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Monitor Newsletter June 23, 2008

Bowling Green State University

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BGSU Monitor

JUNE 23, 2008

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Kassa to address Ethiopian public health as Fulbright Scholar

After several years of building ties with universities and agencies in Ethiopia, Dr. Hailu Kassa, public and allied health, will be able to expand his efforts on behalf of his native country when he returns in August as a Fulbright Scholar.

Kassa will spend 10 months in the capital, Addis Ababa. "I laid the groundwork in 2002 when I went on a fact-finding mission through a faculty research grant," Kassa said. Now he hopes to "cement the relationship" by helping the government and universities develop long-term plans for public health initiatives. Another objective is to aid in the search for grant funding for health-related projects, from organizations such as the United Nations and the U.S. Agency for International Development and from U.S. institutions for collaborations with Ethiopian institutions.

He has been the catalyst for a series of visits to Ethiopia by BGSU faculty members. Following his first visit, Kassa returned in 2003 with Drs. Charles (Chris) Keil and Gary Silverman, environmental health, to meet and establish links with officials in the government and at Addis Ababa University. He and Keil later offered a two-week seminar on air quality for faculty at regional universities and employees of the Ethiopian equivalent of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Based on that seminar, Keil gave two similar seminars at Jimma University, southwest of the capital. Last December, Kassa returned once again for a two-week visit to Addis Ababa University to teach graduate students in environmental and occupational health.

"Now I would like to continue to work and find internships for students and opportunities for faculty exchanges between BGSU and Ethiopia," he said.

Kassa joined the BGSU faculty in 2000. A former sanitarian with the Toledo-Lucas County Board of Health, he has partnered with Silverman in 2004 and 2007 on Ohio and U.S. EPA-funded projects aimed at reducing lead poisoning in urban and rural homes in Toledo and northwest Ohio.

He is not the only one in his family helping Ethiopia. His daughter Robin, a 2004 BGSU alumna who is pursuing her master of public health in epidemiology degree at the University of Washington-Seattle, has founded a nongovernmental organization named Tesfa, meaning "hope," that provides financial assistance to purchase books and other school essentials and to care for orphaned Ethiopian children.

Boys State hears from governor

Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland discussed the importance of government, and the uniqueness of the American democratic system, in a civics lesson of sorts June 17 for delegates to Buckeye Boys State at BGSU.

Among Strickland's listeners were his Boys State counterpart, Nicholas Messenger of Bowling Green, and Boys State Lt. Gov. Kevin D. Justice Jr. of Lorain.

They are among the hundreds of rising high school seniors selected by American Legion posts statewide to participate in Boys State, which BGSU has hosted since 1978. This year's program concluded yesterday (June 22).

Messenger is the first Bowling Green High School student to be elected governor of the annual mock government program since its founding in 1936.

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'Centers of excellence' key to economy: Fingerhut

Gov. Ted Strickland's administration has placed higher education at the center of Ohio's re-birth and future, and the excellence it demonstrates will retain and attract the kind of people and business that can revitalize the economy, Ohio Board of Regents Chancellor Eric Fingerhut told a gathering of university representatives from northwest Ohio June 17.

In a "community conversation," held at the University of Toledo, a panel of state and local representatives, higher education officials, a UT student and a recent UT graduate discussed the governor's 10-year Strategic Plan for Higher Education. The specific topic for the event, one of several Fingerhut is conducting across the state, was the centers of excellence called for in the plan.

While he did not provide significant guidance in how institutions are to determine their centers of excellence or how many should be expected from each, the chancellor said it is clear that universities must "all provide a comprehensive, quality education with all the disciplines," noting that is a different mission from community colleges and regional campuses, and one which gives students exposure to all fields.

Each institution must also identify and build on its programs that have national and international ranking and can serve as magnets to attract talent and investment.

"What has the potential to be that type of center of excellence?" he asked. The report has set benchmarks by which institutions can judge their programs, he said.

The deadline for Ohio's four-year public universities to submit their recommendations for their Centers of Excellence is December 2009, noted Sandra MacNevin, associate vice president for governmental relations, following the meeting. BGSU faculty, staff, students, administrators and board members will thus have about a year to assess and identify proposed centers of excellence for BGSU, she said.

"These centers of excellence are a core element of the plan," Fingerhut said. "We can no longer afford to compete against each other," which by diluting resources can only result in a mediocre system. The legislature will invest in collaborative efforts, and the state's greatest success will come from each institution focusing on its strengths, he said.

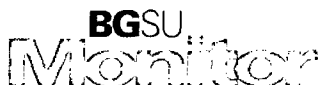
"Throughout history, excellence has always been the best seller," commented panelist Robert Savage, founder of Savage and Associates, a Toledo financial planning and insurance firm, and former trustee of both BGSU and UT. Savage cited the development of alternative energy as a hallmark of the type of research that will attract jobs to northwest Ohio and bring attention to the area. "We need to keep putting together these incubators," he said.

In response to discussion about technology and research, several audience members and one panelist, UT junior Betsy Yeary, expressed concern that the humanities would be overlooked and undervalued in the move toward the centers of excellence. "High quality education must prepare students for a lifetime of learning opportunities" by giving them a wide range of skills and expanding their creativity, said Yeary, a theatre major.

Ohio Rep. Peter Ujvagi responded that while he heartily agreed with her, he did not think that the sciences and humanities were mutually exclusive. Creative and critical thinking, he said, are hallmarks of American education envied by other countries that might produce more engineers and scientists but do not foster those kinds of intellectual skills. "We will never have centers of excellence in any discipline unless we have a strong basis in core courses," he said, adding that the state now has a "unique opportunity," after years of citizen dissatisfaction with legislative support for higher education, to move forward.

Fingerhut also commented that science is one of the most creative of endeavors, since it revolves around problem solving.

He also re-emphasized the importance of education's role in job creation. "Support for state universities comes from tax-base dollars, and tax dollars come from people who are working,



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so we must grow the tax base of the state.”

Basis and philosophy of plan

At the heart of the strategic plan is raising the educational attainment of Ohio citizens, Fingerhut said. He noted that studies indicate this is the key predictor of a city, state, region or even country's economic success. A report compiled by the Regents shows that the state is not competitive in educational attainment or preparation of its citizens for college, said OBOR member James Tuschman. Further, Ohio's institutions should improve productivity and will need more state, federal and private investment to support the additional 230,000 students the plan calls for in the next 10 years. While Ohio has made progress, the study found, further investments are also needed in research and technology transfer.

The state education system has the potential to meet the needs of the 21st century, but Ohio institutions need to improve their focus on their core strengths, re-position themselves to serve more students and increase collaboration, Tuschman said.

Three major goals emerged from the study, Fingerhut said: Graduate more students, keep them in the state, and attract new people here. “We need to be a net importer of talent,” he said.

IN BRIEF**Watch Fourth of July fireworks at ‘The Doyt’**

Doyt L. Perry Stadium will once again be the site for the annual Bowling Green community Fourth of July fireworks.

“We are glad to have the opportunity to partner with the community for this holiday celebration,” said BGSU Director of Athletics Greg Christopher. “This year's event is even larger in scale as we celebrate not only our nation's freedom, but also the city of Bowling Green's 175th anniversary.”

The Perry Stadium gates will open at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, July 4. The field will be open to the public until 8:30 p.m. Fans are welcome to bring footballs or Frisbees or simply walk on the FieldTurf.

A free concert by members of the Bowling Green Community Band, under the direction of Nick Ezzone, will begin at 8:30 p.m. The fireworks are scheduled to follow at approximately 9:45 p.m.

No outside food, beverages or sparklers will be allowed into the stadium. The stadium concession stands will be open to the public.

For more information on the Fourth of July event, contact the Bowling Green Chamber of Commerce at 419-353-7945 or www.bgchamber.net.

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CALENDAR

Monday, June 23

Bingo, noon-1:30 p.m., Falcon's Nest, Bowen-Thompson Student Union.

Wednesday, June 25

Classified Staff Council, 10 a.m., 316 Union.

Board of Trustees, 1 p.m., 308 Union.

Dissertation and Thesis Support Group, 1:30-3 p.m., 422 Conklin Hall. No registration needed. Call the Counseling Center at 2-2081 for more information.

Thursday, June 26

Grilling on the Green, Mediterranean Picnic, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., patio outside Falcon's Nest, Union.

Thursday, July 3

Administrative Staff Council, 1:30-3 p.m., 207 Union.

Friday, July 4

Independence Day. Classes canceled, offices closed.

Continuing Events Through June 27

Summer Music Institutes, musical theater (through June 28), recording studio and Super Sax camps, Moore Musical Arts Center.

July 1-5

Summer Theater, "Brigadoon," 8 p.m. nightly, Huron Playhouse, McCormick School, Ohio Street, Huron. Tickets are \$12 for students and senior citizens, \$14 for other adults, \$9 for children under 12, and \$11 for groups of 15 or more. Season passes are \$55. For reservations, call 419-433-4744.

JOB POSTINGS

FACULTY

There are no faculty postings this week.

Labor Postings

<http://international.bgsu.edu/index.php?x=facinfohires>

Contact the Office of Human Resources at 419-372-8421 for information regarding classified and administrative positions. Position vacancy announcements may be viewed by visiting the HR Web site at www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/.

Employees wishing to apply for these positions must sign a "Request for Transfer" form

and attach an updated resume or data sheet. This information must be turned in to Human Resources by the job deadline.

CLASSIFIED

On-campus classified:

www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/BGSU_only/page11151.html

Off-campus classified:

www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/cl_staff/page11145.html

ADMINISTRATIVE

www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/adm_staff/page11137.html

OBITUARY

There were no obituaries this week.

