New Success Center, Two Software Labs Open

Dr. Kendall T. Harris, Dean of the Roy G. Perry College of Engineering (COE) at Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU), unveiled in February the new Engineering Student Success Center (ESSC) and announced the formal opening of the almost half million dollar Software Simulation Laboratory, both during one of the most successful Engineering Week observances in the institution’s 134-year history.

Less than two months later, on April 1, Dr. Harris presided in a well-attended ceremony on the second floor of the S. R. Collins Building that signaled the addition of an almost $200,000 Cloud Computing Simulation Laboratory provided by IBM Corporation.

Dean Harris orchestrated the multi-faceted, weekend 2010 celebration focusing on the commitment of the college’s six departments to expand the engineering pipeline by attracting, retaining and graduating larger numbers of world-class professionals ready to meet new challenges in today’s global communities.

The Roy G. Perry College of Engineering is now recognized as a national leader in providing highly trained and exceptionally motivated engineers, researchers and scientists for today’s technical world, offering eight bachelor’s degree programs, four master’s and one doctoral degree program.

A Celebration of Excellence Awards Ceremony on February 15, at the Willie Albert Tempton Sr. Memorial Student Center Ballroom recognized 35 outstanding COE undergraduate and graduate students for 2010, saluted four outstanding engineering faculty and staff members and provided the vehicle to pay tribute to long-time COE corporate partners, and to recognize one of the university’s newest corporate partners.

On February 16, Prairie View hosted the 2010 Outstanding Engineering Student Recognition Luncheon, a gathering that honored 31 outstanding junior and senior engineering students from PVAMU, Rice University and The University of Houston. The session was attended by substantial delegations of engineering faculty and administrators from the three universities, and the event’s sponsor, the Houston Engineers Week Committee.

The College of Engineering’s namesake, Roy G. Perry, returned to his alma mater on February 18, to deliver the 2009-2010 Wesley Lecture for faculty and students. In the 30 years since his PVAMU studies, Perry has played key executive and managerial roles at IBM, Allied Signal, Dell, StorageTek and other high-tech corporations.

The finale of Engineering Week activities came with eleven (11) students, three (3) faculty and staff along with the Dean attending the 2010 Black Engineer of the Year Award (BEYA) Conference in Baltimore, Maryland.
Perry Leading COE, PVAMU Renaissance By Example

“There are so many kids out there looking for someone to help answer questions . . .”

Roy G. Perry, a 1978 electrical engineering graduate of Prairie View A&M University and a Stanford Sloan Fellow with two master’s degrees, was, in 2008, honored by the Texas A&M University Board of Regents, who permanently affixed his name to the Prairie View A&M College of Engineering.

Perry followed that honor in 2009 with the acceptance of a new challenge as Chairman of the Board of the Prairie View A&M University Foundation (PVAMF).

Perry believes “winning is a choice” for every task and every challenge faced by students, graduates, scientists and researchers with each individual’s attitude playing the primary role and determining factor in the outcome. “I’ve never met anyone who chooses to fail,” he says. “We fail because we set predetermined boundaries for ourselves.”

The crown jewel of the February 2010 Engineering Week activities was, arguably, the ceremonial formal opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the stunning new Engineering Student Success Center (ESSC) which came about through more than $600,000 in renovations involving a suite of rooms on the second floor of the C.L. Wilson Building.

Central to the new Center is its large library, with publications yet to be shelved, surrounded by large computer laboratories, smaller student project rooms and office-size “private” rooms for student interviews or intense tutorial or study sessions. A well-lighted central walkway separating the various ESSC components features a “wall of honor” where corporate, public or private sponsor logos will be on permanent display.

The grand opening ceremony included the recognition of individuals and companies who contributed to the Center in some way. Recognized for their roles in the Center’s inauguration were the U.S. Department of Education Title III Program, Spectra Energy, Shell Oil Company and L-3 Communications, among others.

Dr. Kendall T. Harris, Dean of the Roy G. Perry College of Engineering (COE), said the ESSC will help the college address retention concerns, centralize COE student activities and programs, and work closely with Career Services to streamline the placement of engineering students into permanent, intern and cooperative employment and career opportunities.

“It is the goal of the supplemental instruction program through the ESSC to lower the freshman and sophomore attrition rates for the College of Engineering to below 40%,” said Harris, noting COE students will be offered peer-to-peer enhanced instruction to foster a “community of scholars.” Centralization of COE activities, both social and academic, will “tremendously affect the educational experience of our students,” he explained.

Additionally, ESSC activities will include seminars and workshops to help develop non-academic skills and intensify partnerships with career and placement services. “Many of our activities will be accomplished by leveraging ESSC’s efforts with other existing programs,” the dean said.

Among those praising the Center were Dr. George C. Wright, President of PVAMU; Dr. E. Johanne Thomas-Smith, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Willie Trotty, Vice President of Research and Development; Mrs. Lora Williams, Title III Administrator; and Mr. Robert Powell, 2010 Roy G. Perry College of Engineering Outstanding Student, 2010 Outstanding Senior in Civil and Environmental Engineering, and 2009-2010 Student Government Association President.
L-3 Communications funds $430,000 lab and student/faculty training center

Exploring Space Through Simulation Software

A formal ribbon-cutting ceremony for Prairie View’s new Space Exploration and Simulation Laboratory, funded with $430,000 from L-3 Communications, was held in February 2010 at the S. R. Collins Building. L-3 is an important engineering and computer science contractor for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) at Johnson Space Center in Clear Lake, TX.

L-3 is also providing technical support to train PVAMU faculty, staff and students using the simulation tool co-developed by the company and NASA. Bob Zehentner, L-3 Senior Program Manager, said support for the COE began in September 2008. The company intends to provide future funding for faculty to develop a new course using a high-involved software simulation program known as TRICK.

Continued funding has also been used for student interns, co-operative education and on-campus hourly work. PVAMU participants include faculty members Dr. Shield Lin (Interim Associate Dean & Project Lead), Dr. Pamela Obiomon (Associate Professor, Electrical Engineering), Dr. Sherri Frizell (Associate Professor, Computer Science) and Dr. Mohan Kekar (Associate Professor, Engineering Technology); staff member Chris Galvez (Systems Analyst); and students Quincy Canada, Thomas Wade, Pranay Reddy, Eric Brown, James Turnage, Jerry Nickols, Justin Jordan and Jarrett Johnson.

Harris said the L-3 project aligns with the vision to stimulate PVAMU student interest and development through software technology, coursework and senior design projects involving software simulation, research projects and intern/co-op assignments.

The ribbon-cutting was followed by a brief demonstration and tour of the laboratory led by Jeff Ellis, L-3 Technical Area Manager. The lab is equipped with 28 computers and projection equipment designed to provide instructional activities on the high definition simulation software for PVAMU student participants.

2009-2010 Wesley Lecture Series

Roy G. Perry, currently CEO of Thinity Corporation, a start-up company focused on improving productivity and innovation in the use of electronic medical records and regulatory compliance in healthcare arenas, talked on “The Success Factors for a Productive Engineering Career” during the February Engineering Week observance at the Electrical Engineering Building.

The Houston native earned his bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from Prairie View in 1978. The Sloan Fellow holds a master’s degree in management from Stanford University and a master’s degree in electrical engineering from Iowa State University. While at Prairie View, Perry was named “Outstanding Engineering Student of the Year” and was Texas Society of Professional Engineers outstanding student in 1978. Black Enterprise Magazine called him a "manufacturing genius" in 1999 for his work at Dell, and in 2005, he earned recognition as "Black Engineer of the Year for Career Accomplishments," “One of the 50 Most Important Blacks in Technology” by USBE Magazine and “Superstar Award” from Frontline Solutions Magazine.

As a distinguished alumnus of PVAMU, Perry served on the university’s Capital Campaign Cabinet and helped reactivate its foundation. Texas A&M University’s Board of Regents and PVAMU Leadership joined recently to name the Prairie View A&M University College of Engineering in Perry’s honor, at the same time, adopting the slogan, “Imagine the Possibilities.”

2010 Black Engineer of Year Awards

BEYA Conference

The BEYA STEM Global Competitiveness Conference is about opportunities to acquire and retain talent, to learn and network among the best and brightest technology minds in the country. Since 1986, the conference has served as an invaluable tool to recognize outstanding achievement of African-Americans in companies across America. This year, eleven (11) students, three (3) faculty and staff along with the Dean attended the 2010 Black Engineer of the Year Award (BEYA) Conference in Baltimore, Maryland. This event was an opportunity for PVAMU students to be exposed to well accomplished Minority Engineers and Scientist while also networking with companies for future internships or permanent hire. It was also an opportunity for the College of Engineering to recruit potential graduate students for its Master of Engineering and Doctoral programs.

Roy G. Perry
College of Engineering

Making a Difference

The mission of the Roy G. Perry College of Engineering is to sustain an infrastructure that attracts and maintains a world-class faculty that, in turn, produces and trains graduates who meet and exceed the highest levels of professional standards.
PVAMU team wins $50,000 top prize as Honda All-Stars

Two outstanding Roy G. Perry College of Engineering students were among a four-member undergraduate team of Prairie View A&M University scholars who emerged as the National Champions and the $50,000 winner of the 2010 Honda Campus All-Star Challenge April 10-13 at Orlando, FL.

Senior Edward Hackett, a civil engineering major; and junior Isaac Hoyt, a chemical engineering major, made up half of the PVAMU team which faced off against SWAC rival, Mississippi Valley State, in the final. Other team members were captain and senior biology major Cedrick Wilson and junior Jonathan Gholston, a communications major. Career Services’ Herbert Thomas served as the team’s coach and advisor.

It was the first national championship trophy for the Panthers of Prairie View. The $50,000 prize translates into an educational grant that will be forwarded to Prairie View A&M University.

To acknowledge and celebrate the accomplishments of students, faculty, staff, and corporate partners of the Roy G. Perry College of Engineering, a Celebration of Excellence Awards Banquet kicked off 2010 E-Week activities. Ms. Jabreel Walker, a ’09 Chemical Engineering Alum and Shell employee, was the Mistress of Ceremony. Dr. E. Joahorne Thomas-Smith, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs provided the opening remarks.

Thirty-two PVAMU undergraduate engineering students – a freshman, sophomore, junior and senior student from each of the eight departments – were in the spotlight during the evening Celebration of Excellence Awards Banquet at the Memorial Student Center Ballroom. Each was named a 2010 Outstanding Student. Honorees also included two Master of Science students and one doctorate student. The awardees were selected by their respective departments based on their academic credentials, participation in department activities, and leadership skills.

Dr. Houston Brown, a research scientist for Shell Oil Company and a long time COE supporter, gave a stirring talk among the banquet tables populated by students and guests, urging the scholars to become pro-active in their academic goals and travel the extra mile toward higher recognition and educational success. Shell Oil was the winner of the 2010 Corporate Partner Excellence Award. L-3 Communications was recognized with the 2010 New Partner Initiative Award.

Dr. Kelvin Kirby, Associate Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, provided guests with a brief overview of the COE’s faculty highlights and accomplishments during 2009-2010 and President Wright joined the distinguished list of banquet participants, later providing closing remarks.

Dean Harris, along with Interim Associate Dean Dr.Shield Lin and Interim Assistant Dean Dr. Felecia M. Nave, recognized each outstanding scholar and presented all with certificates and academic medals. Doctorate student Emad Awada earned “outstanding” recognition in electrical engineering. Master’s of Science students Craig Bazli in electrical engineering and Henry Gonzalez in mechanical engineering also won “outstanding” recognition.

Other 2010 Outstanding Students and their departments, starting with freshmen and ending with seniors in each group, included:

• Chemical Engineering: Amber Parker, Sonia Alexander, Abdulaye Djire and Jacqueline Heard.
• Civil and Environmental Engineering: LaSasha Walker, Britnee Keller, LaToya Walker, Hamoon Dashtaki and Robert Powell.
• Computer Engineering: Roland Champine, Karim Fotso, Martel Shorter and Mark Ivey.
• Computer Engineering Technology: Shaniquial Young, Ricky Shaw, Thomas Wade and Santos Padreza.
• Computer Science: Jared Terrell, Karla Wooten, James Turnage and Thasia Madison.
• Electrical Engineering: Derrick Webster, Marcus Benjamin, Kudakwashe Nyatoti and Dedrick Dalou.
• Electrical Engineering Technology: Bianca Young, Jordan Fuchs, William Hynds and Courtney Sharp.
• Mechanical Engineering: Kema Hibbert, Malcolm McGhee, Allen Matlock and Jonathan Daniels.

2010 Outstanding Faculty Awards also went to Dr. Zauli Huque for Faculty Teaching, Dr. Sukesh Aghara for Faculty Research, Dr. Raghava Kommalapati for Faculty...
Service and Mrs. Mary Daniels for Staff Service.

The following is a partial listing of honored faculty and their accomplishments for the 2009-2010 academic year:

Dr. Sukesh Aghara:
- $400K from agencies i.e. NSF, TWC, NASA, and UNCFSP
- 5 journal publications, 1 conference presentation, 3 reports
- Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Dr. Safwat Shakir
- 100K in funding from Department of Education
- Established the new International Journal for Environmental Science

Dr. Felecia Nave
- $850K in NSF funding for Advancement of Women Faculty in Engineering at HBCUs
- $130K from Department of Education, Title III
- Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor
- Promoted to Associate Provost

Chemical Engineering Dept. doubled in enrollment over past 2 years

Dr. Raghava Kommalapati
- Published a book

Dr. Judy Perkins
- Texas A&M University System Regents Professor Award-2008-2009
- 150K in funding

Dr. Akhtar Lodgher
- $600K in funding from NSF for Broadening (together with Dr. Yang & Dr. Cui) Participation in Computing for Women and Minorities

Mr. J. D. Oliver
- StoreFront Project totaling $6.4M for Lockheed Martin

Dr. Sherri Fizzell
- $150K in funding from NSF and Thurgood Marshall
- Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Dr. Richard Wilkins
- PI, Center for Radiation Engineering A Science for Space Exploration, $3.9M (Team includes: Dr. Kirby, Dr. Zhou, Dr. Aghari, & Dr. Biney)
- 1 journal publication

Dr. Lijun Qian
- $476K in funding from Department of Defense
- 4 journal publications, 3 book chapters, 9 invited talks
- Graduated his 3rd Ph.D. student

Dr. Annamalai Annamalai
- 6 grants awards as PI/Co-PI totaling more than $1.1M
- 2 journals, 6 invited talks
- 2009 Airforce Visiting Faculty Fellow
- Editor for Communication Theory Journal

Dr. Warsame Ali
- 4 grants awards as PI/Co-PI totaling more than $1.4M
- 2 journals

Dr. Kelvin Kirby
- Received ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Science Camp Award

Dr. John Fuller
- $2M funding from Department of Energy

Dr. Jianren Zhou
- $469K from agencies NSF and BAE Systems
- 5 journal publications

Dr. Xiaobo Peng
- $320K from NSF and NASA
- 1 journal publication

Dr. Ronald Boyd
- Distinguished Professor Mechanical Engineering/ Honeywell Endowed Professor
- $333K in funding
- 2 journal publications

Dr. Ziaul Huque
- $125K in funding from NASA
- 1 journal publication

Dr. Yongpeng Zhang
- Funding from 3M and NSF

Dr. Nirpendra Sarker
- 4 Conference Publications

Dr. Dhadesugoor R. Vaman
- $890K in NSF funding, Research Infrastructure for Science and Engineering (RISE)
- $499K in Army Research Office (ARO) extension funding, battlefield communications research
- IEE Sarnoff Symposium at Princeton University, INFORTE Tactical Seminar in Finland
- Texas Instruments Endowed Chair

Shell Oil's Dr. Houston Brown, left, chats with Dr. Shiels Lin after speaking at the Awards Banquet.
PVAMU team enters Lone Star Challenge 2010

The Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering from Prairie View A&M University’s Roy G. Perry College of Engineering “calibrated” with Tennessee State University recently in the Lone Star Challenge 2010, a state competition calling on university teams to build and demonstrate a stealth system capable of tracking and shadowing people or objects of interest.

The PVAMU/Tennessee team went head to head against the collaborating team of Texas A&M University and the University of Texas-Austin in competition staged at St. Elijah, a mock European village built at Fort Hood, TX in the 1980s due to the increased need to train soldiers in urban combat techniques. The site has stores, gas stations and other assorted buildings used for military training purposes.

For this competition, the PVAMU/Tennessee team built an aerial surveillance system that included a small radio controlled drone aircraft that was augmented by a ground system back-up. Team members developed the equipment and designed a plan to find hostages who had been kidnapped by suspected terrorists.

While the team failed to win the overall competition, judges were nevertheless highly complimentary of the PVAMU/Tennessee team’s combined aerial/ground approach to the problem. Ten persons make up the PVAMU senior design group.

MSC Ballroom Luncheon Honors Outstanding Engineering Students

PVAMU, Rice University, University of Houston Join To Recognize Year’s Best

Dr. Kendall T. Harris, Dean of the Roy G. Perry College of Engineering, welcomed scores of outstanding junior and senior engineering students from PVAMU, Rice University and The University of Houston February 18 when the 2010 Outstanding Engineering Student Recognition Luncheon was held at the MSC Ballroom.

Dr. Harris also recognized and honored faculty from the participating universities and dozens of industry representatives present for the award-filled event. In addition to their usual awards, the Most Outstanding Juniors and Seniors from each university also received a scholarship from the Houston E-Week Committee.

Dr. Jerry Rodgers, 1996 Engineer of the Year, was the keynote speaker.

Harris presented awards to Prairie View’s outstanding engineering students. Named Most Outstanding were senior Robert Powell and junior LaTonya Walker, both Civil and Environmental Engineering majors. Other outstanding seniors were Dedrick Dalcour, electrical; Jonathan Daniels, mechanical; Jacqueling Heard, chemical; Hamoon Dashtaki, civil and Mark Ivey, computer. Outstanding juniors were Abdulye Djire, chemical; Allen Matlock, mechanical; Kudakwashe Nyatoti, electrical; and Martel Shorter, computer.

A listing of University of Houston and Rice University engineering students recognized by the 2010 Houston Engineers Week Committee during the Prairie View A&M University awards ceremony can be found on the organization’s website located at www.houstonengineersweek.org.

HONORS AND AWARDS

CELEBRATION of EXCELLENCE STUDENT ORGANIZATION ACHIEVEMENTS - 2010

Established New Chapter Society for Hispanic Engineers (SHPE) Fall 2009

National Society of Black Engineers Chapter of the Year and Largest Chapter in Region (175 Members Strong)

Society of Women Engineers Outstanding Collegiate Section Gold Level Award

Boeing Multicultural Award Collegiate Section

Ms. Jabreel Walker Featured in Winter 2009 Issue Society of Women Engineers Magazine
With Our Sincere Thanks . . .

The Roy G. Perry College of Engineering acknowledges the support, dedication and hard work of its administration, faculty, staff and students who, along with our loyal corporate and industry affiliates, made 2010 a premiere year for our undergraduate and graduate students. Among those who contributed to the university’s engineering challenges and shared in the college’s achievements were:

Corporate/Affiliate Sponsors and Supporters
Shell Oil Company                               Valic Financial Services
L3 Communications                               IBM Corporation
Spectra Energy                                   Sodexo Campus Services
Houston Engineers Week Committee                Diane Alexander & Asso.

Solicitor Performance Report
3M Corporation                                  AMIE Naval Systems
Chevron                                        ExxonMobil Corp.
Lockheed-Martin                                 NACME
Northrop Grumman                                Raytheon
Siemens Energy                                  Spectra Energy

University Departments
Department of Chemical Engineering
Department of Computer Science
Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering
Department of Mechanical Engineering
Department of Education, Title III
PVAMU Facilities Staff

Other PVAMU and Partner Contributors
Dr. George C. Wright, President, Prairie View A&M University
Dr. E. Joanne Thomas-Smith, Provost and Senior Vice President
Dr. Willie Trotty, Vice President for Research and Development
Ms. Lora Williams, Title III Administrator
Ms. Carol Campbell
Mrs. Paula Sandle
Roy G. Perry College of Engineering, Dean’s Office Staff
Mr. J. D. Oliver, Department of Computer Science
Mr. Miron Billingsley, Associate VP for Student Affairs
Mr. Terry Thomas Jr., Alumni Manager, Power Virtualization
Mr. Robert Sanders, Department of Arts & Sciences

PVAMU’s Team X-Cavator, nineteen other universities vying for top NASA honors

Six Prairie View A&M University mechanical engineering students participated in the first-ever 2010 National Aeronautics and Space Administration Lunabotics Mining Competition at Kennedy Space Center May 27-28, 2010.

Dr. Jianren Zhou, Interim Head and Professor of the Mechanical Engineering Department, said the new NASA competition attracts approximately 20 university teams from across the nation and is designed to promote and develop interest in space activities and in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields nationwide.

The PVAMU team is led by Ronhoward McNeill and includes Jenny Galvis, Luis Fuentes, Hamzah Zoubi, Mario Morgan and Anthony Wariso. All are senior mechanical engineering students who hail from all parts of the globe.

With a $5,000 grand prize and bragging rights at stake, the challenge for Team X-Cavator was to design an excavator using telerobotic or autonomous operations to excavate the most lunar regolith stimulant within a 15-minute time limit. The minimum excavation requirement was 10 kg with excavation hardware mass not to exceed 80 kg.

Dr. Zhou said the six team members used the NASA competition as their Senior Design Project. The PVAMU robot, conceptualized, designed and built using the systems engineering approach, was expected to dig more than three times the minimum weight requirement of 10 kg.

Team X-Cavator is composed of six PVAMU senior mechanical engineering students who participated in the 2010 NASA Lunabotics Mining Competition at Kennedy Space Center. Standing from the left, are Anthony Wariso, Team Leader Ronhoward McNeill, Hamzah Zoubi, Luis Fuentes and Mario Morgan. Seated is Jenny Galvis.
IBM investing in PVAMU students

Roy G. Perry College of Engineering and Department of Computer Engineering leadership unveiled the new Cloud Computing and Simulation Laboratory on April 1, providing PVAMU students with 56 “Blade Center” servers with computer power that is unmatched anywhere else on the campus.

A ceremonial ribbon cutting was followed by a tour of Dr. Yanggao Yang's new simulation laboratory and a demonstration of the $168,000 system's computing power. The ceremony was attended by PVAMU administrators, faculty, students and special guests.

IBM Corporation officials join Prairie View A&M University Administrators and Faculty for the April 1, 2010 dedication of the new $168,000 Cloud Computing and Simulation Laboratory. From the left are Stan Gowen, IBM University Alliances Systems Group; Mrs. Chandra Mansfield, PVAMU Computer Science Dept; Mr. Terry Thomas Jr., Alumni and Manager of Power Virtualization Performance; Dr. Kendal Harris, Dean, Roy G. Perry College of Engineering; Ms. Marilyn Johnson, IBM Vice President of Market Development; Dr. George C. Wright, President, Prairie View A&M University; Dr. Joshua Thomas-Smith, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Yanggao Yang, Interim Head, Computer Science Department; and Roy G. Perry, PVAMU alumni for whom the Roy G. Perry College of Engineering is named.