# Morgan State's expanding Computer Science Program

By C.T. Goodman

"Believe me, it's been quite a struggle." When the Director of Academic Computing Cynthia Harvey utters this statement with a tired smile and a shake of her head, she's not describing her 8 to 6 work day. No, she's talking about something a little more unique on campus–the long, long road to acquiring the new degree granting program in computer science.

At Morgan State University, this acquisition has been a road that finally seems to have reached its destination. A program that has proved itself elusive to the school for over 10 years, the majors degree in computer science has finally opened its doors and let in some tired travellers.

"We first put in a request for the majors program in the early 1970's," says Professor Harvey "but since that time Morgan has been involved in several administrative changes. We had a president, then an interim, another president, another interim...those kind of internal set backs had caused our request to pretty much sit on the back burner.

"Then," she continues, "problems at the state level began to creep up–changes in the manner of acquiring a majors program. We just had problems from both sides. But finally, last year (1983), we got approved."

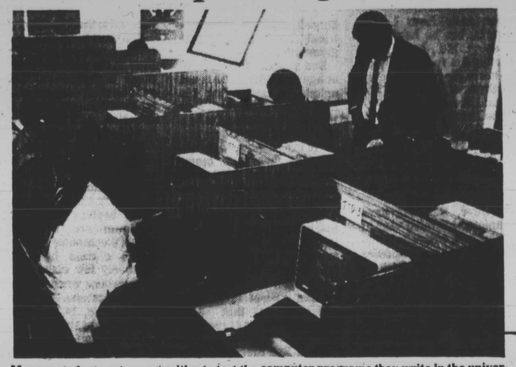
With advanced technology infiltrating all aspects of our everyday lives, basic computer literacy is practically a necessity for American citizens today.

Colleges and universities across the country are beginning to make certain computer courses requirements for all to keep one step ahead of the high school students who are receiving computer exposure in the classroom, and the junior high kids that are getting hands on experience by way of arcade games.

For those searching the job market, the demand is even more acute. Morgan's new degree granting program, will enable its graduating seniors to compete on a more equal ground with others nationwide. Dr. Nathaniel Knox, chairperson of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Sciences cites this fact as the major advantage to the new program.

"A computer science degree here at Morgan benefits everyone--the students, the school, the city and the state. It provides a pool from which city and state can pull professionals," he says. "Morgan wants to enhance that pool and now, with this long awaited degree granting program, we can."

Although MSU has had computer courses in its curriculum since 1964, one of the first post-secondary schools in the state to do so, its computer science program, as a whole, was limited. The late Dr. Walter Talbot who was chairman of the Mathematics Department at the time, saw computer technology as the wave of the future and attempted many times to get school administrators to share his beliefs. During his years at Morgan, he was able to secure one computer (IBM 1620) for the campus.



Morgan students get opportunities to test the computer programs they write in the university's state-of-the-art computer laboratory.

"He was a man of vision," describes Harvey, also a part of the faculty at the time. "He knew what was on the horizon.

"It's always been hard to get people to see the trends in a particular field of which they are not a part. For years, I've participated in several professional societies, attended conferences and seminars to keep in contact with my peers. I can see what trends are evolving."

By originally including computer science with the mathematics department–fitting in courses such as Programming (BASIC, FORTRAN, PLI, Data Structures, File Processing, Assembly Languages and Computer System Architecture — students interested in the theory of computer technology were forced to modify their educational and professional goals to remain at Morgan. However, as time moved on, and student interest in computer science grew, the program began to develop with more courses being added every semester.

"Computer science is very popular among the students," continues Knox.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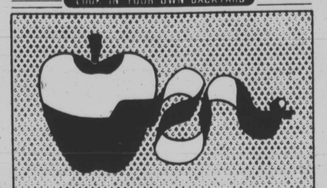

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# Richardson lays down no nonsense policy at MSU

By Jeffrey Williams

Dr. Earl S. Richardson, the newly appointed president of Morgan State University, is a determined man who has embarked upon a monumental mission. He has set out to uplift the institution from the quagmire of political, managerial and financial difficulties that have ensnared Morgan over the past ten years or so and to restore Morgan to the international prominence it has enjoyed for the greater part of its 118 years of existence.

How?

Well, that is a question that Dr. Richardson, 41, has been asked in dozens of ways virtually every day since October 31, 1984 when he officially assumed the helm of Maryland's largest predominantly black institution of higher learning.

Dr. Richardson responds by stating "while our first and foremost goal is to provide education of the highest caliber to our students, there are some specific priorities that must be dealt with expeditiously, decisively and logically.

Dr. Earl S. Richardson

"When I first came to Morgan as Interim President in February, 1984, my first priority was to address the fiscal crisis that had beset the university as a result of an unsatisfactory audit report issued by the State for a two year period ending December, 1983.

"I found a willing team within the Division of Finance and Management, and we immediately began correcting the deficiencies cited by the auditors relative to the university's fiscal management. By August, 1984 we had improved this situation sufficiently to receive a positive post audit review indicating that considerable progress had been made toward resolving this problem.

"Furthermore, we have instituted management safeguards and procedures within our financial division to prevent the recurrence of these kinds of fiscal difficulties in the future."

Discussing the upcoming review of Morgan's fiscal management, Dr. Richardson says, "While we have made considerable progress toward improving our fiscal procedures, we still have a lot of hard work that has to be done before the state's auditors return to Morgan this April. During the upcoming years, we must continue laboring toward attaining a high level of fiscal integrity if we are going to maintain the respect of people throughout Maryland and the respect of those legislators in Annapolis who make critical decisions about our annual budget."

Dr. Richardson indicates that another one of his immediate priorities relates to further improving Morgan's image which he says has a direct relationship to the decisions made by legislators relative to funding the institutions, contributions made to the University by public and private donors, and the decisions made by parents about sending their sons and daughters to Morgan.

He says, "the institution is suffering from a poor image, an image which has adversely impacted on the confidence of legislators, businesses and the community in general. In many ways, the university has been looked upon as a hotbed of conflict and turmoil over the past decade. Changing this image will help stabilize the institution and will involve bringing the entire university community together--Regents, faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends of Morgan--to work cooperatively in support of achieving the goals and objectives of the university."

Some of the major goals and objectives that Dr. Richardson believes are important during the upcoming years are:

...to obtain adequate funding to fully develop the new School of Engineering and to build a facility to house the program;

...to recruit faculty, staff and students of the highest caliber;

...to further improve the quality of instructional programs, services and research;

...to obtain adequate funding to upgrade and make needed renovations to Morgan's existing physical facilities;

...to improve the relationship between Morgan's diverse internal and external constituents while bringing about an increased level of community involvement;

...to enhance the level of esprit de corps at Morgan.

Dr. Richardson places considerable emphasis on teamwork in his approach to solving problems and managing the university. He says "because I believe that stabilizing the university is critical, I spend an inordinate number of hours in meetings, listening to my staff members and talking about how we can solve problems. This process is time-consuming, but I find that we establish a meaningful relationship with students of the highest caliber. Major fund raising activities being planned by foundation members include

Continued on page 24


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