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Kennesaw State University's Diversity Plan: A State and National Model

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Kennesaw State University's Diversity Plan: A State and National Model

Abstract

This panel presentation is designed to provide conference participants with an opportunity to examine successful innovative and proactive strategies used by Black Faculty on a predominantly white campus in Georgia to address such relevant topics as recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, establishing a foundation for diversity in the university and community.

~

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Jerome Ratchford, Director of the Student Development Center, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA

During a panel discussion of faculty and members of the campus power structure innovative and proactive strategies developed and implemented over the last twenty years at a predominantly white university will be examined and shared with conference participants. Participants will be provided with information needed to implement a similar model that addresses issues of diversity on their respective campuses and community.

During the panel discussion the panelists will discuss strategies for recruiting and retaining diverse faculty. For example the university over the years has implemented a Black Faculty mentoring program and their has also been a mentoring of faulty when they arrive on campus by members and the leadership of the Black Faculty Caucus. So a coupling of formal and informal structures has played a key role in the recruitment and retention of minority faculty.

The local community has also played a major role in the success and support of Black faculty and other diverse faculty on this predominantly white campus. Again the formal color represented at

the university.

The Black Faculty Caucus most recently held its annual retreat at this church and members of the community were invited to address the faculty and listed to the accomplishments of faculty in the areas of scholarship, service, teaching and community
outreach.

The panelists will also discuss other issues such as diversity in programs, policies, creating a positive climate, ways of entering difficult discussions and coming out whole. Not only will these issues be examined but innovative proactive strategies will also be provided. Some of the strategies have included workshops, conferences, seminars, retreats, scholarly publications, community partnerships,~mentoring programs, tapping into K-12 schools to recruit minority students, partnerships with diverse alumni and numerous other strategies. The strength of this model consist of the power of the use ofa formal framework and a very strong informal network and core of Black Faculty to use innovative and proactive strategies to ensure issues of diversity are identified and addressed On a predominantly white campus for the ultimate benefit of all diverse groups.

Presenters

Dr. Lendley C. Black is the Vice-President of Academic Affairs at Kennesaw State University. He is a Professor of Theatre. Dr. Black earned his Ph.D. at the University of Kansas, his M.A. from the University of Connecticut and his B.A. from the University of Tennessee at Martin. Dr. Black and a stellar career in higher education and a strong commitment to diversity in his personal life as well as his professional role as Vice- President of Academic Affairs at Kennesaw State University. As Vice -President of Academic Affairs Dr. Black is chief academic officer of undergraduate, graduate and continuing education programs that enroll over 18,000 students.

Dr. Rosa Bobia is entering her 20th year as a Professor of French at Kennesaw State University. She earned her Ph.D. at Vanderbilt University, her M.A. at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her B.A. at North Carolina Central University. Dr. Bobia has distinguished her self as a teacher and scholar and is the author of several books. She her arrival at the university she has continued to demonstrated a strong commitment to diversity. She has co-chaired several National Black Conferences in Higher Education, been a spokesperson on diversity at local, state, national and international conferences As Co-Chair of the Black Faculty Caucus at Kennesaw State University she continues to serve a leader and advocate for diversity on a predominantly white campus as well as the surrounding communities.

Dr. AI. Panu is the Assistant Dean of the College of Science and Mathematics and Associate Professor of Chemistry. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Georgia, his M.S. at the University of Alabama in Binningham and his B.S. at Tuskegee (Institute) University. Dr. Panu has a distinguished record as a teacher and has been a recipient of the Distinguished Teaching Award in his college. Dr. Panu is also recognized on campus for his commitment to diversity having served on the Diversity Council. Dr. Panu also provides leadership in the Black Faculty Caucus.

Dr. Jerome Ratchford is Director of the Student Development Center. He earned his Ph. D. at

Bowling Green State University, M.A. at Indiana University and his B.A. at the University of Kentucky. Dr. Ratchford has provided the leadership needed to not only recruit Black and other minority and international students but his office has played a pivotal role in retaining and graduating minority students in all fields at the university. He not only serves an advocate for minority students but also an advocate for diverse faculty and staff. His influence is also felt in the community from having served on the university minority advisory board. Dr. Ratchford is to a teacher, servant leader mid scholar.

Dr. Harold L. Wingfield is a Professor of Political Science and Program Coordinator. He also serves as Co-Chair of the Black Faculty Caucus. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Oregon, his M.A. at the University of Oregon and his B.A. from Fisk University. Dr. Wingfield has also served as Co-Chair of several National Black Conferences in Higher Education as well as a leadership role in the Association of Black Political Scientists. Over the years Dr. Wingfield has played a leadership role in the struggle to ensure that diverse faculty as well as staff and students on a predominantly white campus are treated equally. His commitment to leadership and diversity is not confined to the university having served on the school board in his community as a member and chair. He is also active participant in the National School Board Association. He has a commitment to P-12 education as well as higher education and has provided the leadership needed to address issues of diversity in the public school setting.

Dr. Valerie W. Whittlesey is Assistant Vice-President for Academic Affairs, CETL Fellow and Professor of Psychology. She earned her Ph.D. at Cornell University and her B.A. at Hampton University. Dr. Whittlesey has a distinguished career in teaching, scholarship and service in higher education. She has served as a Chair of the Department of Psychology and also in numerous other leadership roles at Kennesaw State University. She is a scholar in diversity having recently published a book on issues that address diversity. In her role as Assistant Vice-President of Academic Affairs she not only plays a key role in curriculum, teaching and assessment but also a leadership role in diversity with a focus on minority faculty recruitment, climate and retention.