A Historical Event for the University of Tennessee College of Engineering: The Dedication of the Fred D. Brown Jr. Residence Hall
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A Message from the EDP Director

Travis Griffin, Director, Engineering Diversity Programs

Greetings!

We have had an exciting, busy year and you’ll see just a preview of all the great things happening within this issue. I would like to thank the students, faculty, staff, and administration that voluntarily contributed to the content of this exciting publication. The Focus 2014 newsletter features many notable highlights such as the upcoming dedication ceremony of the new Fred D. Brown Jr. Residence Hall, the celebration of the 40th anniversary of Engineering Diversity Programs and 175 years of engineering instruction at the University of Tennessee, and the national recognition of the National Society of Black Engineers UT Chapter. We cordially invite everyone to join us for the upcoming building dedication in October and to celebrate the accomplishments of the 2013-2014 school year.

In closing, we would like to thank our alumni and corporate supporters, whose generous support provides our university with enrichment and scholarships. Thank you all for your efforts, and if you are in the area, please stop by and visit us in 110 Estabrook Hall.

Go Vols!

Travis Griffin, Director, Engineering Diversity Programs

Dedication of the Fred D. Brown Jr. Residence Hall Set for October 10, 2014

The 2014 Homecoming weekend will be kicked off with two exciting events this year. On Friday, October 10, the new Fred D. Brown Jr. Residence Hall, named for the original director of the Minority Engineering Scholarship Program in the College of Engineering and the first building on the university’s Knoxville campus named after an African American, will be dedicated during a gala afternoon ceremony. Prior to the dedication, the College of Engineering and the Engineering Diversity Programs Office will also be hosting an invitation-only luncheon in the University Center Ballroom from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Formal invitations to the luncheon will be mailed this summer.

The Fred D. Brown Jr. Residence Hall is the first new residence hall to be built in forty-three years. Located on Andy Holt Avenue, the two hundred fifty thousand square foot facility will accommodate seven hundred men and women when it opens, and includes a dedicated art gallery to showcase students’ work, two dining locations, video message boards, a workout facility and recreation room, a full catering kitchen, a conference room, living area, an internet lounge on each floor, and a multipurpose meeting room.

Brown graduated from Hall High School in Alcoa, Tennessee, and was the first African American member of the Alcoa Board of Education.

Dean Fred Peebles established the Minority Engineering Scholarship Program (MESP) in 1973, an initiative designed to motivate highly qualified African American young people to select engineering careers, and designated Brown as its first director. Brown successfully launched the initial program with an enrollment of only seventeen minority students and under his guidance the program grew rapidly over the years.

MESP evolved into the Engineering Diversity Programs (EDP) Office and incorporated pre-college summer programs for middle and high school students; bridge programs for new freshmen; recruiting initiatives targeted at underrepresented students; and retention and mentoring programs.

In the four decades since the programs were established, UT has consistently ranked among the top fifty universities and colleges in the nation for graduation rates of African American engineering students. The college has graduated more than nine hundred minority students.

UT Trustee and industrial engineering graduate Spruell Driver submitted a letter to the UT board detailing his gratitude to Brown for influencing his own career.

“He made it his mission to personally identify and successfully recruit the best students in Tennessee and neighboring states with a high aptitude for engineering studies,” Driver said. “Mr. Brown went to great length to ensure that his students got off to a strong start academically and that we had a cohesive support structure to ensure successful persistence to graduation.”

The events will be part of the Homecoming 2014 festivities, which will include a parade on Friday afternoon and the college’s annual Alumni Barbeque on the Hill, which will be held on Saturday, October 11, three hours prior to kickoff of the Tennessee Volunteers football game. Tickets to the Engineering Alumni Barbeque will be available for purchase online later this summer.

For more information about Homecoming 2014 and the Engineering Diversity Alumni Luncheon, contact the Engineering Diversity Office at 865-974-2779/engdev@utk.edu.

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EDP Celebrates 40th Anniversary

On Friday, October 4, at noon after the dedication ceremony for the John D. Tickle Engineering Building, a group of engineering alumni, faculty, students, and special guests gathered at The Foundry, where the College of Engineering hosted a luncheon honoring the 40th anniversary of its Engineering Diversity Programs (EDP).

The crowd of over one hundred and twenty attendees was welcomed by COE Dean Wayne T. Davis, and Chancellor Jim G. Cheek also offered remarks recognizing the 40th anniversary of the college’s diversity programs.

Rodney Brooks (BS/ME ’85, Group 8), a mechanical engineering alumnus and vice president of Alamo, Tennessee, also spoke, recognizing the origins of engineering diversity initiatives that began with the Minority Engineering Scholarship Program (MESP) which was established by the college in 1973 under the direction of late Fred Brown, Jr.

“The university has shown its greatness in the College of Engineering through its commitment to the diversity programs over the past forty years. To be able to celebrate forty years of diversity demonstrates the unwavering commitment by the leadership at UT,” said Brooks. “The future is bright to be a Top 25 university through the efforts of the engineering leadership along with the campus administration. Seeing the new Fred Brown dormitory validates his efforts to provide opportunities to many students whose lives were impacted in a very positive manner by being a part of the College of Engineering. I am very proud to be a VOL!”

Special tributes were given to the National Society of Black Engineers; the National GEM Consortium; the EDP summer pre-college programs; the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers; and the Tennessee Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation.

The two previous directors of the program, Brown and James Pippen, also received distinctive recognitions. Pippen was present at the event and graciously acknowledged the current EDP director, Travis Griffin.

“As exciting an event to behold was the return of the first group of students recruited by Mr. Fred Brown and those whom I recruited when they converged for the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the Minority Engineering Diversity Programs,” Pippen said. “The establishment of the James T. Pippen Diversity Engineering Scholarship has led to the creation of the number of PhD degrees in medicine, engineering, and law as well as MBA degrees for underrepresented students as result of the EDP I consider to be two of my greatest contributions to the College of Engineering.”

Special guests at the event included Cavanaugh Mims (BS/NE ’86, Group 5), a mechanical engineering graduate and assistant of the UT Alumni Board of Directors, and his wife, Telicia; and Dr. Mark Dean (BS/EE ’79, Group 2), co-inventor of the personal computer, former BMI Vice President and Fellow, and the new John Fisher Distinguished Professor in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, and his wife, Denise, along with his parents James and Barbara Dean.

“The 40th Anniversary Luncheon for the Engineering Diversity Programs brought me back to the place and reconnect me with the people where engineering and I became one,” said Tiffany Young, CEO of TEGrant Consulting and a member of MESP Group 25. “I walked up to the third floor of Perkins Hall and went straight to the lecture hall. Filled with emotions of gratitude and pride, I gathered in the room, I was very fortunate because at this last step for the simple reason that just because a professor’s lab might be full this semester, a spot could open up the next semester. To close out her speech, Pound reminded students who might still be a little unsure about the whole research process to utilize all the resources available at this university, such as those offered by TLSAMP and the Office of Research.

By Yonas Simon

Why Research?

On September 17, 2013, TLSAMP held a monthly meeting titled “Why Research?” with guest speaker Sharon Pound from the Office of Research. Pound has always made an effort to emphasize the importance of gaining practical experience at the undergraduate level. The research projects I currently assisting in a second year. Pound has witnessed firsthand the difference undergraduate research can make. During her speech, Pound listed off the Top 10 reasons to pursue research at the undergraduate level:

• Work directly with a faculty mentor.
• Learn about issues, methods, and leaders in your chosen field.
• Apply concepts to courses with real-world situations.
• Further your creative achievement.
• Practice critical thinking and problem solving.
• Explore potential career opportunities.
• Improve communication skills and ethical awareness.
• Prepare for graduate or professional school.
• Network with others who share your interests.
• Build confidence.

Pound noted that for many students, the idea of working alongside a professor on a research topic is an intimidating one for a variety of reasons, such as: lacking prior lab experience, not having enough background knowledge, and/or being afraid to try for the chance of being rejected. Since she has interviewed countless faculty members throughout her career, Pound was quick to point out that this is simply not the case. In reality, faculty members are always looking to incorporate undergraduates into their research, regardless of the amount of experience the students may have. She explained that the things professors are looking for in an undergraduate student are a shared common interest in their research and perseverance.

Pound offered a simple outline for those students that are interested in joining a research lab but are unclear on what to do. She suggested starting on the department of interest’s website and reading through the research topics found on each faculty member’s name. Next, make a list of the top five professors whose topic interested you the most. Then, send an email to each professor on your list with the purpose of arranging a time to meet and learn more about his or her research. Prior to the meeting, do your homework and have a few topics in mind to discuss over the research. Finally, do not leave the meeting without asking about lab openings. Pound recommended being very persistent at this last step for the simple reason that just because a professor’s lab might be full this semester, a spot could open up the next.

Career Planning and Resume Writing

By Dennis Norfleet

This TLSAMP session focused on the career services department at UT, with an appearance from guest speaker Justin Rice. Rice is the Science, Technology, Math, and Engineering (STEM) consultant with the UT Career Services Office and he gave some very useful insight when it comes to making your way into the job force. From career planning and graduate school to finding your resume, Rice provided tons of helpful information. Two of the more pivotal subjects that he focused on were graduate school and resume building.

Luckily for the TLSAMP scholars, Rice’s presentation contained a good amount of information about internships, Research Experience for Undergraduates (REUs), and getting into graduate school. Concerning internships and REUs, there are a couple of options, such as shadowing and paid vs. unpaid. Career Services offers a great option in Hire-A-VOL, in which they assist students in finding work, whether it is an internship or part-time job. Graduate school is a very real possibility for most TLSAMP scholars and also a heavy focus of the TLSAMP program. Career services also assists students in getting into graduate programs, making the application process a little less of a headache. The office provides interviewing and networking skills, help in the research and application process, and assistance with cover letters and resumes. This leads into the second point of emphasis, which is the resume seminar.

The resume section of the presentation was of great interest because, as Rice explained it, a resume can be the difference between a good job offer and being rejected. A well-written resume not only catches a potential employer’s eye but also gives you a competitive advantage over another student with similar qualifications. He explained that there are basically three types of resumes: chronological, functional, and combination. Of course, there are the essentials that every good resume needs such as education, experiences, and contact information but Rice also gave small tips to “spruce up” your resume to make it more professional and presentable. Little things, like alignment, use of white space, and rephrasing from repetition are pivotal to make your resume stand out above the rest. After all, you only have ten seconds to capture your reader’s attention.

In conclusion, the meeting was a real treat for all students and faculty that attended and students walked away with valuable knowledge on navigating through the sometimes intimidating STEM industry.

By Dennis Norfleet
Antwanette Anderson, mathematics graduating senior, received a full-time job with University of Tennessee Facilities Services as a Central Dispatch and Information Services Assistant in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Ofoluwake Tina Anjorin-Olu, biomedical engineering sophomore, received a summer 2014 Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Cecil Bell, food science and technology junior, participated in undergraduate research at the University of Tennessee in the Department of Food Science and Technology.

Mwamba Bowa, electrical engineering junior, received an electrical engineer co-op opportunity with DENSO Tennessee Manufacturing in Maryville, Tennessee.

Gareth Butler, biochemistry and cellular and molecular biology sophomore, participated in undergraduate research during the 2013-2014 academic year with Dr. Michelle van Rijmsdijk in the Department of Geography at the University of Tennessee. His research topic was “Recruitment of Foreign-born Engineers to Norway in the Oil and Gas Industry.”

Carlos Callaway, mechanical engineering junior, received a summer 2014 internship as a process engineer with Alcoa in Morristown, Tennessee.

Jermaline Chauvin, electrical engineering junior, received a summer internship experience as a cold mill intern with Logan Aluminum in Russellville, Kentucky.

Alfredo Cruz, mechanical engineering junior, received a summer 2014 internship experience as a production management engineer intern with Cargill in Eddyville, Iowa.

Courtney Dennis, material science and engineering junior, received a 2014 summer research experience at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas participating in radiocarbon studies and research with a focus on the nuclear fuel cycle in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Eric Hampton, computer engineering freshman, received a 2014 summer internship experience with Memphis Light, Gas, and Water as a desktop automation intern in Memphis, Tennessee.

Kaleesa Hines, industrial engineering sophomore, received a summer 2014 internship as a manufacturing intern with Kellog in Jackson, Tennessee. She also received an industrial engineering co-op position for Fall 2014 with Toyota in Georgetown, Kentucky.

Imani Jackson, mechanical engineering sophomore, participated in a summer internship co-op with Duke Energy in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Marcus Jeter, mechanical engineering Fall 2013 graduate, received a full-time position with Knoxville Utilities Board as plant engineer in Knoxville, Tennessee. He has also been accepted to the dual MBA/MS in Business Analytics program at the University of Tennessee and received an assistantship through the UT-ORNL Governor’s Chair in Advanced Manufacturing.

Martina Little, biological sciences sophomore, received a study abroad experience in Beloza City, Beliza, during summer 2014 mini semester (May 7-26). This was a University of Tennessee faculty-led experience for Agriculture 491.

Johnson Luma, civil engineering senior, participated in a Spring 2014 study abroad experience at L’Université de Savoie-Chambéry in Chambéry, France. He participated as an IEEE Student in the Institut savoisien d’études du français pour étrangers program.

Michael Massey, mechanical engineering senior, participated in undergraduate research during the 2013-14 academic year with Dr. S. Suresh Babu, UT/ORNL Governor’s Chair of Advanced Manufacturing Professor. The title of his project was “Effects of Design Choices on Properties of Electron Laseder Additive Manufacturing.” Michael also won third place in the engineering oral competition at the Eleventh Annual TLSAMP Research Conference for his presentation on solar cell evaluation. This work was performed with Dr. Leon Tolbert in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.

Alexander Scott McCullough, chemical engineering graduating senior, received a full time job offer with Procter & Gamble in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, as a process engineer.

Samantha Medina, material science engineering freshman, received a summer 2014 Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) with TN-SCORE hosted at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Samantha also participated in research focusing on resonant ultrasound spectroscopy during the spring 2014 semester with Dr. Veezie Hoppens.

Timothy Mickens, biomedical engineering graduating senior, participated in undergraduate research during the Spring 2014 semester with Dr. Haddong Zhou in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Tennessee.

Genesis Minter, chemical engineering senior, participated in undergraduate research during the 2013-2014 academic year during her proprietary design project with Dr. Robert Patel Council in the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at the University of Tennessee.

Ambar Nisan, industrial engineering sophomore, received a summer 2014 internship with Friki Lay as a manufacturing/ supply chain intern in Perry, Georgia.

Dennis Norfleet, biomedical engineering sophomore, received a 2014 summer internship experience as a TN Operations intern with Alcoa in Knoxville, Tennessee.

DeAnna Walker, civil engineering senior, received a summer 2014 internship as an equipment reliability intern with TVA- Sequoyah Nuclear Plant in Soddy Daisy, Tennessee.

MacKinzlie Washington, mechanical engineering junior, received a summer 2014 internship with International Paper as an engineering intern in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Khai Williams, computer engineering junior, received a 2014-2015 co-op opportunity with DENSO in Maryville, Tennessee.

Cristian Orozco, civil engineering junior, participated in undergraduate research during the 2013-14 academic year with Dr. Angel Palomo in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. The topic of his research was “Calcium Carbonate Precipitation in Kaolin Clay.”

Solange Perez, biochemistry and cellular and molecular biology graduating senior, participated in undergraduate research spring and Summer 2014 at the University of Tennessee. The title of her project was “Arabidopsis: Cloning DNA to Produce Mutant Plants for Crossing.”

Andre Shibata, material science and engineering junior, participated in an undergraduate research internship spring and summer 2014 in the Department of Material Science and Engineering at the University of Tennessee. His research focused on “Recrystallization of Magnesium Alloy with Driction-Stri Processing.”

Cassandra Smith, nuclear engineering junior, received a summer 2014 internship as a PRA Intern with Dominion Power in Richmond, Virginia.

Markyth Smith, mechanical engineering sophomore, received a summer 2014 internship as a summer intern with Logan Aluminum in Russellville, Kentucky.

Melanie Smith, civil engineering sophomore, participated in research during the 2013-14 academic year with Dr. Stephanie TerMaath in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. The topic of her project was “Analysis of Composite Lamina Properties.” Melanie won second place in the engineering poster competition at the Eleventh Annual TLSAMP Research Conference in Nashville, Tennessee.

Thomas Turner, electrical engineering graduating senior, received a full-time internship experience with Eaton in Morrisville, North Carolina.

Gabriel Valerio, mechanical engineering sophomore, received a summer 2014 internship experience as a TNS Operations intern with Alcoa in Knoxville, Tennessee.

During the Eleventh Annual Tennessee Louie Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (TLSAMP) Research Conference, two students took home awards. Michael Massey, a mechanical engineering major, won third place in the engineering oral presentation category. His presentation topic was Solar Cell Evaluation, a project conducted in conjunction with Dr. Leon Tolbert in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. Michael is currently conducting research with S. Suresh Babu and Dr. Ryan Dohoff. Melanie Smith, a mathematics civil engineering major, won second place in the engineering poster category. Her project title was “Probabilistic Analysis of Composite Lamina Properties.” Melanie works with Dr. Stephanie TerMaath in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

This year the conference was held in Nashville, Tennessee, on February 27-28, 2014, hosted by Vanderbilt University. The purpose of the TLSAMP Research Conference was to bring together students, staff, administrators, and professionals in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The conference provided academic stimulation and disseminated information to TLSAMP at large and also featured an undergraduate/graduate networking reception, motivational speakers, oral/poster presentations, breakout sessions, and much more.
The Fourth Annual Tennessee Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (TLSAMP) Awards Banquet was held on Monday, April 14, 2014, at the UT Visitors Center. The TLSAMP Awards Banquet is a time where we applaud and highlight the efforts of students participating in TLSAMP and other student organizations such as Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) and National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE). This event would not have been possible without our sponsors, DENSO, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and the National Science Foundation.

The event’s guest speaker, Dr. Robert Nobles, completed his Doctor of Public Health degree at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston with a triple major that included health policy and management, epidemiology, and health economics; and he received his Master of Public Health and Bachelor of Science in molecular biology from Florida A&M University. Currently, Nobles serves as the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research at the University of Tennessee Health in the College of Education, Health & Human Sciences.

Nobles began by asking, “How do YOU define success?” He said Webster’s dictionary defines it as a favorable or desirable outcome possible without our sponsors, DENSO, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and the National Science Foundation.

The overall goal of TLSAMP, as directed by the National Science Foundation (NSF), is to increase the pool of talented STEM graduates capable of pursuing graduate studies, while addressing the need to increase the underrepresented population in the STEM fields.

Awards presented at the banquet include:

**SHPE Awards**
- Liderato Award
  - Stephanie Steren-Ruta, Electrical Engineering junior
- New Member of the Year
  - Daniel L. Caballero, Computer Engineering freshman
- Member of the Year
  - Cristian Orozco, Civil Engineering junior

**NSBE Awards**
- The Golden Torch Award
  - Marcus Cordier, Biomedical Engineering freshman
- Freshman of the Year Award
  - Sierra Ellis, Mechanical Engineering freshman

**TLSAMP Awards**
- Freshman of the Year Award
  - Samantha Medina, Material Science and Engineering freshman
- Outstanding Volunteer Award
  - Olufunke Tina Anjonrin-Ohu, Biomedical Engineering sophomore
- Outstanding Research Award
  - Kiara Crutcher, BCMB junior

**Graduating Seniors**
- Antwanette L. Anderson, Mathematics
- Glorise Davis, Food Science and Technology
- Jacinda C. Dunn, Mechanical Engineering
- Toniqua S. Hunter, Mechanical Engineering
- Marquinta M. King, BCM B
- Alexander S. McCullough, Chemical Engineering
- Timothy Mickens, Biomedical Engineering
- Solange Perez, BCM B
- Brea L. Read, Microbiology
- Diana Shelby, Mechanical Engineering
- Thomas Turner, Electrical Engineering
- DeAnna Walker, Civil Engineering

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By Tina Anjonrin-Ohu

"Fear is in everyone...but do not stifle your own potential," Nobles concluded.
National Society of Black Engineers News

UT National Society of Black Engineers members Isaac Atuahene, DeAnna Walker, Diamond Wallace, Markyth Smith, Sierra Ellis, and Tiffany Sithiphone were honored with various awards at the NSBE convention in Nashville last week, including being named the national chapter of the year.

UT’s chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers was recognized as the 2014 National Medium Chapter of the Year and senior Tiffany Sithiphone became the first female from UT to be elected regional chairperson, capping a highly successful national convention for members from the College of Engineering. The NSBE national convention was held on March 26-30, 2014, in Nashville, TN.

“This is truly a tremendous recognition for our group to receive, and it highlights the successes being made here at UT toward a more diverse campus,” said College of Engineering Dean Wayne Davis. “To be recognized for those efforts is nice enough, but to be singled out in front of peer institutions makes it all the more special.” Sithiphone, from Nashville, is only the second UT student overall to be elected regional chairperson, after Trevor Williams—her mentor—in 2007.

“It was just such an incredible feeling when they called my name,” said Sithiphone. “As I stood there taking the oath I felt like I was having an out-of-body experience. I hope I never lose that feeling.” Sithiphone, an industrial engineering major, said that as nice as the award is for her personally, the real happiness in winning the award is “to be recognized for those efforts that are nice enough, but to be singled out in front of peer institutions makes it all the more special.” Sithiphone, from Nashville, is only the second UT student overall to be elected regional chairperson, after Trevor Williams—her mentor—in 2007.

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“Their chapter president Diamond Wallace, from Memphis, was equally enthused about the chapter’s success. In addition to winning the national award this year, UT was honored as a top regional chapter for the second consecutive year.”

“We can proudly say that this year we had three national scholarship recipients, an educator of the year, and our first female region chair,” said Wallace, a biomedical engineering major. “We’re producing leaders, and more specifically leaders in STEM fields, and I am excited that our national society has taken notice.”

Isaac Atuahene, a graduate student from Ghana in industrial and systems engineering at UT, received a Golden Torch as winner of the Dr. Janice A. Luremnik Educator of the Year Award for contributions related to research and education, while undergraduates Sierra Ellis, from Memphis, Markyth Smith, from Nashville, and DeAnna Walker, from Chattanooga, were chosen as a Board of Corporate Affiliates Fellow Scholar, a Lockheed Martin Scholar, and a Major Fellow Scholar, respectively.

Ellis and Smith are mechanical engineering majors, while Walker is in civil engineering. “Our chapter continues to excel and take on new challenges,” said UT Engineering Diversity Programs Director Travis Griffin. “They have a keen vision to fulfill the NSBE’s mission and increase the success rate of our engineering students, and I think that was on display for all to see in Nashville.”

Associate Professor Gerd Duscher, right, of the College of Engineering’s Department of Materials Science and Engineering explains some of his work involving nanotechnology to students visiting during the college’s recent Breakfast of Champions.

Demonstrations were set up for the visitors with the Department of Materials Science and Engineering’s Dr. Gerd Duscher; staff members of CURENT, the Center for Ultra-Wide-Area Resilient Electric Energy Transmission Networks; and the Center for Transportation Research’s driving simulator in the John O. Tickles Engineering Building. Even with the sneak peak into some of the more high-tech offerings at UT, one of the big selling points on display was the amount of cooperation and teamwork the students saw.

“It’s not all about the technology,” said Griffin. “A big part of not just picking a university but of being happy once you are there is that sense of a cooperative spirit. Because of that, we felt it was important to show examples from a number of departments of how well our faculty, students, and staff work together and to show them how welcoming UT is.”

Griffin discusses the Breakfast of Champions event in this video on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LSMbVr_Hj8&feature=youtu.be.

The College of Engineering held its annual Breakfast of Champions in the spring of 2014, giving underrepresented high school students—defined as African American, Hispanic, Native American, Alaskan Native, and Pacific Islander—a chance to visit with UT professors, tour labs, and get to know some of their potential classmates.

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Fred D. Brown Jr. and the UT Engineering Diversity Programs

It is a momentous honor for the College of Engineering to have the first residence hall in forty-three years and the first building on the UT campus honoring an African American to be named after Fred D. Brown Jr.

Brown, the first director of the Minority Engineering Scholarship Programs (MESP) in the engineering college at UT, was a strong believer in higher education. He received his degree from the Tuskegee Institute and did post-graduate work at UT, Tennessee State University, and Vanderbilt University. Brown taught math and science in high schools in Alcoa and Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and was the first African American teacher in the Oak Ridge school system. He was also a member of the Alcoa School Board and had served as a consultant to the engineering college for two years prior to becoming the MESP director.

In 1972, Dean Fred Peebles recognized the obligation that the university had to help minority students and established MESP, hiring Brown as its head. The program had very ambitious goals.

Brown, along with Bob Netherland and later James Pippin (who later became the director of Engineering Diversity Programs after Brown’s retirement) actively recruited promising students for the program, providing mentoring and support for academic studies and real-life work experience through the co-op program. Brown’s efforts grew the program from an initial enrollment of seventeen African American students to launch it into a forty-year engineering success story.

In 1999, the MESP was renamed the Diversity Engineering Scholarship Program (DESP) and was incorporated into the Engineering Professional Practice Office. The college’s minority outreach programs were renamed the Engineering Diversity Programs (EDP).

Successful students from the college’s minority engineering program include Dr. Mark Dean, the first African American IBM Fellow, a National Academy of Engineering member, and the John Fisher Distinguished Professor in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at UT; Dwight Hutchens, the Global Managing Director of Washington, DC-based Accenture’s Health and Public Service Strategy practice; Dr. Jamie Anderson Porter, the first female African American student to graduate from UT with a doctorate in engineering; and Jessie Hill Roberson, Vice Chairman of the US Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

The legacy of Fred D. Brown Jr. lives on in the successful students that the college’s engineering diversity programs have supported and graduated and the new residence hall that honors his service to the College of Engineering and the University of Tennessee.