

INROADS:



PAVING THE WAY TO SUCCESS



THE GHETTOS have young men and women with as much talent as do the suburbs.

With that philosophy, Inroads was started in 1970 by Chicago executive Frank Carr. "The whole thing is to get talented minorities in management and bring them up through the ranks while in college," says Dr. Keener Tippin, assistant director of admissions at Mizzou.

Capitalizing on support from the corporate community, the Inroads program had grown to 437 corporate sponsors of 826 students by 1981. The program combines summer internships in 15 cities with training and guidance from Inroads coordinators and campus counselors throughout the students' college years.

The students, who rank in the top 10 to 15 percent of their high school classes, major in business or engineering, two areas in which minorities are highly underrepresented, Tippin says. The program, started on this Campus eight years ago, has a 50 percent retention rate, about the average for white students, too. Currently 50 Inroads students are enrolled and nine have graduated. Most of Mizzou's students are sponsored by St. Louis and Kansas City businesses.

Inroads' bottom line is talent, not family income. Some students come from well-to-do families, others have parents who are unemployed, Tippin says.

"**HUNGRY**" is how Lawrence Hamilton, coordinator of the St. Louis Inroads office, describes students picked for the program. "They may have not had a lot of breaks in the past, and they view Inroads as a way to the top."

These cream-of-the-crop students aren't promised a rose garden, however; they have to perform. Identified early in their high school careers, Inroads candidates participate in six-week summer enrichment programs and 30 Saturday workshops each year to prepare for the rigors of college life. It's tough work, those classes

Freshmen Inroads students from St. Louis and Kansas City and their advisers include, first row, from left: Rhonda Stiles, Michelle Price; second row: St. Louis Inroads coordinator Ruby Williams, engineering academic adviser Jay McGarraugh, Cassandra Brown, Reginald Veasley, Georgia Thigpen, Veronica Chapman; third row: financial aid director George Brooks, St. Louis Inroads coordinator Lawrence Hamilton, Steven House, Candice Youngblood, Andreal Haywood, Kimberly Cooley, B & PA academic adviser Nancy Stull. Not pictured is Phillip Bailey.

While Kimberly Cooley, a freshman business major from Kansas City, concentrates on Inroads programs that help her improve study skills, junior Daryl Scales of St. Louis enjoys applying accounting classroom theory to his work with Arthur Andersen & Co. during summer internships.



in calculus, physics, chemistry, accounting, English and communication taught by college professors, says Daryl Scales, a 20-year-old accounting major from St. Louis. But when he got into his first accounting class at Mizzou, "I remembered terminology and concepts from my Inroads classes," he says.

Students like Scales also attend workshops that emphasize personal and professional development. Subjects include interviewing techniques, college survival skills, money management and business etiquette.

In college, students must perform internships assignments to the sponsors' satisfaction, remain in good academic standing, participate in Inroads training and counseling, and set goals for career, education, social development and community service.

"A lot of students are first generation college students and don't know how to manipulate the college system," Tippin says. He encourages them to use the "built-in life support system," i.e. visit their professors, keep in touch with their academic advisers and use the resources available.

Kimberly Cooley, a freshman business major from Kansas City, anticipates Frances Wright's monthly visit to Campus, the most recent being timed to coin-

HELPING OTHER BLACK STUDENTS



Dr. Roland Buck

INROADS is meeting the needs of 50 black students on Campus, but what about the other 825?

Dr. Roland Buck, director for student development, asked himself that question when he came to Campus a year ago. He conducted a study that pointed out some alarming socioeconomic disparities between blacks and whites: 40 percent of black students are on academic probation compared with 18 percent of non-minority students; white students scored 100 points better on SAT college entrance exams than blacks; and the average family-income level of white students is \$24,000 compared with \$12,000 for blacks.

After talking with students, teachers and administrators, Buck came up with some suggestions to combat black students' poor previous academic preparation, low test scores, lack of academic or career goal, lack of involvement with the Campus community and less frequent use of Campus resources.

One is to ask faculty members to volunteer to specialize in minority advisement.

"It's a tedious process," Buck admits, but after an orientation program in his office and armed with advisees' high school rec-

cide with the start of finals. Wright, college relations coordinator from the Kansas City Inroads office, makes sure students have the information they need and that there are no surprises at the end of the semester. They discuss goals, progress, grades, problems and challenges. "I freeze up on tests," Cooley admits. She hasn't gotten the problem licked, but with the help of counseling, she's working on it.

THE STUDENTS ARRANGE a buddy system in which upperclassmen help freshmen learn the ropes. "When we have a problem, we always have someone to turn to," says Andrea Haywood of her extended Inroads family. She is a St. Louis freshman studying electrical engineering.

Inroads encourages extracurricular activities, too. The group gathers regularly for picnics or dances. "It breaks the monotony of books, books, books," says Scales, president of Phi Beta Sigma and member of the Black Business Student Association.

Students rub elbows with their peers across the country by attending regional and national institutes. They also compete for academic awards. As a group, Inroads students have a propensity to get scholarships, at least partially because they know how, and when, to apply.

Karen Downey, the Inroads connection

with Panhandle Eastern Pipeline Co. in Kansas City, calls Inroads "the best minority program in the area. It gives us an opportunity to select and help train students in our company."

Students applaud their internships, which mean progressively more responsible positions with their companies as well as money in the bank. Says Scales of his position with Arthur Andersen & Co. in St. Louis, "It brings classroom theory into reality." Concerning the office-politics savvy he's acquired, he says, "They don't even teach you that in school."

Inroads alumna Madye Henson, BS BA '78, admits her internship experience gave her a "jump on a lot of other grads." After two years as assistant buyer for Famous Barr, her internship company, she's now assistant staff manager-data systems with Southwestern Bell in St. Louis. While neither student nor company is obligated, it is hoped the company will offer a senior a full-time position and that the student will accept.

INVOLVEMENT with Inroads doesn't end at graduation. Henson serves on the St. Louis Inroads Board and volunteers for community service projects.

"We've gotten something out of the community," she says. "Now it's time to give something back."—Karen Worley

ords, advisers "could spend the extra time that's needed for quality advising."

For the most part, Buck believes black high school students are not taking the type of courses that will enable them to compete successfully in college. The black students he studied had taken coursework in office orientation, mixed chorus and crafts as opposed to college prep courses in chemistry, math, physics and English. The minority advisers, he says, could suggest spreading out five-hour science requirements, for example, over several semesters. Or students could take lighter academic loads than the normal 15 hours the first semester or year in order "to build a confidence in them about their new environment."

Buck's study also revealed that black students on academic probation lack a commitment to meet academic demands. The advisers could encourage students to attend class regularly, develop good study habits and use Campus resources, like the Learning Center, which provides tutorial assistance in a number of areas.

Since there's more to college than hitting the books, Buck has started a mentor program with Black Faculty and Staff Association volunteers to smooth a freshman's social adjustment to the University. As one of the volunteers, Buck, at his own expense, invites his group of students over for dinner, takes them to lunch or telephones them regularly to monitor their academic progress as well as to lessen any feelings of alienation.

Although the issue of black student retention is a complex one, Buck feels these programs will help students fit into the big picture "so they don't drift as much as they have been." While Buck realizes the attrition problem transcends ethnic origin, the statistics are compelling: Only 23 percent of black students graduate compared with 52 percent of whites. "The revolving door syndrome is evident on our Campus, and something should be done about it."

Besides, he says, with the supply of 18- to 24-year-olds showing a steady decline, it only makes economic sense to hold onto the ones who are here. □