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THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS: A TEMPLATE FOR CHANGE

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"Establishing a diverse academic community is not primarily about changing the way a system looks; it is about changing the way a system thinks and acts."

In an increasingly global and competitive world, it is imperative for an educational System; to move beyond historically set racial boundaries. This movement will increase the breadth of their capabilities to service diverse communities. The ability to become culturally competent insures longevity and improves the overall effectiveness of the institution.

Attracting a diverse group of people to an educational system will not mean much if the environment they find there, represses them and impedes the very qualities that makes them valuable. In order to create an environment that establishes a culture that is hospitable to, and respectful of its people's uniqueness, there must be an equitable distribution of diverse staff on all levels from policy positions to custodial positions. The total academic population should also reflect ethnic make-up of the community at large. The issues of Recruitment and Retention of African American faculty, staff and students have created institutional challenges throughout the country, clearly creating racial battlegrounds that result in lose/lose outcomes. The success of Historical Black Institutions in recruiting and retaining African American faculty, staff, and students and more recently other groups of color and Caucasians is primarily due to creating an environment of inclusion and respect. As diversity speaks to the breadth of differences in an institution; Recruitment and Retention speak to the integration and utilization of those differences to accomplish the goals of that system.

Recruitment and Retention as a system initiative seeks to leverage differences by establishing behaviors, policies, and practices that values all the people in the system and welcome their unique added value to help accomplish the goals of the system. An inclusive and diverse system creates environments that foster support, acceptance, and encouragement and maximizes people's ability to contribute their expertise to the system. Establishing a diverse academic community is not primarily about changing the way a system looks; it is about changing the way a system thinks and acts. The movement towards a strategic culture change is part of a larger movement among higher performing educational systems to simply pay more attention to their cultures and to not let them happen by chance.

Creating an environment where people are encouraged to bring their ideas to the table invariably enables people to contribute fully to their system mission so that everyone can

benefit from success.

In response to the serious problem with regard to recruitment and retention of African Americans in predominantly Caucasian institutions, my colleague and I developed a workshop where by a community collective approach to the problem could be introduced as one resource used in addressing the myriad of issues that participants may encounter in their perspective communities.

Recruitment and Retention Workshop
The workshop will focus on developing an effective template to assist institutions, their professionals, students and communities in making a positive impact on the problem. The recruitment and retention workshop will provide participants with a statistical snap shot of the problem from our institutional perspective, utilizing the cultural tools of our community through storytelling analysis. Participants will listen to the academic journey of two students.

In addition we will facilitate a Ghanian learning and consensus building process in which participants will develop a working template for change. This process will create a unified knowledge base and common language so participants can network across the country. The workshop will also enhance cultural competency, effective networking relationships, and the formulation of a leadership strategy.

Objectives of the Recruitment and Retention Workshop
The primary objectives of the Recruitment and Retention Workshop are to:
  * Enhance the capabilities of Predominantly Caucasian Post Secondary Institution staff, students and community to develop a working template for recruitment and retention of African American faculty, staff and students.
  * Facilitate the coordination of resources and the efforts of diverse academics.
  * Support innovations and develop a realistic Action Plan.