Black media group sets goals

By Marc Harper
Lantern staff writer

The African American Media Association, established in 1989 to reduce isolation felt by its members at Ohio State, has expanded its activities to include job placement, recruitment, professional contacts and monitoring of campus media for racial insensitivity.

Linda F. Callahan, assistant professor of journalism and AAMA co-adviser, said a goal of the organization upon its creation last spring was to lessen feelings of minority isolation common at predominately white colleges such as Ohio State.

Callahan, who is president of the Columbus Association of Black Journalists, said the AAMA’s major weapon in fighting minority isolation is establishing networks that bring students together to discuss classroom and social concerns.

She said a professional support network is a main concern of the National Association of Black Journalists, of which the CABJ is an affiliate. AAMA will soon become an affiliate as well.

Callahan said other AAMA goals are more directly concerned with helping students enhance job opportunities and performance.

Those goals include helping students write resumes and developing a student-mentor relationship with the CABJ, she said.

The CABJ also hopes to implement a scholarship program for minorities planning careers in mass media, she said.

Felecia G. Jones, assistant professor of journalism and co-adviser with Callahan, said she has been pleased by OSU faculty cooperation with AAMA to this point.

She said that on Feb. 15 of this year, Tom Hubbard, associate professor of journalism, asked visiting Newsweek photographer Jacques Chenet to speak to the organization.

She said the organization has brought in guest speakers on its own, including Barbara Reynolds, columnist for USA Today and an OSU graduate.

Guest speakers generally provide students with a good reference source on what it is like to be a minority in a field where few exist, she said.

Callahan said the organization also hosted Minority Media Day on Feb. 8.

Reggie Anglen, a group adviser and employee of University Communications, said the event was designed to increase black enrollment at Ohio State.

He said the event tried to expose new media to key faculty, administrators and students who could provide accurate and useful information on Ohio State.

The media in turn could present a more accurate and hospitable portrait of Ohio State and help encourage black students to attend the school, he said.

Anglen said University Communications will help black journalism students in the future with job fairs. According to Callahan, the group will also get a chance to look for job opportunities April 20-22 at the NABJ’s regional conference in Louisville, Ky.

Jean-Jacques Taylor, a senior from Dallas and organization president, said the group is also concerned with monitoring racial insensitivity on campus.

The group is especially interested in the Lantern’s handling of potentially sensitive minority issues, as well as making sure minority interests are covered in general, he said.

Taylor said the newspaper’s failure to cover the crowning of OSU’s first black homecoming queen this fall upset campus blacks. He said the group doesn’t feel that racism was a factor but that laziness was.
AAMA joins group

The African-American Media Association will soon be able to offer more services to its members when it becomes part of the National Association of Black Journalists.

National activities, programs and career advice are some of the benefits the National Association of Black Journalists can supply to local AAMA members, said Michael Malcomb, president of the OSU AAMA.

Membership to AAMA is not restricted to African Americans but is open to all, Malcomb said. The purpose of the organization is to serve as a network for students in journalism and mass communication, Malcomb said.

AAMA hopes to become part of the national chapter by Summer Quarter.

The group meets Thursdays at 6 p.m. in the Journalism Hall of Fame room.

— Shanita Brown