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"CREATING PARTNERSHIPS AND A SUPPORTIVE SYSTEM IN THE MINORITY COMMUNITY"

Flamingo Tabyoyan Brown
Director of Community Relations
Jackson Community College

"We have succeeded in gaining a tremendous amount of support in the community and are recognized as a viable member of the minority community in Jackson, Michigan."

Creating Partnerships and a Supportive System in the Minority Community Jackson Community College (JCC) is located approximately 10 miles outside of the Jackson City Limits. Due to the location of the college the perception of the minority community was that JCC was not receptive to the needs of minority students and staff and was not committed to becoming part of the community in which most of our minority students and staff live.

My mission has been, and remains to be, to create partnerships within the minority community that disseminates accurate information regarding the benefits of attending JCC for minority youth. We have also become sponsors or co-sponsors for the most of the social activities, which occur in the community partnering with minority churches and minority organizations.

One of my first tasks, when appointed to the position of Director of Minority Affairs was to organize a Town Meeting which provided me the opportunity to seek minority community support for JCC and those who attended were provided the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding their concerns about the college. The meeting was very informative and I was able to establish a list of priorities with regard to issues involving minority students and the minority community.

My second task was to create an Advisory Council for the JCC Office of Minority Affairs. This council consisted of one of the JCC Board of Trustee members, minority community leaders, ministers, officers of organizations and my student workers. This group has become the steering committee for the issues my office addresses and the activities that we sponsor or cosponsor.

Each of the members of the Advisory Council committed themselves to disseminate information regarding JCC to their respective organizations as well as members of the minority community. I committed to attend their organizations meetings, when necessary to provide the entire organization with information, as required.

The Creation of the Partnerships
I identified three partnerships that I wanted to create and build upon. These partnerships were with the Martin Luther King Recreation Center, minority churches and minority organizations. I knew that these organizations would consist of individuals who were

members of many different boards, churches and organizations and would assist immensely in assisting me in getting the message to the minority community that we are a part of the community and are willing to assist them, whenever possible.

Partnership 1
The first partnership was established with the Martin Luther King Recreation Center (MLKC) located in the minority community. This center is frequented by most of the minority youth that live in Jackson. Meeting and functions are held at the MLKC to have a centralized location for churches and organizations for some of their major functions and provides a wide range of activities for youth.

Partnership 2
My second partnership was established with most of the minority churches. I attended each of their functions and purchased a table and an advertisement in their Souvenir Books. JCC has students who attend the churches that we have formed partnerships with.

Partnership 3
My third partnership was with organizations. I support organizations similar to the relationships with the churches with the exception of also providing them the opportunity to partner with the Office of Community Relations to bring some of their functions to the college. Most organizations did not realize that partnering with my office would allow them to have access to the facilities at JCC.

Measurable Outcomes of the Partnerships
These partnerships have resulted in a change in how JCC is perceived by the minority community. We continue to outreach and now have several minority events, which are held, at our Main Campus location. Previously the only minority event that was held at our campus was the Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Dinner. Some of the events we now host are:

* The Annual NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet.
* A Fashion Show which generate funds for one of our tuition-only scholarships at JCC provided to at-risk students in 6th grade, contingent upon their graduation from high school.
* The Ebony Fashion Show with one of the community organizations which will generate money for scholarships for college students and minority programming at JCC.

It has not been easy to establish these relationships, as each organization has to operate within the JCC guidelines, which my office is committed to work within. We have many success stories as well as a few failures. We have succeeded in gaining a tremendous amount of support in the community and are recognized as a viable member of the minority community in Jackson, Michigan.

Presenter:

Flamingo Tabyoyan Brown is Director of Community Relations for Jackson Community College. She began working for the college in its Prison Education Program in various positions since July 1992. She was appointed to the position of Director of

Minority Affairs in October 1995. Her title was changed to Director of Community relations in September 1997. She reports directly to the President of Jackson Community College and her job responsibilities include; advising the president and board of trustees on diversity issues at JCC and in the community, serving as a minority student and minority staff advocate and creating partnerships in the community.

Flamingo serves on several boards and was recently appointed and elected as a JPS Board Trustee. Other boards include the Citizens Advisory Council for the City of Jackson appointed by the Mayor, Jackson Club of Negro Business and Professional Women's Club, Inc., NAACP, Secretary -A. Philip Randolph Institute, Potential Development Homes and the Jackson Citizen Patriot Newspaper Focus Group. She received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Management of Human Resources in January 1992 from Spring Arbor College and a Masters of Arts in Education with concentration on Instruction and Curriculum.