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The Recruitment and Retention of African American, Hispanic, Asian and Native American (AHANA) Students on College Campuses

Franklin T. Thompson

University of Nebraska at Omaha

“We believe it is the duty of both policy makers and educators to identify qualified minority youth and place them in channels that ensure success.”

The ultimate objective of any college minority recruitment and retention effort should be to train and cultivate qualified students of color for leadership in their community, as well as the general society. The existence of special problems and conditions within certain communities is well documented. Although the success of university-community collaboration efforts varies from one community to the next, most college officials nonetheless find themselves calling for greater representation and participation.

Research has shown that minority and disadvantaged kids possess the aptitude necessary for advanced careers. Whether or not those students are properly cultivated at the various academic levels is another topic. We believe it is the duty of both policy makers and educators to identify qualified minority youth and place them in channels that ensure success. Successful recruitment of students must begin before the senior year of high school. It is for this reason that universities must become more engaged with meaningful program development in conjunction with local school districts.

We know that successful problems have in place a policy decision and commitment level from the highest levels of administration. When the goals of minority recruitment and retention are articulated system-wide, students win. Do not despair. Staff and faculty who work at institutions who don't have administrative support can still do wonderful things at a departmental level. It very well may take a small effort in one corner of an institution to serve as a role model for the larger bureaucracy.

The next step is to conduct a needs assessment and develop a database. At the same time, school officials will need to put out a statement of policy and articulate the goals of the program. Next comes program development, followed by program implementation. Last, but not least, is the development of a monitoring and evaluation process.

This one hour workshop is broken down into (six) parts: (1) A quick overview of the literature to identify recruitment and retention related problems for entering freshmen regardless of race; (2) A more in-depth look at special issues AHANA students face above and beyond traditional freshman anxieties; (3) The identification of factors that contribute to college academic success among AHANA students; (4) An overview of three specific programs that work - a very successful system-wide effort at an institution back East, and two successful department level programs within a Midwest system that is not successful; (5) A discussion of the need for establishing a mentoring, as well as a minority faculty development program; and (6) A period where conference participants can share successes, or lack thereof, from their respective

institutions.

This session is for college faculty and staff who wish to make traditionally elitist programs more inclusive for AHANA students, thereby ensuring academic success and empowering communities. Although there are no magic cures, there are research and time-tested practices and procedures that we know help to remediate the problem.

PRESENTER:

Franklin T. Thompson received a B.S. degree (History and Sociology) in 1976 from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, a M.S. degree (Counseling) in 1986 from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and Ed.S. degree (Educational Administration) in 1992 from the University of Southern Mississippi, and an Ed.D. degree from UNO in 1996.

Dr. Thompson is an assistant professor in the College of Education at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He is currently teaching and doing research in the area of Urban Education, Human Relations, Multiculturalism and Diversity, At Risk Youth, and Guidance and Counseling. He also taught for 14 years in the public schools, and for four years in a private school.

Dr. Thompson is an active member in Phi Delta Kappa and Omicron Delta Kappa. He is a member of the American Educator's Research Association (AERA), and is active in the MADD DAD's Association. He has presented at local, state, and national conferences. He has presented at two previous People of Color Conferences.