

Points of Pride - April 2008

CARL VINSON INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT (Vinson Institute)

Vinson Institute Leadership Shares Strategic Plan

The Vinson Institute recently unveiled a new strategic plan to guide the work of the organization over the next five years. Members of the Vinson Institute's management team began a comprehensive strategic planning process in November 2007. The document represents the Vinson Institute's strategic goals and aspirations for best positioning itself to address the governance challenges of the 21st century and emphasizes the themes of innovation, responsiveness, self-assessment, excellence, entrepreneurship, and collaboration. **Steve Wrigley**, director, presented the plan to faculty and staff on March 21. The plan is posted on the Vinson Institute's web site.

Sichuan Province Officials Gain Insight on U.S. Public Health System

A delegation of officials from Sichuan Province now has a better understanding of how public health policies are administered at the national, state, and local levels through a training program coordinated by the Vinson Institute's International Center. From March 23 through April 3, the group of 20 officials spent time in Washington, D.C. and Atlanta and Savannah, Georgia, making site visits to public health agencies, organizations, and care facilities and hearing from administrators, inspectors, and other specialists. The program concluded in Athens, Georgia, where they spent time with faculty at the University of Georgia's recently established College of Public Health.

FANNING INSTITUTE

Capacity Building

Mac Brown, Jan Coyne, Karen Holt, and Courtney Tobin participated in the Governor's Office of Workforce Development's inaugural Work Ready Region Academy at Stone Mountain on March 18. They presented information on mapped regional assets, such as educational institutions, companies in various sectors selected by regional teams, and transportation networks. The seven multi-county regions will continue to meet in the Academy for the next eighteen months.

Exploration

The Fanning Institute, in collaboration with the Georgia Institute of Technology, held four forums with young people as part of the Southern Growth Policies Board (SGPB) 2008 issue: *Youth: The Real Future of the South*. Two of the forums involved regional 4-H leaders meeting at Rock Eagle; the other two were for Junior Achievement groups in metro Atlanta and Savannah. The forums examined attitudes about workforce readiness and the participants' involvement in extracurricular activities, volunteer service, and community engagement. The results from the forums as well as an on-line survey will be compiled in Georgia's report for the SGPB, and will be incorporated into the annual report to be presented at the SGPB conference in Little Rock, Arkansas, in June. Fanning faculty involved in this effort include **Leigh Askew, Danny Bivins, Jan Coyne, Louise Hill, Langford Holbrook, and Karen Holt**, with assistance from **Amanda McKasson**.

Faculty from the Fanning Institute and the Carl Vinson Institute made a presentation to community, business and faith leaders in Columbus on March 12 on community approaches to combating poverty. **Matt Bishop, Kelly Foster, Karen Holt and Courtney Tobin** updated data from an eight county community needs assessment conducted by faculty from both institutions several years ago and discussed options for developing a strategic plan for the region.

Rob Williams assisted the Association County Commissioners of Georgia's Board of Directors with the development of their first strategic planning process in more than ten years.

Engaging Communities

OneAthens held its final meeting on March 31, unveiling strategies for reducing Athens' 31% poverty rate. Action will be taken within sixty days on several key programs: affordable housing, public transportation, teen pregnancy and health care. The founders (and *Partners for a Prosperous Athens* co-convenors) – UGA, the Athens-Clarke County government and school district, the Athens Chamber of Commerce, *Family Connection* and a coalition of black community leaders – now face the task of following through on these recommendations. **Sandy Christopher, Delene Porter and Joe Whorton** continue to be heavily involved in this effort and, for this meeting with 600 participants, were assisted by **Debbie Allen, Jessica Garris Miller, Janet Rechtman, and Pam Ward.**

GEORGIA CENTER FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION CONFERENCE CENTER AND HOTEL (Georgia Center)

The Georgia Center was able to host the 2008 Delta Prize for Global Understanding award ceremony on April 3. This year the prize was awarded to Martti Ahtisaari, former president of Finland, for his efforts to make peace in Kosovo, Namibia, Aceh and other troubled parts of the world.

The Grants and Contracts department of the Georgia Center sponsored a conference for early care and education program directors and administrators during the month of March. 138 participants attended from all over the state and were exposed to the Early Care and Education Professional Development System Registry and other components developed by the department to help those who work with young children.

The Georgia Center's Principles of Marketing Research program is now approved for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of Northern Kentucky. The Georgia Center will now be on a list of providers for education to dislocated workers. The Georgia Center's presence on this list will allow access to this student demographic.

During the month of March, the Georgia Center had:

- 97 Independent & Distance Learning Enrollments
- 572 Continuing Education Enrollments
- 1,474 Conferees
- 13 Conferences Booked
- 1,215 Hotel Rooms Booked

MARINE EXTENSION SERVICE (MAREX)

Robert Overman produced a G.E.O.R.G.I.A. (Generating Enhanced Oyster Reefs in Georgia's Inshore Areas) Oyster Restoration Public Service Announcement.

G.E.O.R.G.I.A. is the state's first oyster restoration effort informing the public of oyster reef restoration efforts in coastal Georgia. Intertidal oysters are described as a “keystone” species as they play a critical role in maintaining a healthy coastal ecosystem. Georgia’s oyster populations were once immense; however overfishing, habitat degradation, and disease have considerably impacted these estuarine communities. The TV public service announcement is currently airing in coastal Georgia counties.

MAREX Applied Research Evaluates Using Oysters to Remove Fecal Bacteria from Beach Creek on Jekyll Island.

MAREX determined that wild animals and birds living in and around Beach Creek were the source of fecal contamination determined by the Department of Natural Resources’ monitoring of Jekyll’s beaches for excessive levels of enterococci bacteria. We know dense populations of oysters can significantly improve water clarity and quality by filtering algae, bacteria and other pollutants. MAREX is restoring oyster reefs in Beach Creek and Clam Creek with the intent of improving their water quality. MAREX specialists are monitoring the creeks to determine if newly established oyster reefs can improve water quality and prevent fecal bacteria advisories for those Jekyll Island beaches impacted by the creeks. MAREX is hosting a ten-member team of volunteers from the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps of Charleston, S.C. Members of AmeriCorp spent a year doing a variety of projects helping with community related issues across the United States. They are presently aiding in establishing the oyster reef in Beach Creek along with other volunteers from Georgia. The Oyster Bioremediation work is funded by a Georgia Environmental Protection Division 319 grant.