become confused over their identities. It wasn't unusual for the younger Paula to take a class the semester after Jill and to receive questions like "Miss Davis, weren't you already in this class?" They didn't mind the confusion, however. In fact, Jill commented that it was nice having her sister in some of the classes since Paula's notes were usually easier to read. Today, Jill and Paula Davis have different notes to compare. Each has taken the electrical engineering major and done something completely different with it.

Jill Davis Parker is a manager in switching systems at Michigan Bell in Southfield, Mich., where she lives with her husband of two years, an engineer for the Chrysler Corp. She obtained her position after successfully completing the Ameritech Development Program. This highly selective program prepares employees interested in management positions for promotions sooner and, thus, allows them to move up faster in the company. The program "gives you a chance to see more of the company and to get more of a diversity" of exposure and experience in different departments, Jill said. Besides striving toward advancement at Michigan Bell, Jill plans on someday going back to school to get an MBA.

Paula recently graduated from the University of Cincinnati College of Law and began a career as an associate at Benesch Friedlander Copeland and Aranoff in Cincinnati on Sept. 8. She is also planning for her wedding on Nov. 1 to UD alumnus Nate Lampley '85, who earned his law degree from the University of Cincinnati in '88. Paula first became interested in law during a mandatory class dealing with law and engineering that she took for her electrical engineering major. According to Paula, "law touches all aspects of life." She believes that law offers an important, well-rounded education, especially for people in business. In fact, she calls it "the best education you can get for graduate studies."

Four Delta Sigma Theta sorority sisters who graduated April 26, 1992, supported and encouraged one another so successfully that they achieved honors while students and attained the ultimate goal for many college graduates — jobs. (Left to right): Jacqueline Rice was hired by Fifth Third Bank in Cincinnati, Angela Lovett by Society Bank in Cleveland, Valerie Clark by the Gahanna School District and Trina Frazier by Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati. The foursome also paved the way for the sorority to receive the University's award for the highest combined grade point average for a Greek organization.

"We were always looking out for one another," said Frazier, an industrial engineering technology major from Dayton. "If one of us heard about a job fair, then we all knew about it, and we would remind each other to sign up for job interviews. We were all involved in finding jobs for all of us."
Friday, Oct. 16
Homecoming: Black Alumni Reception, 7-10 p.m., Kennedy Union Torch Lounge. RSVP: (513) 229-3634.

Friday, Nov. 6
Annual Soul Food Dinner Theater — McGinnis Center. Call (513) 229-3634 for more information.

Wednesday, Nov. 18
UD Jazz Ensemble, 8 p.m., Kennedy Union Boll Theatre.

Saturday, Dec. 5
Ebony Heritage Singers Winter Songfest, 8 p.m., Kennedy Union Boll Theatre.

Reunion Weekend '93 — June 11-13
For the Classes of 1943, 1948, 1953, 1963, 1968, 1973 and 1983: Every spring alumni return to campus to celebrate Reunion Weekend in grand style. The classes of the 10th, 20th, 25th, 30th, 40th, 45th and 50th years come back to reminisce and renew friendships with classmates, faculty, administrators and Marianists. This tradition of celebrating and honoring alumni perpetuates UD's unique family spirit. For information, call Rich Munn at (513) 229-3299.

Protestant Worship Experiences
Protestant Worship Experiences will be held in UD's Immaculate Conception Chapel on the following dates:
- Sunday, Nov. 8 — 2 p.m.
- Wednesday, Dec. 9 — noon
- Sunday, Jan. 10 — 2 p.m.
- Sunday, Feb. 7 — 2 p.m.
- Sunday, March 7 — 2 p.m.
- Sunday, April 4 — 2 p.m.