



# NATIONAL COUNCIL ON BLACK AMERICAN AFFAIRS OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

## Northeast Region Summer 2008 Newsletter

### REMOVING BARRIERS TO STUDENT SUCCESS: A CONTINUUM FROM RECRUITMENT TO GRADUATION AND THE WORKFORCE

#### Enhancing the Community College Pathway to Engineering Careers for Underrepresented Minorities

Dr. Irving P. McPhail, Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer, National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering, Inc. (NACME) NCBAA NE Region Board of Directors

The role of the community colleges in increasing access to engineering careers is not well known to the public, or even to the engineering community. Recent National Science Foundation (NSF) data demonstrate that 50 percent of African Americans, 64 percent of Native Americans/Alaska Natives, and 55 percent of Latino science and engineering bachelor's and master's degree recipients in 2004 and 2005 attended community colleges. With the critical mass of African American, Native American and Latino students in the nation's community colleges, a unique opportunity exists to increase diversity with equity in the engineering workforce. The mission of the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME) is to provide leadership and support for the national effort to increase the representation of successful African



American, Native American and Latino women and men in engineering and technology, math and science-based careers.

Dr. McPhail presented a clearly delineated community college pathway to engineering careers strategy currently underway at NACME.

Dr. McPhail, the conference keynote speaker, was raised in Harlem, New York, and holds a bachelor's degree from Cornell, a master's from Harvard Graduate School of Education and a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania. He has served as chancellor of the Community College of Baltimore County, president of St. Louis Community, Florissant Valley, president of LeMoyne-Owen College, and has held senior tenured faculty positions at Morgan State University, Delaware State University and Pace University.

#### The Black Minority and STEM, a Necessary Nexus in the 21st Century

Dr. Reginald A. Blake, Physics Department, New York City College of Technology  
Project Director of the Black Male Initiative at New York City College of Technology

The laws of motion as explained by Newton and other scientists help us to understand and explain the world around us. Objects remain at rest or continue in uniform (constant speed and straight line) motion unless a motive or non-zero net force acts upon them. The non-zero net force is supplied by external means. This presentation makes the analogy that for minorities to benefit from STEM academics and thereby change the dismal, unprogressive, uniform motion course or the stagnant, unproductive equilibrium posture, a motive force must also be supplied. But to cause a change in motion (velocity) in a positive direction, unlike the non-zero external force of Physics, an internal motive force must be administered. The presentation explored this intrinsic internal force as

a key requirement in any plan for minority success in STEM. Dr. Blake suggested that this key requirement has to be recognized and identified in the education of the Black Minority. Self desire and internal motivation, which may not have been stressed before as important parts of the solution to the question of the lack of minority participation in STEM, are highlighted here as necessary and sufficient conditions for success in STEM. These important ingredients hold the power to human transformation, and they provide strategies for involving minorities in accepting the responsibilities for their own security. Dr. Blake discussed proven methodologies for recruiting and retaining African American males in STEM (Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics) programs.

#### Retaining the African American Male Student: A Synergistic Approach

Gregory Mason, Program Director for  
Strategic Planning, Cincinnati State  
Technical & Community College



By utilizing retention practices based on established models for urban student persistence and achievement, Cincinnati State's Black Male Initiative enhances Black male retention by focusing on building positive relationships between African-American male students and the school, and between the students themselves, in and out of the classroom. This relationship building is accomplished through a holistic approach that emphasizes coordination of existing student services, with additional opportunities for mentoring, counseling and group specific activities, coupled with increased interaction with academic advisors and close monitoring of academic performance.

The Black Male initiative also focuses on strengthening the "connectivity" between the students and the institution through mentoring, and supported with retention efforts related to students' majors and close monitoring of academic performance which have all had a positive impact on retention of African American Male students.



Left to right: President David Levinson, President Calvin Woodland, and Chancellor Marc Herzog in attendance at opening session of annual spring conference.

## Maintain to Retain: The Men of Color Imperative

Capital Community College's Black and Latino Male Resource Center  
Carlos Soler and Dwayne Brewington—Co-Coordinator  
Patton E. Duncan- Academic Coordinator

*"This notion is becoming increasingly evident. It takes an entire college to lift a cohort of young men."*

*Josiah Ricardo-Rivera, Associate Professor of Sociology, Capital Community College*

Through Capital's involvement in the Achieving the Dream, Capital has succeeded in planning and exerting a targeted effort to reduce the achievement and retention gaps impacting male students of color. The strategies implemented include a Multidimensional Approach, Multifaceted Support, a Male Resource Center and an Advisory Board composed of college leaders.

### Multidimensional Approach

At the outset of each academic year, all male students of color are invited to an orientation where they are formally introduced to the Center and to key academic and student support services. During the semester, if a student is demonstrating difficulty in a class, the corresponding faculty member is asked to contact the Center so the Center may intervene to assist the student in receiving appropriate support in a timely manner. Students may also visit the Center as needed to receive mentoring and guidance.

The Center also tracks student retention from semester to semester. The Center contacts all non-returning students of color to identify the cause of a discontinuation and works with the student to find a possible solution. Additional targeted activities

include an annual conference focused on persistence, academic workshops, self-development seminars, employment and internship assistance and the creation of a student success course designed specifically for male students of color.

### Multifaceted Support

Early in the planning process, it became apparent that the success of a male resource center would require the involvement, engagement, and support of the entire college community. Faculty and staff play a pivotal role in informing students about the newly formed initiative and encouraging their participation. The endorsement and support of key college leaders at the inception of the intervention was integral to the launch of the effort. A diverse group of faculty, staff and administrators formed an Advisory Committee.

### Early Success

The creation of the Male Resource Center, The Center's Advisory Committee and the wide range of support and dedication have strengthened the Center's ability to be fully institutionalized. Capital's fall to spring retention rates of Black and Latino male students have increased since the creation of the Center.

*Andre Freeman*

*Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Co-Chair of Achieving the Dream Initiative  
Capital Community College*



NCBAA Board Members (L) Dr. Michael Gillespie (r) Dr. Cheryl Smith

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT Dr. Calvin E. Woodland

*"A good teacher is like a candle – it consumes itself to light the way for others."*

*Author unknown*

This past academic

year has been a very productive and successful one for the National Council for Black American Affairs (NCBAA-NE) Northeast Region. Over the years, this organization has devoted its energies



and collaborative efforts in working with colleagues throughout the region and around the country to provide high quality professional development programs at its annual spring conference. With the increased demand from policymakers and the public for accountability, fiscal pressures and demographic shifts in higher education, the National Council for Black American Affairs has sought to provide its constituencies with access to expertise and provide qualitative research that fosters innovation and relevancy that enhance teaching effectiveness, provide quality student support services and ensure student success.

The theme of this edition of NCBAA-NE's newsletter is focused on *Removing Barriers to Student Success: Recruit, Retain, Graduate*. Included in this issue you will find abstracts of several outstanding workshops presented at the 2008 spring conference held at Norwalk Community College, Norwalk, CT. on March 13-14, 2008. Addressing the crisis of men of color in higher education was the overarching theme in the workshops. The conference opened with an outstanding presentation by Dr. Irving McPhail, Chief Operating Officer, National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME). In addressing the theme, *Toward a Comprehensive Strategy to Developing a Community College Pathway to Engineering Careers*, Dr. McPhail noted that the community college has been the primary pipeline for matriculating students enrolled in America's schools of engineering. Responses to evaluations of the conference rated the conference as being very relevant with high quality program presenters.

I hope that you will find the articles informative and instructive in guiding your professional activities. On behalf of the NCBAA-NE Region Board, I would also like to express our appreciation for your continuing support and look forward to your participation in next year's conference. Please let us know how we can serve you better in meeting your professional goals.



## THE BLACK MALE INITIATIVES

### The Cooperative Initiative at LaGuardia Community College

Francine White, Professor at LaGuardia Community College and Chairperson of the College's Cooperative Education Department

LaGuardia Community College's black male dropout rate before 2005 was about 60%. During that year, in keeping with one of the goals of the College's strategic plan supporting student success and embracing diversity, the College's Center for Enrollment Management developed a program to specifically address this problem. LaGuardia's black male student population has increased, the College has embraced a campus culture of heightened awareness concerning the plight of black male students, images of blacks in general and black males in particular are more prominent in College promotional materials, and more academic and career development-related support services for black male students are available.

To further address the College's concerns for black male recruitment, development, retention, and graduation, LaGuardia's Cooperative Education Department has developed an internship model that includes recruiting black males while introducing "new" mentoring and retention support resources.

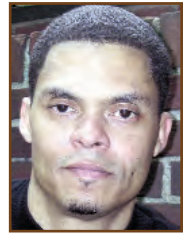
Professor White is taking the Department in new directions with a current emphasis on a Black Male Empowerment initiative, an international internship initiative, an entrepreneurial initiative, initiatives in course pairing and learning communities and a focus on researching and documenting the Departments' contribution to student persistence and success.

### The Black Male Initiative: A Report from the Field

Dr. Doug Thompkins,  
Assistant Professor of Sociology,  
John Jay College NY

For the past two years, researchers at John Jay College have been conducting research which investigates the attitudes and perceptions of Black men and other groups of students towards education and their own abilities to be successful. Focus group interviews of high school students and college students have been conducted, with a written survey being administered to Black males currently attending college. In addition, focus group interviews of former prisoners, social service providers, and criminal justice practitioners have also been conducted for the purpose of investigating the relationship between participation in-prison and post-prison educational programs and employment opportunities for former prisoners. The data here suggest that some of the beliefs that main stream society have about Black men and education, may not be as true as many continue argue. In addition to read, the relationship between participation in-prison education and employment opportunities after release varies across race with this difference often being linked to issues other than race.

**Dr. Thompkins**, a graduate of the University of Chicago, is a member of the Advisory Committee for the Prisoner Reentry Institute at John Jay College and an Advisor to the Public Safety Initiative run by the Lifers Organizations at the state prison in Graterford, PA.



Presenters on Male Retention Programs at Norwalk Community College/Capital Community College.



NCBA Board Members (top) Dr. Russell Davis, (bottom) Prof. Sonia Jackson & Dr. Barbara Gaba



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AWARDS, APPOINTMENTS, AND HONORS

**Dr. G. Duncan Harris**, associate dean of academic affairs at Manchester Community College, received the 2008 Connecticut Higher Education Community Service Special Award. Dr.



Harris was honored for his work with Alpha Academy, a mentoring program at the Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School in Hartford. The Alpha Academy connects college student mentors from Wesleyan University and Trinity College with male 5th and 6th graders on a weekly basis.

**Dr. Calvin E. Woodland**, president of Capital Community College, was honored as "Man of the Year" at the State of Connecticut African-American Affairs Commission Awards Program.

**Dr. Regan Hicks-Goldstein**, dean of student services at Delaware Technical and Community College, graduated from Delaware State University with a Doctorate in Educational Leadership, Administration and Supervision.

**Dr. Ron Wright**, who has more than thirty years of experience working in community colleges, was appointed chancellor of Delgado Community College at the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) Board of Supervisors meeting on May 14, 2008. He will officially begin serving as chancellor on July 1, 2008.

Dr. Wright, former president of Cincinnati State

Technical and Community College, also has been executive vice president of Delaware County Community College, vice president for academic and students affairs at the Community College of Baltimore and chief policy analyst for the Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Delgado Community College is a member of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System. Delgado was established in 1921 and is the largest and oldest community college in the State of Louisiana. As of fall 2007, Delgado had the largest enrollment among all higher education institutions in metropolitan New Orleans with 13,217 degree-seeking students and nearly 9,500 students in Workforce Development programs.

**Dr. Gwendolyn W. Sanders**, VP Public Relations of NCBA/NE Region and one of the founding members of NCBA, received the NCBA National Leadership Award. Dr. Sanders has served as the National Vice President of Organizational Vitality and President of the Northeast Region. She has been the bedrock for the organization in various capacities on the regional and national levels. NCBA applauds Dr. Sanders' unwavering commitment to African American and Latino students, faculty, staff and administrators.



NCBA Board Member, Dr. David Rudder (top left) and other conference attendees.

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\*National Board Representative