

ED333856 1991-07-00 Pursuing Diversity: Recruiting College Minority Students. ERIC Digest.

ERIC Development Team

www.eric.ed.gov

Table of Contents

If you're viewing this document online, you can click any of the topics below to link directly to that section.

Pursuing Diversity: Recruiting College Minority Students. ERIC Digest..	1
WHAT IS THE INSTITUTION'S ROLE IN RECRUITING FOR DIVERSITY?.....	2
HOW ARE MINORITY GROUPS DISTINCT--FROM EACH OTHER AND FROM THE MAJORITY?.....	3
HOW IS THE RECRUITMENT OF MINORITY STUDENTS RELATED TO OTHER.....	3
WHO SHOULD RECRUIT, WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW?.....	4
SELECTED REFERENCES.....	4



ERIC Identifier: ED333856

Publication Date: 1991-07-00

Author: Astone, Barbara - Nunez-Wormack, Elsa

Source: Association for the Study of Higher Education.| BBB15669 _ ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education Washington DC.| BBB27915 _ George Washington Univ. Washington DC. School of Education and Human Development.

Pursuing Diversity: Recruiting College Minority Students. ERIC Digest.

THIS DIGEST WAS CREATED BY ERIC, THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ERIC, CONTACT ACCESS ERIC 1-800-LET-ERIC

WHY IS THE RECRUITMENT OF MINORITIES AN IMPORTANT NATIONAL CONCERN?

Present and future trends in population growth and in participation in higher education reveal that people of color in the United States are a dramatically increasing but seriously undereducated segment of society. By 2000, minorities will account for roughly 30 percent of the population (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990c). Even now, 27 percent of all public school students in the 24 largest city school systems are minorities (Hodgkinson 1986). Yet for nearly all minority groups, high school graduation rates are significantly lower than for the majority, and entry rates of college-age minorities into higher education are actually shrinking.

Government and industry alike have noted the potential economic effect of these alarming trends in education. With the projected increases in the minority population, the situation threatens to affect the national economy: Given the present level of minority education, the potential shortage of qualified workers equipped to meet the needs of the market is a serious concern (Economist 1990b; Hodgkinson 1983). Institutions of higher education are being called upon to exercise leadership in helping to address these problems before they take on even more critical proportions. The recruitment of minority students must therefore not only focus on more aggressive strategies to recruit those students who are already well prepared but also encompass long-term initiatives to improve existing educational conditions.

WHAT IS THE INSTITUTION'S ROLE IN RECRUITING FOR DIVERSITY?

Higher education institutions are the traditional centers for scholarly debate, research, innovation, and change in social matters. Increasing the presence of minorities and of minority perspectives in all aspects of the college and university is, in its broadest sense, a question of social change. Universities can provide vision, energy, leadership, and direction to other institutions, from school systems to government to business and industry, first to establish firmly the goal of excellence in minority education and then to pursue and achieve it (American Council on Education 1988). Through investigation into the subject of minority education and the effectiveness of responses at various levels, higher education institutions can bring the issue into focus. But beyond the social role, colleges and universities need to determine the ways in which diversity will be incorporated locally by identifying what the problems are with regard to their own institution. Are minority enrollments and graduation rates low and, if so, why? Do minority students feel welcome and are they part of the college community? Colleges need to evaluate their mission, objectives and policies, and the allocation of resources with minority education in mind.

HOW ARE MINORITY GROUPS DISTINCT--FROM EACH OTHER AND FROM THE MAJORITY?

Because they share many common concerns, people of color are frequently referred to as a single group. In fact, however, this population of African-Americans, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, and American Indians consists of an enormous variety of people from different racial, ethnic, language, and cultural backgrounds. As a group, clear distinctions--social, economic, and educational--can be made between minorities and the majority. Additionally, the obstacles they encounter include some that are not part of the experience of most majority students, even those who are disadvantaged. Limited proficiency in English and racial and ethnic prejudice are two examples.

With regard to higher education, however, the nature of the problems in each minority community is somewhat different, and each situation calls for solutions that are informed and responsive to the needs of each community. Preparation for college, language proficiency, immigrant or nonimmigrant (or refugee) status, time in the United States, gender, cultural influences, and financial condition are only some of the factors that vary from group to group and could have more or less significance in a particular minority group's educational profile. Recognizing and understanding the differences within and among the various minority populations are an important preface to the larger goal of achieving cultural diversity in higher education.

HOW IS THE RECRUITMENT OF MINORITY STUDENTS RELATED TO OTHER INSTITUTIONAL CONCERNS?

Because the ultimate goal in recruiting minority students must be graduation, recruitment is not an objective that can be pursued in isolation. The better integrated it is with the college's educational programs and services, the more opportunity it will have for success. Admissions and financial aid policies, strategies for retention, and opportunities for transfer are some of the areas intricately tied to recruitment that therefore can share common objectives (Carnegie Foundation 1989; Lenning, Beal, and Sauer 1980). Organizing strategies for recruitment that combine the human and financial resources of all these areas can be cost-effective. Above all, however, it will disseminate minority recruitment throughout the institution.

Effective recruitment of minority students should not only be coordinated with many different areas of the institution but also enlist the participation of people from different departments and at various levels of responsibility to work in concert as part of a comprehensive plan. Nontraditional models of recruitment teams can have significant success. Administrators, faculty, and staff from academic departments, including ethnic studies programs and centers, student services, and special program offices, such as

economic opportunity programs, can be organized to participate in the institution's strategy for recruitment.

WHO SHOULD RECRUIT, WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW?

Even when a formal structure for recruiting minority students exists, the function is commonly located in one of several different areas within a college's organizational structure. The recruitment of minorities can be administered through the regular operations of the admissions office, by a specially appointed officer, or through a variety of other possibilities. Rather than the location of the office, however, it is the institution's commitment to improving the education of minorities that will ultimately endow recruitment with its potential to be effective (Christoffel 1986). In this sense, the leadership and involvement of top administrators are fundamental.

Ideally an institutionwide effort conceived as a process rather than a program, recruitment of minority students would optimally engage all constituencies of the college--faculty, administrators, staff, and students--in a well-developed and deliberate plan designed to achieve specific, reasonable goals. The plan should be based on a comprehensive institutional audit reflecting the profile and present educational situation of minorities at the institution. It should be cooperatively designed, including the perspectives of those who will implement it, and should delineate the methods and resources designed to achieve its objectives within a stated time. Finally, it should be monitored, evaluated, and periodically modified to reflect changing conditions and to capitalize on aspects that emerge as being particularly successful.

SELECTED REFERENCES

- American Council on Education and Education Commission of the States. 1988. "One-Third of a Nation. A Report of the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life." Washington, D.C.: Author.
- Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. 1989. "Tribal Colleges: Shaping the Future of Native America." Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Christoffel, Pamela. 1986. "Minority Student Access and Retention: A Research and Development Update." New York: College Entrance Examination Board. ED 279 217. 10 pp. MF-01; PC-01.
- Economist. 3 March 1990. "Black Americans" 314(7644): 17-19.
- Hodgkinson, Harold L. 1983. "Guess Who's Coming to College: Your Students in 1990." Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Independent Colleges and Universities. ED 234 882. 4 pp. MF-01; PC-01.

-----, ed. 1986. "Higher Education; Diversity Is Our Middle Name." Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Independent Colleges and Universities.

Lenning, Oscar T., Philip E. Beal, and Ken Sauer. 1980. "Retention and Attrition: Evidence for Action and Research." ED 192 661. 134 pp. MF-01; PC-06.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. September 1990. "Money, Income, and Poverty Status in the United States--1989." Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 168. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

This ERIC digest is based on a new full-length report in the ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report series, prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education in cooperation with the Association for the Study of Higher Education, and published by the School of Education at the George Washington University. Each report is a definitive review of the literature and institutional practice on a single critical issue. Many administrators subscribe to the series and circulate reports to staff and faculty committees with responsibility in a report's topic area. Reports are available through subscriptions for \$80 per year (\$90 outside the U.S.). Subscriptions begin with Report 1 and conclude with Report 8 of the current series year. Single copies, at \$17 each, are available from: ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports, The George Washington University, One Dupont Circle, Suite 630, Washington, DC 20036-1183. Or phone (202) 296-2597.

This publication was partially prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. ED RI-88-062014. The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or the department.

Title: Pursuing Diversity: Recruiting College Minority Students. ERIC Digest.

Note: For full report, see HE 024 746.

Document Type: Information Analyses---ERIC Information Analysis Products (IAPs) (071); Information Analyses---ERIC Digests (Selected) in Full Text (073);

Target Audience: Policymakers, Administrators, Practitioners

Available From: ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports, ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, One Dupont Circle, Suite 630, Washington, DC 20036-1183 (\$1.00).

Descriptors: College Applicants, Cultural Differences, Demography, Enrollment, Higher Education, Institutional Role, Labor Force Development, Labor Supply, Minority Groups, Organizational Objectives, Social Change, Student Recruitment

Identifiers: Diversity (Student), ERIC Digests

###



[\[Return to ERIC Digest Search Page\]](#)