

November 2002

The 4 C's of Success: Commitment, Connection, Compliance and Compassion: Achieving Notable Retention Rates Through Proactive Collaborative Recruitment

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Ball, Trent and Byrd, Alan, "The 4 C's of Success: Commitment, Connection, Compliance and Compassion: Achieving Notable Retention Rates Through Proactive Collaborative Recruitment " (2002). *Seventh Annual National Conference, POCPWI* . 26.
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The 4 C's of Success: Commitment, Connection, Compliance and Compassion: Achieving Notable Retention Rates Through Proactive Collaborative Recruitment

Abstract

This session is an overview of the strategies developed and implemented for the successful retention of minority students attained via successful collaborative efforts in recruiting. Utilizing shared objectives, connecting units for joint recruiting and retention efforts and the strategic use of resources has increased the retention rate of participating students to over eighty-five percent.

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As we prepare to advance our efforts to advocate for and develop the students we serve, it is time to redefine and expand our programming efforts and to use our resources wisely and efficiently in this unsure economic climate across the nation. Recruiting and retaining students of color has always been a pressing concern in Higher Education, and this year's conference continues to address these efforts. Our session provides us the opportunity to share a successful programming plan that has increased minority recruitment numbers over fifty (50) percent in the last five years and the retention of students served in the programs to over eighty-five (85) percent.

Throughout the country the number of minority students vying for spots at our institutions has been impacted by the changing financial and academic standards, it is of critical importance that we develop and refine our strategies aimed at both recruiting and retaining minority students. Increasing the diversity on campus and extending the opportunity to higher education to qualified students of color has to be at the forefront of our agenda, this conference, in continuing to address these issues for a second year has accepted that responsibility, at Southeast Missouri State University so have we.

Our program is based on the following ideas. In our approach to recruitment and retention programs we stress **Commitment** to the standards for achievement and understanding the access provided by education to our targeted students, a **connection** to the resources, opportunities and support that makes education attainable and affordable to the recruited student. We emphasize throughout the process the issues of **compliance** and responsibility on the part of the student and the student's family to the goals, mission and path of education at their chosen university. Throughout campus, we advocate **compassion** in the assistance provided to the students we have recruited during their

pursuit of the skills and competencies needed by to earn a college degree and that lead to a productive life. The session will outline, address and discuss a series of objectives that underscore the strategies developed to increase minority student recruitment and retention.

There are challenges inherent in recruiting minority students from underserved regions in our state, these challenges are universal recruiting in multiple territories and by working with other units on campus we have begun a seamless objective to inform and raise the awareness of students in our service region.

The structures of presentations to minority students and the types of programs utilized to deliver the message to the students and their parents is important in beginning and cementing the recruiting process, as well as in securing the family's support for the student's educational pursuits. From the moment the student moves from prospect to recruited student the expectations that were provided at the beginning of the process will continue to be reviewed, discussed and consistently at the forefront of the programs offered for their successful transition to the campus. Making an active connection between current and prospective parents will be a focal point in the session to highlight building the bridges that provide a campus and a home based community for the student.

During the session we will discuss the "rifle" versus the "shotgun" approach to recruiting minority students, joint programming that includes scheduled and targeted joint presentations, peer recruiting, leadership opportunities for current students, supplemental financial assistance and acquiring faculty and staff support for both recruiting and retention based programs. The session will conclude by opening a dialogue on the strategies necessary to convey the importance of including every level of the university in the mission to recruit and retain minority students as well as the benefit the campus receives from being active in the efforts to diversify the community.

There are a number of learning outcomes for the session. Program attendees will have the opportunity to engage in discussions centered on the importance of developing and implementing collaborative programs across campus. These discussions will address involving other campus units and their relationship to minority students and their success.

Participants will be challenged to reflect on their role in creating these partnerships and expanding their efforts to assist minority students in coming to and graduating from their institution. Finally, program attendees will be asked to discuss their own challenges and successes experienced while working in joint programming efforts and with other units.

Presenters

Mr. Trent Ball currently serves as the Assistant Dean of Students and Director of the Office of Minority Student Programs at Southeast Missouri State University. As Assistant Dean, Mr. Ball provides leadership for the implementation of campus- wide student development programs for underrepresented and at-risk students. In his current position

he directly supervises the units of Minority Student Programs and the TRIO Programs at Southeast Missouri State University, Student Support Services and Project Upward Bound. Mr. Ball holds the position of adjunct faculty in the College of Education and the College of Extended Learning. Mr. Ball attended Culver-Stockton College, a private liberal arts college in Northwest Missouri and graduated with a B.S. degree in 1989. He began his graduate work at St. Louis University and completed his studies, earning a M.A. in Psychological Counseling at Southeast Missouri State University in 1994. Mr. Ball's professional career in Higher Education began as a Learning Specialist in the Student Support Services TRIO Program at Southeast Missouri State University. He has presented numerous programs at the local, state and regional level on topics ranging from diversity training, parental involvement, advanced counseling skills and the value of mentoring.

Mr. Alan Byrd began his professional career in the Office of Admissions at Southeast Missouri State University in February 2000. He served as an Admissions Counselor I for two years, providing guidance to students from northern Missouri and Kansas City high schools through the admission and financial aid process. In January 2002, he was promoted to the position of Assistant Director of Admissions for Minority Recruitment. In his current position, Alan is responsible for the direct implementation of the university's strategic plan designed to meet minority recruitment goals and objectives and diversifying the incoming student body. As the Assistant Director of Minority Recruitment, he works closely with the Director of Minority Student Programs, the St. Louis Outreach Coordinator and other relevant university units to support retention and community building efforts in recruiting new students. Mr. Byrd also coordinates the admission procedures for the University Summer Academy, which is an alternative admission program for students who fall short of core admission requirements. Mr. Byrd attended Southeast Missouri State University and graduated in 1999 with a B.A. in Mass Communication and a minor in Business Administration. He is currently pursuing his Master's in Higher Education Administration in a joint program between Southeast Missouri State University and the University of Missouri in St. Louis.