President’s Message

My Fellow Kappans,

Our PDK group is off to a great start and I want to thank everyone for all the help they are providing to make this another great year for our PDK West Georgia Area Chapter. On Aug 6th we had our opening luncheon for new professors that was lots of fun and good for our relations with the departments and colleges here at University of West Georgia. About 40 folks were in attendance and it was nice to have the problem that we were running out of room in Hubbard to seat everyone. Conversations were interesting and we were able to present PDK functions and membership opportunities to many of the new faculty. On September 21st we had an interesting and informative Publishing Panel over lunch in the Executive Dining room and although our turnout was not exemplar, the panel was and we send special thanks out to them. The close comfortable atmosphere at the luncheon allowed for presentations, discussions, and reflections about publishing and our progress toward promotion and tenure.

Our next event will be a special one, beginning at 6:00 PM on October 18th with
catered dinner in the Hubbard Dining Room of Z-6. We have invited guest speaker Teresa Lynch from PDK International to talk after dinner about “Education in China” as part of this year’s theme regarding our “Flattening World” and how advancements in technology are affecting education throughout the world. It is great being part of an organization that values quality education and acknowledges those who work diligently to further that ideal. Your officers are currently planning our two spring events. We hope to have President Sethna speak at a function about our flattening world in early spring, and our Annual Awards Banquet is in the planning phases for April. Our major effort this year is new membership. In particular we would like to increase the membership of teachers in public schools, in an effort to increase the voice of public schools in our local chapter. Let’s each commit to bringing at least one new person to one of our PDK events this year and perhaps encouraging them to join us once they have experienced what we do and our value to education and our community. We want to have our Chapter continue to grow and expand so that we can do more in a larger geographical area. Let’s all help make that happen!

Thanks again for all you do for PDK. and for education.

Dan Saurino

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West Georgia Chapter, 1303

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This issue of our newsletter speaks directly to our chosen theme for the year: Our Flattening World: Changes that Impact Education. We are honored to have Dr. Beheruz Sethna who has written and spoken often on this topic as our visiting author for this year’s first edition.

Thomas Friedman, in his book, *The World Is Flat - A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, starts out by describing ten factors and events that made our world increasingly “flat” – and by that he means factors that are leveling the playing field for many countries that had until recently been essentially left out of the economic opportunities that America and parts of the Western world had enjoyed. These include such events as the fall of the Berlin Wall and so too the walls of intense governmental regulation in countries such as India, the advent of Netscape which gave us all the ability to “browse” the World Wide Web, the ability computer applications to “talk” with another, “open-sourcing, outsourcing, supply-chaining, in-sourcing, search engines such as Google, and the “Steroids” which turbocharge the flatteners such as Voice over IP, Wireless, iPQs, and PDAs.

It is interesting to note the date on the first flattener – this happened at the end of 1989. All of the others followed incredibly rapidly in a span of approximately 12-13 years –essentially, in the blink of an eye. Further, Friedman says, “the convergence of the ten flatteners begat the convergence of a set of business practices and skills that would get the most out of the flat world” – also of professions with different skill sets. And finally, with the advent of China, India, and other countries into this new world, almost 3,000,000,000 people who had been left out of the business climate were now in. So, it is a “three convergence” that we in America have to deal with – a convergence of 10 flatteners in the blink of an eye, of many diverse skill sets and professions, and of three billion new people in the global market.

These global changes are essentially unstoppable. So, he asks, “How do Americans fit best into this new world? How do we prepare our children and young adults to survive and succeed in the new flat world?”

Before answering that question, let me shift to another important part of Friedman’s book – he calls these the “Dirty Little Secrets” of which we need to be cognizant:

1. **The Numbers Gap:** Since the time we won the race to the moon, the number of scientists and engineers has steadily declined in America. Most of our scientists and engineers are 40 years old or older, and the inflow is not keeping pace with retirement. Friedman refers to a study at Boston College that showed that 44 percent of eighth graders in Singapore and 38 percent in Taiwan scored at the most advanced level in math tests, but only seven percent in America did so. He estimates that it takes about 15 years to create an engineer (from interest to graduation).

2. **The Ambition Gap:** Friedman says, “Here is the dirty little secret that no C.E.O. wants to tell you: they are not just outsourcing to save on salary. **They are doing it because they can often get better-skilled and more productive people than their American workers.**” He adds, “When they send jobs abroad, they not only save 75 percent on wages, they get a 100 percent increase in productivity.”
3. The Education Gap: It shouldn’t be the call centers going abroad that worry us – today, many of the high-end research jobs are going abroad. As Friedman says, they are not racing us to the bottom; they are racing us to the top. In 2003, Leslie Stahl of 60 Minutes did a story on the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). In that story, she said, “IIT may be the most important university you’ve never heard of ... This is IIT Bombay. Put Harvard, MIT and Princeton together, and you begin to get an idea of the status of this school in India.” In Lesley Stahl’s Notebook (Jan. 9, 2003), she said her story was “about a university that may be the hardest school in the world to get into. It’s called IIT- Indian Institute of Technology. A stunning percentage of CEOs and innovators in the American high tech industry were graduated from IIT.” As Friedman claims, “Remember, in China when you are one in a million, there are 1,300 other people just like you. The brainpower that rises to the Microsoft research center in Beijing is already one in a million.”

It needs to be emphasized that there is almost no parallel in the U.S. Every potential (even possibly potential) engineer does not wish to go to one engineering school. On the other hand, almost every potential engineering student aspires to go to the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT); there are now seven such IITs throughout India, with a common entrance examination – and admission dependent exclusively on how a student performs on these examinations. There are now two sets of examinations, one in December at which only about 28,000 of a total of 178,000 applicants make it through just to earn the right to compete for the final entrance examination. Then there is an arduous series of examinations in May in the content areas – Physics, Chemistry, and Math. It is estimated that about two percent of eligible applicants get into the IITs. In contrast, even Harvard College accepts about 10 percent of its applicants.

In an increasingly "flat" world and one in which the knowledge base is increasing at a mind-numbing rate, the only way, we can retain a competitive advantage is through higher education and the ability to learn how to learn. Investments in higher education are critical to America’s future – Friedman lists several “secrets of American sauce” – things that have made America great and still give us a strategic advantage over other countries. First among these “secrets of American sauce” is American higher education. We need to step up our advocacy for higher education. India and China have realized that education and higher education are the keys to success. They are rapidly increasing their emphasis and budgets as a percentage of public expenditures, as we, as a nation, may be not be increasing ours at a sufficient pace, if at all.

We must work hard to preserve this key ingredient of American Sauce – Higher Education!

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The author is a Professor at, and President of, the University of West Georgia, but this piece is written in the author's private capacity and does not represent the views of any institution to which he belongs. The approach of this paper is similar to, and draws heavily upon, other works of the same author: Beheruz N. Sethna, "Ethical Leadership in a Global Society -- (How) Can Universities Lead," in For the Common Good: The Ethics of Leadership in the 21st Century, ed. John C. Knapp (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2006), and Sethna, Beheruz N., “The Role of Higher Education in a Global Society: Ethical Challenges,” Journal of Ethics in Leadership, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2007, pp. 111-136.

The material in this article refers to The World Is Flat - A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century, by Thomas Friedman. No claim is made to original research.
New Professor’s Luncheon – Our annual new professors’ luncheon was held on August 6, 2007. Some 40 professors were in attendance. Here are pictures of our gathering.

Publishing Panel Luncheon: On Friday, September 21, 2007, we held our first Publishing Panel Luncheon for fellow researchers and writers in the Executive Dining Room of Z-6. The panelist included Dr. Harry Morgan, Dr. Abbot Packard, Dr. Barbara Kawulich, and Dr. Ronald Reigner. Drs. Allison Nazzal and Janet Strickland provided information about their journal in absentia. Thanks to all the panelists!
More News from

PHI DELTA KAPPA West Georgia Chapter

Calendar of Events

- Thursday, October 18th, our meeting will be held at 6:00 in the Hubbard Dining Room of Z-6. This is the 30th anniversary of the UWG chapter. To celebrate, a special Initiation ceremony will be held to induct new members. We have invited guest speaker from the international office: Tereasa Lynch. Consistent with our theme for the year, Ms. Lynch will speak about education in China.
- Thursday, March 6th, our meeting will be held at 6:00 PM in Z-6. Panelists will speak on this year’s theme- Our Flattening World: Changes That Impact Education.
- The awards and honors night banquet will be held on Thursday, April 17th. This will coincide with the UWG COE convocation.
Mission of Phi Delta Kappa: to promote quality education, with particular emphasis on publicly supported education, as essential to the development and maintenance of a democratic way of life.

Code and Creed:
I dedicate myself proudly to my profession in the belief that universal education is the foundation for our society's strength. I will strive through

Research
To seek accurate knowledge in the art and science of education;
To utilize such knowledge for the improvement of teaching; and
To share new truths with fellow workers.

Service
To help children and adults become more effective members of our society;
To perpetuate and to improve educational standards; and
To foster free and equal educational opportunity for all.

Leadership
To assume an influential role in education;
To stimulate in others the qualities of leadership; and
To guide learners toward worthy academic, economic, moral, social, and spiritual competence.