Pursuing the Promise

CONFERENCE REPORT

14th Annual Continuing Conference
Southern Education Foundation
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About the Southern Education Foundation

SEF is an Atlanta-based public charity whose mission is to promote an equal and quality education for black and poor citizens in the South. Through operating programs, the Foundation plays an active role in seeking positive change in educational equity. SEF's programs are supported by grants and contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations and other public and private sources. Income from its endowment covers a portion of the annual operating costs.

The Foundation continues to see one of its functions to be that of convening individuals and agencies who can further the cause of equity in education. The Continuing Conference is a major part of SEF's efforts to focus the attention of decision-makers upon critical policy questions related to education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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To receive additional copies of this report, please contact:
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Ave., NE, Second Floor
Atlanta, GA 30303-2503
(404) 523-0001 FAX (404) 523-6904

Michael Baxter served as conference rapporteur. Conference photographs by Linda Schaefer. Report design by Paul Frick.

Cover photos: *Clockwise from top left: Joyce Lane of St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago joins the discussion. James Dyke, former secretary of education for Virginia, takes a question pertaining to state policy. Alma Adams of the North Carolina General Assembly poses a question during the comment period of a presentation. Kim Hunter, left, of Southeastern Louisiana State University, talks to Mark Musick of the Southern Regional Education Board after his presentation. Joan Elifson, Georgia team leader, discusses institutional leadership with the Georgia team. Joseph "Pete" Silver of the University System of Georgia takes notes. Carolyn Coleman of the North Carolina Governor's Office comments on state-based strategies for promoting opportunity in higher education. Seated beside her is Gail Russell of the University of Southern Mississippi.*

Contents

Clockwise from bottom left: Gov. Zell Miller, left, talks with Donald Hollowell as Carolyn Coleman looks on. Regina Sofer of the State University System of Florida and Dhyana Ziegler of the University of Tennessee listen during a presentation. Sam Robinson of the Kentucky-based Lincoln Foundation questions Jan Somerville of the University of Maryland System after her presentation. SEF President Elridge W. McMillan welcomes conference goers. Willyerd Collier of the University of Arkansas, right, converses with Denise Littleton of Norfolk State University.

Overview

In its groundbreaking report *Redeeming the American Promise*, released in May of 1995, the Southern Education Foundation called for a new dialogue on race and education and made recommendations pointing the way to increased opportunity for minorities and improved higher education for all students.

Determined to avoid the common practice of shelving and forgetting about the study, SEF initiated some of the first activities around the report's recommendations at the 1995 Continuing Conference, when individuals from education and government began working in teams, by state, to discuss ways to promote equity in higher education. Their discussions didn't dwell on the problems; they steered into the realm of solutions and strategies. What were the chief obstacles facing the state? What could be done back home? And who best to continue the struggle for an equitable system of higher education?

As important as the 1995 Continuing Conference was, this year's gathering was perhaps more critical to bringing about change. Sparking change can be difficult, but building early momentum is always an enormous challenge. So it was that the 14th Continuing Conference fell under the banner theme of "Pursuing the Promise." No longer were participants focusing solely on the issues. They were working on the answers, and how to make those answers a reality.

For some states, that meant capitalizing on the progress they had made in the past year. For others, it meant finding new ways to get their states off the starting block. Regardless, the Continuing Conference afforded an opportunity for all participants to reflect on recent developments, consider new strategies and, most of all, strengthen relationships among state team members. "This is not just an event," SEF senior consultant Robert Kronley reminded the conference at the outset. "It's a dynamic process, which is why we want to give you time to network with other people in your region and consider strategies for your state."

The states would need the teamwork, as well as the ideas. The year 1996 was viewed by many as a setback for those seeking to advance equity in education. The passage of the California Civil Rights Initiative (Proposition 209) and the ruling of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit in *Hopwood v. Texas* signaled that affirmative action was under new fire. The concern was that, just as *Redeeming the American Promise* was pointing out vestiges of segregation in southern higher education—four decades after *Brown v. Board of Education* —the nation was witnessing a backlash against equity.

Thus, participants in the Continuing Conference faced some daunting challenges. But they had reason to cheer, too. Education reform initiatives were blossoming in the South, mostly in the K-12 sector but in other areas, too; and *Redeeming the American Promise* had emphasized that educational equity had to be addressed in the context of comprehensive change in education, not just on college campuses. Moreover, some states had begun tackling the issue of equity head-on. A legislative resolution in Virginia, a blueprint for reform in Maryland, a host of new programs in Georgia—all of these pointed to progress. Developments in other states offered promise, too.

The 14th Annual Continuing Conference, then, was all about momentum. Building on the groundwork laid in 1995, advancing the agenda another step, continuing the commitment—all in pursuit of a promise.

Opening Address
Recent Developments in Higher Education: An Overview

MARK MUSICK

The American South can be defined any number of ways, but in some education circles it is depicted as 15 states forming a ragged crescent from Texas to Virginia. For nearly 50 years, educational developments in these 15 states have been closely watched by the Southern Regional Education Board. The nation's first interstate compact for education, SREB compiles statistics and analyzes trends, all in an effort to help the South understand its progress in higher education, or lack thereof.

As participants learned in the opening address for the Continuing Conference, 1996 brought both progress and a lack thereof. Mark Musick, the president of SREB and a man described by Elridge McMillan as a "virtual walking encyclopedia," told the group that higher education in the South still lacked adequate support—but that the future may well bring positive developments, particularly in financial aid.

In opening his review of trends and developments, Musick noted that the number one issue is and always will be money. "Unfortunately," he said, "higher education is not the number one issue with state legislatures. In fact, it is now a lower priority than it was 10 years ago, even though there are more students in higher education." As evidence, Musick pointed to tuition, which continues to climb, and faculty salaries, which slipped in the early 1990s after making gains in the '80s.

There was some good news, however. Public higher education in half of the Southern states enjoyed budget increases above inflation in 1996—increases that ranged from 6 to 9 percent in a third of the states, and in the double digits in a couple of states. "The down side is that increases in seven of the 15 SREB states were less than 4 percent," Musick said.

Still, Musick reported feeling "more encouraged today about the outlook in 1997 than I did in '92 or '93." He noted that, while tuition was rising, the rate of increase had slowed. "A third of the states had no tuition increases in '96-97," Musick said, "and the increases in the other two-thirds were between 1 and 7 percent. I think we'll see continued efforts to moderate tuition increases"—good news for those seeking ways to increase access to higher education.

How people pay for college is another issue that's changing, Musick said. Student aid programs aimed at the middle class are popular—most notably, guaranteed scholarships such as Georgia's HOPE program and pre-paid tuition plans. Musick rattled off five SREB states (Maryland, Virginia, Florida, Kentucky and South Carolina) where the idea of guaranteed scholarships based on performance has at least been seriously discussed. "Many professionals are saying they

We need to build more bridges between the two- and four-year institutions.

want to stay in Georgia because of HOPE," Musick said. "So HOPE scholarships are springing eternal in other states."

As an aside, Musick went on to offer his views on a common criticism of the HOPE program—its lack of a ceiling on household income. It could be argued, Musick said, that because HOPE is not need-based, it takes money away from low-income scholarship programs. "But these dollars aren't necessarily dollars that would go into low-income [scholarship] programs," he observed, adding that such programs aren't always politically popular, particularly when stacked up against programs that benefit the middle class. Musick advised conference participants to watch how states fund need-based scholarships and to press lawmakers to support low-income aid programs.

On pre-paid tuition plans, Musick noted that "every state has a program, is studying a program or has key people talking about one." A third of all SREB states have implemented pre-paid tuition—the newest being in Virginia, the largest in Florida. "This raises a question: What will happen to tuition and scholarships when these pre-paid students come to college?" Musick asked. He urged his colleagues to think about that point.

Musick did touch on two trends not related to money—transfer policies and admissions standards. He pointed out that a third of all SREB states soon will have legislation regarding the transfer between two- and four-year institutions, a development that raises questions on the issue of access for African-American students. While serving on the SEF Panel on Educational Opportunity and Postsecondary Desegregation, Musick recalled an individual who expressed opposition to supporting two-year colleges for fear that minorities would routinely be directed to those institutions, which often have poor transfer rates. "This person told us we ought to close or build a fire wall around community colleges," Musick said. "That's just not realistic. We need to build more bridges between the two- and four-year institutions."

On the issue of admissions standards, Musick observed that "nearly everyone is talking about or is raising standards—even 'open' colleges." The best advice for dealing with this trend, he said, was to examine more closely the breakdown of SAT/ACT scores in each state by ethnicity and to pay attention to minorities enrolling in college prep programs. "There's no conspiracy for tracking minorities into the non-college track. If it's happening, we're doing it to ourselves," Musick said.

Though funding for education in the South still has sustained occasional setbacks, the region has made progress, according to Musick. An admitted "impatient person," he professed to having learned in his career that change comes gradually, in increments, and through persistence.

"There are persons in this room who remember when the governor of Georgia was the featured speaker at a Ku Klux Klan meeting," Musick said. "Tonight, another governor of Georgia will receive the highest award this organization gives."

That's progress, Musick said, offering a salute to the Southern Education Foundation for its Continuing Conference—"because I think it takes *continuing* efforts to make things work."

Session I
New State Initiatives to Promote Opportunity

JAN S. KETTLEWELL AND JANIS I. SOMERVILLE

At 160 pages, the SEF report *Redeeming the American Promise* is a thorough piece of work. But among its many ideas and recommendations is a phrase that serves as a password for unlocking the entrance to greater minority access and success in education: *sound educational practices.* Those three words come directly from the Supreme Court's decision in *U.S. v. Fordice,* which decreed that the steps taken to overcome segregation must be consistent with "sound educational practices."

The panel that prepared the report took the "sound educational practices" language to mean practices that promote the interests of students. But there is a related interpretation. "Sound educational practices" invokes the notion of change, of education reform. The best chance for wiping out the remaining vestiges of segregation lies not in a single program, nor an array of individual initiatives; it resides in the larger context of education reform.

Which is why the Southern Education Foundation placed education reform first on the agenda at the 14th Annual Continuing Conference. Participants examined the reform movement in two states, Georgia and Maryland. And they learned that in both states, the boundaries among different sectors of education are being erased as the states seek to expand educational opportunity for their citizens.

Of the two, Georgia's efforts are a little further along in their development. Since the summer of 1995, Georgia has been methodically implementing a comprehensive, collaborative program designed to raise expectations and ensure student success—from pre-kindergarten all the way through postsecondary education.

The program is called the Georgia P-16 Initiative, and its overarching component is collaboration, said Jan Kettlewell, an official with the state's university system and coordinator of the P-16 Initiative. The state, she explained, has four systems of education:

- a K-12 system governed by state and local school boards;
- a state university system of 34 public colleges and universities, including 15 two-year colleges;
- a system of 34 technical institutes; and
- a new Office of School Readiness, which coordinates voluntary pre-kindergarten programs across the state.

Thus, when it came to implementing education reform in Georgia, "it was pretty clear that we all needed to be in this together," Kettlewell said. She went on to outline five principal goals for the P-16 Initiative:

1. improve student achievement by concentrating on changes across all four educational systems;
2. help students move smoothly from one educational sector to another "when movement is appropriate";
3. ensure that all students who want to pursue education beyond high school are well-prepared to do so;
4. increase rates of admission and retention in postsecondary education for minority and low-income students; and
5. strengthen ties among teacher education, local schools and local communities in education reform.

Georgia's strategy for accomplishing all five objectives is equal parts innovation and communi-

The boundaries among different sectors of education are being erased as the states seek to expand educational opportunity for their citizens.

Jan S. Kettlewell

cation. According to Kettlewell, 15 community councils across the state are devising ways to improve education in their locales. Each council received a $10,000 planning grant and was invited to apply for challenge grants to put their plans to work; so far, six of the 15 have seen their innovation rewarded with challenge grants. (To involve teacher education, the state designated the 15 colleges with teacher prep programs as the fiscal agents for the community council in their area.)

On an ongoing basis, the councils promote high standards, curriculum linkages, aspirations, effective teaching and collective responsibility—as well as develop ways to apply what's learned in school to what's needed in life, Kettlewell said. To minimize any reinvention of the wheel, the councils share their successes and failures through a network for P-16 reform. Complementing the work of the community councils is a statewide P-16 Council made up of 38 representatives from education, government and industry. Their charge: to guide the overall initiative and facilitate regular communication across educational systems.

One key component of Georgia's P-16 Initiative—one that relates directly to the issues raised at the Continuing Conference—is a Postsecondary Readiness Enrichment Program, or PREP. The program's goal can be traced to the P-16 Initiative's third objective of ensuring that *all students who wish to continue their education beyond high school are well-*

prepared to do so. In that, Kettlewell explained, PREP seeks first to make students aware of the academic record they need to go to college or technical school and to get them to build that record.

Kettlewell observed that such a program is needed in Georgia because of the disparities between whites and minorities in high school and college graduation rates. "Blacks are only half as likely as whites to graduate from college," she said, a reality that stems in large part from what happens in high school. There, African-American, Hispanic and low-income students are less likely to enroll in college prep classes; are less likely to take math from a teacher who majored in math because of a lack of resources; and are subjected to academic standards that are too often tied to the affluence of the school itself. "Students in high poverty schools who make A's may only achieve at the same level as students in affluent schools who are making C's," Kettlewell said. The poor tracking, inequitable resources and inconsistent standards explain why high school graduation rates (and, later, college graduation rates) are higher for whites than for blacks or Hispanics, Kettlewell said.

Janis I.Somerville

The state of Maryland has also begun addressing education reform as an issue for all sectors to tackle together, according to Janis Somerville, a senior associate for the University of Maryland System and coordinator of the state's K-16 Partnership. The Partnership, which is about a year old, began at a voluntary "summit" that brought together the commissioner of higher education, the state school superintendent and the chancellor of the state university system. "They wanted to focus on a clear action agenda," Somerville said, adding that the first step was to assemble a leadership council and a network of staff at the different agencies.

A central thrust of the Maryland Partnership involved looking at the core subject areas in the K-12 system in an effort to forge some agreement on just what students should know. When examining English, math, science and social science, educators in the Partnership learned from each other—how, for example, schools could streamline their social science electives or adjust their science requirements. "We have found common ground in this effort so far," Somerville said, "and we have found that we still have some unresolved issues."

Another critical issue taken up by the Partnership concerns the support provided by schools in relation to academic standards. "It's clear that [implementing] consistent standards has to be matched by an infrastructure that will support students' ability to achieve those standards," she said. A lack of school support is not lost on the students themselves. "They tell us that what they're getting [in school] is not strong enough to buy them the options they need" to succeed later, Somerville said.

Both Kettlewell and Somerville were asked about legislative support for their states' burgeoning collaborations. One difference between the two states emerged: Georgia created a specific line item in the state budget to support the P-16 Initiative. "Local councils can apply for more funds," Kettlewell said, "but they have to be able to match it." No such line item exists in Maryland, Somerville said, but the state has looked at ways to leverage federal funds to acquire more state support.

The issue of assessment was also raised, and Somerville reported that in Maryland, an assessment instrument for the K-16 Partnership is being designed "as we speak." Kettlewell acknowledged that Georgia's P-16 Initiative has yet to incorporate assessment, but added that the chief officers of the four educational systems were submitting a separate budget request to develop a system for monitoring P-16.

John A. Griffin and Governor Zell Miller

John A. Griffin Award
for Advancing Equity in Education

ZELL MILLER, 1996, RECIPIENT

"Each child is an adventure into a better life—an opportunity to change the old pattern and make it new." When Vice President Hubert Humphrey spoke those words more than three decades ago, he was portraying America's children as symbols of hope, and of future prosperity and happiness for a nation. In his six years as governor of Georgia, Zell Miller has seized the opportunity to change the old and make it new. If the future of the country truly lies with its children, Miller believes, and if America is to always improve, then it had better invest in the well-being of its children.

Miller has acted on his beliefs. As governor, he has guided Georgia into national prominence for improving education—through HOPE scholarships, a statewide voluntary pre-kindergarten program, major technology initiatives and, above all, uncompromising support for the state's schools and colleges. It was because of his advocacy on behalf of education that Miller was named the seventh recipient of the John A. Griffin Award for Advancing Equity in Education, an honor that he received at a dinner of some friends, colleagues and participants in the Continuing Conference.

To understand how Zell Miller became a tireless crusader for education, one need only look at

his life. Born and raised in the mountains of North Georgia, Miller grew up working a number of jobs (short order cook, timber cutter), all while keeping his eyes fixed on getting an education. He earned an A.A. degree from Young Harris Junior College, then went on to receive B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Georgia.

After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, where he rose to the rank of sergeant, Miller entered into a dual career of public service and college teaching. He taught history at four colleges and universities and ascended the political ladder in the state, serving as mayor of Young Harris and as a state senator before becoming lieutenant governor, a post he held for 16 years. By the time he was elected governor in 1991, Miller had written three books and a country song or two.

At the John A. Griffin Award dinner, Southern Education Foundation President Elridge McMillan told guests that he had been fortunate to observe the governor up close. "He's sensitive, he's smart, and he's tough," McMillan said. "He means what he says and says what he means, and the state of Georgia and its citizens are beneficiaries of his good efforts and statesmanship."

For his part, Miller was characteristically direct in talking about the importance of education in a changing world. Global competition and evolving technology, he said, are changing people's jobs, the neighborhoods in which they live and the institutions that shape their lives. For some, these developments present opportunities; for others, insecurity. "The difference between [experiencing] opportunity or insecurity is education," he told the gathering.

Not just basic education—extensive education. To survive and thrive in today's world, people need more than a high school degree, Miller said. "More and more, postsecondary education is everything," he said. "A high school diploma is losing its economic value—in fact, the median income of people who have only a high school diploma has fallen $14,000 in the past decade. Today, two years beyond high school must be a given minimum."

While the economic benefits of education are significant, Miller took care to emphasize education benefits in personal development and citizenship. Earning is not living, Miller said. And it's the responsibility of schools and colleges to not only show students how to learn, but how to live. "The business of education is more than mere information—it's knowledge. Unlike information, knowledge cannot be poured into minds like water into a glass," Miller said.

He added, "As we look to the 21st century, we must continually strengthen education to meet the demands of the economy. But while we are doing that, let's not forget, my friends, that education is about much more than money."

Through the nation's most extensive scholarship program, through Georgia's largest construction program for schools and colleges, through the networking of all college libraries and the furnishing of satellite dishes to all public schools, through a far-reaching pre-K program, Zell Miller has worked to change the education culture in Georgia. At the John A. Griffin Award dinner, he said he hoped the sum total of those changes would be a culture of higher expectations.

"I want the question in Georgia to be not *whether* to go to college, but *where* to go to college, or technical school," Miller said.

The evidence suggests Zell Miller hasn't just changed the question. He's helped provide the answer, too.

SEF established the John A. Griffin Award for Advancing Equity in Education in 1990 to honor an individual who has made a significant contribution to the advancement of equity and quality in education for minorities and disadvantaged citizens in the South. The award is presented annually in conjunction with the conference. Previous award recipients are: 1990-Augustus Hawkins, former U.S. representative from California; 1991-Jean Fairfax, formerly with the Legal and Defense and Educational Fund; 1992-John L. Clendenin, chairman and CEO of the BellSouth Corporation; 1993-Eva M. Clayton, U.S. representative for the 1st District of North Carolina; 1994-Jack Greenberg, professor of law at Columbia University; and 1995-Sophia Bracy Harris, executive director, Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama.

Session III
Hopwood v. Texas: What it Means for Minority Opportunity

ISABELLE KATZ PINZLER

Flashback to 1978: The Supreme Court of the United States hands down a landmark decision that strikes a blow for equity in higher education. In *University of California v. Bakke,* the Court allows universities to consider race in admissions in order to promote diversity.

Fast forward to 1996: A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit rules that the University of Texas law school's consideration of race in student admissions is not permissible. In *Hopwood v. Texas,* the Court in practice rejects the Supreme Court's dictum in the *Bakke* decision.

Does the *Hopwood* decision spell the death of affirmative action in education? Hardly, according to Isabelle Katz Pinzler, a deputy assistant attorney general in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. In a session that provided both practical advice and a primer for judicial language pertaining to race-related cases, Pinzler told the Continuing Conference that although the *Hopwood* case affects higher education, it isn't necessarily a force of destruction for efforts to create diversity.

"Of course, we can't control the news media," Pinzler said, "and they're reporting the death of affirmative action. But we have to keep getting the message out that that's not the case."

Pinzler opened her remarks by acknowledging the importance of equity in education, saying that "equal opportunity in education is the linchpin, the *sine qua non* for equal opportunity in every other area." While she cautioned that she wasn't there to give legal advice, she did review the legal tests that courts have used in their analyses of affirmative action cases, most notably the tests of "strict scrutiny" and "rational basis."

In the 1970s, a third analysis emerged, Pinzler said, a sort of middle-tier test termed "heightened scrutiny." Under strict scrutiny analysis, which applies to cases involving race, affirmative action cases must show "compelling government interest" and be "narrowly tailored." She noted that this terminology is important because it affects what colleges and universities today should consider when shaping affirmative action programs. "It requires [higher education] to do some homework," Pinzler said, "and it may force institutions to admit some embarrassing things, such as previous discrimination." The "narrow tailoring" factor also means institutions should consider major changes in their admissions policies to make their efforts to promote diversity more defensible in the legal arena. "This involves creating individual folders on people, looking at the whole range of what they bring to the institution—not just [evaluating] grades and test scores."

To build in factors for "narrow tailoring," Pinzler suggested that institutions:

Although the Hopwood *case affects higher education, it isn't necessarily a force of destruction for efforts to create diversity.*

- view race as a "plus" factor, rather than an absolute factor;
- give consideration to other factors, such as income, that might help them build diversity;
- base numeric admissions goals on "something real," such as an applicant pool, rather than the population as a whole;
- carefully consider the effect of affirmative action programs on non-minorities; and
- re-evaluate programs regularly.

Having reviewed some of the law surrounding affirmative action decisions, Pinzler touched on the impact of the *Hopwood* decision. Though she acknowledged the "chilling effect" *Hopwood* could have on other states, she reminded conference participants that the case directly affected the Fifth Circuit only (Texas, Mississippi and Louisiana). What's most significant is the signal sent by the Fifth Circuit Court, she says. In essence, the court reversed the precedent set in *Bakke,* an action that "is pretty much unheard of," Pinzler said—though she added that the Supreme Court could take the issue up later, despite the fact that it declined to review a *Hopwood* appeal.

She noted one other potential development—a reversal of *Hopwood* by the full Fifth Circuit. "There are 15 judges in the circuit, and they sit in panels of three," Pinzler explained, "so the University of Texas could have asked the full circuit to reverse the decision of the three-judge panel that ruled in *Hopwood.*"

Another significant element of *Hopwood* is its potential conflict with the *U.S. v. Fordice* decision, particularly in Mississippi, the battleground of *Fordice*. "The *Fordice* decision called for the elimination of all vestiges of prior discrimination," Pinzler said, "and that creates a tension with *Hopwood.*"

Pinzler emphasized that the *Hopwood* decision was of considerable concern to the Justice Department, which filed a brief arguing that the Supreme Court review the case. After that failed, "we spent a lot of time thinking about what other case would be the right case for us to take up. We went around and around and around before we realized that we're really at the mercy of challenges brought by others to these programs."

What Justice opted for, she said, was to get involved in all cases that pose a significant threat to affirmative action. She affirmed that the Clinton administration supports affirmative action "when it's done right," and that in mounting a full-court press in defense of affirmative action, the Justice Department would tailor its argument to the specifics of the case at hand, taking care to reflect the legal tests now being used to analyze such cases.

For the Justice Department to have that kind of involvement, it will need the help of higher education, Pinzler said. She offered three ways institutions could help:

1. *Monitoring.* "Sometimes we don't find out about cases until a judge somewhere rules on them. And then, it's too late." She offered a plea: Let us know if you hear of any challenges to affirmative action programs in your locale.
2. *Preparation.* Pinzler said the Department was developing a checklist for colleges and universities to use for taking stock of statistical information relevant to affirmative action programs. "One institution I know of didn't know what percentage of applicants were minority and what percentage were getting scholarships," she said. "If you don't know the answers to these questions, you'll have difficulty explaining the rationale for your [practices]."
3. *Communication.* None of the cases to date should stop institutions from affirmative action, Pinzler said, and in many instances, a failure to establish affirmative action will result in liability for institutions. As a result, higher education must consistently communicate the importance of affirmative action. "I think it's very important to get the message out," she said. "We must not declare defeat. If we do, then we *are* defeated."

Session IV
Strategies in Response to *Hopwood*

JOHN BORKOWSKI AND M. RICK TURNER

Isabelle Katz Pinzler's advice to the Continuing Conference provided a sound strategic platform from which colleges and universities could build stronger programs to promote diversity. In the very next session, conference participants got even more counsel, both legal and programmatic. The remarks of attorney John Borkowski and educator M. Rick Turner amounted to more than a "things to do" list, however. Collectively, their words pointed to possible changes in higher education policy that could bolster both access and success.

Borkowski, a New Orleans-based partner in the Washington, D.C., law firm of Hogan and Hartson, talked about *Hopwood*'s impact on access. Efforts to promote diversity through college admissions, he said, are part of a larger struggle, one that is organized around three major principles:

1. The history of segregation has effects that must be remedied.
2. Diversity is beneficial to all.
3. All educational institutions ought to be inclusive and provide opportunities for success for all. This last principle is the only one not called into question by the *Hopwood* case, Borkowski said.

John Borkowski

After contending that *Hopwood* is "one small battle that was lost . . . in a struggle of very large proportions," Borkowski pointed to three specific arenas that indicate where the action is and will be:

- *The courts.* "*Hopwood* was an organized case by organized opposition who oppose us on those three principles. So there will be more *Hopwood*s," Borkowski said.
- *The legislatures.* As the most prominent piece of evidence that statehouses remain a battleground, Borkowski pointed to the California Civil Rights Initiative passed into law this year.
- *The general public.* "The hearts and minds of the public at large [constitute] an arena," Borkowski said. What happens in the courts and the legislatures over the long run depends on how persuasive higher education is on this issue.

Understanding what's at stake and where it's being debated is helpful to institutions of higher learning as they formulate policy responses to *Hopwood*, Borkowski said. And he offered some possible solutions regarding access. He echoed Pinzler's recommendation to consider factors other than race in admissions decision-making, such as

Understanding what's at stake and where it's being debated is helpful to institutions of higher learning as they formulate policy responses to Hopwood.

socioeconomic status. While not a substitute for race, income is relevant, considering that "there are huge socioeconomic divisions in our society. And there's nothing keeping a university from providing greater access to first-generation students or poor students."

M. Rick Turner

Borkowski also concurred with Pinzler on the need for institutions to do their homework and compile checklists to ensure that their affirmative action measures comply with the provisions handed down in the *Bakke* decision. This amount of preparation isn't just for the sake of the institution, he said: It's for the well-being of education. "Bad cases make bad law," Borkowski told the audience. "Not only are your plans at risk—so are everyone else's."

Other measures Borkowski recommended:

- Move away from instruments and measurements that have discriminatory effects in admissions and employment.
- Support efforts to improve K-12, because what happens there ultimately affects what happens down the line, all the way to graduate school. Offering all K-12 students an outstanding education is the best way to improve access to postsecondary education.
- Publicly state your goals for diversity, monitor them and report them. "There's nothing unlawful about having goals and reporting [progress on] them," Borkowski said, and doing so helps prevent backsliding.
- Articulate forcefully and clearly the principles we believe in and why we believe in them. "Don't let the political right set the terms for debate," he cautioned.

Once institutions successfully recruit a diverse student population, they immediately face another critical task: keeping them. On predominantly white campuses, this isn't always easy, but it can be done. In fact, it has been done, reported M. Rick Turner, the dean of African-American affairs at the University of Virginia. He noted that one million African-American students attend predominantly white institutions. "And we know they can succeed."

At his institution, the success of African-American students is remarkable: The six-year graduation rate for African-American students stands at 89.1 percent, nearly triple the rate nationally. That's no accident, Turner told conference participants. "Something has to happen on campus to keep these students coming back," he said.

At the University of Virginia, that "something" is a comprehensive program engineered by Turner's office that is short on rhetoric and long on individual contact. The program has some familiar elements—a peer advisor component and a faculty mentor component, to name two. But its hallmarks are a sincere institutional commitment to retain African-American students and the involvement of a group of individuals who Turner said are too often overlooked in retention efforts: *parents*.

The institutional commitment, Turner said, extends to the recruitment, admissions, enrollment, retention and, ultimately, graduation of African-American students. Though it is evident in the University of Virginia's philosophy, its strength stems in large part from the diligent efforts of

Turner's office to promote success of minorities on campus. "On my wall is a quote from Sam Proctor, professor emeritus at Rutgers University," Turner said. "It says that the most meaningful function of whites on campus is to be advocates for African-American students."

Turner has set about the task of promoting that thinking at Virginia. He and his staff have personally called on every academic department head to explain what the Office of African-American affairs is all about. He has called for the university community to speak up and highlight the positive endeavors of African-American students, to intercede on their behalf when necessary, to uphold the highest academic and social standards of behavior. The sum total of this campaign has been a greater awareness of the importance of diversity at the University of Virginia.

Another key component in Virginia's efforts has been the involvement of parents. "We tend to think that when our students go to college, there's no more need for nurturing from home other than writing a check," Turner offered. As soon as students are accepted to the university, he writes both them and their parents a letter. Next, he invites parents to the Fall Fling or Spring Fling, where they attend a reception, meet with the president and get a look at the campus. While the admissions-related nature of these activities appears to address the issue of access, Turner notes that retention begins with communication before students arrive on campus.

Turner also continues parental involvement by running interference for parents when they have questions or problems, and by deepening their involvement through a Parents Advisory Association, which gives them a conduit for sharing their insights and concerns. They appear to be impressed, he said. "I think one of the reasons African-American parents are so enthralled with the University of Virginia is they couldn't go there when they were students," Turner said. "So they want to make sure their children are taken care of."

Ultimately, student success comes down to high visibility for African-Americans on campus—having them serve as resident advisors, student government presidents and generally being present on campus. All of that is true at Virginia, Turner said. But it didn't happen by accident. It came because of a commitment.

Luncheon Address

Toward a New Agenda for Equity in Education

WADE HENDERSON

To effect change, those working on behalf of a cause must be motivated and organized. If participants at the Continuing Conference needed any kind of inspirational call to do both, they got it from a stirring luncheon address by a veteran Washington insider.

The call from Wade Henderson, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, was simple and pointed. His message: Wake up, look again, get it together and get going. What's at stake isn't just educational opportunity; it's the larger social order, the way of everyday life in America. Is the country sliding backward into prejudice? Henderson said there are signs that it is, and it's up to everyone to do something about it.

"It's fair to say that right now, the nation is in the midst of the most challenging crisis in civil rights since the 1960s," Henderson told the gather-

Education holds the key to turning back this tide of prejudice.

Wade Henderson

ing. "I say that because there are several indices of deeper social problems—problems that may seem random but are part of a larger picture."

The indices:

- *A rash of fires at black churches in the South.* While it's encouraging that all political institutions stepped forward to decry the fires, "the fires themselves are an indication of a larger problem. It's like a boil." And there is sufficient evidence that hate crimes are affecting groups other than African-Americans, Henderson added.
- *Persistent discrimination in the world of work.* Henderson cited the Texaco employment discrimination case and a recent U.S. Department of Labor report on glass ceilings as the latest examples. Moreover, "in public sector institutions, the record of discrimination against employees is very high." The point: Not enough progress has been made to stamp out discrimination.
- *The turning tide against affirmative action.* Proposition 209 in California is a glaring piece of evidence, and Henderson predicted that "we're going to have a big fight beginning in January [1997] to repeal affirmative action legislation."
- *The underlying message of welfare reform.* Legislation signed last year by President Clinton signified the first time that Congress had repudiated a major part of the New Deal, Henderson said. Too, the devolution of power from the federal government to the states indicates a trend toward more states' rights. "And we remember a period in history when 'states' rights' was a codeword for white supremacy," Henderson said.

Education holds the key to turning back this tide of prejudice, Henderson suggested. Individuals such as those attending the Continuing Conference can make a profound difference by serving as agents of change. But they must get organized,

rally the masses, take action back home and support action at the federal level.

Specifically, Henderson proposed revitalizing the progressive coalition. Remember who you are, he told the audience, and *charge!* "The candidates have been running away from the liberal [label]," he said. "But remember—the liberal tradition ended slavery, provided rights to women, introduced social security. We need to be true to ourselves." He also advocated getting out of the "defensive mode" and collecting the knowledge and research necessary to strengthen the case for equity.

Getting out the vote is another important tactic, according to Henderson. He observed that, despite the results of the 1996 elections, it's still not clear whether the 1994 elections signaled a political shift to the right, since it tipped the balance of power in Congress to the Republicans. While registering more voters has been a success, "turnout tells me that we didn't do a very effective job getting people to the polls." He reminded the audience that "voting is the language of democracy" and suggested incorporating civic education into the core curriculum at colleges and universities.

A third important step to take is thinking globally and acting locally. If African-American students aren't getting the information they need to do well on the SAT, then alternative ways must be found to deliver them that information. If other states are going to try to pass anti-affirmative action legislation, then steps need to be taken right now to prepare for that.

The *Hopwood* decision in Texas could serve as a catalyst for initiating that kind of preparation, Henderson said. Research should be conducted to determine the potential impact of *Hopwood*, and "someone [should] convene a meeting of higher education officials, admissions directors and others to show them what *Hopwood* really means," he said. This kind of groundwork would help states prepare for other challenges to affirmative action.

Finally, Henderson called for large-scale action at the federal level. Renewal of the Higher Education Act in 1997 is key, he said, especially since he anticipates new attacks on Title III of that Act, which relates to the funding of historically black colleges and universities. The Civil Rights Coalition, a bipartisan group, is gathering data to help launch several new initiatives for all federal agencies involved in civil rights enforcement. And the nation's top leadership could—and should—also do its part, Henderson said.

"The leadership of our country, both government and private individuals, has abdicated its responsibility to bridge this lack of understanding among races," Henderson said. "So we are calling upon President Clinton to convene a White House conference on racism, bigotry and intolerance. What we're asking the president to do is to use his office to look at these issues."

The stakes are high, Henderson said. So the work must begin anew.

Session VII
State Policy Panel

HOWARD "PETE" RAWLINGS AND LARRY "BUTCH" PARRISH

An oft-repeated lesson of human history is that money makes the world go around. Despite the fact that some political leaders have contended that education's problems should not be solved by "throwing money at them," this axiom of history applies to education reform. No, problems cannot be solved by throwing money at them. At the same time, solutions cannot be implemented without adequate resources and sustained support.

Good things can happen in education with money, but it's incumbent upon the education sector to be accountable for how it spends the money.

This point was driven home in a panel discussion of public funding for education. The panelists, both of whom have played a role in securing state appropriations for education, covered different aspects of the topic, but they shared a common refrain: Good things can happen in education with money, but it's incumbent upon the education sector to be accountable for how it spends the money.

Larry "Butch" Parrish

Clearly, good things have happened in Georgia, reported Larry "Butch" Parrish, vice chair of the House appropriations committee. "What Georgia is doing covers every sector of public education in the state," Parrish said." To educate students and be successful, we have to be comprehensive."

Included in Georgia's "comprehensive" approach:

- A bachelor of applied science degree program, which has facilitated the transfer of students from technical institutes to colleges, thus opening up new opportunities for high school graduates to continue their education.
- The Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE) scholarship program, which covers tuition costs at public institutions for students who graduate high school with a "B" average and maintain that average in college. The scholarship can also be used to offset the cost of private college tuition. Funded by $165 million in lottery funds, "HOPE gives students a reason to study," Parrish said.
- A statewide voluntary pre-kindergarten program, which has provided an educational jump-start for 60,000 4-year-olds in the state. The $200 million lottery-funded program, Parrish said, has also helped teach parents and children the value of education.
- The P-16 Initiative, a program that has "unified every sector of public education." A statewide council and series of community councils have forged a continuum that "starts with the governor and goes to the grass roots," Parrish said.
- A Postsecondary Readiness Enrichment Program, or PREP, which offers students tutoring, career exploration, exposure to technology and other components to prepare them for education beyond high school. According to Parrish, PREP signifies that "we're raising the bar in Georgia while at the same time extending a helping hand."

Parrish cautioned that desire and good intentions aren't enough—and that "funding and accountability are the dual mechanisms that make it work." The public now demands accountability; by providing it, policymakers and lawmakers have consolidated support for education in Georgia. "When we passed the lottery program, it was a close vote," Parrish conceded, "but even people who opposed the lottery have said they can't argue with the way it's been used."

Howard "Pete" Rawlings, who chairs the appropriations committee in the Maryland General Assembly and served on the SEF panel responsible for producing *Redeeming the American Promise,* echoed that sentiment. "To improve public education does not require money alone," he said. "People need to be held accountable. We can't take excuses

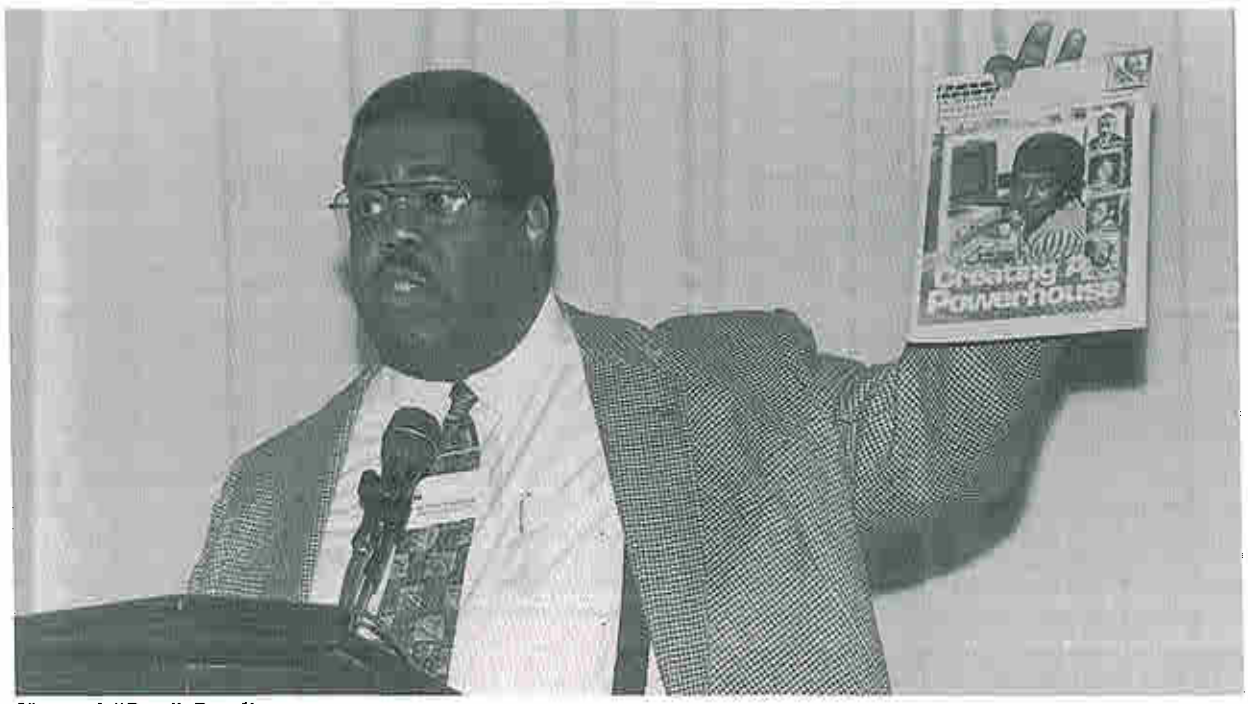
from teachers who say that some children are not educable."

Rawlings contended that demonstrating accountability has been something of a problem for many African-Americans. "Sometimes, we are not willing to make the tough strategic decisions in our interests, and we are not willing to take the heat for them, because we have a strong need to be loved by everyone," he said.

If educational opportunity is going to be expanded, if equity is going to be realized, it starts with advocacy, Rawlings said. That means supporting the election of African-Americans to positions of influence, particularly in the budget process. "As I visit the South, I see that many appropriations committees have only token African-American membership," Rawlings observed. "The budget of the state determines the policy of the state. If we're not participating in the budget process, then we can't bring about change."

He gave examples of how and why he offered support to historically black institutions in Maryland—dormitories at Morgan State, new programs and a recreational facility at the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore, new funding to accommodate growth at Bowie State. Those institutions earned Rawlings' support because he recognized the importance of their issues; but also because they made a compelling case for how funds would be used.

Rawlings also urged conference participants to participate more in the budget process by calling up decision-makers, going to committee meetings and playing a more active role in advocacy. "The ability to promote change for equity in education is in your hands and my hands," he concluded. "I am using what's in my hands, and I hope you do, too."



Howard "Pete" Rawlings

Closing Address
A View of Equity in the 21st Century

WILLIAM HYTCHE

Noting the important role of leadership in promoting opportunity in higher education, SEF's report *Redeeming the American Promise* states that, while the responsibilities of individuals from various sectors are significant, they do not equal those of the women and men who lead the nation's schools, colleges and universities.

"They have the greatest responsibility to ensure that the tradition that they have inherited—a belief that education, knowledge and learning are powerfully bound to freedom, justice and democracy—endures." In the last session of the continuing conference, participants heard from a higher education leader who during his more than 20 years as the president of a historically black college has made equality of opportunity central to his administration. Referring to his upcoming retirement in January 1997, William Hytche, president of the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore (UMES), used the occasion to reflect on his many experiences and lessons learned as an inveterate educational leader.

Except for a brief stint at Oklahoma State University, Hytche, who was introduced by session presider Cynthia Brown as a "solid leader who's also a risk-taker," spent his entire educational career at UMES. Appointed acting chancellor in 1975, then later the permanent president, Hytche recalled that "I started with nothing but problems." One of those problems was a recommendation from a legislative analyst that said the institution ought to be closed or merged with a neighboring traditionally white institution.

The prospect of elimination perhaps led Hytche to concentrate on consolidating support and sharpening the institution's focus in his first year. On his very first day, Hytche wrote to 28 influential community leaders, inviting them to join a newly established chancellor's council. To his surprise, each accepted the offer. Also in that first year, Hytche rewrote the constitution for the faculty assembly and senate, two recommending bodies, and secured the approval of the Board of Regents.

Operating from the premise that "HBCUs don't need to integrate—give them the resources and the programs, and the students will come," Hytche focused on improving the physical campus at UMES and initiating several unique programs. He told a story of how a major philanthropist, unbeknownst to Hytche, had visited the UMES campus. The potential donor phoned the president the next day, telling him he didn't think the campus aesthetics and facilities matched the caliber of students—and that he was prepared to help out. "I visited him in his office," Hytche remembered, "and told him that fixing the campus was the state's responsibility and what we really needed was money for scholarships."

He made the sale. With Hytche in his office, the donor phoned the governor and requested his support for campus improvements at UMES. He then agreed to make a $2 million donation for scholarships at UMES. "At the time, it was the largest gift ever made to an HBCU," Hytche said.

Hytche pointed to campus improvements as one of the hallmarks of his presidency. New lighting, pedestrian access, handicapped access, eight renovated or new buildings—all contributed to the improvement of the quality of education at the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore, he said.

His other priority—initiating unique programs—attracted a diverse group of students whose primary goal was receiving a quality education. The physical therapy program at UMES is one of the top three in the nation, according to Hytche. Quality

We've known for years about the correlation between college graduation and economic status. I guarantee that even students with low test scores will graduate [college] if they get financial aid.

Cynthia Brown and William Hytche

programs in fashion merchandising, dietetics, environmental science, hotel/restaurant/travel management and construction management technology have helped integrate the campus, proving Hytche's theory. UMES's student population is 69 percent African-American, 25 percent white and 6 percent international or other minority.

Hytche proudly noted that his emphasis on quality education gained the university a designation by the Maryland Board of Regents as the Eastern Shore's research, doctoral degree-granting institution; a designation earned by being third in the university system of Maryland for gaining federal dollars for programs and fourth in terms of total contract dollars earned. In addition, Hytche said, 92 percent of the tenure-track faculty at UMES hold terminal degrees.

Hytche then touched on an issue of personal concern—student financial aid. He termed himself a "strong supporter" of Georgia's HOPE scholarship program, although he advocated an additional requirement that students stay out of trouble in order to qualify. He also said he viewed financial aid as an investment in a productive work force. "We've known for years about the correlation between college graduation and economic status," he said. "I guarantee that even students with low test scores will graduate [college] if they get financial aid."

Which raises another point, Hytche said: support for HBCUs. "We used to ask for money on the basis it was morally right. But in the next 10 years, 70 percent of the work force will be either minorities or women. So these institutions must be enhanced."

In closing, Hytche read from a 1990 *USA Today* column that he said reflected the real meaning of the many efforts on behalf of equity. The column was authored by a single African-American mother who had a message for her 8-year-old son:

"Too soon you'll be a teenaged male raised by a single parent . . . [In you] I see a prince, but they'll see a felon. I hope you see a king."

Reports from State Teams
Formulating State Strategies

A defining characteristic of the Continuing Conference in 1995 and in 1996 was the organization of state teams to address what to do back home about the issue of educational equity. What has made these team meetings valuable is the opportunity they present for different constituencies to get to know each other. A state legislator could brainstorm with a college faculty member, a university president could exchange ideas with a K-12 official, and so on. The state teams also provided continuity—team leaders from last year were back at the 1996 conference to report on follow-up activities since last year and to help the teams plan new strategies in light of recent developments in the states.

At this year's conference, after the state teams met for two sessions, all of the participants joined in a "town meeting" to share the content of their discussions. The meeting was illuminating. Not only did it expose many of the factors pertaining to educational access and success for minorities, it also brought to light some tangential issues confronting policy makers every day.

Below is a brief summary of the activities of the state teams as presented by state team leaders and members in the town meeting. Following the summaries, a more detailed look is provided of some of the significant activities in a few of the states since the 1995 conference and what's ahead as a result of the 1996 gathering.

SUMMARY REPORTS

Alabama. Some change is in the air in Alabama, according to Mary Ann Jones of Tuskegee University, but the state continues to struggle in bringing about needed changes. One major reason: lack of leadership. "There remains some ineffective leadership in some areas of government," Jones said, "in that the plans and policies are not meeting the needs of the state."

Noting that it took six months for the legislature to endorse Goals 2000: The Educate America Act, Jones observed that Alabama "tends to wait for court action before we take any action. We operate by court order."

Another barrier is an incomplete understanding of what's happening across the state to promote access and success for minorities. As a result, the Alabama team was unable to determine the status of equity programs in the state. "There appears to be no reliable source of data concerning programs," team members concluded. The state team recommended compiling a list of all independent programs that promote equity in higher education at individual institutions.

The Alabama team developed a vision statement proclaiming that "every student that has academic promise can go to college—free." Implementing this vision, Jones said, "could take two years or an eternity," given a volatile political climate that has "individuals switching stances and parties" frequently. Another development being monitored is the creation of a 4-by-4 curriculum, in which high school students are required to take four years of social studies, math, science and English to go to college. "There is some concern that the implementation of this curriculum without [adequate] funding will create problems for people going to college," Jones said.

Florida. In Florida, community colleges are the access mechanism for many students, said Frederick Humphries, president of Florida A&M University.

A member of the Kentucky team takes notes during a working session.

But out of the 14,000 African-American students enrolled in the state's 28 community colleges, a mere 400 earned the Associate of Arts degree last year, the degree that serves as the transfer ticket to a four-year institution. By contrast, Humphries reported, 5,000 to 6,000 Hispanic students earned the A.A. degree. "This needs to be addressed," he said.

Another issue that emerged in the Florida meetings: the number of blacks holding a Ph.D. "This nation is producing only 1,000 black Ph.D.s," Humphries said, "so the chances of having black faculty on campus are very slim and dim." As long as an institution's faculty remains overwhelmingly white, it won't be able to offer the best campus environment for African-American students, according to Humphries.

David Spence, executive vice chancellor for Florida's university system, added another development in Florida: performance budgeting. The state legislature, he said, is looking favorably on a plan to reward institutions with high graduation rates for minorities. "That's good because [institutions and policy makers] could take into account those factors that affect graduation rates," he said.

Georgia. The state is experiencing a great deal of excitement about progress in education, reported team leader Joan Elifson, interim vice president for academic affairs at Floyd College. But there's been some apprehension, too. "It's as much a fear of the unknown as anything else," she said of the mood on campuses regarding the sweeping changes taking place.

The state's P-16 program has made headlines, but some officials are concerned about the potential for unrealistic expectations from the public, as well as having sufficient resources to handle their growing workload. Another area being watched carefully is the state's HOPE scholarship program. "Half of the students who come to campus with HOPE scholarships lose them after the freshman year," Elifson noted, "and that's an issue of concern."

She also noted that the HOPE program "took a [public relations] hit" last year because it's funded through the lottery—and the lottery is played mostly by low-income groups. But Elifson pointed out that the lottery also funds pre-kindergarten programs and high technology at campus and state libraries, programs that benefit all citizens.

Kentucky. Team members from Kentucky talked about the prospects for change under a new governor and higher education commissioner. The new commissioner, they said, has called for more col-

Members of the Mississippi state team discuss strategies for promoting higher education opportunity.

laboration between K-12 and higher education and has demonstrated more sensitivity to issues affecting women and minorities. Similarly, the new governor has shown a concern for advancing equity and has hired a minority to serve as education secretary. Samuel Robinson, president of the Lincoln Foundation and Kentucky team leader, said, "We feel like we are on our way, but we need more involvement to bring about change."

These leadership changes are taking place in the context of other developments in Kentucky higher education. Last year, the state's Council of Higher Education adopted preformance-based funding, a system that proposed 15 indicators by which institutions will be measured and funded. One of those 15 indicators holds institutions accountable for implementing an EEO plan; another assesses retention and graduation rates at the state's colleges and universities.

The Kentucky team also hammered out the following vision statement as an anchor to a proposed five-year plan for improvement: "We in Kentucky envision a comprehensive, collaborative statewide initiative that promotes equal access and success to higher education and economic self-sufficiency by the year 2002." Team members also vowed to forward notes and ideas from the conference to state leaders, as well as drafted a strategy for improving minority recruitment and retention in their state.

Maryland. The Maryland team began working on a "vision statement for equity" and focused on key players: local boards of education, superintendents, the state board of education, lawmakers and the governor. "We think these are the persons who would advocate equity," said William Hytche, president of the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore and team leader.

The team's philosophy, he said, is that a strong statement can make a case for advocating equity. "Some of those in authority don't know they can make a difference," he said. "But they can—they can carry out equity."

Mississippi. Being caught between the *Fordice* and *Hopwood* decisions poses a quandary for the state of Mississippi, said Gail Russell, a professor of geology at the University of Southern Mississippi. As a result, some initiatives to move forward have been stifled. There have been some developments, however—new admission standards at the state's public colleges and universities, as well as uniform entrance criteria for historically black colleges and traditionally white institutions. "Our [team's] concern is that we don't have any kind of K-16 system," Russell said, "so it's impossible to have equity of opportunity at the college level when inequities exist at the pre-college level."

The Mississippi team also discussed other new

developments affecting education in the state—among them, pre-paid tuition plans, a program for eminent scholars and a tuition grant program that provides funds to every college student. The key to improving opportunities for minorities lies in getting the power players together and improving communication across educational sectors. Once this happens, the team reasoned, it will be easier to "cut the money loose." Thus, the Mississippi team proposed a "structure for better communication between and among the public universities and public K-12," and listed the players who should participate in this new dialogue.

Some institutions and schools have taken the initiative to forge partnerships with each other, reported team member Rita Nordan, an official with Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning. "We surveyed four-year institutions a few years ago," she said, "and we found 265 such programs and millions of dollars in external funds, just from those who answered the survey." A College Discovery program is one such initiative, she said. Rising ninth-graders live on college campuses for two weeks in the summer to see the environment firsthand; they also learn math and science from teams of teachers and faculty members.

North Carolina. A "vision for equity"—that's what the North Carolina team forged in its first two work sessions, according to team leader Carolyn Coleman, a top official in the governor's office. The vision calls for adequate financial aid for students; more African-American faculty; a greater commitment to enroll, retain and graduate African-American students; an appeal mechanism for students who cannot graduate within five years, due to financial hardship; and the institutionalization of recruitment and retention policies that work.

Another issue that was raised is the funding of historically black colleges and universities, she said. A 1995 study recommended the redirection of $21 million in funds to traditionally white institutions. But that study, Coleman said, only looked at funding ratios over a 10-year period. "We want historic funding levels to be considered also," she said.

State Superintendent Mike Ward reported that the team discussed five changes needed to build a seamless system of education in North Carolina: correcting the school funding inequities in low-income districts; increasing the proportion of African-American teachers through scholarships; strengthening coordination among the University of North Carolina System, the public schools and public colleges; investing more in early childhood education programs; and applying more resources to help students meet academic standards, so that the standards don't become barriers.

Tennessee. Team leader Nebraska Mays said the *Hopwood* case and admissions standards were two issues that had dominated team discussions so far. "There's an absence of information about *Hopwood* that needs to be addressed," he said. "We need to tell people what *Hopwood* means." Another need: examining "non-cognitive" factors in admissions criteria, so that students aren't admitted based solely on grade point averages and test scores.

Dhyana Ziegler of the University of Tennessee said the team also acknowledged the need for an articulation agreement between community colleges and universities. "There's also a need for cooperative leadership training across the state to get people to tune in to the issues of access and success," Ziegler said, suggesting that councils could be created to provide that kind of training.

Rep. Larry Turner, another team member, acknowledged these needs and said that two resolutions calling for an inventory of educational needs and the creation of a K-16 committee would be introduced in the next legislative session, as well as a bill proposing a process for transferring credits from two- to four-year institutions.

Virginia. Former Virginia education secretary Jim Dyke reported on a few developments in the state since last year. One is the creation of a commission to examine how to implement the tenets of the *Fordice* case in Virginia. "That [commission] is now developing its final recommendations to take to the general assembly," Dyke said. Also, a budget is being developed to direct the secretary of education to work on articulation agreements, he said. Finally, the education sector has mounted new efforts to court industry in order to build more support for education in Virginia.

Nonaligned States. Representatives from Illinois, Arkansas and New York held "very lively discus-

sions," according to Joseph "Pete" Silver, who headed the team of nonaligned states. The team, he said, agreed that the *Hopwood* decision is wide, not deep—and that "people are focusing on its width, not depth."

The team of nonaligned states expressed other issues of concern: articulation between community and four-year colleges and its impact on minority students; the institutionalization of retention programs; the dearth of black graduate students and its impact on the campus climate; and the lack of collaboration between universities and the K-12 sector. While team members supported higher standards, Silver noted that "we need to listen very carefully when people talk about quality and excellence. No one's against those things, but some will use those [concepts] to keep people out."

DETAILED REPORTS FROM FLORIDA, GEORGIA, MARYLAND, NORTH CAROLINA, TENNESSEE AND VIRGINIA

Florida. The state of Florida has already taken an important first step toward increasing educational opportunity: a full inspection of its educational system. In September 1996, Gov. Lawton Chiles created a Governor's Commission on Education to conduct "the first wholesale review of Florida's public schools, from pre-kindergarten through college, in more than 20 years."

In announcing the commission, Gov. Chiles was careful to emphasize that "every child deserves to start school ready to learn—and graduate from school ready to earn." Co-chaired by Lt. Gov. Buddy MacKay and Dr. Jack Critchfield, president of Florida Progress, the Governor's Commission began meeting in October, and its interim recommendations were slated to be ready in March for the beginning of the 1997 legislative session.

While the issues of diversity and equity are expected to find their way into the Commission's study, the Florida team gathered at the Continuing Conference identified some of the problems facing the state's African-American students.

One is the issue of transfer rates from community colleges to four-year institutions. Currently, less than 5 percent of the 15,000 or so African-Americans in community colleges earn an associate degree, which enables them to transfer to a university. Noting that such a figure was abysmal, the Florida team proposed that community colleges place a new emphasis on remedial programs to help all students continue their education beyond the community college. They also recommended that the university system increase the number of its successful "reach-out" programs, which team members said were successful in creating a caring environment.

Another issue tackled by the Florida team is performance-based funding, which lawmakers are examining as a way to increase graduation rates. Performance-based funding, as it is now being considered in Florida, would reward institutions that improve completion rates. Team members strongly suggested that "whole need assistance" be factored into institutional strategies to drive up graduation rates, noting that financial aid impacts academic performance. Thus, financial and academic assistance should go hand in hand. Help minorities pay for school, and you'll see their grades go up, because they will be able to devote more time to their studies.

The Florida team also developed some other ideas to increase access and success for minorities:

- *Increase attention on retention.* Too often, students have no idea where to go when they run into problems on campus. So one individual should be designated as the retention coordinator on each campus, the team suggested. In working with other offices and departments, the retention office would be well-positioned to monitor student progress toward graduation and troubleshoot problems as they arise.
- *Create intervention at community colleges.* Each community college student ought to participate in an "educational quality enrichment" program between their first and second years. The program would not only serve to shore up their skills in key subject areas, but to monitor their progress and help them alleviate any problems. (Florida estimated the cost of such a program would be $1,000 a student.)
- *Have community colleges create "survival classes" for high school students.* Miami-Dade Community

Ernest Nicholson, superintendent of Bessemer City Schools, talks to Alabama team members about new developments in the state.

College conducts such classes for 150 high school sophomores; the program gives students tutoring support and a first look at college campuses. The success of Miami- Dade's program ought to be replicated, according to the Florida team.

Georgia. Perhaps no state has experienced as much rapid change in education as Georgia. Hundreds of millions of dollars in lottery proceeds are being earmarked exclusively for education each year—for HOPE scholarships, a pre-kindergarten program and a slate of technology initiatives, including an online statewide library.

At the same time, Georgia has taken significant steps to streamline education through its P-16 Initiative, a comprehensive reform program that has spurred new ideas in 15 communities across the state as well as opened up new channels of communication among the agencies overseeing K-12, technical institutes, colleges and the pre-K programs. A key component of the P-16 Initiative is a Postsecondary Readiness Education Program (PREP), an effort designed to communicate college entrance requirements and to help students meet those requirements.

It was against this backdrop of progress that the Georgia team met at this year's Continuing Conference to discuss future strategies for promoting equity. The team began by reviewing its efforts at the 1995 conference, noting developments that have taken place in the year since. Chief among them: a dozen policy initiatives put into place by the Board of Regents, the governing body of Georgia's 34 public colleges and universities. Each initiative, the Georgia team noted, contained some activity that reflected what *Redeeming the American Promise* said should be done to address the issues of access and success for minorities.

For all of Georgia's progress, however, the state team agreed that there is unfinished business in the state regarding equity in education. After concurring that continued attention to the Regents' 12 initiatives was important (given that real change can only come with sustained, comprehensive reform), the Georgians turned their attention to PREP. Preparing students to meet admission standards is the main thrust of PREP. The program is carried out through year-round tutoring and mentoring, summer programs that bring high

school students to college campuses, a series of middle school visitation days, and the like. PREP is also launching a far-reaching communication program to make students and parents aware of the high school classes needed to graduate and continue their education.

The sharp focus on college preparation is how PREP addresses the equity issue. Still, the Georgia team expressed some concerns about PREP, calling into question its cohesiveness and funding support. It's important, team members agreed, that PREP not be merely offered as a kind of add-on program in schools, but that it become an "integral part of the normal school environment." If PREP is to succeed in bringing about greater equity, it must be fully incorporated into the middle/high school experience—as much as, say, a class in algebra or a session with the school counselor. The Georgia team also contended that PREP isn't receiving enough funding, and what support it does have is restrictive. Again, PREP can only meet its potential if it is truly a far-reaching, fully funded, well-integrated, systematic program, the team said.

Helping PREP mature as a program so that it can serve as a crown jewel in Georgia's reform movement is an important development that the Georgia team would like to see happen next. Team members discussed other issues as well that could serve as strategies for increasing access and success for minorities, such as diploma reform, improving the teaching environment and increasing faculty salaries to attract the best teachers.

MARYLAND. Like many states, Maryland has experienced some tension between its governing and coordinating boards for higher education. Early in 1996, however, members of the Maryland Higher Education Commission and the University of Maryland Board of Regents put aside their differences and agreed to work together on a plan to improve higher education in the state. In their "extraordinary meeting," as commission Chairman Edward O. Clarke called it, the two boards peered into the decade ahead and came up with a host of critical issues that are sure to play a role in the future development of higher education in the state.

One of those issues was diversity. And for guidance in figuring out what to do next, the study commission looked to *Redeeming the American Promise.*

Following a five-year desegregation plan in the late 1980s, Maryland made some progress in fostering equal educational opportunity. Still, the commission noted, there is work to be done. Gaps persist between black and white students in college retention and graduation rates, and in community college transfer and graduation rates; in fact, white students are twice as likely as black students to finish college in six years. The presence of minority faculty and administrators at traditionally white institutions remains scarce. And the campuses of those institutions still aren't fully cultivating a "climate of acceptance" for African-Americans.

As a basis for formulating solutions to these problems, the study adopted the three guiding principles set forth in *Redeeming the American Promise.* Closing the gaps and more fully integrating traditionally white campuses can only be accomplished through solutions that are comprehensive, student-centered and accountability-based, the study commission offered. To achieve those three principles, the commission proposed:

- finding new avenues for expanding financial aid to students;
- providing both academic and financial advice to students and families and broadening academic support;
- instilling a campus climate that is conducive to racially and ethnically diverse populations; and
- working to attract and retain adequate numbers of diverse full-time faculty members.

The study commission invited the general public to review its report and to offer solutions and ideas. At the Continuing Conference, the Maryland team did its part by drafting a vision statement for equity in higher education:

"The state of Maryland shall have an educational system that provides an opportunity for ALL students to be engaged in a challenging curriculum, K-16, which provides them the opportunity to develop, without barriers, full potential to achieve economic viability and quality of life. To this end, it is imperative that the state close the gap between minorities and non-minorities in participation in college preparatory curricula, postsecondary attendance rates and college graduation."

The vision statement echoes the sentiment expressed in the study commission's report that education is the key to the quality of life. But to bring about greater equity, the Maryland team did identify some possible solutions that went beyond

The Maryland team, led by William Hytche, president of the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore, right, answers questions pertaining to equity in higher education.

those contained in the study commission's report. Among them: the addition of doctoral programs to produce more minority Ph.D.s; the implementation of a HOPE scholarship program with an added stipulation that recipients abide by a code of conduct; an examination of what, specifically, Maryland has done to implement the *Fordice* decision; and developing a plan to help high school students who fail to graduate because they did not pass the requisite literacy exam.

North Carolina. The state has experienced its share of change in education in recent years, though most of the developments are taking place in the K-12 arena. A comprehensive plan to reorganize public schools in the state was developed early in 1996 in response to legislation passed in 1995; titled "The New ABCs of Public Education," the plan calls for strong accountability measures, maximum local control of schools and an emphasis on basic knowledge and high standards. A North Carolina Education Standards and Accountability Commission hammered out new benchmarks for students in grades 4, 8, 10 and 12.

While K-12 in North Carolina is undergoing major changes, there is still considerable need for more initiatives in that state to promote equity, according to the North Carolina team. A good start would be to establish collaboration among the public schools, community colleges and universities in the form of a P-16 initiative. The team proposed a day-long conference with representatives from the governor's office, Board of Education and other interested parties to discuss the notion of implementing a P-16 program in North Carolina.

The team also hammered out a "vision for equity" that started with increasing financial aid. The general public needs to press policy makers to increase student aid in the state; at the same time, policy makers ought to look closely at developing a statewide lottery as a mechanism for creating HOPE scholarships. Organizing a small team to "quietly" examine the lottery in other states, then share the information with lawmakers would be a good idea, the North Carolina team said. It also agreed that an appeal mechanism is needed for those students who plan to drop out of college because they can no longer afford it. Not having money shouldn't be a reason for discontinuing education, team members said.

A second element in the North Carolina team's vision for equity concerns the racial make-

Dhyana Ziegler of the University of Tennessee takes part in a Tennessee team meeting.

up of college and high school faculty. Steps must be taken to encourage more African-Americans to teach college. Again, financial aid could play a part in this strategy, the North Carolinians said. Scholarships could be an effective incentive to getting more black faculty (and teachers) into the pipeline.

North Carolina also called for a deeper commitment to the enrollment, retention and graduation of more minorities. Approximately one in five students enrolled at the state's 16 public universities is African-American; those institutions, however, should become more aggressive to ensure that black students receive the support to succeed and graduate. The team offered some suggestions: organizing African-American faculty, staff, alumnae and clubs to aid in recruitment and retention; encouraging the involvement of parents of African-American students in campus activities; and the aforementioned proposals for increasing scholarships and black faculty.

Finally, the North Carolina team proposed a major initiative to reach out to the general public. An educational "think tank" that conducts research into some of the key issues pertaining to equity is a good idea, they said. Equally important is sharing this information with policy makers, lawmakers and the public. One-page data flyers, communications with ministers and other ideas were suggested, but the team concurred that whatever the communication method, it's important that the state's people and state's leaders be fully informed of the needs for greater educational opportunity—and how best to meet those needs.

TENNESSEE. Some southern states are paying new attention to public education—and paying for new reform initiatives. Tennessee is one such state. Five years ago, the state unveiled its 21st Century Schools program, a comprehensive effort to improve the performance of K-12 education. Since then, overall funding for public schools has increased by nearly $900 million. Nearly all of Tennessee's 139 school systems had state funding increases of 50 percent or more; more than a third of the systems received 100 percent more in funding.

As a measure of accountability, Tennessee issues an annual report card for its 21st Century

Schools program. The latest report card shows improvement in several areas, including a decline in the high school dropout rate and increased funding equity among the state's school systems.

Tennessee's progress notwithstanding, some elements are missing in the state's education reform, most notably new attention to equity in higher education. The Tennessee team addressed that issue head-on at the Continuing Conference and developed some specific action steps to move it's state forward:

- Two joint House/Senate resolutions to be introduced at the next legislative session. The first would call for an assessment of the state's needs in ensuring equal educational opportunity; the second would establish a K-16 council made up of lawmakers, educational officials and representatives from business and the community. The new K-16 council would explore the best strategies for creating a seamless system of education in the state. "Already, the Black Legislative Caucus agreed that a K-16 initiative would be good for Tennessee, and that the issues of access and success could be incorporated," said team leader Nebraska Mays.
- A bill to be introduced to the legislature to establish an articulation agreement between community colleges and four-year institutions. The transfer of credits between the institutions, especially the transfer of general education courses, has been a major issue for minority students in Tennessee, the team noted. The legislation, which was to be drafted right away, would identify core curricula and certificates that would be universally accepted by four-year institutions.
- A series of leadership training workshops which would help community and education leaders "develop a new paradigm and new measurements of success." One team member agreed to research leadership training programs that could be used as a model for the proposed Cooperative Leadership Training.

In the past, working through the legislature has proved to be a successful strategy for addressing equity issues in Tennessee. The Tennessee team cited a matching teacher grant program (to help teaching assistants earn education degrees) and a minority teaching fellows program as two successful initiatives; both, they noted, came about because of legislation that had been passed.

The team also talked about the importance of quick action and effective communication. On the matter of the proposed K-16 council, for instance, the team began working right away on cost estimates for council meetings; in addition, team members proposed holding a news conference once the council is named and networking with education writers to build public support for a K-16 Initiative.

Virginia. In some ways, Virginia's efforts to advance the cause of equity in higher education have resembled a person learning to drive a car with a manual transmission. That is, there have been stops and starts, leaps and lurches, many of them abrupt. All of that may be changing, for Virginia now has a new vehicle for addressing the issues of educational access and success for minorities.

At last year's Continuing Conference, after reviewing developments in Virginia going back to the early 1990s, the state team expressed some frustration that progress has stalled. First there was a special monitoring and advisory committee in the education secretary's office that had been restructured, paving the way for the development of an outline of a comprehensive plan to address desegregation issues. Then, plans were put on hold. At the same time, a task force had been charged by the general assembly to study educational equity in 1993 and 1994. Then, a proposal to create an equal education opportunity commission was defeated.

Despite the sense of frustration, the Virginia team remained undaunted. Members agreed that if the 1994 task force couldn't be revisited as an agent for change, they would propose a new agent. In February 1996, they got one. That month, the general assembly adopted a joint resolution that created an in-state commission with a seven-point charge for steering the state toward elimination of all vestiges of de jure segregation, as called for in the *Fordice* decision.

The group's name—the Commission on the Impact of Certain Federal Court Decisions on the Commonwealth's Institutions of Higher Education—reflected lawmakers' concern that the state fulfill its desegregation plan, particularly in light of a pending review of that plan by the Office of Civil Rights. At the same time, the resolution that

created the commission noted the recommendations of the Southern Education Foundation for correcting inequities—as well as the rationale articulated in *Redeeming the American Promise.* "The Southern Education Foundation also found that 'opportunity for minorities in higher education is restricted, limited, fragmented and uneven'...because of the lack of substantial improvement in the desegregation of systems of higher education among such states," the resolution said.

More specifically, the joint resolution in Virginia charged the commission with:

- reviewing the findings and recommendations of the 1994 task force as well as the Southern Education Foundation;
- determining the state's legal obligations (and the implications for educational policy) stemming from court decisions, including the *Fordice* and *Adams* decisions;
- evaluating the status of the Virginia Plan for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education in light of the *Adams* decision and agreements between the state and OCR—and recommending changes in the plan, including funding; and
- recommending "specific immediate and long-term initiatives to fully implement the revised Plan and the directives in *Fordice* to expand educational opportunities for all Virginians, giving particular attention to the need to increase the numbers of African-American and other minority students, faculty and administrators at the undergraduate and graduate levels."

As Jim Dyke, head of the Virginia state team, noted at the 1996 Continuing Conference, a series of workshops is planned in 1997 to discuss specific steps for implementing the *Fordice* decision in Virginia. The workshops are an outgrowth of the in-state commission's efforts in 1996, he said. Meanwhile, Dyke noted, both of Virginia's gubernatorial candidates are supporting guaranteed scholarship programs similar to the HOPE program in Georgia. So prospects for significant change in Virginia appear to be brighter now than they have been in the last few years.

State Teams

Alabama
Leader: Ernest Nicholson, Superintendent, Bessemer City Schools, Alabama
Florida
Leader: David Spence, Executive Vice Chancellor, State University System of Florida
Georgia
Leader: Joan Elifson, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, Floyd College
Kentucky
Leader: Samuel Robinson, President, The Lincoln Foundation
Maryland
Leader: William P. Hytche, President, University of Maryland-Eastern Shore
Mississippi
Leader: William A. Butts, Special Assistant to the President and Professor of Political Science, Delta State University
North Carolina
Leader: Carolyn Q. Coleman, Special Assistant to the Governor
Tennessee
Leader: Nebraska Mays, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Tennessee Board of Regents
Virginia
Leader: James W. Dyke Jr., Esq., Former Secretary of Education, Commonwealth of Virginia

Looking Ahead

OVER THE YEARS slogans such as diversity, equity, affirmative action, reverse discrimination and race-based preferences have inflamed people's passions rather than informed their perceptions. Confusion and uncertainty have multiplied while minority achievement in higher education continues to languish.

The Southern Education Foundation has made a concerted decision to engage people in a new dialogue on race and education. We are committed to getting a critical mass of people not just interested but involved in discovering real and practical solutions to ensuring equal opportunity in higher education.

Real solutions for promoting equity can best be found at the state level and will depend on the energy and leadership of committed individuals in those states. At the last two Continuing Conferences, we have interacted with many individuals who are determined to bring positive change in education to their states. At the 14th event, we had state school superintendents, state representatives, college presidents, leaders from state systems of higher education, civil rights activists, school teachers and representatives from the federal government all working together to fulfill the promise of opportunity.

The Continuing Conference is one part of a larger process that will continue to evolve in the next year. We ask you to stick with us in this process. Change is starting to happen in the states. Together we must continue to push for change that will result in equitable systems of higher education and an opportunity for quality education for all students.

We are committed to getting a critical mass of people not just interested but involved in discovering real and practical solutions to ensuring equal opportunity in higher education.

A Parting Shot...

Clockwise from bottom left: Gov. Zell Miller and wife Shirley Miller enjoy a bit of conversation before the Griffin award ceremony. Joyce Lane of St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago takes part in a working group session. A group of HOPE scholars from Spelman College are recognized at the award ceremony. Ernest Nicholson of Bessemer City Schools leads the Alabama working group. SEF Trustee Adrienne Bailey welcomes guests to the Griffin award dinner and ceremony.

Clockwise from above: Norman Camp of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction takes notes during a presentation. Nebraska Mays, left, of the Tennessee Board of Regents and Duane Giannangelo of the University of Memphis contemplate a presentation on recent developments in higher education. Gov. Zell Miller, center, poses with SEF President Elridge W. McMillan, left, and Norman Francis, chairman of SEF Board of Trustees. Listening intently is James Proctor of the Maryland House of Delegates. Janeen Witty of Norfolk State University considers information about new state initiatives to promote opportunity.

14TH ANNUAL CONTINUING CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Grace Aarons
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Alma Adams
North Carolina General Assembly
2 Mandela Way
Greensboro, NC 27401

Deborah Barrett
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Michael Baxter
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Ernest Benson
Albany State University
504 College Drive
Albany, GA 31705

John Borkowski
Hogan & Hartson, Ltd.
546 Carondelet Street
New Orleans, LA 70130

Jackie Brathwaite
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Cynthia Brown
Council of Chief State School Officers
One Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001

William Butts
Delta State University
Highway 8 West
Cleveland, MS 38733

Norman Camp
NC Dept. of Public Instruction
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825

Alma Clayton-Pedersen
Vanderbilt University
Box 164
Peabody College
Nashville, TN 37203

Carolyn Coleman
Office of the Governor, North Carolina
116 W. Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27603

Krista Coleman
Clark-Atlanta University
School of Education
Campus Box 299
Atlanta, GA 30314

Willyerd Collier
University of Arkansas
221 Administration Building
Fayetteville, AR 72703

Joe Cunningham
Vanderbilt University
Box 329
Nashville, TN 37203

Diana DeBrohun
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Otis Dismuke
Birmingham Public Schools
1840 Pearson Avenue, SW
Birmingham, AL 35211

Lee Doebler
University of Montevallo
College of Education
Station 6360
Montevallo, AL 35115

Arthur Dunning
University System of Georgia
244 Washington Street, SW
Room 454
Atlanta, GA 30334

James Dyke
McGuire Woods Battle & Booth, L.L.P.
8280 Greensboro Drive, Suite 900
McLean, VA 22102

Joan Elifson
Floyd College
P.O. Box 1864
Rome, GA 30162-1864

Adrienne Faulkner
Tuskegee University
c/o Office of the Dean
Moton Hall, Room 204
Tuskegee, AL 36088

Cheryl Fields
Black Issues in Higher Education
10520 Warwick Avenue
Suite B-8
Fairfax, VA 22030

Michael Fields
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Norman Francis
Xavier University
7325 Palmetto Street
New Orleans, LA 70124

Bessie Gage
Johnson C. Smith University
100 Beatties Ford Road
Charlotte, NC 28216

Duane Giannangelo
University of Memphis
Ball 200
Memphis, TN 38152

Vance Gray
Clark-Atlanta University
School of Education
Campus Box 299
Atlanta, GA 30314

Wasdon Graydon
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College
2802 Moore Highway
ABAC Box #21
Tifton, GA 31794

Freddie Groomes
Florida State University
301 Westcott Building
Tallahassee, FL 32306-1049

Claire Handley
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Jerry Hardee
Valdosta State University
1208 North Patterson Blvd.
Valdosta, GA 31698

Wade Henderson
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
1629 K Street, N.W.
Suite 1010
Washington, DC 20006

Carla Hernandez
Clark-Atlanta University
School of Education
Campus Box 299
Atlanta, GA 30314

Cheryl Herrington
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Frederick Humphries
Florida A&M University
Tallahassee, FL 32307

Kim Hunter
Southeastern Louisiana University
SLU 784
Hammond, LA 70402

Lynn Huntley
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

William Hytche
University of Maryland-Eastern Shore
Princess Anne, MD 21853

athaniel Jackson
outhern Education Foundation
35 Auburn Avenue
tlanta, GA 30303

driene Jefferson
ndian River Community College
209 Virginia Avenue
ort Pierce, FL 34981-5599

ay Johnson
lark-Atlanta University
chool of Education
ampus Box 299
tlanta, GA 30314

om Johnson
enter for Leadership in School Reform
50 Breckenridge Lane, Suite 200
ouisville, KY 40207

Mary Ann Jones
uskegee University
Office of the Dean
Moton Hall, Room 204
uskegee, AL 36088

rving Joyner
North Carolina State University
512 S. Alston Avenue
Durham, NC 27707

Ian Kettlewell
University System of Georgia
244 Washington Street, SW
Room 361
Atlanta, GA 30334

Robert Kronley
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Joyce Lane
St. Luke's Medical Center
1653 W. Congress Parkway
Chicago, IL 60612

Ramona Leonard
Clark-Atlanta University
Campus Box 299
Atlanta, GA 30314

Denise Littleton
Norfolk State University
2401 Corprew Avenue
Norfolk, VA 23504

James Luvene
Institutions of Higher Learning
904 North Lamar Blvd.
Oxford, MS 38655

Meredith Marsh
Johnson C. Smith University
100 Beatties Ford Road
Charlotte, NC 28216

Bonnie Marshall
DuValle Education Center
3500 Bohne Street
Louisville, KY 40207

Ruby Martin
715 Spottswood Road
Richmond, VA 23220

George Marx
University of Maryland System
3300 Metzerott Road
Adelphi, MD 20783

Barbara Mason
Clark-Atlanta University
James P. Brawley Drive
Atlanta, GA 30314

Nebraska Mays
Tennessee Board of Regents
1415 Murfreesboro Road
Nashville, TN 37217-2833

Jo McDonald
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Elridge W. McMillan
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Patricia McNeal
Metro-Nashville Public Schools
2601 Bransford Avenue
Nashville, TN 37204

Shonja Melton
Johnson C. Smith University
100 Beatties Ford Road
Charlotte, NC 28216

Tiffany Melton
Clark-Atlanta University
School of Education
Campus Box 299
Atlanta, GA 30314

Nikki Merchant
Harvard University
222 Longfellow Hall, Appian Way
Cambridge, MA 02138

Mary Miller
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Barbara Milton
Maryland Higher Education Commission
16 Francis Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Mark Musick
Southern Regional Education Board
592 10th Street, N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30318-5790

Ernest Nicholson
Bessemer City Schools
1621 5th Avenue, North
Bessemer, AL 35020

Rita Nordan
MS Institutions of Higher Learning
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, MS 39211-6453

Eleanor Nunn
North Carolina Biotechnology Ctr.
15 T.W. Alexander Drive
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Larry Parrish
Georgia General Assembly
224 West Main Street
Swainsboro, GA 30401

Sahadeo Patram
Morehouse College
830 Westview Dr., SW
Atlanta, GA 30314

N. Joyce Payne
NASULGC
1 DuPont Circle, N.W., Suite 710
Washington, DC 20036

Isabelle Katz Pinzler
U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
P.O. Box 65808
Washington, DC 20035-5808

Nathanael Pollard
Bowie State University
14000 Jericho Park Road
Bowie, MD 20715

Stanley Pope
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Emma Popwell
Atlanta Public Schools
222 Pryor Street, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30335

James Proctor
Maryland House of Delegates
11204 Cedarville Road
Brandyville, MD 20613

H. Pete Rawlings
Maryland General Assembly
3502 Sequoia Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215-7211

Robert Rice
Maryland State Dept. of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-2595

Earl Richardson
Morgan State University
Cold Spring Lane & Hillen Road
Baltimore, MD 21239

Kevin Riley
Clark-Atlanta University
School of Education
Campus Box 299
Atlanta, GA 30314

Terry Roberson
Montevallo University
College of Education
Station 6360
Montevallo, AL 35115

Evelyn Robinson
Southern Education Foundation
135 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303

Samuel Robinson
The Lincoln Foundation
233 West Broadway
Suite 120
Louisville, KY 40202

Minnie Ruffin
Atlanta Public Schools
222 Pryor Street, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30335

Sidney Rushing
Sidney L. Rushing & Associates
1104 Lewis Avenue
Gulfport, MS 39501

Gail Russell
University of Southern Mississippi
SS Box 5044
Hattiesburg, MS 39402

Joseph Silver, Sr.
University System of Georgia
244 Washington Street, #351
Atlanta, GA 30334-1450

Anona Smith
North Carolina State University
204A Poe Hall
Box 7801
Raleigh, NC 27695-7801

Marzell Smith
Miami-Dade Community College
300 N.E. 2nd Avenue
#5514
Miami, FL 33132

Tamara Smith
Tuskegee University
c/o Office of the Dean
Moton Hall, Room 204
Tuskegee, AL 36088

Calvin Smyre
Georgia House of Representatives
State Capital
Room 417
Atlanta, GA 30334

Regina Sofer
State University System of Florida
325 West Gaines Street
Room 1454
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Janis Somerville
University of Maryland System
3300 Metzerott Road
Adelphi, MD 20783

David Spence
Florida Board of Regents
325 W. Gaines Street, Suite 1548
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1950

Roosevelt Steptoe
Alabama State University
915 S. Jackson Street
Montgomery, AL 36104

Sylvia Strothers
University of Alabama School of Medicine
1600 University Boulevard
VH-P100
Birmingham, AL 35294-0019

Burton Taylor
Council of Chief State School Officers
One Massachusetts Avenue NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001-1431

Maurice Taylor
Morgan State University
Cold Spring Lane & Hillen Road
Baltimore, MD 21239

Larry Turner
State of Tennessee
752 West Levi Road
Memphis, TN 38109

M. Rick Turner
University of Virginia
#4 Dawson's Row
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Lin Tyler
Maryland Higher Education Commission
16 Francis Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Harold E. Wade
Atlanta Metropolitan College
1630 Stewart Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30310

Michael Ward
North Carolina Department of Education
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825

Foster Watkins
Gainesville Community College
P.O. Box 1358
Gainesville, GA 30503

Beverly Watts
Kentucky Commission on Human Rights
323 W. Broadway
7th Floor
Louisville, KY 40202

Samuel Welton
Mississippi Department of Education
P.O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Deria Whatley
Clark-Atlanta University
School of Education
Campus Box 299
Atlanta, GA 30314

Peyton Williams, Jr.
Georgia Department of Education
1966 Twin Towers East
Atlanta, GA 30334

Lauren Wise
Dean Blakey & Moskowitz
1101 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005

Janeen Witty
Norfolk State University
2401 Corprew Avenue
Norfolk, VA 23504

Yulanda Young
Clark-Atlanta University
School of Education
Campus Box 299
Atlanta, GA 30314

Dhyana Ziegler
University of Tennessee
333 Communications Building
Knoxville, TN 37996