

College tops in degrees awarded

By [Erica Pippins](#)
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Sharon Wiley already can envision her first classroom.

She says it's a place where all students receive the building blocks they need to become life-long learners.

Wiley will be one step closer to that dream in the fall when she becomes a student teacher at Wares Ferry Elementary School in Montgomery. She says she has to do well.



Sharon Wiley, left, and Sandra Staley listen as their classmates deliver presentations in their Teaching Science for Elementary School class Thursday evening at Alabama State University.

-- Photos by Karen S. Doerr Advertiser

"Around there, I'm known as 'Kayla's mom,'" said Wiley, whose 8-year-old daughter is a rising third-grader at the school. "Now, I will take on the role of teacher. I have to shine."

BY-THE-NUMBERS

Alabama State University recently was ranked by *Black Issues in Higher Education* in its 14th annual special report on the top 100 degree producers for the 2003-2004 academic year. Following are the results:

Number of bachelor's degrees in education awarded to blacks: **1st**

Total number of education degrees awarded to minorities: **11th**

Total number of bachelor's degrees awarded in all disciplines among 97 historically black colleges and universities: **24th**

Wiley, a senior elementary education major at Alabama State University, praises the institution for preparing her to shape young minds. She's not at all surprised that ASU recently was ranked No. 1 among a group of four-year colleges and universities for the total number of bachelor's degrees awarded to black education majors.

"If you put an ASU education major up against a student at one of the predominately white schools, they are going to be at an equal level or will come out on top," Wiley said. "ASU focuses on preparing highly qualified teachers."

ASU's high mark appears in the June edition of *Black Issues in Higher Education*. For 14 years, the chronicle has included a list of Title IV-eligible colleges and ranked them by the number of bachelor's degrees, including education, that are granted to minorities.

The university conferred 164 education degrees in the 2003-2004 year, according to a analysis by the U.S. Department of Education. Alabama A&M University ranked 7th. The University of West Alabama, Oakwood College, Auburn University Montgomery, Miles College and the University of Alabama at Birmingham rounded out the top 50.

"It's nice to know that we are No. 1. But I would rather our Professional Education Personnel Evaluation (PEPE) score had be an A rather than a B," said Pete Macchia, dean of the College of Education, ASU's oldest program of study. "The numbers mean that we are meeting our mission. But our mission is also to provide quality."

Macchia is referring to data released recently by the Alabama Department of Education that gave ASU an overall grade of a B for preparing highly qualified teachers to enter the state's K-12 public classrooms. The university received an F on the report card the previous two years.

The annual accountability profiles are based on performance evaluations by principals and other supervisors of first-year teachers straight out of college.

Wiley says the marks are unfair. She believes ASU's showing in *Black Issues in Higher Education* and the fact that the College of Education was reaccredited last year by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education shows just the opposite.

"Whenever I see the results of those (state) report cards, it makes me feel bad," Wiley said. "I know I keep my grade point average up and so do other students who are in the program. ASU is not just handing out these grades."



Jason Gremillion, right, and Alvin Sims listen to presentations in their Teaching Science for Elementary School class Thursday at Alabama State University.

people think they are above us but they are not. We are getting the tools we need to prepare future generations."

Wiley echoed those remarks. As a mom and future teacher, she wants to know that teachers are highly qualified and that all children receive an equal education.

"At Alabama State University, I have gotten a feel for everything," Wiley said. "I know what I need to do to be successful in the classroom."

ONLINE EXTRA

HOW OTHERS RANKED

Here is a look at other state colleges and universities who were ranked in the top 50 schools that awarded bachelor's degrees in education to blacks:

Alabama A&M University: 7th; 95 degrees

Miles College: 34th; 35 degrees

University of West Alabama: 37th; 34 degrees

Oakwood College: 39th; 33 degrees

Auburn University Montgomery: 43rd; 31degrees

University of Alabama at Birmingham: 43rd; 31 degrees

** Data reflects degrees conferred during the 2003-2004 school year at Title IV-eligible schools.*