

# Vicky L. Carwein, Chancellor

## TRI-CITY HERALD COLUMN



### One of WSU Tri-Cities' strengths lies in its diversity

Published in the Tri-City Herald, Sunday, October 7, 2007  
Business Section, page B5

"In diversity there is beauty and there is strength," says poet Maya Angelou.

There also is prosperity. Washington State University Tri-Cities is dedicated to preparing students to enter a dynamic and multicultural world and to reaching out to this community to provide educational opportunities for all of our citizens.

Along with this year's record enrollment, WSU Tri-Cities has seen an increase in minority student applications. Now 66 percent of our student body is female and 16.5 percent come from ethnic minority households. While more than half of our students hold jobs, 70 percent of them receive some form of financial aid.

Minority and women-owned businesses account for 40 percent of all Washington businesses, according to the state's Office of Financial Management. Those businesses employ more than 200,000 individuals and have an annual payroll of \$5 billion. In 2006, minorities represented 23 percent of the state's population. While 11 counties have minority populations above the state average, Franklin County has seen the largest growth with a minority population of 57 percent.

This is a tremendous opportunity for the Tri-Cities to foster an environment in which our community's diverse populations thrive socially and economically.

Higher education must respond to issues of diversity and globalization from many perspectives. While we have work ahead to become a truly rich diverse learning community, WSU Tri-Cities is making major strides and becoming more pro-active in enhancing initiatives for recruitment of members of under-represented groups, developing multicultural community outreach programs, expanding our students' understanding of these issues, and contributing to the nurturing of a more diverse community.

Gear Up is an early outreach program that collaborates with regional public schools to target middle and high school students, with the goal of preparing them to succeed in college. School-based staff members offer tutoring, serve as mentors, and provide a technology-enhanced curriculum in science and math. The program includes field trips. Marika Tomkins, a sixth-grade teacher from Pioneer Middle School in Walla Walla, brought her students to campus to learn about college and careers from WSU Tri-Cities nursing and engineering faculty.

Washington State MESA, another early outreach program, works to support underrepresented students in developing their full potential in mathematics, engineering and sciences. MESA provides hands-on workshops with engineers (cont.)

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and scientists for middle and high school students. For example, this summer Adrianna Saenz, the Youth Outreach Coordinator, took 29 high school students from Pasco, Sunnyside, Granger and Wapato to the Olympic Park Institute for a one-week program on the Elwah River where they studied forestry, ecology, watershed science, and geography with local scientists. Programs such as this, which increase student's engagement with science while offering memorable life experiences, serve as a model of educational excellence and equity.

WSU Tri-Cities has a commitment to hiring faculty who are qualified to teach and research in their disciplines, and who reflect our community's diverse population and needs. Among the ways we target such faculty are by advertising in the Hispanic Journal, the Diversity Network, and Black Collegian Online. New professors are expected to have demonstrated their ability to work collegially and collaboratively with diverse groups both on campus and in the community. For example, Dr. José García-Pabón, assistant professor in Community and Rural Sociology, works as the Latino Community Development specialist. His research focuses on cultural competency as well as creating youth and adult leadership and economic development opportunities.

Courses are designed to expand and enrich understandings of multiculturalism. This semester's course offerings include Representations of the Holocaust, Women Writers, Psychology of Women, the History of Social Movements, and Comparative Ethnic Studies. Armed with this knowledge, our graduates will truly be poised to make a difference in the world.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for human rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country and a finer world to live in."

Our goal is to educate and graduate students who make "a career of humanity" – no matter what they do for a living.

- Chancellor Vicky L. Carwein may be contacted at [chancellor@tricity.wsu.edu](mailto:chancellor@tricity.wsu.edu). WSU Tri-Cities offers 17 baccalaureate, 14 graduate, and five doctoral degree programs as part of the Washington State University system. The campus is located at 2710 University Drive in Richland, one block north of Hanford High. For more information, call 509-372-7250 or go to [www.tricity.wsu.edu](http://www.tricity.wsu.edu).



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