When one thinks of the Talent Development Program, one often thinks of it the way it is today: the advisors, Taft Hall, the PREP and Pre-Mat Programs. Some even remember the days when Reverend Hardge and Mr. D. directed the program and walked the campus as one. But few know how the program came to be what it is today, and even fewer know about the man who made it all possible.

Dr. Harold V. Langlois is that man. Graduating from URI in 1967 and completing his masters at the University of Indiana, 24-year-old Dr. Langlois returned to URI in 1968 with an idea, a dream and ambition.

According to Dr. Langlois, the story of how TD started is a story about leadership, anxiety, risk-taking and learning.

Without any experience and a budget of only $56,000, Dr. Langlois set out to start a six-week summer program at URI.

The program, originally named Programs for Disadvantaged Students, targeted individuals ages 24-25 who wanted to pursue a college education but were in some way disadvantaged and unable to attend a college or university.

“With change rises anxiety,” Dr. Langlois said. “It is important to understand the student’s anxiety about moving from inner city environments to a college campus.”

To deal with the anxiety felt by the university, faculty and students, Dr. Langlois created sensitivity programs for the faculty, which included two courses, Urban Education and Building Sensitivity. The courses dealt with understanding issues of race, sex, age and socio-economic influence on culture.

“The was about understanding pluralism.” Dr. Langlois said. “There was no vehicle for minorities. No minority representation in politics or higher education.”

According to Dr. Langlois, 42 of the students made it through the summer.
LANGLOIS continued

program, 13 of whom attended URI in the fall. The remaining students attended RIC or Rhode Island Junior College (CCRI).

“Each student added a unique commitment of their own, not a minority commitment, but a personal commitment to do well. The students took the program and made it really work,” Dr. Langlois said.

It was after the first summer that TD obtained the name it has today. According to Dr. Langlois, the name Programs for Disadvantaged Students was a terrible name for the program because the word “disadvantaged” seemed to be synonymous with minority groups and therefore portrayed a negative connotation.

Dr. Langlois said he came up with the name Special Programs for Talent Development while walking across campus one afternoon. Ultimately, the program’s name was structured around the word “talent.”

“I liked the idea of ‘talent’ and the program essentially was aimed at developing talent,” Dr. Langlois said.

And so the program became SPTD.

The once - unformed idea of starting a college program for minority and disadvantaged individuals was beginning to expand and take form.

The second year of the program the number of students doubled, and 50 entered URI in the fall.

During this time, URI experienced a bad budget crunch and was planning to cut TD funding.

According to Dr. Langlois, the URI Faculty Senate stepped forward in defense of TD and stated, “Even if we do not get our raises, we want the Talent Development Program to go untouched.”

As a result of the faculty’s efforts, Talent Development was able to continue. With university and federal funds, the program received a budget of $150,000.

With the program reaching new heights, Dr. Langlois brought in the services of Leo F. DiMaio and Reverend Arthur L. Hardge.

The connection between Dr. Langlois and Mr. D. dates back to their childhood when the two played basketball at the Providence Community Center.

Having worked at the ACI with Dr. Langlois’ father, Dr. Langlois believed that Mr. D. had the “kind of spirit, ethic and dedication to get something done and that his skill sets would be better used for pursuing positive gains.”

Looking for someone who could take the program to the next level, Dr. Langlois introduced Reverend Hardge who was not only well known politically, but also had a strong hold on the Providence community and according to Dr. Langlois, could “represent the program in a meaningful way.”

“A 24-year-old white male going into black communities was not effective,” Dr. Langlois said.

And so goes the story of Talent Development.

“We learned from going and what we learned we implemented,” Dr. Langlois said. “TD came about as a need to produce something that needed to get done. It didn’t have to do with color, it didn’t have to do with what was right, it had to do with justice. It was a responsibility to represent the unrepresented.”
Another Record-Breaking Recruiting Year

It has been another productive fall semester. Gerald Williams, Frank Forleo and I have returned from an arduous recruiting effort. Recruiting for Talent Development has taken on all shapes, traveled all avenues and continued to be innovative, enlightening and refreshing. We each were responsible for recruiting at seventeen Rhode Island high schools. We are happy to announce that by the time you read this we will have once again accepted the largest class in TD history (397).

No matter how long ago you graduated, no matter how far removed you are from your Pre-Mat Summer, and no matter what town or city you reside in, your contributions and leads into recruiting students for TD are and will always be appreciated. You will always be part of the Talent Development family and community.

Recruiting has been more extensive and far reaching than ever before. Community agencies throughout the state, the Lincoln, Providence and Warwick campuses of the Community College were visited, and the interest in Talent Development has been greater than ever.

We have increased efforts in recruiting students of the Narragansett Indian Nation. There were a number of times that Gerald, Frank and myself went somewhere during the week to meet with one or two individuals who wanted to attend the University and be a part of TD. In turn the number of students reached this year was 1,233, far exceeding last year’s 862.

The TD staff discussed ways to increase the number of students we reach out to every year and in turn we have changed a few things. Our message to students is the same of course.

Letters were drafted and sent to high school principals and guidance counselors. The letter explains our wish and desire to visit the high school. We ask for the assistance of the guidance office in pinpointing students of color and disadvantaged students to attend our presentation.

A new color brochure was developed by Joanna Ravello. The brochure contains pictures of our students and information pertaining to the admissions and financial aid processes. The brochure also explains the various aspects of the Preparatory (PREP) and Pre-Matriculation Programs (Pre-Mat). In general, it explains what makes Talent Development so special.

A new and exciting PowerPoint presentation was included this year. We are now discussing the possibility of taping a recruitment video.

The TD message has started to reach students at an earlier stage in their education. We have had numerous requests to bring middle school students to campus. These tours are frequent and year round. We provide the young students with a tour escorted by present TD students and a staff person provides them with a presentation and information stressing the importance of education and that they all can attend college.

We have also started recruiting high school juniors. It is never too early to reach out to students. Opportunities to attend the University and the message stressing higher education to students will continue. We will continue to be the best and recruit the best and top students throughout the state. Talent Development is expanding and becoming a larger force at URI and throughout Rhode Island.
As a result of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., programs like Talent Development (TD) were established at universities and colleges nationwide in order to create opportunities for students of color and disadvantaged backgrounds to attend a four-year college or university.

The key to spreading the TD message lies heavily in recruiting. Each year TD advisors visit several high schools, community agencies and grassroots organizations throughout the state to inform potential students of the opportunities TD has to offer and to help them understand the process of college admission.

TD also invites potential TD students for scheduled tours at the university so that they may become better acquainted with the URI campus and with the TD program.

Through recruiting, TD is able to identify Rhode Island students of color and disadvantaged individuals who demonstrate academic achievement and potential, as well as, a strong desire for a higher education.

“All that counts is that Talent Development provides an opportunity to students who may not be aware of it,” TD Director Gerald R. Williams, also known as Mr. G, said. “TD proves that a college education can be affordable for anyone.”

According to URI Admissions Officer Frank Santos, “Less than one-tenth of one percent of the world’s population gets the opportunity to go to college and graduate.”

It is TD’s belief, said Frank Forleo, Assistant Director for TD Admissions, that “if people are given the opportunity, they will be successful and TD has been proving it since 1968.”

First and foremost, TD students are URI students and therefore must meet the requirements of the university; four units in English, three units in algebra and plane geometry, two units in physical or natural science (one with a lab), two units in a foreign language, two units in history or a social science and five additional units.

The TD application is the same application used by URI, with the exception that Talent Development is stamped in red in the upper right-hand corner and the application fee is waived.

To be eligible for URI admission, students must have a combined SAT score of at least 1050. Taking the SAT, ACT or TOEFL is mandatory for enrollment at URI; however, for TD students SAT scores are not considered.

TD acceptance concentrates on three basic requirements: a student’s personal statement, two letters of recommendation and their grade point average. In order to qualify for TD admission, students of color or disadvantaged backgrounds must maintain a minimum GPA of a C+ throughout their four years in high school.

After attending a TD presentation, many high school students have been inspired to attend college because of the opportunities and support described by the staff.

“I really like the program. It is beneficial to a lot of people who need guidance,” Melissa Iovlino, East Providence High School, said.

“I didn’t think I wanted to come to college but now after listening to the presentation I would really like to go,” Anilia Ruiz, Mt. Pleasant High School said.

Marong Tho, a Woonsocket High School advisor, and TD
Development Program

graduate, believes that TD is a strong resource for preparing students for college.

“The steps and stones of TD help students who have no idea what college is about. TD is a great light for people who have no idea where they are going,” Marong said.

Equally as important to completing the admissions application is completing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form. The deadline for completing the financial aid form is March 1; however, TD strongly urges students to complete the form after Jan. 1 but no later than Feb. 14. By postmarking the FAFSA by Feb. 14 students become eligible for one of three RI State Scholarships, - - the RI State Scholarship, the University Grant or the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), which awards students up to an additional $1,000 in financial aid.

TD students are also eligible to receive the $4,600 Arthur L. Hardge grant, named after one of the former directors of TD. Additional financial resources are determined according to the need of each individual student.

How TD differs from the university is what makes the program so special. Mainly these qualities lie in the advisor’s relationship with his/her students.

“That’s where the success of TD lies, the one-on-one individual advising in TD,” Mr. G. said.

According to Mr. G., the business of TD is to ensure that TD students are successful, and part of that success lies in students meeting weekly with their TD academic advisors.

“I didn’t think I wanted to come to college but now after listening to the [TD] presentation I would really like to go.”

- Anilia Ruiz, Mt. Pleasant HS.

Weekly advisor meetings are not something that TD takes lightly. In fact, students who fail to meet regularly with their TD academic advisor can expect to find Mr. G. at their door at 6:30 a.m. reminding them of their responsibility to TD and to themselves.

Open communication is also crucial in the work of TD and is key to the success of the program. The TD staff is committed to knowing their students well and helping them achieve their goals. The success of each student is the measure of the success of TD.

According to the TD staff, “The objective of the program is to assist students who have the talent, ability and the ambition to pursue higher education.”

TD is also unique because of the programs it has created to help students prepare for the college experience and to ensure students success in their academic career.

Once a student’s application is reviewed and they are accepted into TD they are required to attend TD’s PREP Program held in April of their senior year.

The intention of the PREP Program is to familiarize students with the university, financial aid, as well as confirm the student’s acceptance to TD. PREP also allows students to register for summer classes and the New Student Orientation Program, which the university requires all incoming freshmen to attend.

At the completion of the PREP Program, TD guarantees accepted students payment for the nonrefundable $250 enrollment deposit, $150 payment for the mandatory New Student Orientation Program, as well as payment for TD’s Summer Pre-Matriculation Program (Pre-Mat).

Pre-Mat is an intense six-week program where students live on the URI Kingston campus and complete two courses for college credit. Tuition, fees, room, board and books are fully paid for by TD during the Pre-Mat Summer Program.

see TALENT DEVELOPMENT, page 6
TALENT DEVELOPMENT continued

The first week of Pre-Mat consists of intense work in writing, college study skills, computer skills and critical thinking skills. For the remaining five weeks of the program, students attend classes Monday – Thursday and continue their writing program.

Tutorials are available and required for students to attend throughout Pre-Mat to ensure that students receive the assistance and guidance they may need and to ensure the success of their completion of the Pre-Mat Program.

“TD proves a college education can be affordable for anyone.”
- Gerald R. Williams

According to Frank, the Pre-Mat Program and the continued support services provided by TD are the primary reasons why seven out of 10 TD students graduate from URI.

“We [TD] are going to do everything we can do to help you [students] be successful,” Mr. G said.

In order to successfully complete Pre-Mat, students must receive a grade of C or better in each class in order to pass the program and be accepted as a TD student in the fall.

TD takes great pride in the success of its students. Since the program started in 1968, TD has grown from 13 students to over 700. Without students, however, TD would not be able to exist. Mr. G encourages students to remain focused in their senior year, to work hard in the classroom and not lose sight of their goals.

“Your attention in academic success is what will land you in the college institution you want. You are the future, and don’t let anyone tell you you’re not,” Mr. G said.

TD COMPUTER LAB

Starting in April 2002, Talent Development students will have access to the first TD Computer Lab located in the Leo F. DiMaio Student Conference Room in Taft Hall.

The computer lab will consist of six Dell laptop computers. Initially, use of the computers will be restricted to student registration for the fall semester, however, TD plans to expand the computer services to include internet use and Microsoft applications.

As of now the TD computer lab will be available for student use on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. and on Wednesdays 11:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

To gain access to the lab students must first see a designated staff person.

TD’s own Babatunde Ologun inducted in the Phi Beta Kappa honor society

Babatunde Ologun, a 23-year-old pre-med student majoring in biological sciences, is the first Talent Development student to be inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa honor society.

With a cumulative grade point average of 3.93, Babatunde plans to graduate from URI this May and attend Brown University medical school in the fall.

Phi Beta Kappa is the premier liberal arts academic honor society in the country. Founded in 1776 by students of the College of William and Mary, the society now has 260 chapters at U.S. universities selected for their standards of academic excellence.

The University of Rhode Island Chapter was founded in 1976. New members are initiated in their junior or senior year. Members are chosen from the top 10 percent of the student body and who qualify on the basis of a high GPA in liberal studies including: humanities, social sciences, mathematics, and sciences in courses taken primarily in the College of Arts and Sciences.
TD Congratulates...

Fall 2001 Dean's List students, as well as, students with an equivalent or higher GPA

Waleska Alvarez
Khari Bass
Keith Cardoza
Ponreay Chek
Roth Chhim
Ruth Crisostomo
Joseph Del Carpini
Soanny Delgado
Yngribel Espinal
Kevin Delle Femine
Susana Fortich
Ti-Auna Foster
Ana Franco
Sonia Gaitan
Saikon Gbehan
Jenise Harrison
Vanna Hok
Diana Ibarra
Sokhoeun Im
Nirmal Intwala
Jevonya Jenkins
Yatar Kuyateh
Marvens La Porte
Jennifer Lin
Nicole Love
Neya Ly
Vismark Maria-Gonzalez
Janelle Mc Allister
Sophat Moeuy
Thaou Nguyen
Babatunde Ologun
Margaret Onasanya
Sarah Perez
Khounsay Pongvongkeo
Peneloppe Poulard
Bovivine Pradith
Carlos Ramirez
Adilson Ribeiro
Jennifer Rivera
Matthew Robinson
Arismendy Rosa
Susan Saraiva
Mack Scott
Ratkanhnha Siv
Vannaly Sivilai
Srim Soung
Maricar Tica
Chun-Tat Tsang
Loveline Umoh
Silcia Ventura
Hircanys Vicioso
Joyce Wehjla
Felecia White
Benjamin Willis
Pao Yang
Samnnang Yen
Rahpael Yepez

URI Black Faculty Congratulates...

Spring 2002 TD Recipients

William Gould Award for Outstanding Achievement
Monica Tavares

Estes Benson Award for Academic Achievement
Babatunde Ologun

Sojurner Truth Award for Scholarly Persistence and Dedication
Nicole Love

Althea Gibson Award for Athletics
Yatar Kuyateh

Harvey Robert Turner Outstanding Service to the University of Rhode Island Black Community Award
John Cruz

Reverend Arthur L. Hardge Award for Outstanding Community Service
Barry O’Connor Jr.

Noreen Coachman Award for Outstanding Achievement by an Older Student
Maria Sampson
PLANS FOR the TD reunion are currently under way. The reunion is intended to unite alumni and celebrate the program’s 35 years of success. The reunion is scheduled to take place on Saturday, August 16, 2003, at the Rhode Island Convention Center in downtown Providence.

It is important that all TD alumni contact the TD office with their current contact information. Alumni may update their information by either calling the office at (401) 874-2901, e-mail: tdinfo@etal.uri.edu or via the TD website www.uri.edu/talent_development/

If you are a TD alumnus who has heard about the reunion, please spread the TD news.

TD News - Coming in the Fall issue

• 10 Years Ago - The Black Student Leadership Group
• Scenes from Pre-Mat 2002
• Profile of Rev. Arthur L. Hardge

These stories and more in the next issue of TD NEWS.