

Engineering professor talks about industry

By Kanika Vann
Sentinel-Voice

The College of Engineering at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas will be undergoing a bit of a change in July as Dr. Eugene McGaugh voluntarily steps away from his administrative duties to become a full-time engineering professor. McGaugh holds multiple positions — Minority Engineering Program Director, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, and Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering.

For 17 years, McGaugh has served in a predominantly administrative fashion, recruiting minority high school and graduate students to the engineering program in an attempt to introduce an unpopular major to underrepresented students.

"For over 17 years, I have been a part of the engineering program at UNLV. I have taught and overseen over 1,000 students. Engineering isn't the most popular major amongst college students, but there are some that show an interest in the major as high school students and university freshman. I've tried to expose students to the infinite possibilities associated with the major. Half of my professional career has been

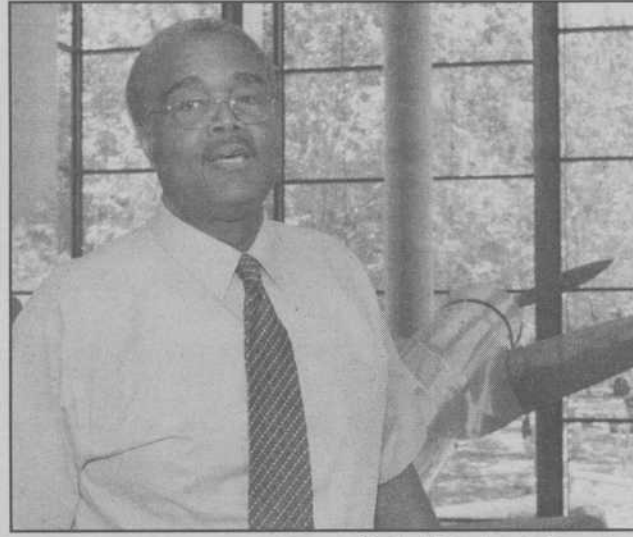
spent introducing engineering to minority students. And for nearly 20 years, it has been my responsibility to recruit, retain and graduate those students."

The College of Engineering at UNLV has graduated hundreds of students, with minorities representing a significant number of those graduates. In the fall of 2006, minorities made up approximately 42 percent of the engineering students (approximately 7.1 percent are African-American), with about 15 percent of the students being female.

McGaugh also says that eighth grade students are sought after as early engineering candidates.

"We've gone to many Clark County middle schools to stimulate interest in engineering-related careers. It's important at this age to begin to think about future aspirations. Our recruitment staff speaks to them about the benefits of engineering and computer science and what they need to do to prepare for such careers. We encourage them to take four years of mathematics in high school and to do well in those courses."

According to McGaugh, the College of Engineering at



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Dr. Eugene McGaugh will continue recruiting minority engineering students but start teaching full time at UNLV.

UNLV is mostly made up of Nevada residents. However, there are students from the HBCU, Fort Valley State College, in Georgia, who participate in a dual degree program, which allows them to attend Georgia Tech, University of Texas-Pan American, or UNLV to seek engineering degrees after receiving degrees in physics or mathematics. The dual degree program is associated with the Cooperative Energy Developmental Program, a scholarship awarded to exceptional math and engineering students seeking dual degrees.

"Students work on a de-

gree in mathematics, then attend one of about three universities to attain a degree in engineering. One of them being UNLV," McGaugh said. "Since 1995, 40 minority students have graduated with those dual degrees."

Students graduating from the CED program have a 90 percent graduation rate, while underrepresented minority students graduating from UNLV's engineering program experience a 30 percent graduation rate.

The minorities whom

McGaugh speaks of are non-White students. But the underrepresented minorities who he mentions are African-American and Hispanic.

Although McGaugh enjoys teaching, it has not made up the entirety of his career. Before entering the field of academia, McGaugh worked for the Hughes Aircraft and Missile Systems Division as an electrical engineer subsequent to receiving both his bachelor's degree and doctorate from the University of Kansas and his master's degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia, all of which are in electrical engineering.

It is McGaugh's belief that "desire and work ethic contribute to success. This statement is one that I stress to my students. I want them to succeed, so I help them to succeed."

McGaugh commented on leaving his multifaceted positions to soon become a full-time professor. "I look forward to teaching more. I enjoy teaching. I'm sure that I will continue to have a hand in recruiting and retaining underrepresented minority

students in various ways. I've always taught at least one class every semester, but now I'll be teaching two or three and that's exciting," he said.

"Over the years, I've established relationships with the students who've entered the program. They use me as a resource, constantly attempting to learn more about the profession and their places within it. By teaching students, I hope to help them live up to their maximum potential," he continued.

"It is my motto to be all you can be, like the U.S. Army says. I want students to be all they can be. No matter what career path one chooses, it's about maximizing your promise for success. Go above and beyond to be the best, even if it means you have to study harder or take preparatory courses. Either way, you have to remain committed. Read anything and everything you can get your hands on. Take advantage of the library and the countless amounts of information of the Internet. Just keep your eyes on the prize. Success may take sacrifice but anything worthwhile does."

Clinton nabs backers on eve of fourth visit to state

LAS VEGAS (AP) - Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's campaign recently announced a string of endorsements seeking to project mounting support for her presidential bid ahead of her fourth Nevada campaign visit.

Among the backers was former Gov. Bob Miller, the last Democrat to sit in the Nevada governor's office, as well as a list of Black community leaders the campaign said would shore up support for the New York Democrat among the state's Black voters.

"I believe she is one of the only candidates that has a strong awareness of what is happening here in Nevada," said Dr. Robert Fowler Sr., pastor at 9,000-member Victory Baptist Church in Las Vegas' Historic Westside. Fowler said he believes Clinton best understands education, housing and healthcare issues and would direct public funds to his community.

Blacks are a small but reliable voting bloc for Demo-

crats, making up about 7 percent of the state's population.

The show of support among the Black community came a day before Clinton campaigned at the Culinary Union and at Canyon Springs High School in North Las Vegas last Wednesday. One of her chief rivals, Illinois Sen. Barack Obama made his second visit and spoke at the Culinary Union and at a rally held on the campus of Silverado High School on Friday.

Clinton has been the most aggressive of the Democratic candidates in collecting endorsements. She surprised many in February by announcing the support of Nevada Sen. Harry Reid's son, Clark County Commission Chairman Rory Reid. Last month, she announced the membership of a Nevada Hispanic Leadership Council that included supporters some had expected to line up behind fellow Hispanic, New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson.

Clinton's Nevada African American Leadership Coun-

cil consists of 34 Black activists and business leaders, including Cordell Stokes, the former president of the Caucus of African American Nevadans, and Hannah Brown, president of the Urban Chamber of Commerce.

Missing were any of the handful of the state's Black lawmakers. Nevada party leaders have encouraged elected officials to withhold endorsements until later in the year to maintain the state's profile with each of the candidates.

Fowler said he also was courted by the Obama campaign. He said he picked Clinton over the freshman senator because of her experience and "political savvy."

"I believe that Sen. Obama has a day, I just don't believe that this is the day, personally," Fowler said.

Obama's campaign responded to Clinton's announcement by saying Obama was proud of his work on social justice issues and "is focused on getting to know the people of Nevada."

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