

# Wake Forest program ensures academic success

## ▲ Project Ensure brings African-American students to the university

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Chronicle Staff Writer

For three weeks during the summer, the Ivory Tower halls at Wake Forest University echo with the voices of African-American professors teaching high school students curricula from an Afrocentric perspective.

Project Ensure, a program sponsored and funded by Wake Forest University and the Babcock Foundation, is a pre-college program aimed at increasing the number of black students going to college.

"The underlining goal is to see that students maximize their high school experience, graduate from high school and then go to college — ideally a four-year institution," said Dr. Ernest Wade, director of the program. Wade serves as director of Minority Affairs at Wake Forest.

Students are selected in the second semester of their eighth grade year, based on California Achievement Test scores and recommendations from counselors and teachers. There is also an interviewing process for students and parents.

Once students are accepted, they remain in the program until they graduate from high school. During the academic school year, students meet once a month to learn about different issues and topics.



Photo by Mike Cunningham

Dr. Ernest Wade, director of the Project Ensure program and Minority Affairs office at Wake Forest University, drops in on a class.

This year, the writing process was taught.

Tony Hinson, a junior at North Forsyth said, "It has not only enhanced my academics but it has also given me the motivation to know that I can succeed at anything, as long as I put my mind and heart into it."

The program is in its third year and students currently in the program are rising juniors and seniors. Entry into Project Ensure is highly competitive because funding is limited. A maximum of 60 students from different socio-economic backgrounds as well as achievement levels are accepted into the program.

Students are invited to live in the dorms, take classes and get a feel for what college life is about. They are taught a core of classes that they will take in the fall such as algebra, geometry, pre-calculus, physics, anatomy, chemistry and English. In addition, students are taught courses on Malcolm X, the-

ater and drama, African history and life skills.

"We want to give students a sense of self in terms of how black people came to where they are today — historically speaking," said Wade. "We want them to know it didn't all start with slavery."



Photo by Mike Cunningham

Teacher Alfred Mann assists Project Ensure students in dissecting a rabbit during an anatomy class. Students pictured (left to right) are Austin Mann, Faith Kelley, Alicia McKinney, Yvette Gray.

Before coming to the Wake Forest campus, students visited colleges in the Washington, D.C. area, touring Howard University, Georgetown and the University of Maryland. Last year, they visited several

from this other dimension of themselves — their history and heritage."

Project Ensure students say the program has not only helped them to excel academically, but also it connects them to the African culture and contributions made by

Africans and those of African descent, to the rest of the world, much the way Europeans have connected their ancestral contributions to the world.

Faith Kelley, a junior at North Forsyth, has been in the program for three years. "I feel that this pro-

gram has enhanced my academic abilities. I've brought my grade point average up and have been on the honor roll continuously. It helps me to understand black people and my heritage, and how we're better than what the mainstream makes us out to be," she said.



Dr. Alton B. Pollard, associate professor of religion at Wake Forest University, conducts a class on Malcolm X for Project Ensure students.

College-bound students will also be assisted in preparing for the college application process and meeting deadlines. Parents will also be informed on how to assist their child in applying for college. Wade says parental involvement is important to a child's success.

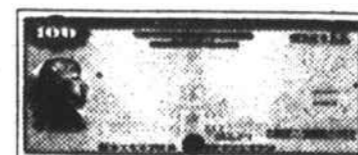
Working with Project Ensure has kept Wade in touch with the

youth culture. "It's a mission kind of thing. I know if you put in the time and the work now, that it's going to make it so much easier for them. I know if you build the right foundation — in spite of the obstacles — their personal building is going to be right but you have to stick with it because its real easy to give in," Wade said.

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## Disabilities Act affects employers

Beginning July 26, employers with 25 or more employees may not discriminate against any qualified individual with a disability because of that individual's disability. These employers must make reasonable accommodations to the known physical or mental limitations of the employee with the disability, unless the employer can demonstrate that the discrimination would pose an undue hardship.

This is the latest in a series of deadlines required by the landmark federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, known as the ADA. It is the first comprehensive federal law that protects people with physical or mental disabilities from discrimination in private employment, public accommodations, telecommunications and a wide range of

public services such as theaters, hotels, restaurants, professional offices, libraries and parks.

Under the ADA, "disability" refers to a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities, such as working, walking, seeing, hearing, performing manual tasks and self-care skills. The definition included people with a physical, mental or physiological disorder or condition.

Also covered are those infected with communicable diseases, including the AIDS-causing virus, HIV. The ADA definition for disability is consistent with the definition of "handicapped" in Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988.