April 1998

Bureaucracy, Collegiality and Politics: Three Models of Academic Governance to Aid People of Color in Predominantly White Institutions

Wallace Southerland
University of Maryland, College Park

Bureaucracy, Collegiality and Politics: Three Models of Academic Governance to Aid People of Color in Predominantly White Institutions

Wallace Southerland
University of Maryland, College Park

"This workshop will examine briefly the bureaucratic, collegial, and political models of governance in America's colleges and universities with an emphasis on enhancing the knowledge base of people of color in predominantly white institutions."

Ever wonder why some policies or decisions are made while others are rejected? Ever wonder why certain people are involved in decision-making processes and some are not? Or, have you often felt that institutions of higher learning were cauldrons of chaos led by disorganized leadership? There may be some method to the "madness" in our educational organizations. Research on colleges and universities—especially presidents—as subjects reveal several insights and theories about higher education environment.

Scholars have developed several labels for our institutions, which may begin to clarify some of our campus processes and leadership behaviors. Three models of academic governance have merged from the minds of several eminent scholars and researchers. These models have, to a large degree, affected practitioners' and other scholars' thinking regarding governance in our postsecondary institutions.

This workshop will examine briefly the bureaucratic, collegial and political models of governance in America's colleges and universities with an emphasis on enhancing the knowledge base of people of color in predominantly white institutions. To be sure, the participants will be exposed to the various perspectives on each model, for no single model is endorsed as the "right" model for higher education. For example, the following areas of each model will be discussed: (1) administrative aims of institutions based on each governance model; (2) characteristics of the models listed; (3) historical background of the models; (4) types of organizational and power-based theories and practices that are associated with the models; and (5) scholars and authors who are associated with each model will be shared with participants to say they may engage in more research at a later date. Also, the presentation will include mini-activities for participants to apply concepts to their institutions as well as discuss specific and practical ways people of color can contribute more effectively in institutional governance based on information presented in the workshop.

Finally, the workshop will include the distribution of materials to facilitate questions, discussions, and mini-activities, as well as provide some tangible information that may be used as a reference during appropriate situations at the participants' home campus. The article, "Alternative Models of Governance in Higher Education" and the book, "How Colleges Work," will be extrapolated information from these sources.

It is desired that the information presented in the workshop will maximize the roles and effectiveness of people of color in shared governance on their campus. The general format will be lecture-discussion style with an emphasis on audience participation and reactions to materials and scholars' research-based viewpoints.

While any professional may benefit from this workshop, it is an ideal workshop for people of color who served, currently serve or those who hope to serve in campus leadership positions whether they are in race- or gender-based organizations or leaders of campus-wide offices, departments and divisions. All participants interested in participating more effectively in campus governance should learn the concepts and characteristics of the aforementioned models to take the knowledge to their campuses to share with other leaders.

In sum, this workshop strives to give participants information and skills which will enable them to scan and evaluate their environment and tap into the most appropriate governance model for their specific situation. Indeed, all models may not be effective all the time.

PRESENTER

Wallace Southerland is pursuing his doctor of philosophy degree in higher education from the University of Maryland, College Park on a full-time basis. His research areas are Academic Management and Governance/Leadership. While pursuing his degree, Mr. Southerland serves as an Academic Counselor in the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, a federally-funded TRIO program, where he advises undergraduates who are planning to pursue their Ph.D. Additionally, Mr. Southerland is an active leader on the campus. He is president of the department's graduate students association.

Prior to pursuing his degree, he was employed at the University of Bridgeport in Bridgeport, Connecticut. He served in the following positions: Assistant to the President, Affirmative Action Officer, Director for Minority/Ethnic Affairs and Special Services and Director for Residential Life and Judicial Affairs. Mr. Southerland is also a lecturer and motivational speaker.