Recruitment of Students of Color

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Ask some questions…

Institutions differ in need, interest, philosophy. These are important to consider…

But there are some general assumptions and “best practice” approaches that we can discuss.
Who are “underrepresented students?”

It depends on whom your state or institution has defined as underrepresented

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- First Generation
- Geography
- Academic Interest
Ask yourself some questions…

Have underrepresented populations been identified?

What measure(s) has the institution used to determine lack of representation?

Why is an improvement in representation important to the institution?
Understanding Common Challenges

**Challenge: Low Income and First Generation Status**

• Over half of Hispanic (53.7%) and African American (52.6%) students came from families with incomes less than $25,000 per year, compared to 23 percent of white students.

• 14.1 percent of Hispanic students and 15 percent of African American students had a parent who had received a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 30 percent of all NELS students.

*Pew Hispanic Center Study (www.pewhispanic.org)*
Students’ Challenges

Challenge: Perceptions and Beliefs

- Pressure to represent, meet (exceed) expectations
- Discrimination
- Feelings of “not belonging”
- Conflict between family and academics (lack of support)
- Lack of knowledge and external support to navigate systems of higher education admission and enrollment
ASK the basic questions:

What are you doing to:

a) assess these challenges and
b) address challenges
Factors that most often influence students (and thereby affect successful enrollment efforts)

Research by Patricia McDonough (UCLA)

- Family support and background
  - Including parental guidance and expectations
  - Social class of the student’s family
- Peers’ decisions about college
- High school structures and expectations
  - Including guidance counselor assistance
- Institutional reputation and appearance
- Interest and guidance of institutional representatives
Same Questions: What are you doing to:

a) assess the factors that influence and

b) implement strategies and tactics to address them
Our Challenges

**Challenge: Establishing Institutional Priorities**

- The institution must be committed to recruitment and enrollment efforts that will aid and benefit underrepresented student populations.
Institutional Commitment

• Articulate the commitment to diversity.

• This is required at all levels—from the President throughout the institution.
  
  ▪ In the mission, guiding principles, vision statements.
  
  ▪ Leadership communicates the commitment with trustees, faculty, regents, etc.
  
  ▪ Everywhere--whether it be on web pages, in press releases, in commencement addresses.
Institutional Commitment

- Example: “The University prepares students for a diverse and technological world…”
  (Text from the UA Mission Statement)

- Example “Compared to other top research universities, the University of Arizona is unusually accessible to students of modest means and wide-ranging backgrounds.”
  (Text from the UA Mission Statement)
Institutional Commitment

- Articulate the commitment to diversity.
  
  - Example: “[W]e define diversity as a qualitative concept, applying not only to numbers and percentages, but to ways we interact with people who are different, while they are at the UA and beyond.”

  (UA Diversity Action Plan, 2002)
Our Challenges

**Challenge: Getting our own efforts in line with these priorities and what we learn:**

- What are we doing?
- What can we be doing?
- What will the benefits be?  
  *(probably the toughest question, but necessary)*
Our Challenges (be prepared...)

*Challenge:* Challenges from state and federal laws

- What are they (are we aware)?
- How do we respond? Reactive or?
Our Challenges (be prepared…)

**Challenge:** Challenges from the public (perception)

- How do they affect what we do (or don’t do)?
- How do we respond?
Our Challenges

**Challenge: What To Do / What Works?**

- What should or could you be doing to affect enrollments?
- How do you know your efforts are successful?
- What resources are needed?
- How do you get support?
What Can/Should We Do?

- “People economize on the energy needed to make distinctions”
  (Tom Brown, Thomas Brown & Associates)
What Can/Should We Do?

Lesson:

There is a tendency to ignore problems and issues when they seem too complex or difficult (or uninteresting)
What Can/Should We Do?

Respect for Cultural Differences

- Don’t assume needs and background based solely upon race or ethnicity.
- Recognize that student may be a “first-time minority” when coming to campus. In other words, their racial or ethnic group was a majority at the high school attended.
- Understand identity development models.
What Can/Should We Do?

Know “Why” Increasing Enrollments is Important

• It’s not simply “the thing to do”

• Public institutions have commitments to serve the residents of the state. Shouldn’t the campus population should ideally reflect the state/region’s population. This is not often the case.

• It is the mission of most institutions of higher education to attract and enroll a diverse student population.
What Can/Should We Do?

*Know “Why” Increasing Enrollments is Important*

- Students of color often do not have the same opportunities or encouragement (often as first-generation students) to attend college. Outreach efforts serve to provide these opportunities and encouragement.

- Higher education institutions are traditional centers for scholarly debate, research, social change, and innovation. Increasing minority perspectives helps this diversity of thought and ideas.

- Students grow intellectually and socially when they are exposed to other cultures and perspectives.
What Can/Should We Do?

• Measure diversity
  – Satisfaction surveys / exit surveys
  – Climate surveys (specific to climate of diversity and availability of resources)
  – Data regarding campus complaints, incidents, etc.
  – Even informal polls: How do faculty, staff, and students feel about campus diversity?

• Determine appropriate goals
  – Involve the enrollment management committee, diversity task force.
  – What is the community profile? What are historical enrollments?
  – What is the institution’s strategic plan suggest? Mission and vision?
What Can/Should We Do?

*Participate and engage in fundamental recruitment practices.*

- The best practices we strive to embed in our general recruitment and outreach activities are the same practices that we must engage in as we seek to increase diversity on campus.
- The strategies and action plans may differ, but the approach and discipline are the same.
- Involves a review and development of market research, goals, historical data, operational processes, etc.
Recruitment

*Participate and engage in fundamental recruitment practices means...*

*We approach the questions related to minority student recruitment in the same fundamental ways that we approach other recruitment efforts.*

- Assess enrollment history and trends.
- Conduct focus groups and surveys.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of various activities, including cost return and receptiveness.
- Review available literature and research, particularly regional information and long-term longitudinal studies.
# Recruitment

## Quantitative History and Goals
First-year Freshman (Hispanic) – Fall Term

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<th>Stage</th>
<th>2009 Goal</th>
<th>2008 Goal</th>
<th>2007 Fall</th>
<th>2006 Fall</th>
<th>2005 Fall</th>
<th>2004 Fall</th>
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<td>Applications</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Acceptance %</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Yield %</strong></td>
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Recruitment

*Participate and engage in fundamental recruitment practices.*

- Develop objectives that are specific and measurable. The most common include goals related to conversion rates and yields—we treat these as fundamental practices in all efforts.

- These data include inquiries, applications, deposits, enrollments.

- *Like any recruitment effort, you need to have goals and a plan.*
Recruitment

*Three important steps:*

Develop a plan

- Goals. Where should and will you be?
- Strategies. Develop specific to campus needs.
- Actions/activities specific to campus, related to strategies and with a desired effect on goals.
  - Who will be responsible?
  - When?
  - How often?
  - How will it affect goals?
  - How will it be evaluated?
  - What are costs associated with the action/activity?
Recruitment

*Participate and engage in fundamental recruitment practices.*

- Recognize that diversity should not be measured exclusively in terms of **numbers** of students; diversity is best measured in the (positive) experiences, attitudes, and exposure to new perspectives that students gain at the institution.

- Diversity does **begin** with measurable goals. These may be numbers or percentages, which are later measured against whether the efforts were successful or not successful.
Consider Messages

We approach minority student recruitment by asking many of the fundamental questions:

• What are the messages that resonate with target populations?
• What factors influence college choice? Interests?
• What are perceptions that students of color have about the institution?
Consider Messages and Audiences

A

Will not enroll at your school no matter what you do.

Influence

C

Students falling in this area will not enroll unless your institution does something to influence their decision.

B

Will enroll at your school no matter what you do.
Consider Messages

Lesson:

Don’t rely on one data element to make important decisions. There is a possibility of coincidence or unrelated variables appearing. Using data is good—so is common sense.
Consider Approaches

*Engage in non-traditional, culturally relevant approaches and activities.*

- Recruitment activities that go beyond college fairs and high school visits. These may include visits and collaborations with churches, community centers, etc.
- Early outreach activities that increase college awareness and encourage success. *Pipeline building.*
- Community relations. Who are the non-profit and business organizations that you need to know (and need to know you?) That you can partner with?
- Family relations. Are you investing time with families?
Consider Resources

Involve and utilize all campus resources.

- Particularly units that serve underrepresented populations (such as the cultural resource centers, TRiO, etc.); coordinate efforts. Messages and information need to be consistent.
- Faculty, staff, student awareness, input, and assistance.
- Identify, advocate, and assertively seek funding to cover needed costs.
Consider Resources

Work with Financial Aid and Scholarship offices to counter the problem of unavailability of (or perceived unavailability of) financial assistance.

• This is one of the most frequently repeated observations in literature regarding the decrease in minority students' participation in higher education.

• Make sure that avenues for educational funding are conveyed to students, through brochures, web pages, admission offer letters, etc.
Continually assess performance and seek to improve efforts.

- Surveys and focus groups; data regarding performance and activities.
- Establish services that guide and assist, rather than force the student to "discover" information or go it alone.
- Support and initiate the development of new pipelines, including partnerships with other organizations.
- Awareness and participation of staff ("accountability")
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Thank you!

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