Black, Brown and College Bound

“One of a Million: Increasing Minority Male participation in Higher education”

Presentation DRAFT

I. Brief overview of minority male experiences in higher education (Jeff: 5 minutes)

Racial cultural identity development theory

- **Stages**
  - Students enter college at any stage
  - Develop at different rates
  - Norm is to enter college at early adult stage

- **Factors & Variables of adult stage**
  - Salience values
  - Student affairs goal and early adult stage

- **Current enrollment trends**

II. History of Project Challenge (Monique: 2 minutes)

**PROJECT CHALLENGE** is a program designed to recruit and retain African American males into college and give them a “jump start.” The concept and implementation of Project Challenge was initiated after Mr. Tom Heyward, Chairman of the State Board of Community Colleges expressed this concern about the rage and frustration experienced by Black males in the Los Angeles riots, and across the country. It was noted by education officials that Black males interviewed on live television revealed signs of not being formally educated. Many lacked certain grammatical qualities; most were unemployed and some were homeless.

Mr. Heyward offered a challenge to college presidents to develop ideas/suggestions for increasing the enrollment of Black males in Florida community colleges. Dr. Ed Hartsell, President of Pensacola Junior College, continued the challenge by asking members of the President’s Cabinet to suggest ways to increase Black male enrollment at Pensacola Junior College.

The string of colleagues continued when Dr. Charles Atwell, Executive VP at Pensacola Junior College, offered a challenge to the Student Affairs division to bring 25 Black males on campus for the summer term. The college would provide 25 non-refundable fee waivers and 25 student jobs. Upon receiving the challenge, the Student Affairs team and Dr. Gael Frazer, Assistant to the President for EA/EO, put
a plan together for implementation for Summer Term 1992- Project Challenge was born.

The Black males were identified and recruited using several means, (i.e., recruitments by the Minority Retention Office and the Minority Advisory Task Force Committee; announcements in churches, newspapers, and word of mouth. To be eligible, students were required to be Black males, meet Pensacola Junior College admissions requirements, and most likely would not have planned to attend college. The age range was 18-44. All but three of the students were between the ages of 18-22.

The project plan was designed around measurable objectives including activities such as: career planning, tutoring, counseling (academic, financial, personal), skills development and motivation. All of these activities were included in the course outline. The course was taught on a volunteer status by college staff at no cost to the college. The objective of the College Success course was to give the Black male student a jump start, similar to the concept of a freshman orientation with a “personal touch.” Additionally, the plan was to give [students] sufficient information and assistance so that they could use existing college resources (e.g. financial aid and counseling center) to fully support their college experience.

III. Current state of Project Challenge (14 minutes)

A. Class (Monique)

SLS 1101 College Success is a unique course, designed to introduce students to the basic skills that they will need in order to be successful in their quest for a college education. The major topics discussed are motivation, goal setting, learning styles, time management techniques, test-taking skills, and note-taking skills. This course also covers topics such as wellness, interpersonal relationships, employability skills, financial management, and other career planning topics.

The goal of this course is to assist students in learning academic, personal, and career skills which will help them to be successful in college and subsequently in the world of work. Therefore, this course was taught using many methods, including but not limited to class discussion, lectures, required readings and assignments, student presentations (individually and cooperatively), videos, and guest lectures. Student interaction and participation was welcomed and expected.
B. Experiential learning (Jeff)

In addition to classroom instruction and the MIIM program, students were exposed to weekly guest speakers, luncheons, a historical media presentation and two experiential learning opportunities held off campus.

Each Thursday, a guest speaker was welcomed to the classroom. The speakers offered nuggets of wisdom for the students to take with them on their journey through academia. The speakers included: Elvin McCorvey (NAACP) Jerry McIntosh (Movement For Change), E. Bennett (SCLC), Rob Gregg (Research Specialist), Gerald McKenzie (Attorney).

Mid-semester, a student/mentor luncheon was organized. After class, students were afforded downtime with their mentors. Student Leadership and Activities provided Subway sandwiches and the VP’s office provided Coca-Cola gratis.

The Daggs World Ford dealership was the first trip. Using a Pensacola State minibus, students traveled to Crestview, Fl to hear a motivational speech from Mr. Leon Daggs, the Dealer. Mr. Daggs’ speech helped dispel stereotypes associated with minority male collegiate goals and achievement expectations. The students toured the dealership and were able to view the new police Interceptor vehicles, which will not be available until 2013. The trip concluded with the assignment of mentors.

The students were afforded the opportunity to view the documentary, “The Freedom Riders” as an additional classroom activity and as a precursor to the final experiential learning experience.

The final experiential learning trip was to Montgomery Al. The students again traveled on a Pensacola State College minibus to tour several historical civil rights museums including: The Civil Rights Memorial Center, Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Rosa Parks Museum and the Martin Luther King Jr. Parsonage. The student experience on the MLK parsonage was perhaps the most profound. They each walked through the same home once occupied by the great civil rights leader, himself. They also sat at the kitchen table where he received his inspiration for his infamous “I have a Dream” speech. Even more moving was the opportunity for each of them to touch the table where the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) members founded the organization. The students had the additional privilege of meeting Mrs. Vera Harris, who along with her husband, helped organize transportation for African Americans negatively impacted by the Montgomery bus boycotts.
On this trip, the students gleaned knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement along with an appreciation for the harbingers who paved the way for the rights they receive today. The experience was invaluable.

C. Work Experience (Monique)

As an added component of the program, students may work on-campus as budget assistants. They are assigned to jobs based on their interest and availability. The students are limited to a maximum of 20 hours of work per week. Students are required to attend class from 10:30am-12:05pm, Monday through Thursday; they worked from 10am-4pm, with one hour for lunch. Students earned minimum wage pay and a very valuable work experience.

The persons listed on the work assignment sheet were responsible for daily job assignments, monitoring, supervising and evaluating the Black male students assigned to their department. **Daily class attendance is a requirement for keeping the job assignment.**

D. MIIM: Man-to-Man Mentoring Program (Jeff)

In 2011, Man-to-Man (MIIM), a new element was added to the Project Challenge program. MIIM is, by design, a mentor program created to further enhance retention efforts by aligning students participating in the Project Challenge program, with Black males who are currently employed by the College. President Ed Meadows encouraged a cohort of African American males to participate in the program, by way of email (attached). Students are paired with their MIIM mentor beginning in the Summer D session until the end of their first academic year. As a courtesy to the mentoring program, Mark Hopkins, Graphic Arts Professor, designed the logo.

In order to ensure the mentors success during the course of the students first year, Dr. Collins and Mr. Benjamin arranged training sessions for mentors to attend. These training sessions allowed mentors to ask questions to other already established mentors. Also the mentors will be asked to take the same Jung type personality test that was administered to the students. Taking the Jung type personality test is important when assigning mentors to mentees; it increases the chance that a student and a mentor will get along.

Also in an effort to give mentees and mentors chances to bond, out of classroom activities have been organized such as: luncheons and field trips.
IV. Moving forward: (Jeff & Monique: 4 minutes)

- The recruitment process should begin February of each year- as to give the recruiter substantial time to recruit students
- A pre-program orientation may be necessary in order to help students begin the program with all necessary paperwork, testing, FA essentials, completed.
- Intermittent meetings to help further engage students during and after the program may be necessary to help sustain momentum.
- The MIIM program mentor program suffered slightly due to a loss of 3 mentors early into the program- perhaps a signed “commitment” to students and the program might help mentors better engage in the process and more readily commit to the students' success.
- Students’ behaviors (tardiness to class, horseplay at work) have often been issues in years past. Some better explanation of collegiate/work-appropriate behaviors should be impressed upon the students.
- The end of the program travel was a huge success and should be an annual culmination of the program and should be continued in future programs.
- A new edition of the SLS textbook has been adopted. Thus, new textbooks will be purchased for the 2012 class. The program will continue to recycle the textbooks for future classes as resources deem appropriate.

V. Q&A