

EDUCATION

Texas to get juvenile crime center

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The Texas Senate has approved a proposal to create a center to study juvenile crime and prevention at Prairie View A&M University near Houston.

Sponsored by Senators Rodney Ellis (D-Houston) and Royce West (D-Dallas), the measure will create a new center to help develop juvenile prevention strategies to reduce youth crime in Texas.

"Texas must do more to stop crime before it starts," Ellis said. "A new center to study juvenile crime at Prairie View A&M will allow more young people to be part of the solution to crime."

The center for the Study and Prevention of Juvenile Crime and Delinquency at Prairie View A&M will conduct research on juvenile crime and delinquency, serve as a state and national resource for information on juvenile crime and develop programs, policies and strategies to address youth crime and related social problems. The state has committed \$100,000 in funding for the center.

"By investing in juvenile crime prevention, we will create safer communities and save state resources that we are spending today on the incarceration of juveniles in state facilities," West said. "The juvenile crime center is a smart investment in Texas' future."

Recent data shows that youth crime is on the rise in Texas. In 1996, almost one in 10 juveniles ages 10-16 was arrested. In addition, juvenile offenders are increasingly using guns in their crimes. In 1995, one in five youth crimes involved a firearm - an increase of more than 100 percent since 1990.

Blacks closing graduation gap

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Many black Americans finish high school at the age that many whites complete college, reports an American Council on Education study.

The Council, an umbrella group for colleges, universities and educational associations, included this information in its 15th annual report "Minorities in Higher Education."

Researchers also found that blacks and whites, ages 25 to 29, had nearly the same rate of high school completion, about 87 percent in 1995. But in the younger age group, 18 to 24, the gap was wider.

The May 18 report said the gap may have closed in the older age category because a greater number of blacks finished high school requirements later in life through equivalency examinations.

Just 10 years earlier, in 1985, blacks had an 81 percent graduation rate, compared with 87 percent for whites.

Nonetheless, the council's

analysis of Census data showed that blacks and Hispanics finished college at a far lower rate than whites and the rate of enrollment increase is slowing down.

action are key factors causing the overall enrollment slowdown.

But John Matlock, the University of Michigan's vice provost, believes that there are



For example, minority enrollment at the University of Michigan rose 6.8 percent in 1992, 1.2 percent in 1995 and 0.7 percent in 1996.

Wayne State University saw a six percent dip in minority enrollments in 1994 and again in 1996, although black students remained 21 percent to 23 percent of Wayne State's overall enrollment, according to figures cited by the *Detroit Free Press*.

Challenges to affirmative

other equally valid issues that affect enrollment. He said that more students are now choosing work over college because the economy is good, and with rising college costs, fewer students can afford to attend college right away.

"But I don't want to discount the assault in terms of affirmative action nationwide," Matlock told the *Free Press*. "I think it does have a chilling effect on students in terms of where they go to college."

Matlock defended Michigan's use of race as one of several admission criteria. "We have to continue to open doors for a variety of students," he said. "I think that it's in the national interest."

Michigan philosophy professor Carl Cohen challenged the policy. He said that his analysis of applicants with similar test scores and grade point averages in 1994 showed minorities were more likely to be accepted at Michigan and its law school than at other colleges.

Cohen has some allies in the state legislature. Rep. Penny Crissman, (R-Rochester) has a bill that could stop community colleges from race-norming, or adjusting test scores to account for social and economic factors.

Crissman's bill would also prevent colleges from using preferential treatment in employment, promotions and contract awards.

(See *Graduation*, Page 16)

Southern HBCU's to get wired

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Enhancing technology at select private Southern Historically Black colleges and Universities (HBCUs) is the aim of a two-year, \$1 million grant recently awarded to the Southern Education Foundation (SEF), by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Called Gateway 21 - a metaphor for technology needed to adapt to the 21st century - the project has three objectives: to enable selected institutions to participate in JSTOR, a Mellon Foundation journal storage project that provides institutions access to electronically-stored journals; to provide students and faculty with initial or enhanced e-mail and Internet access; and to utilize the technology requirements for JSTOR, email and Internet to promote greater use of technology on the campuses.

"We know that effective use of technology is the key to success in the job market and that minority students are not getting the access they need to keep them competitive," said SEF senior program officer Nathaniel Jackson.

The SEF is an Atlanta-based



public charity that works to promote educational equity and excellence, primarily for black and disadvantaged citizens in the South.

"Generally, the students attending private HBCUs come to college with less exposure to computers and other educational technology than other students," he said. "There's a pressing need for these institutions to close the gap, and we want to help them do that."

Twenty-four HBCUs have been selected to participate. From the 24, approximately 15 will be selected at the end of July to implement their plans with the SEF's assistance. They

will submit to SEF technology plans addressing appropriate use of JSTOR, email and the Internet to enhance effectiveness in carrying out their missions.

The SEF will provide technical assistance to the colleges through an advisory committee of technology experts and help with collaborative purchasing of equipment.

Institutions identified to participate in the competitions are Benedict College, Bennett College, Bethune-Cookman College, Dillard University, Fisk University, Florida Memorial College, Hampton University, Johnson C. Smith University, LeMoyné-Owen College, Livingston College, Morehouse College, Oakwood College, Paine College, Rust College, Saint Augustine's College, Shaw University, Spelman College, Stillman College, Talladega College, Tougaloo College, Tuskegee University, Virginia Union University, Voorhees College and Xavier University.

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