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Retain or Let GO!

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Retain or Let GO!

Abstract
Participation in the Cultural Diversity Peer Mentoring Program is voluntary for all students. The program is developed under the supervision of the Director of Multicultural Student Services.

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The Introductory Meeting is important for both the student and the staff, because it sets the tone for the new semester. At this meeting, the student and staff member review the student's performance from last semester, discuss the student's goals for the new semester, and the student completes a Developmental Plan that serves as a benchmark on which their performance is judged. An overview of the new semester is another reason this meeting is important. Students are provided a packet that includes all the information that the student will need throughout the semester.

Students are required to meet with their academic advisor at least once a semester. This allows the academic advisor to go over the major and/or general studies requirements and plan out the students schedule for next semester. It is essential that this component be completed before the course registration comes around because it allows the student to plan ahead. The advisor will complete the advisor signature form (appendix II) to document the meeting with the student.

The Value of co-curricular participation in the overall development of students is something that we hold in high esteem; therefore students are encouraged to participate in a variety of programs, activities, and/or organizations that can enrich their college experience. These programs and activities cover a broad variety of topics (including academic skills building, leadership, volunteerism, culture and diversity) and are offered in collaboration with many other campus departments. In some situations, these opportunities are available off-campus through campus departments and/or organizations. Students are provided a list of possible option of activities to choose from. They are also required to document their participation by completing an Involvement/participation form.

Office of Multicultural Student Services provides a tutor for students involved in the MSS mentoring program. The MSS staff identifies courses where students need additional help, and then hires a student tutor to provide assistance to students in the Era

Bell Thompson Cultural Center on a walk-in basis. In addition to tutoring, MSS also keeps a good working relationship with the University Learning Center.
Because of this we are able to make a significant amount of student referrals for tutoring in subject areas where we do not provide such assistance. The learning center also offers a multitude of enhancement courses that are beneficial to students who want to improve their behavior in reading and writing, test taking and time management skills.

The Wrap-up meeting is usually held during the last month of the semester. The main purpose of this meeting is to review the student's progress for the semester. At this meeting, the staff member ensures that all the requirements have been completed. The student completes a wrap-up survey that allows the staff to evaluate the program and make necessary adjustments for the up coming semester.

Our goal is to make the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center a home of sorts for all students. We provide an atmosphere that is conducive to learning as well as welcoming to all. We encourage students to take advantage of our services by making random or routine stops to the cultural center. Deadlines are also a good way to encourage this practice. Since the deadlines for different requirements are spread throughout the semester, it allows students an opportunity to stop by the cultural center. Many students take this opportunity to familiarize themselves with the center, have conversations with staff, and to get answers to any pressing questions that they might have.

Presenter
Dr. Matsimela Changa Diop is the Assistant to the Vice President, Director of Multicultural Student Services, Former Upward Bound Director and Coordinator of the National Student Exchange Program at the University of North Dakota. He supervises the activities and programs presented in the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center, advises the Student Relations Committee, serves as UND's point person for diversity and multiculturalism. Previously, he was the Director for Student Resources and Counseling Services at Mohawk Valley Community College. There, he supervised all Counseling Services, the Office of Multicultural Resources, the colleges' retention efforts, the Substance Abuse Center, and the Office for Services to Students with Disabilities. Dr. Diop received his master's and undergraduate degrees from the University of Wisconsin – Lacrosse. During his 20 Plus years in higher education, Diop made numerous presentations, taught courses on race and ethnicity, wrote grants and have communicated and interacted with some of the most influential people in the United States. Dr. Diop presently completed his doctorate degree in Teaching and Learning – Higher Education Administration at the University of North Dakota.