

A Summary of "Best Practices" for Recruitment and Retention of Students of Color

During fall of 2002, the Student Affairs staff reviewed almost one thousand college and university web pages describing activities dealing with the recruitment and retention of students of color, in order to determine what practices were most effective in helping institutions achieve their recruitment and retention goals. The institutions ranged from community and technical colleges to research universities, public and private, urban and rural, large and small. Despite the differences in the types of institutions looked at, striking similarities emerged in the types of activities undertaken by those colleges and universities that seemed to be most successful in achieving their minority student recruitment and retention goals. Among these similarities are the following:

- Expressed support for improvements in minority student recruitment and retention at the highest administrative levels and inclusion of recruitment and retention goals in strategic plans and annual work plans, along with accountability mechanisms for achievement of the goals.
- Early outreach activities designed to increase college awareness in students at the elementary, junior high and high school levels and enlarge the pool of college-bound minority students. Some of these outreach activities focus on highly talented students in fields such as math, science, or teacher preparation, while others are more general in nature.
- Recruitment activities that go beyond the traditional college fairs and high school visits. Successful institutions recruit students of color in community centers, churches, and other nontraditional settings. Current minority students and alumni are involved in the recruitment effort. Recruiters engage the parents and other family members rather than focusing exclusively on the prospective student.
- Summer bridge programs to help students make the transition from high school to college. Some programs are discipline-based, especially in math and the sciences.
- Academic and cultural support services programs to provide the help that students may need in dealing with the demands of their academic programs or in dealing with an unfamiliar cultural milieu.
- Diversity awareness or multicultural sensitivity programs to address the needs of the larger campus community and the community at large. This may include programs to engage on-campus students of color with the larger community.

Many institutions have initiated one or more of these activities. Few have developed comprehensive programs that incorporate all of these aspects that characterize best practices. Listed below are examples of programs and initiatives undertaken by colleges and universities to improve minority student recruitment and retention. It should be noted that a large number of institutions have recruitment strategies that consist primarily

of merit-based scholarships. These are not included here, although some programs that offer financial assistance in addition to other support services may be included.

- Clemson University offers a summer Pre-College Enrichment Program for high school juniors. Minority students take a study skills course, SAT prep seminar, and workshops on the college admissions process, and also get help with the FAFSA.
- Indiana University of Pennsylvania developed a Minority Student Recruitment Council, employing current IUP minority students to help recruit new students. IUP used a number of other strategies, including collaboration with minority churches.
- At the University of Delaware, ASPIRE (Academic Support Program Inspiring Renaissance Educators) is a multifaceted recruitment and retention program aimed at attracting students to the teaching profession. Recruitment is done at neighborhood community centers, churches and church youth groups, and is a year-round endeavor. Early awareness is a component of the program. Retention aspects include intrusive academic advising, study skills training, tutoring, and social development activities
- The University of Michigan sponsors a Minority Student Symposium attracting minority high school students from across the state to attend sessions on admissions procedures, financial aid, and other aspects of university life.
- Olivet College, a small college in a non-diverse part of rural Michigan, established a Global Cultures Center and an African American Cultural Center to provide "safe and comfortable places for students to socialize, study, and hold cultural awareness programs." Olivet also sponsors an intergroup dialogue program where diverse students can come together to discuss issues and break down cultural barriers.
- Central Community College, in Grand Island, Nebraska utilized the services of a minority student recruiter who is a student herself. Throughout the year she worked and maintained contact with a cohort of minority high school students culminating in a comprehensive college tour during which two students were admitted to the college.
- The University of Washington Diversity Outreach and Recruitment Program employs minority outreach coordinators who live in the minority communities that are the recruitment targets.
- Miami University of Ohio invites counselors from high schools that have high minority enrollments to the campus, and specifically invites minority students to campus for visitation programs at no charge the students.
- Arizona State University created a Minority Advisory Council of 25 leaders from minority communities to provide ideas and guidance for developing programs to recruit students and faculty. Programs developed include Focus, similar to the Clemson Pre College Enrichment Program described above, a four-day Native

American Summer Institute, and the Native American Achievement Program, which provides support services to Indian students.

- Technical Colleges in South Carolina are conducting minority student recruitment activities through Tech Prep, JTPA programs, high school career centers, adult education programs, and Job Service Centers. They are also using College Career Days focused on minority students, establishing contacts with community organizations, and using minority students in their recruitment activities.
- Tennessee Tech sponsors a Black Student Visitation Day at which African American students and their parents come to campus and meet with faculty, current students, and university administrators. All residence hall staff members are provided diversity training. The university will be creating an African American Alumni network to be used in recruiting African American students.
- The University of California is investing millions of dollars in early outreach programs in middle and high schools, many of them focused on science and math. The programs include afternoon sessions, weekend programs, and summer enrichment programs on the university campuses.
- The SMART (Student Mentors Advising Rising Talent) program at Elon College assigns each new minority student an upper-class mentor who is also a minority student. The student mentors are supported by faculty and staff that also help the new minority students in transitioning to life at a mostly white institution.
- The University of Wyoming has a Power Hour- UW minority student recruiters on high school visits set aside some time to meet with parents and community representatives as well as students.
- University of Iowa's Opportunity at Iowa is a multifaceted program including Pen Pals, an early outreach effort involving faculty staff and students writing letters to and visiting minority students in grade schools to develop early awareness of college. The OI Ambassador program involves minority students in community outreach and recruitment efforts. Academic support programs are an additional feature.
- The California State University's Academic Support Program provides a variety of early outreach, mentoring, transition, and academic support services to underrepresented students. The Educational Opportunity Program focuses on low-income students.
- Texas A&M University has several early outreach initiatives, including a summer residential program, a Pre-College Partnership Program that focuses on students in grades 8 and 9, and the Aggie Connection program, which brings first generation students to the campus for visits with faculty, staff, and current students.

- The University of Florida decentralized responsibility for minority student recruiting, so that the various colleges (Business, Education, Journalism, etc.) are engaged in recruiting diverse students. The University also has developed a summer transition program, Unified Freshman Studies, focusing on college survival skills.
- Rochester Institute of Technology is partnering with the Rochester School District in a program to identify talented minority students who are interested in engineering. The students receive supplemental academic preparation, and are evaluated for admission by a wholistic assessment process, rather than standardized test scores.
- The Carnegie Mellon Action Project provides a Summer Academy for Minority Scholars, and then assures that minority students receive good academic advising, tutoring services, and career development programming. Program participants are involved in community service and outreach activities in order to "give back" to the community.
- The University of Colorado at Boulder Minority Arts and Sciences Program provides a comprehensive support services beginning with a Summer Bridge Program and including academic advising, learning communities, and academic enrichment seminars and workshops.
- The University of California at Berkeley Bridges Multicultural Center is a consortium of student groups that are involved in recruiting underrepresented minorities to Berkeley. The college students visit high schools, provide workshops on college essay writing, and help high school students to fill out university applications.
- The Community Action Network of Austin and Travis County, Texas is working with area colleges and universities to develop a comprehensive, community-based approach to increase high school graduation rates and college participation rates for low-income and minority students.
- Virginia Tech's Minority Academic Opportunities Program developed a coalition of minority leaders from the community, churches, the political arena, corporations and education to develop a base of intellectual and financial power in support of minority student recruitment and retention. The program provides outreach, transition, academic and financial support, and career development opportunities for students.
- The University of Oregon's Summer Journalism Workshop brings minority high school students interested in journalism to the campus for a week-long residential program. The students produce a newspaper while also learning about college.
- Louisiana Tech University has established a Presidential Minority Council, consisting of student leaders who represent the university in recruitment and retention efforts. Young Sisters and Brothers is a five-day transition program for new freshmen.

- Southwest Missouri State University created a Minority Student Recruitment Team comprised of current minority students and faculty to visit high schools, and to call and send personalized letters to prospective minority students. The University has also established a group of minority community representatives to assist in the recruitment of minority faculty, and to help minority faculty in making the transition to life in Springfield.
- Fergus Falls Community College builds connections between a racially nondiverse community and its on-campus students of color through CACTUS (Cultural Opportunities can Touch Us), a joint program of the Housing and Multicultural Services offices. Students engage in community service activities and serve as speakers on culturally-related topics for various community groups. The result is a more positive community environment which contributes to minority student retention.
- The University of Alabama in Huntsville conducts Real World Seminars for minority students, at which community professionals cover a variety of subjects including communication and interviewing skills, health and beauty tips, and career development. The Early Alert Program is an intrusive advising program focused on minority students at risk of dropping out of the university.
- The University of Arizona has a comprehensive Early Academic Outreach program, working in 64 public schools. The Academic Program for Excellence targets students in grades 6 to 12 to give them early awareness of college opportunities. The Mathematics, Science and Engineering Achievement (MESA) program works to increase the number of underrepresented students in these fields by providing learning skills workshops, tutoring programs, and summer enrichment programs.
- Swarthmore College sends a publication titled "Black at Swat" to prospective African American students. The brochure was developed by current Black students at the college and provides information about the minority experience at a predominantly white college. African American, Hispanic and Asian students also participate in phone-a-thons and send personal cards and letters to prospective minority students.
- Purdue University Minority Peer Counselors program involves current minority students in recruiting and orientation for new minority students. The Minority Engineering program provides pre-college guidance, counseling, academic support and other services to minority students.
- Abilene Christian University has overcome a perception of not welcoming minorities by incorporating multiculturalism throughout the university. Cultural sensitivity training is provided to all faculty and staff. Multiculturalism is incorporated into the student life program. Minority students are involved in community outreach and student recruitment activities.

- Georgia State University relied on a Cultural Diversity Committee to help develop a university Marketing Plan focusing on minority student recruitment. Components include forming liaisons with local area churches, targeting predominantly African American high schools, direct mail to minority students, and a full-time minority recruiter.
- The University of Florida adopted three low-performing high schools and worked with both teachers and students to improve the educational environment. Top students were then offered scholarships to UF. Student recruitment conferences held on weekends allow minority students and their working parents to visit the university.
- Washington State University has a comprehensive program of services, including Adopt-A-School which provides outreach to students of color in junior and high schools, Multicultural Student Mentor Program which pairs new minority students with continuing students, and the Academic Enrichment Center which provides help with academic, cultural and social concerns.
- The University of Nebraska-Lincoln sponsored a Summer Pre-College Instruction and Career Experience (SPICE) Program to promote the value of higher education to tenth- and eleventh-grade racial minority students. Students live in the residence halls and are exposed to various career options and get a taste of what life as a college student involves.
- Ohio State University initiated a Diversity Action Plan that called for establishing a multicultural student center on campus, developing summer programs for at-risk freshmen, and establishing a Peer Partners program to match minority students with other students in the same major. A University Council on Diversity will monitor the university's success in achieving goals and issue an annual progress report.
- The University of Arizona incorporates minority student issues in its overall enrollment management plan. Minority student recruitment is characterized by personal attention, with telephone calls at home to parents and students. Students are assisted through all phases of the application and enrollment process. Parents are encouraged to attend on-campus orientation programs along with their children.
- The University of Washington School of Business created a Business Educational Opportunity Program that conducts outreach to students in middle- and high-schools throughout the state. In addition, a special class provides a supplement to the introductory accounting course, which many minority students have trouble with.
- The University of Wisconsin-Platteville General Engineering Department is developing a Diversity Resources website to provide information that will be useful in recruiting ethnic minority students to engineering as a field of study and career and will provide links to support services and other resources for retention of minority students.

- Metropolitan State University has a multifaceted Public School Outreach Program that extends from elementary school through high school. The program provides help for students to be successful in their public school studies while at the same time providing community service and mentoring opportunities for college students. The College for Kids program is an early awareness activity that allows elementary school students to spend a day at the campus taking mini-classes and implanting the idea that college is possible for them.
- The University of Missouri- Columbia worked with St. Louis community leaders and guidance counselors and administrators in the St. Louis school district to attract minority students to the university. In addition, the university used the ACT selector service to target and send personalized recruitment letters to Black students falling within selected ACT score ranges. Black student enrollment at the university has increased as a result of these efforts.
- Texas Tech University initiated a Chancellor's Junior Ambassadors Program, which identifies high school seniors and offers them a \$5,000 scholarship. In turn, the students serve as ambassadors for the university in their high schools. The ambassadors visit the university several times during the year to learn more about the university which they can then share with their high school classmates.
- Brown University's Third World Weekend program brings accepted minority students to the university so they can experience the environment first-hand to see if they will be comfortable at Brown. Financial aid workshops, an extracurricular activities fair, and faculty and student information panels are all part of the weekend program.
- The University of Michigan relies on a highly personalized approach in recruiting minority students. Lists are purchased from testing services and personalized letters and invitations to visit the campus are sent to prospective students and parents. Alumni and current students participate in recruitment efforts, including making telephone calls to prospective students and their parents. The university also has "on-the-spot admissions sites" at schools with high minority enrollments and top feeder schools.
- The New Jersey Institute of Technology has a Center for Pre-College Programs, designed to attract elementary and secondary students to engineering, science, and math careers, and to help them develop the skills to qualify for college admission. The Pre-Freshman Summer Residential Program is a seven-week orientation and transition program providing students academic enrichment in math, physics, communication, and computer science.
- The Rochester Institute of Technology, in partnership with the Rochester City School District and the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME) is participating in the NACME Vanguard program to identify potential minority engineers and provide them academic enrichment and college readiness skills.

- The "Future Teachers of Color" conference sponsored by Washington State University is a weekend event during which minority students learn about career opportunities in teaching, admissions requirements, applying for financial aid, and support services available at WSU. Participating school districts provide transportation to the campus, and all other expenses are borne by the university.
- The American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) sponsors a Diversity Action Grant program which student sections of ASME may apply for. The grants are to promote the inclusion of women and underrepresented minorities in ASME student sections and mechanical engineering. Among recent winners were the University of Minnesota for a project to reach out to middle school students and involve them in a LEGO League competition, California State University- Fresno for a project where high school students "shadow" an engineering student for a day, the University of Rhode Island for a tutoring program that focuses on women and minorities, and North Carolina A&T University for a "Youth in Engineering" program aimed at seventh graders in predominantly Black middle schools to encourage them to consider engineering as a career. Grants range from \$500 to \$1,500, illustrating what can be done with only a small amount of money.
- The State of South Carolina requires that public institutions of higher education "provide annually for the state's eighth grade students and their parents or guardians small group and one-on-one counseling on required high school courses and post-secondary options, financial requirements, and assistance available for a post-secondary education." Every school having an eighth grade is paired with a college or university which provides the required information in a program now known as the Higher Education Awareness Program (HEAP). The program now also involves visits to campuses by eighth grade students to promote early awareness.
- The Texas A&M University Business Career Awareness Program brings minority students from targeted high schools to a six day summer residential program on the campus. Parents are invited to an opening banquet, at which time they are assured that students who enroll at the university will be provided the necessary support services to ensure that they succeed. The week's activities for students include a visit to a large accounting firm where students can see firsthand the work environment of business professionals.
- The University of Tennessee-Knoxville sent university vans to bring students from Memphis and Nashville to the campus for an orientation weekend. The weekend was part of an intensified minority student recruitment effort that includes invitations for friends and family to visit the campus, direct mail and telephone calls to prospective students.
- St. Cloud State University provides a summer bridge program for students of color. Students in the Advance Preparation Program take six credits, and have their tuition and room and board costs paid by the program. Student of color organizations sponsor a College Day, bringing 150 high school students to campus for classes and

admissions and financial aid seminar. The Pipeline Programs are a number of early outreach programs bringing talented students in math and sciences, as well as other areas, to the campus for enrichment activities.

- Wharton County Junior College in Texas increased its minority student enrollment significantly by going beyond its usual recruitment area to communities in southeast and central Texas with large minority populations. Aggressive marketing of financial aid opportunities and technical programs was part of the larger strategy.
- The Auburn University College of Sciences and Mathematics (COSAM) offers an intensive four-week Summer Bridge Program for new minority freshmen majoring in Physical or Life Sciences, Mathematics, Engineering, or in pre-professional health sciences programs. The program helps students to make the transition from high school to college by providing them the tools necessary to succeed in the very demanding COSAM curriculum.
- The Future Teacher Institute, operated by California State University- Dominguez Hills in cooperation with the Los Angeles Unified School District is designed to encourage minority high school students to pursue a teaching career by giving them a taste of what teaching is all about. Promising high schools students are given three weeks of "teacher training" and then spend ten Saturdays teaching fourth- through sixth-grade students in math and science. The program benefits both the high school students, almost all of whom go on to college, as well as the elementary students, who are given some early college awareness training.
- George Mason University helps to ease the college transition for students of color by offering them a faculty or staff mentor. The student and mentor meet at least twice a month, often over lunch or dinner. Students report that the mentoring relationship is useful because it allows them to talk about a wide range of issues and concerns beyond academics.
- The University of Oregon took a team of 30 admissions staff and student recruiters to Portland for a minority student recruitment event titled "Portland Community Night." Informational sessions for both students and parents were presented, and a computer lab was available during the evening to help student and parents fill out admissions applications and financial aid forms.
- Black Hawk College, a community college in western Illinois, offers a variety of programs for first-generation, low-income, and students of color. Bridges is a transition program in which students may take up to seven college credits their first semester while adjusting to the college environment. College Bound is program in which Black Hawk students work with disadvantaged grade school children, tutoring and mentoring them. The children also visit the college and are exposed to career options and develop higher education awareness. Buddy Mentoring pairs a new Black Hawk student with an advanced student who helps with the college adjustment

process. A Black Hawk faculty or staff member in turn serves as mentor for both students.

- Itasca Community College strengthened its outreach to Indian students by developing an Associate in Arts degree with a focus in American Indian Studies. The college also reaches out to Indian students in high schools by sponsoring Ojibwe and Dakota language-based quiz bowls.