African world view conference to aid campus

By Jon Vollo
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The Fourth Annual Conference on Africentricity in Counseling and Teaching will be held on campus Friday.

The conference will be held in the Conference Theatre of the Ohio Union, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

This year's theme is "The significance of the Africentric Perspective," Dwight Varnum, coordinator of the Africentricity conference said.

Africentricity is an African world view that encompasses culturalistic models, values, customs and other perspectives of blacks, Varnum said.

The program will basically cover issues concerning Africentricity in teaching and counseling, but the history of Africans and Afro-Americans will also be discussed, he said.

The guest speakers will be:

- James Turner, the director of the African Studies and Research Center at Cornell University. Turner is a historian and Egyptologist who will lecture on "The significance of an Africentric Perspective." His article, "Blacks on White Campuses" was published in the March issue of Ebony magazine.

- Phillip McGhee, dean of the School of Ethnic Studies, San Francisco State University. McGhee is a biologist and psychologist who will lecture on "Melanin: Cultural and Collective Consciousness."

- Robert Douglas, professor of sociology and african art and literature at Ohio University, Athens. Douglas will lecture on the roles and esteem of African women from ancient times to the present.

- Carol Barnes, senior research chemist, Dow Chemical Corporation. Barnes is an organic product developer who will lecture on "Melanin: The Key to Black Greatness."

- Linda James Myers, associate professor with a joint appointment in psychology and black studies and psychiatry at Ohio State University. Myers will lecture on "Africentric Psychology: The Spiritual Connection."

Varnum said two of the country's leading African historians will be honored at the conference.

One is Yosef ben Jochannan, an Egyptologist, with Ph.D.'s in anthropology, engineering, history and theology.

Varnum said Jochannan is also an author and lectures worldwide.

John Henrik Clarke, a historian at Cornell University, who has lectured all over the world and lived in Nigeria and other nations, will also be honored, he said.

There will also be two workshops, which will be question and answer periods, Varnum said.

He said the conference will also touch on melanin or pigmentation in the sense of culture and collective consciousness.

Other subjects to be covered during the conference are biological, physiological, anthropological and physical issues and will cover history to at least 3,000 years before Christ, he said.

Varnum said these subjects will be applied to the significance of an Africentric prospective of counseling and teaching.

It will also cover African women from ancient time to present in America, he said.

The spiritual aspects of the significance will also be covered, he said.

"In order for us to better understand one another, regardless of what ethnic group we are from, we should understand other ethnic groups," Varnum said.

"For any group of people to better understand the present and better shape our future, we must attempt to understand all the entities of the past," he said.

This conference will attempt to bring about some sort of unification, among students and the community in general, he said.

Many positive things have resulted from these conferences in the past, Richard C. Kelsey, associate professor of human services education said.