

Drexel adds \$2 million to engineering program

By Robert Hightower
Special to Sentinel-Voice

PHILADELPHIA (NNPA) - For prospective students looking to pursue a career in engineering, but can't afford the costs, Drexel University is lending a helping hand. The Schleyer Scholars Program was developed from a \$2 million dollar pledge from alumnus William T. Schleyer and his wife, Mary Z. Zygala.

The program is set to assist students to strengthen their skills needed for college through a six-week summer immersion experience. The course would focus on English, math, and critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Drexel faculty as well as professors from Cal Tech, The University of California at Berkeley and Swarthmore will instruct the courses.

Drexel President Constantine Papadakis said in a statement that the program has many benefits for the student.

"The students can also benefit from a mentorship program in which they will receive guidance from upper-classmen who are fellow

Schleyer Scholars or come from a similar background or major," he said.

"Candidates for the Schleyer Scholars Program will be evaluated by interviews that qualify their high school performance, potential for success in college and personal attributes such as

resourcefulness, persistence, work ethic and communication skills."

One male and one female will be chosen each year. Priority will be given to awarding one scholarship to a student pursuing a degree in engineering.

Dean of engineering

Selcuk Guceri said the program will help students substantially.

"It pays for the majority of the expenses," he said. "It's wonderful because two students who would not have the means to afford it can attend."

According to Papadakis,

the program would financially support students throughout their years at Drexel.

"It will cover about 25 percent of students' annual cost, including tuition, fees, room and board, textbooks, computers and related expenses," he said. "Drexel's

Urban Scholars Program and cooperative education program and financial aid will cover students' remaining expenses."

For more information, contact the school at (215) 895-2000.

Robert Hightower writes for the Philadelphia Tribune.

Bill Gates touts science education, engineering

By Monica Foster
Special to Sentinel-Voice

SEATTLE (NNPA) - If you are searching for a well-paid career in an exciting and growing field, you might want to take a look at information technology or engineering. The trouble is... African-Americans seem to be looking the other way.

Just about seven out of every 100 information technology and engineering professionals are African-American. And the numbers are falling.

That was one of the urgent issues under discussion at the National Society of Black Engineers regional conference held at the Microsoft Conference Center in Redmond recently.

Keynote speaker at the

conference was Microsoft founder and Chairman Bill Gates, who told an audience of about 400 that his company needs men and women from a wide range of multicultural backgrounds, with a wide variety of ideas and innovations.

"Diversity is very critical, we want to get as many men and women engineers as possible, we want to get engineers from all over the world and, of course, we want Black engineers, Hispanic engineers, everyone that we can."

"To be frank, there're some success stories but there's clearly more to be done," Gates said. "We have some great examples of [diversity] of those who have come to work for us, but,

clearly, it would be a great benefit to us all if we had many more."

The conference theme was "Igniting the Torch: Engineering in Action" and the event included workshops, speakers, panel discussions and a career fair.

Gates announced a Microsoft grant program that will donate developer software to all the society's educational chapters throughout the country. The software will help train engineers and student engineers to develop software programs, design and execute technology projects. The grant will include a free three-year membership to the Microsoft Developer Network Academic Alliance for each chapter, so that members will have ac-

cess to more than 100 Microsoft software products.

"All the NSBE member students will get to build their skills and use these tools, and it's an investment in all of you to become future IT leaders," said Gates.

According to a 2002 study by the National Science Foundation, among the 310 million computer science graduates in the U.S., fewer than 23 million, or 7 percent, were Black.

Cedric T. Coco, General Manger of Engineering Excellence and Blacks at Microsoft president, said Black students need early mentoring to stoke their interest in the field.

"We want to grab those students who express an interest in technology at high

school and college levels and help encourage and support them," Coco said. "It's important that more African-Americans get involved in engineering and computer science. That's why the partnership between NSBE and Microsoft is so important."

The NSBE is the largest student-run organization in the country with more than 27,000 members, 700 of whom registered for the conference.

Busloads of students traveled to Redmond from Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay area.

The society recently named Microsoft as its Most Preferred Employer, citing its career opportunities, work-life balance, job security, interest in technology at high

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Wells Fargo proudly honors Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the African-American women he inspired to become leaders in their own right. A graduate of Yale Law School and the first African-American woman admitted to the Mississippi Bar, Marian Wright Edelman was an integral player in a community-building campaign organized by Dr. King and was a lawyer for the NAACP Legal and Education Defense Fund. She founded the Children's Defense Fund which is the nation's leading child advocacy group. Leaders like Marian Wright Edelman not only influenced the Civil Rights Movement, but continue to inspire generations of women to take the lead.

