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November 2002

### Measuring Success One Student At A Time

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Murhpy, Janis E. Ph.D.; Kornegay, Elana B.S.; and Kem, Lee Ph.D., "Measuring Success One Student At A Time" (2002). *Seventh Annual National Conference, POCPWI* . 7.

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# Measuring Success One Student At A Time

## Abstract

*This presentation describes Murray State University's proactive efforts to enhance African-American students' preparation, recruitment/retention and graduation. Strategies utilized to create and maintain a positive/hospitable campus environment will be delineated. It is our campus-wide responsibility to "nurture" each student with personalized contact and carefully selected services to engender degree persistence.*

### **Janis E. Murphy, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor, Murray State University

### **Elana Kornegay, B.S.**

Assistant Director of School Relations for African-American Recruitment

### **Lee Kern, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor Education and Director, College of Education Advising Center

Thought For Today:

"Invest in the human soul. Who knows, it might be a diamond in the rough." Mary McLeod Bethune

Panelists will discuss proactive strategies Murray State University uses to enhance African-American students' preparation, recruitment/retention and graduation. It is deemed our campus-wide responsibility to "nurture" each student with personalized contact and services carefully selected to suit individual academic/personal needs, abilities and career expectations. The aforementioned services provide a fertile learning environment and facilitate successful student acclimation to the university and community.

Measuring Success One Student at a Time presentation is divided into these segments

- Explanation of The Kentucky Plan for Equal Opportunities in Higher Education.
- Description of successful strategies to create and maintain a positive/hospitable campus environment for African-American students and
- Introduction of information obtained from African-American student interviews

**The Kentucky Plan for Equal Opportunities in Higher Education** is a statewide desegregation plan, adopted 15 years ago by the Governor, to ensure Kentucky resident African-Americans equal opportunity of access to and success in postsecondary educational institutions. The Committee on Equal Opportunities' annual progress evaluations monitors the implementation of The Kentucky Plan's goals for institutions in the categories of student enrollment, retention, and graduation. In addition, the Council

on Post Secondary Education requires colleges to submit annual reports describing the status of equal opportunity activities/programs for Kentucky resident African-Americans, and the initiation of new programs that impact these students. This data is utilized to assess each college's progress in meeting racial diversity goals and objectives.

### **Strategies to Create and Maintain a Positive Campus Environment**

Murray State University offers more nationally accredited degree programs than other Kentucky public regional university. Moreover, U.S. News and World Report rates Murray State University as a top Southern regional public university. In keeping with our tradition of excellence, Murray State University maintains a plethora of educational opportunities for African American students. The following are a few noteworthy equal opportunity activities/programs offered by Murray State University:

#### Office of African-American Student Services/Ethnic Programs

- Functions as clearinghouse, referral service, and liaison among administration, academic units, and the community on the behalf of African American students.
- Assists/Supports students prior to and following their enrollment
- Provides data about a programs and services relevance to African American students

#### Governor's Minority Student College Preparation Program

- Early Intervention Program to enhance educational opportunities and awareness of the college experience for middle schools minority students

#### Scholarships Opportunities Specifically for African American Students:

- Dr. Marvin D. Mills Scholarships-Four-year Award provides in-state tuition and fees, cost of double room, and a ten-meal plan for Kentucky, African American high school seniors.

#### Black Alumni Scholarship-Awarded to entering freshman, full-time students.

- Minority Educator Recruitment and Retention Scholarships-Awarded to Kentucky residents who graduated from a Kentucky high school.
- Paducah Sun Minority Scholarships-Awarded-Awardees must declare academic study in newspaper journalism and participate internships with The Paducah Sun.

#### Organizations/Services with providing cultural growth and leadership opportunities:

- Black Student Council
- Academic Monitoring and Advising
- African Heritage Scholars Bowl
- Caribbean Student Association
- Ebony arts Theatre

- Honors Day Seminars- for Talented High School Juniors and Seniors
- Greek Organizations
- Voices of Praise Gospel Choir

#### African -American Student Support and Assistance

- African-American Recruitment Team
- Assistant Director of School Relations for African-American Recruitment
- African-American Faculty and Staff Resource Team
- Minority Teacher Educator

#### **Information from African-American Student Interviews**

Recruitment of individuals of color based on the Kentucky plan has been discussed. In addition, referral of these individuals to campus resources has also been discussed. However, one of the major issues is retention of students of color. Academic advising can play a major role in this endeavor and contribute to the success of one student at a time.

As an advisor of students of color, several factors will contribute to the success of each student. The fundamental purpose of academic advising is to help students become effective change agents in their own lifelong learning and personal development. This can only occur as students recognize critical issues for students of color, understand how to cope with transitions, and support the identity development of students of color. To accomplish these goals it is essential to understand the stage model of minority identity development (Atkinson, Morten, and Sue, 1983), the white identity development model (Corvin and Wiggins, 1989; Ponterotto, 1988), and for students to understand the differences between the two models.

This portion of the presentation will focus on information obtained from interviews with four students of color. The emphasis will be on the students understanding of the success factors, critical issues, and coping with transitions. Included will be an assessment of the students understanding of their own minority identity development as compared to the white identity development model.

Finally, how this information is utilized to enhance advising for students of color will be discussed. Practical steps to enhance pluralistic advising skills (Brown, 2000) will be presented.

#### **References**

- Atkinson, D. R., Mottin, G., and Sue, D. W. Counseling American Minorities: A Cross-Cultural Perspective. Dubuque, Iowa: Brown, 1983
- Corvin, S. A., and Wiggins, F. "An Antiracism Training Model for White Professionals." *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 1989, 17 (3), 105-114
- Ponterotto, J. G. "Racial Consciousness Development Among White Counselor Trainees: A Stage Model." *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 1988, 16 (4), 146-156

Brown, T. "Academic Advising: A critical Link Support the Development and Achievement of Students of Color." Academic Advising Summer Institute, National Academic Advising Association, ACT, Inc. 2000, 2

### **Presenters**

**Janis E. Murphy**, an Associate Professor of Education at Kentucky's Murray State University, is a multifaceted educator with over 30 years experience in teaching/mentoring diverse students. She has a Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of Minnesota, a Masters in Elementary Education from George Washington University, and has completed a Child Development Internship for Exceptional Children with Communication and Interaction Disorders under the direction of the Minneapolis Children's Medical Center.

Dr. Murphy is actively involved in Murray State University students' living/learning experiences, participates in community service projects, facilitates multicultural lectures, and encourages students' discussions related to academic and/ or popular interest topics.

**Elena Kornegay** is the Assistant Director of School Relations for African American Recruitment at Murray State University, Murray, KY. She has a bachelor's degree in Organizational Communications and will complete her Masters in Educational Leadership and Administration (December 2002) from Murray State. She coordinates the university-wide recruitment efforts for African American students and helps individual academic departments develop recruitment plans and set enrollment goals. She supervises the African American Recruitment team (students) as well as the African American Resource Team (faculty and staff).

Elana Kornegay has experience in diversity training, conflict management, and is involved in numerous professional as well as community service organization.

**Lee Kern** is an Assistant Professor in the College of Education at Murray State University, Murray, KY. She has a Bachelor's and Educational Specialist degree from Murray State and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. She teaches in the College of Education and also directs the COE Advising Center. Dr. Kern established the COE Advising Center in 1999 to enhance retention of education students. This endeavor is coordinated through her teaching of the Freshmen Orientation classes for education students.

Dr. Kern has a variety of counseling, advising, and teaching experiences across differing cultures. She has utilized these experiences to enhance her advising and teaching through inclusion of multiple perspectives of development, understanding, and learning. Measuring Success One Student at a Time.