

**Community College of Philadelphia
Leadership Institute 2004-2005
Project Proposal**

Working Project Title

“Men of Color: Path to Power”

Team Members

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Summary of Problem or Challenge to be Addressed by the Project

The retention of male African American and Hispanic students is a critical concern for Community College of Philadelphia. The combined persistence rate of African American and Hispanic students is 35.5%. The College-wide persistence rate is 42.1%. Our proposed project seeks to increase retention of incoming male African American and Hispanic students through a series of seminars on academic and social issues affecting this group. The objective is to assist this group to achieve greater parity in persistence outcomes in comparison to the general student body.

While institutional factors, such as financial issues and course availability, contribute significantly to attrition among minority students, external factors such as family responsibilities, work responsibilities, and personal problems also have an impact on minority attrition. According to a study compiled by the Office of Institutional Research (IR), 18.3% of former African American students reported family responsibilities were a factor in discontinuing their studies, compared to 15.7% of former white students; and 14.1% of former African American students cited personal problems, compared to 7.2% of former white students.

The least successful students were male, minority, and young, an IR study found. The study listed the personal factors necessary for at-risk student success at the College as: confidence, determination, discipline, diligence, perseverance, and a desire to succeed. The study also indicated that a “belief that education is the key to success” was an important factor in student persistence. Among the institutional factors listed as key to at-risk student success was “encouragement from faculty and other students.” A low ratio of minority faculty to minority students is also a likely contributing factor as well as a lack of male role models, a lack of male instructors, and few planning and support programs for African American students.

Purpose of Project

The purpose of the project is to increase retention rates among incoming African American and Hispanic male students at the College.

Overview of Project

Men of Color: Path to Power is an AHANA Project (which stands for African American, Hispanic American, Asian American and Native American and is an acronym used widely at colleges and universities across the nation). AHANA Projects are designed to increase retention by assisting students at the critical point of entry to the college by helping them adjust to the demands of college-level course work. Men of Color: Path to Power strives to increase the retention, achievements, graduation, and leadership skills of African American and Hispanic males. The project focuses on African American and Hispanic men in higher education by reaching out to incoming freshmen and providing much-needed support during their transition to college.

The proposed project would support students during their critical first semester and through their matriculation at the college. Men of Color: Path to Power project aims to increase retention rates of this vulnerable population through a series of activities that focus on the particular issues surrounding this group. Ranging from academic to social events, the programming endeavors to give the participants an outlet and forum to voice their concerns and to adapt to and succeed in an academic setting. Activities may include workshops, lectures, off-campus retreats, intramural sports, and local and national conferences. Luncheon seminars would provide participants information on such topics as: facilitating adjustment to college life; fostering broad understanding of college support services; and providing support networks of committed staff, faculty, administrators and peer mentors to guide the students successfully toward graduation from the College.

During Summer 2005, the program would invite incoming African American and Hispanic male students to a kick-off event to introduce them to the program and explain how it can provide strategies for success at the College.

Several individuals on campus were consulted in developing the proposed project.

Dr. Marvin Bright, Dean of Students, and Sociology professor Waverly Duck are advisors for the recently formed African American Men's Book Club. The success of the Book Club is an indication of the need for further support for men of color at the College. The Book Club has 75 members and more than 50 regularly attend the monthly meetings. The Book Club includes discussions about various topics of interest to participants. Both Dr. Bright and Dr. Duck have a scholarly interest in this area and have expressed a willingness to assist on the project.

Claudia Curry, Director of the Women's Center, who heads a committee investigating the issue of retention on campus, was also consulted. This committee is charged with researching the reasons behind low retention rates at the College and to offer possible solutions.

The project team met with Dr. Bright, Dr. Duck and Ms. Curry on January 11, 2005 to gather further input on the project. The team also met with the African American Men's Book Club's steering committee on February 7th to obtain guidance and feedback regarding the project.

Advantage to Students/Benefits to College Community

The target populations of incoming African American and Hispanic male students would benefit from the proposed program by receiving the academic and social support they need to stay in college and succeed. Participants will be encouraged to continue their education and explore career options and possibly asked to serve as mentors for future participants.

Mini-Grant Proposal

A proposal was submitted to the Community College of Philadelphia Foundation Mini-Grant program on February 25, 2005 to fund the hiring of Peer Mentors. (See attached copy of the application.)

The team members decided to seek funding for the Peer Mentor component of the project after meeting with David Watters, Assistant/Dean/Director of Student Life, who indicated the Office of Student Life would contribute funds toward the seminar series in terms of hospitality and speaker stipends.

The proposal sought to increase retention of first-year African American and Hispanic male students by providing academic and social support through the assignment of peer mentors. Funding was requested to pay stipends to ten Peer Mentors, who would be responsible for meeting regularly with their assigned students and reporting on students' progress. Funding was also requested to pay a faculty coordinator to oversee and evaluate the Peer Mentors.

The issue of which department would assume responsibility for the team's mini-grant project arose while developing the proposal. Each of the three team members worked in different departments and the nature of the project spanned several departments in the College, including Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.

To resolve the issue, the team met with Judy Gay, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Sharon Thompson, Dean of Liberal Studies, who each reviewed the proposal and agreed to sign the mini-grant application. Ardencie Hall-Karambe, a faculty member in the English department, agreed to be the project director and assume responsibility for the project, and her department head, John Howe, also signed the application.

The Mini-Grant Program committee chose not to recommend the project for funding. In a letter to the team members, the committee stated their concerns included the use of paid mentors to provide support to students and the future sustainability of the project.

Collaboration with African American Men's Book Club

In consideration of the mini-grant committee concerns as well as feedback with other interested parties, the Project hopes to coordinate and possibly co-sponsor activities with the African American Men's Book Club. The team members will seek to meet further with that Club and

proceed with seminars and events that foster their efforts as well as incorporate the participation of Hispanic male students.

Evaluation Plan for Project

The project would be evaluated through evaluation forms distributed to participants at the end of each seminar and by obtaining informal feedback from participants on an ongoing basis. The retention of students, in terms of both participating in the program and attending the College, would be tracked each semester. Departing students would be contacted to find out why they are leaving (if not graduating or receiving a certificate). Team, is this still accurate?

Plan for Sharing Results of Project with College Community

Results of the project will be shared with the College community through use of existing communication vehicles. These include:

- Creation of a web-based annual report on the College's website that cites the activities and measurable statistics associated with the program.
- A list serve message sent to the College community providing an overview of primary features of the report and including a link to it on the web.
- A panel during Professional Development Week that will share the results of the prior year and discuss possible improvements and expansion of the program.
- Articles on the program in internal publications, such as *Transcripts*, and external publications.
- An invitation to the student newspaper to publish an article by a program participant.
- Invitations to outside media to cover events.

RESEARCH CONDUCTED

In addition to meeting with a variety of individuals on campus as stated above, the team researched retention issues at the College and at academic institutions across the country.

Institutional Research

Studies consulted included: "Student Attrition at CCP" (Report #120); "Why Do Students Drop Out of Community College of Philadelphia? (Report # 108); and "Reasons for Student Attrition at Community College of Philadelphia" (Report #137). Tables consulted included "Distribution of Full-Time Faculty, Administrators and Classified Employees By Gender and By Racial/Ethnic Background" (Table 36). Jane Grosset and Dawn Sinnott provided input on what reports would be most useful. Dawn also met with the team and provided valuable guidance with regard to the evaluation of available statistics.

Internet

An article found on the Internet – “Regents adopt ideas to increase black male enrollment,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution, May 22, 2003, contributed to the research.

The following Web sites were consulted in formulating the project idea:

http://sunews.syr.edu/honorroll/sa_aamc.html
http://www.easycart.net/CoxMatthewsandAssociates/Gender_Issues_On_Campus.html
http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0DXK/is_18_20/ai_110619171
http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0DXK/is_18_17/ai_67582269
http://www.uapb.edu/source/news/news_blackmale_incollege.html
<http://www.camdencc.edu/camdenccampus/studlife.htm>
<http://www.dccc.edu/studentervices/camplife/clubs.html>
http://ww2.wpunj.edu/adminsrv/pub-info/Releases/04_AALCMconf43.htm
<http://www.aascu.org/ewd/federal.htm>
<http://www.ucsa.org/Final%20Registration%20Packet.pdf>
http://www.usg.edu/aami/Enhancing_Access.pdf
<http://www.oma.ku.edu/brotherskeeper/generalinfo.shtml>
<http://miamigsca.tripod.com/>
http://www.naacp.org/departments/education/education_index.html
<http://www.college.ucla.edu/up/aap/default.html>
<http://www.mc3.edu/sa/stact/stact.htm#afriam>
http://www.bucks.edu/sga/clubs_orgs.html
<http://www.csom.umn.edu/page17.aspx>
<http://www.oma.ku.edu/symposium/agenda.shtml>
http://www.statenews.com/editions/102299/ca_retainment.html
<http://www.usstudents.org/coalitions/translate.asp?xsl=npssc.xsl>
<http://www.trincoll.edu/orgs/moca/>
http://www.mdc.edu/homestead/student_life/default.asp