

# Students travel to Big Easy for conference

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Dr. John Mecham, biology department head, and several students spent 4 days in New Orleans, La. last Wednesday through Saturday.

These students, who are

members of Meredith's chapter of Tri-Beta biology honor society, attended the sixty-second annual meetings of ASB (Association of Southeastern Biologists) and Tri-Beta biology honor society. This year is the first year that Meredith has sent

delegates to the Southeast regional conference.

Juniors Heather Craven and Katie Vreeland and seniors Leslie Maxwell, Christine Furmick, Jacque Fleegle and Megan Cassell, along with Beta Beta Beta adviser Mecham, represented Meredith's chapter of the Tri-Beta at the conference on Apr. 4-7.

These students either presented papers or posters or served as officers this year in Tri-Beta.

Mecham wanted the students to have the experience that comes with a large conference like the one in New Orleans. He noted that of special importance is the people that students can meet at the conference, saying that they "will continue to

be your colleagues and professional acquaintances for the rest of your lives.

"The conference provides an opportunity to build those connections."

Vreeland also enjoyed the experience of meeting other students. "We met a lot of different people from different schools," she noted.

Furmick and Cassell represented Meredith with poster presentations of their research, and Fleegle and Craven presented research they have done while students at Meredith. Fleegle received the third-place Brooks Award for her research and presentation.

At the meeting, Craven was elected President of Tri-Beta District 1 and Vreeland was elected Secretary of District 1.

Craven said, "I enjoyed having the opportunity to represent Meredith for the first time at this conference."

District 1 includes states in the Southeastern United States such as Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland.

In addition to the presentations, students got the opportunity to canoe in a Louisiana bayou, catching sight of several alligators during the trip.

The entire conference also enjoyed a social at the Audubon Zoo Thursday evening, where they got a taste of Cajun cooking and listened to the sounds of a Zydeco band.

The group also had time for some sightseeing around the famous French Quarter of New Orleans and enjoyed beingets, which are essentially French doughnuts, at the well-known Cafe du Monde.

The conference, Mecham noted, combined "education, fun, fellowship and research."

Fleegle, whose concentration is molecular biology, noted, "I think the experience was rewarding because we not only were able to participate in a scientific conference but also got to experience the sights and sounds of a different city."

According to Mecham, about 250 Tri-Beta Representatives traveled to New Orleans this past week to attend the conference. These students represented various states across the Southeast.

Next year, the ASB and Tri-Beta conference will be held at Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C. Vreeland said, "I'm looking forward to next year's trip."



(L-R) Christine Furmick, Heather Craven, Jacque Fleegle, Megan Cassell, Leslie Maxwell and Katie Vreeland enjoy their last night in New Orleans.

PHOTO BY JOHN MECHAM

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Hartford also promised, "This building will ensure that every woman at Meredith College will have a working knowledge of science and math."

Dr. Virginia Knight, Head of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, next praised the many people who have contributed to making this building a reality. She said that faculty members and some students and staff had a hand in the design process, even working with the architects in some cases. She also cited Dr. Janice Swab, a biology professor currently on sabbatical in South America, as instrumental in the building's development.

Next, Dr. Ann Hiott, '92, spoke of her experiences as a science student at Meredith and described why the alumni are so pleased with this new building.

Leslie Gilliland, SGA President, echoed these sentiments on behalf of current students.

She said that, with the new building, "the campus will be transformed."

The ceremony concluded with a prayer by Campus Minister Sam Carothers and the ceremonial groundbreaking at the site.

The platform party, wearing white hard-hats, were the first to dig, and various trustees, administrators, faculty, and students were invited to follow.

Refreshments were served following the ceremony, and many attendees of the ceremony stayed around to eat ice cream and listen to the band that was playing.

Representatives of BJLAS, the architectural firm responsible for the building's design, and Rodgers Builders, the general contractors, were on hand for the ceremony.

Jeffrey Schantz, the principal architect for the new building, said, "It will be the best science building for undergraduate education in the state

when it's done." He added, "I've built a lot of them."

Meredith students and faculty had similar hopes for the facility. Sophomore math major Tammy Overton said, "I think that it's great that Meredith is expanding."

Freshman Biology major Melanie Hoskins also saw the potential of the facility. She said, "I think the building is a great idea for future generations of Meredith women."

Math professor Dr. Charles Davis was excited about the opportunity to teach in the new building. He was especially looking forward to the courtyard and the outdoor classrooms that will be available there. He said, "It's going to be wonderful."

Construction on the new building will begin after the Alumnae House is moved this summer. The projected completion date for the facility is January 2003.

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And even though questioning the Haddith can result in capital punishment, Hassan has done so and hopes to reveal the true nature of Islam, a religion based in justice and compassion.

"There is no sanction to use scared texts to propagate laws unfair to women," said Hassan.

Faced with the challenge of lessening the crimes against women, Hassan feels that helping the victims is not enough.

Unlike organizations whose focus is primarily on treating the symptoms of the problem, the INRFVVP intends to examine the roots of the problem because only then will significant change come.

"The majority of Muslim women don't know their rights,...rights that were given to them by God and can't be taken away," stated Hassan.

Hassan closed by emphasizing the universality of the challenges Muslim women face today. Violence against women is not confined to the borders of Pakistan, Morocco or Turkey.

Senior Missy Neff, who is writing her thesis on female circumcision, or genital mutilation, felt that Hassan "offered the Meredith community insight into a problem that a lot of people didn't know about."

"Patriarchal society has governed everything," said Alyce Turner, art department assistant.

"Women in all traditions," said Hassan, "got derailed at the first step--creation."