

Spanning the Gulf: An Innovative Model for Effectively Mentoring and Retaining African American College Students

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Dr. Heather Parker
Dr. Victoria Anyikwa
Dr. Pamela Lee
Saint Leo University
Saint Leo, FL

African-Americans in higher education

- The nationwide average for African American college graduates in 2000 was 37%, compared to 59% for White students (Brittian, Sy, & Stokes, 2009)
- Only 58% of African American men graduate from high school on time. (Brittian, Sy, & Stokes, 2009)
- Although many enroll in community or 4-year colleges and universities, African American men continue to lag behind their peers with respect to retention and degree completion rates (Butler, Evans, Brooks, Williams, and Bailey, 2012)
- Only two thirds of African American men matriculating in 4-year institutions go on to graduate (Butler, Evans, Brooks, Williams, and Bailey, 2012)

African-Americans in higher education

- American men are said to be the most at-risk college students in this country (Butler et al, 2012)
- while 12% (37.7 million people) is AA, less than 18% (4 million people) is enrolled in college (Brittian, et al, 2009)

Mentoring and retention

- Mentorship programs have demonstrated correlation between participation and increased retention among AA students (Brittain, Sy, & Stokes, 2009)

Five Institutional Resources

1. Draws on the institution's values, mission and rhetoric (Fiscally Responsible)
2. Comprehensive African American student oral histories
3. African American faculty role models
4. African American Alumni
5. Unique opportunities for African American adult learners

Institutional values, mission and rhetoric

Respect

Personal Development

Responsible Stewardship

Excellence

Integrity

Community

AA student oral histories/Surveys

AA faculty role models

- Current models develop students':
 - Self-esteem
 - Self-efficacy
 - Mastery
- Current models focus on:
 - academically at-risk students
 - Assessment
 - Assertiveness training
 - Psychological counseling
 - Multi-cultural training
 - Establishing relationships

Brittain, et al (2009); Butler, et al (2012);
Beyene, Anglin, Sanchez, & Ballou (2002);

AA faculty role models

- Social and cultural networks in the University
- AA faculty role models
 - “There is a lack of AA faculty and staff for students to identify with at predominately White universities. AA students may find establishing a positive identify in the university environment difficulty without faculty to identify with.” (Brittain, et al, 2009, p. 88)
 - “The presence of AA faculty and staff on campus assists students in identifying individuals like themselves in positions of leadership....provides a more supportive environment for AA students” (Brittain, 2009, p. 89)
 - See AA faculty may change the stereotype that exists among AAs that excelling academically is “acting white” (Brittain et al, 2009, p. 89)

AA faculty role models

- A positive relationship with the mentor
 - "one-of-a-kind opportunities for collaboration, goal achievement, and problem solving"
- "The importance of faith-based programming for African Americans cannot be denied or overemphasized. Religion and spirituality are two very critical aspects of African American culture (Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2008). Research has shown that up to 78% of African American adolescents reported that religion was important in their lives, and 72% prayed weekly (Butler, et al, 2012)

AA Faculty role models

- The atmosphere and culture of the university must embrace students of color (wholistic)
 - Student services
 - Student activities and organizations to which AA students can relate
 - AA students “must possess a sense of history, as well as feel respected for their student initiative and responsibility” (Brittian et al, 2009, p. 89)

AA Alumni

AA Adult learners

- Remedial tutors
- Career services
- Child care
- Student mentors
- Professional Networking
- Engagement with career professionals/Advisory Councils

References

Beyene, T., Anglin, M., Sanchez, W., & Ballou, M. (2002). Mentoring and Relational Mutuality: Protégés Perspectives. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education, and Development, 41*, 87-102.

Brittian, A.S., Sy, S.R., & Stokes, J. E. (2009). Mentoring: Implications for African American College Students, *The Western Journal of Black Studies, 33*(2), 87-97.

Butler, S.K., Evans, M. P., Brooks, M., Williams, C.R., & Bailey, D.F. (2013). Mentoring African American Men During Their Postsecondary and Graduate School Experiences: Implications for the Counseling Profession. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 91*, 419-427.