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Bowling Green State University

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Monitor

MONTHLY

Advocating for scholars

W Ribeau speaks out on proposed higher education policy

When the Governor's Commission on Higher Education releases its report later this month, its recommendations could have serious and unwanted implications for BGSU and other state universities, according to President Ribeau.

Ribeau has been a critic of the direction the commission has been taking since it began meeting last fall, a direction he views as a divergence from its original mission of enhancing the participation of higher education in Ohio's economic prosperity. He has been a leader in trying to ensure that higher education's voice is heard and to steer the outcome toward effective and "generative recommendations to challenge higher education to utilize its intellectual and fiscal resources to promote economic growth in our state," as he wrote in a letter to *The Blade* in March.

"I think the creation of the commission was a good idea, and its original focus was appropriate," the president said recently on "The Journal," a public affairs show on WBGU-PBS. But he is troubled by preliminary discussions regarding the purpose of higher education, and is concerned that the commission will issue complicated productivity measures for colleges and universities while the state continues to cut their funding.

"We should not be distracted by 'sidebar' issues, and we shouldn't be spending a lot of money on bureaucracy to measure what we're doing," he said.

"There is not enough money to do all the things we would like to do and all the things other people would like us to do and still maintain the kind of educational environment that allows students to learn, to grow and to develop values," the president said.

"You can't cut your way to economic prosperity," Ribeau emphasized. To stimulate this statewide growth, higher education needs to focus on deploying its resources toward developing intellectual capital and toward discoveries and

innovations that will lead to the creation of patents, licenses and spin-off companies that will employ Ohio's citizens, he said.

One of the expected recommendations is to increase enrollment by 40 percent over the next 10-15 years. BGSU has already been steadily increasing its enrollment, Ribeau said, but at the same time the University is teaching more students than ever before, the funding it earns from the state of Ohio has been reduced by nearly \$10 million—and there comes a point at which it will no longer be able to provide a quality education.

With 85 percent of the University budget going toward salaries, the University has been under a hiring freeze for the past

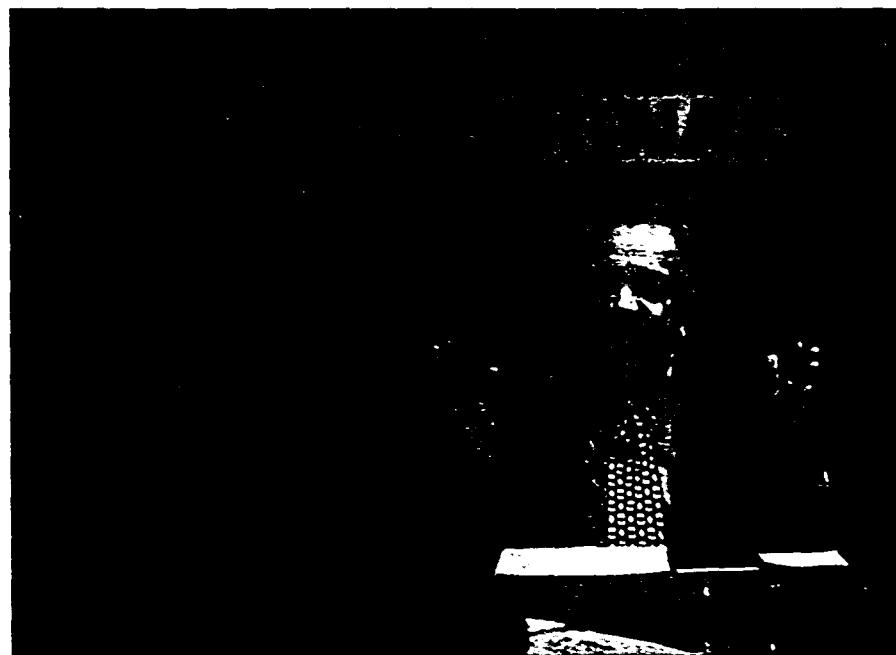
two and a half years and cannot teach more students without more faculty and staff. "We've cut services drastically and have not spent the money we should be spending on technology," Ribeau said. The University is also facing \$1.5 million in mandatory cost increases in utility bills and health care, while financial aid and scholarship costs have risen by 208 percent since 1999 as tuition has increased.

He is also concerned about the mounting pressure to focus disproportionately on job preparation, in lieu of preparing graduates to think critically, analyze, make decisions, work collaboratively and apply their knowledge in the real world.

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"I personally feel that the state has an obligation to reinvest in its citizens."

President Ribeau discusses some of the issues surrounding the Governor's Commission on Higher Education as a guest on "The Journal" with Marlene Harris-Taylor, WBGU-PBS.





Children from Toledo schools listen as Dr. Mae Jemison tells about her extraordinary career as a medical doctor, chemical engineer, astronaut, philanthropist and entrepreneur. Nearly 300 students visited BGSU for an Africana arts festival held in conjunction with the Africana Studies Student Research Colloquium.

Former astronaut challenges status quo

“Time is the one truly irreplaceable commodity,” Dr. Mae Jemison told a packed audience at the Africana Studies Student Research Colloquium in March. We each have 86,400 seconds a day. “The number of seconds in a day is limited, but the possibilities are infinite,” she said.

Dr. Jemison seems not to have wasted a second of her time since growing up on the south side of Chicago. As a young girl, she said, she would look up at the stars from the roof of her apartment building on a summer night and plan to go there.

“But to a young black girl in a tough neighborhood, the world didn’t seem to care about how my ideas and actions and choices

would affect the future,” she said. Nevertheless, she could see herself among the stars and, with her parents’ belief in her, she did get there, becoming the first African-American woman to go into space, aboard the shuttle *Endeavor*.

“Never limit yourself or let anyone else limit you because of their limited imagination,” she told the students.

As an undergraduate at Stanford University, she received degrees in chemical engineering and Afro and African-American studies. She went on to receive a medical degree from Weill Medical College of Cornell University, and served in the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone before joining NASA. Now she is an entrepreneur bringing help to

Third World countries through technology applications.

In his introduction of Dr. Jemison, President Ribeau said her career has a special resonance for him because he strongly believes in “the integration of knowledge” it represents. “There is too much

bifurcation of knowledge today, where we put the different disciplines in their own separate boxes” and fail to see the connections between them. “The world is a complex place,” the president said. “Life is a combination of sociological, biological and psychological forces, and we need to understand it in all those terms.”

Each second of every day we make choices, Dr. Jemison said, whether we recognize it or not. One of the functions of a university is to pay attention and help promote awareness of those choices.

She believes that 60-70 percent of the world’s problems will be solved through science, and the rest through random chance or luck. However, she said, science is widely misunderstood and feared by those who do not possess sufficient scientific literacy. Its practical uses are endless, she said, even to citizens being able to read an article in the newspaper and learn how to prepare nutritious meals for their families or how to vote responsibly. She has developed a hands-on science curriculum to help address this deficiency.

Though we have come light years in our development of

technology, “our moral concepts have lagged behind our ability,” she said. Nuclear energy can be harnessed to create bombs, power or medicine. “It really is our choice.

“The earth grows smaller every day, and aggression anywhere endangers all,” Dr. Jemison said. Squandering our limited resources on hostile activities only heightens the growing disparity between the rich and the poor and threatens our future. The proper question is not “How do we balance the needs of the environment with the needs of the economy?” she said. Rather, it is how we will manage to survive as a species in the way we desire into the future.

Technology must be harnessed to fulfill all humans’ basic needs, she said. Reminding her listeners of their science fundamentals, she said ideas represent potential energy because they have the potential to create change, but only if we are willing to risk changing the state that we’re in. Then, like a match catching fire, the energy can be released and our ideas put into action.

“Never limit yourself or let anyone else limit you because of their limited imagination.”

Dr. Mae Jemison

Colloquium features

Bowling Green students, faculty and staff had an unusual opportunity in March to learn about and see African art firsthand when the University was the site of "African Art in the Atlantic Imagination." The three-day colloquium aimed to give a wider and more authentic perspective on a topic that is largely unknown to Western audiences.

Seen around campus the week of March 22 were famed film director Gaston Kaboré of Burkina Faso and museum curator Erna Beumers of the Netherlands, who has devoted her professional life to introducing African art not only to the West but to Africa itself.

"We in America tend to think of Africa as one giant country," said Michael Martin, chair of ethnic studies, which, along with the School of Art and telecom-

munications, was a main sponsor of the event. But, as the colloquium demonstrated, the art of the continent's many nations encompasses a diverse and fascinating array of styles and media, not frozen in the past but current and alive.

"The week was incredibly successful," said Martin. "Including a cast of national and international scholars, museum curators and cultural artists, it featured a colloquium, film screening and discussion with Kaboré, workshops and class visits, and informal gatherings with students and faculty at BGSU."

From photography to film making to telecommunications, classroom visits by the participants exposed students to a flourishing African art scene. Fiber arts students were treated to a visit from Beumers, who brought samples of clothing from Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso and showed a video on the

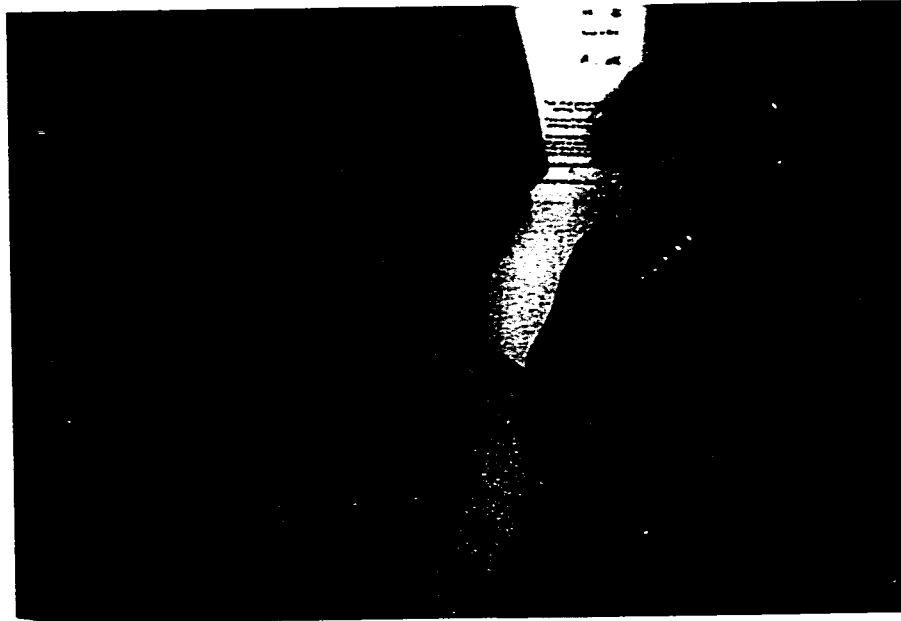
work of Oumu Sy, a top Senegalese fashion designer. "Stunning contemporary fashion design is going on in Dakar (Senegal)," said Rebecca Green, art history.

Glass art, jewelry, musical instruments and film were also on display. Talks during the week centered not only on the art itself but on how it has been perceived and why.

The centerpiece of the colloquium was a roundtable discussion between BGSU

faculty, academics from other universities, museum curators and African art specialists from a three-state region, representing several African countries. A second session dealt with the ways in which museums have shown African art and how that is changing.

"Together, these activities foregrounded Africa, its arts, peoples and distinctive cultures, and enduring presence in the African diaspora and contemporary world," said Martin.



Dutch curator, anthropologist and African art specialist Erna Beumers visits Kathy Hagan's Fiber Surface Techniques class on March 22 as part of the "African Arts in the Atlantic Imagination" colloquium. In addition to African fashions, Beumers brought glass art, jewelry, musical instruments, posters, books and videos to share with students and faculty during her weeklong visit to BGSU.

Welcome to the premiere issue of *Monitor Monthly*

This communication is designed to be an extension of the weekly *Monitor* delivered to you online. *Monitor Monthly* will feature new stories and will provide an additional way to share information with BGSU faculty and staff.

We hope you enjoy *Monitor Monthly* and continue to get your weekly news from the online *Monitor*.

We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Kim McBroom
Office of Marketing & Communications

Ribeau speaks out

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"We must not focus on career preparation to the exclusion of a well rounded education," he said, adding that the current crisis in corporate America speaks to the importance of examining more than company profits.

In a March address to Faculty Senate, the president described some of the proposed policy recommendations that he sees as inauspicious for higher education, including the realignment of funding for graduate programs. Originally, the commission had proposed shifting 20 percent of master's program and 35 percent of doctoral program funding to universities that receive high levels of research dollars from such agencies as the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, and to programs that assist technology development.

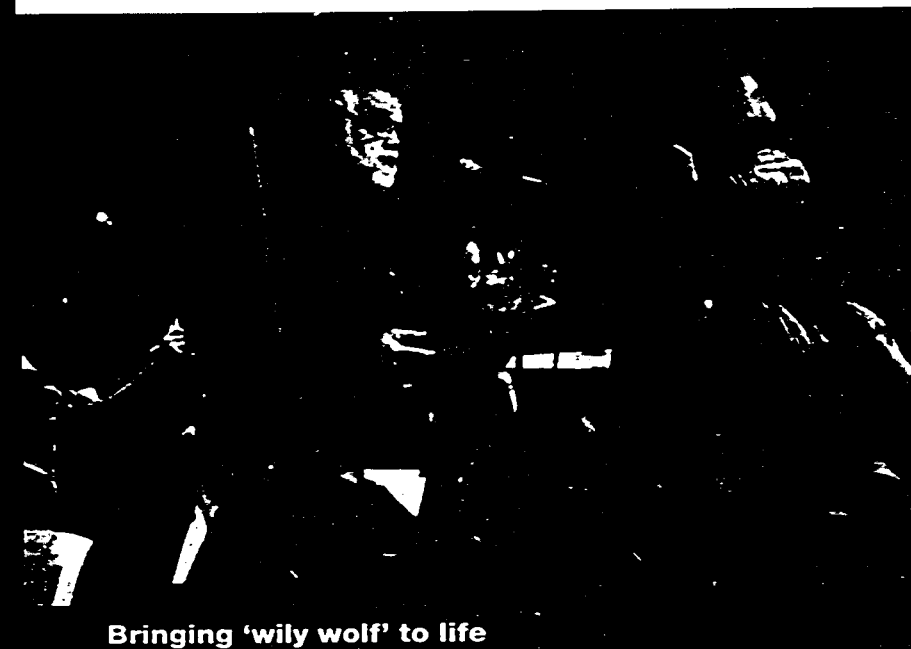
Through the input of higher education representatives, these recommendations have since been modified, Ribeau said, and will not affect master's degree programs. Funds will be reallocated internally, but the focus will still be on those areas that foster technological development.

While some states are contemplating privatizing state colleges and universities as a way of avoiding the seemingly intractable funding dilemma, Ribeau said, "I personally feel that the state has an obligation to reinvest in its citizens. The foundation of a democracy is an educated citizen. If we pull the rug out from under our families, we're going to have a very different kind of citizen because he or she is not going to have the kind of opportunity that education affords."



Expanding musical boundaries

Douglas Bickelmeier, a member of the New Music Ensemble, plays the "Bumblebee" Ambler, a musical sculpture by MFA candidate Brian Glaza. During the premiere of Ferruccio Busoni's (Metal Music) at Kolander Hall March 22, 2007, members of the ensemble under the direction of Michael Kunkel presented a variety of large instruments.



Bringing 'wily wolf' to life

Dean Savage, dean of the College of Technology, rehearses his role as the voice of "Peter and the Wolf." The well-loved piece by Tchaikovsky was part of "Folk Harmonies," the March Young People's Concert: The Bowling Green Community and College Early Childhood Bureau (ECB) Feb. 22.

BGSU

Bowling Green State University

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