Black in Higher Education:
The State of the African-American Student

Annice E. Fisher, AAKC National Co-Chair
Taris Mullins, AAKC Public Policy Chair
Introductions

Annice E. Fisher
- African-American Knowledge Community National Co-Chair
- Transfer Student Retention Coordinator, UNC-Chapel Hill

Taris G. Mullins
- African-American Knowledge Community Public Policy Chair
- Residence Hall Director, New York University

Who is in the room? Why did you choose to attend?
About the African-American Knowledge Community

The Mission of the AAKC is to increase the Knowledge community members' awareness of, knowledge about, and appreciation for issues unique to African American professionals working in higher education, and in particular student affairs.

The African-American Knowledge Community also seeks to educate the NASPA membership on trends and issues related to African-American professionals and students. This is done through sharing information on research, campus issues, and mentoring.
Session Overview

- National College Completion Statistics
- Education Policy and Legislative Climate
- Conversation on Black Student Retention and Graduation Rates
- Success and Campus Support Initiatives
- Beyond “Blackness”
Educators will:

- Discuss emerging national trends impacting the African-American college student experience;
- Understand the sociocultural and institutional barriers African-American students face to accessing higher education;
- Identify effective measures to combat the attrition of African-American college students;
- Develop and share best practices to measure the persistence of African-American college students.
Current World Standing

Implications for the future standings

The United States faces a major demographic challenge in the next few decades. The Latino population, at nearly 47 million, is projected to increase to nearly 86 million by 2030. The future economic success of the U.S. work force depends in large part on the education, skills, and productivity of young people, who are increasingly racial and ethnic minorities. Although both the baby boom and Generation X cohorts are the best educated in American history, the future is not as clear for upcoming generations. By 2030, 43 percent of all youth (ages 15 to 24) are projected to be black or Hispanic. If current gaps in school enrollment and completion rates among blacks and Hispanics persist, the United States may not have the work force it needs to succeed in today’s global, knowledge-based economy.

As a result, there is an increased interest in the success of underrepresented students

http://www.prb.org/pdf10/65.1unitedstates.pdf
What contexts are our students coming from?

- Urban centers, suburbia, and rural regions of the country
- Taxes and relationship to public school funding and resources
- Where are the role models?

Video:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4dhGb3Q3hk
- Race to the Top has its pluses and minuses
Fisher vs. University of Texas
- Raised the question of race-informed admission policy
- The institution must “narrowly tailor” their usage

Shelby County vs. Holder
- Voting Rights Act of 1964
- States are able to change voting laws without federal approval

Policy Briefs will be posted on the AAKC Website
The Completion Agenda

- **Increase the U.S. College Degree Attainment Rate from 40 to 60%**
  - 10 million additional Americans ages 25-34 with an associate or baccalaureate degree (includes 8 million beyond projected growth)
  - Focus: Access, Quality, Completion

Higher Education Act

- HEA governs how federal dollars are awarded to students and institutions.
- Up for renewal and everyone has an opinion on what it should include.

College Affordability & Performance-based Funding

- States fund colleges based on performance
- Income Cap Loan repayment programs
- Race to the top for higher education
- College Rating Systems by 2015
Retention & Graduation Trends and Factors
Graduation Trends by Institution Type

6-Year Graduation Rates for Students Enrolling at 4-Year Institutions in 2004, by Type of Institution and Race

Asian students at four-year private nonprofit colleges had the highest graduation rates, while multiracial students at for-profit colleges fared the worst.

Note: Figures are for students who first enrolled in 2004 seeking a bachelor’s or equivalent degree from a four-year institution. The Education Department’s racial/ethnic categories are mutually exclusive.

Source: U.S. Education Department

http://chronicle.com/article/6-Year-Graduation-Rates-for/140371/
# Degrees Awarded by Race, Ethnicity, Gender, 2010-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Degrees Awarded</th>
<th>Distribution of degree by race and ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage of total degrees awarded to women</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Bachelor's</td>
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<td>Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander</td>
<td>3,976</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 or more races</td>
<td>19,078</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race unknown</td>
<td>112,172</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonresident alien</td>
<td>52,577</td>
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Graduation Trends
Historically Black Colleges and Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Historically black colleges and universities</th>
<th>All students</th>
<th>African-American students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Spelman College (Ga.)</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Howard U. (D.C.)</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Xavier U. of Louisiana</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hampton U. (Va.)</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Morehouse College (Ga.)</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tougaloo College (Miss.)</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Selma U. (Ala.)</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Fisk U. (Tenn.)</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Elizabeth City State U. (N.C.)</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tuskegee U. (Ala.)</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Minority-Serving 4-Year Colleges With the Best 6-Year Graduation Rates, 2011
Where are the Black Graduates?

Reframe the question to: Where are the leaks in the pipeline?

National four-year high school graduation rates

- 1 million students enter ninth grade but many do not graduate in 4 years
- 7,000 kids drop out a day
- U.S. four year high school graduation rate is 70% overall
- Graduation rate for Black and Latino students is 50%

National Conference for State Legislators, Task Force on Dropout Prevention and Recovery
Where are the leaks in the pipeline?

- Nationally U.S. drop out rates have decreased from 12% in 1999 to 7%
  - Latinos lead the drop out rate with 13%
  - Low income students have a 10% rate
  - African Americans students have a 7% rate
  - White students have a 5% rate

- School tracking starting in third grade
- School to prison pipeline
- 82% of U.S. prisoners are high school drop-outs
Black students arrive to campus

Pre-College Barriers

- Insufficient academic preparation
- Limited college knowledge
- Cultural conflict
- Limited familial support
- Financial constraints
- Low expectations

Barriers in College

- Institutional Culture
- Systemic Racism
- Financial Constraints & Literacy
- Low expectations
- Balance of pre-college life and family
- Normalizing help-seeking behaviors
- Dilemma of the diversity commitment
Black students on your campus

- What pre-college factors impact student performance at your institution?
- What factors exist within the institution that impact student performance on your campus?
- What individual factors impact students on your campus?
Dr. Harper’s work on Black males in college

1. Start with standards
2. Recognize they are not all the same
3. Remember they too are men
4. Seek inspiration and not replication
5. Form consortia and alliances

Figure 2. Eight Standards for Black Male Campus Initiatives

I. Inequities are transparent and data are used to guide institutional activities.

II. Black undergraduate men are meaningfully engaged as collaborators and viewed as experts in designing, implementing, and assessing campus initiatives.

III. Actions are guided by a written strategy document that is collaboratively developed by various institutional stakeholders, ranging from undergraduate students to the college president.

IV. Learning, academic achievement, student development, and improved degree attainment rates are prioritized over social programming.

V. Initiatives are grounded in published research on college men and masculinities in general and on Black male undergraduates in particular.

VI. Efforts are enhanced by insights from Black male student achievers.

VII. Institutional agents engage in honest conversations about racism (and other -isms) and their harmful effects on Black male student outcomes.

VIII. At every level, institutional agents are held accountable for improving Black male student retention, academic success, engagement, and graduation rates.

Black females in college

- **Black women outpace all racial groups in college enrollment**

- Still experience racial and gender microaggressions; however, they continue to persist despite the mental health effects.

- Spiritual support and coping mechanisms are important

- **Intersectional Microaggressions for College Women by Joanna Lee Williams and Tonya M. Nichols**

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Room for Black Females and Males at the table

Figure 1. Percentage of 25- to 29-Year-Olds Who Attained a Bachelor’s Degree or Higher, by Race/Ethnicity and Sex, 2011

Women Outpace Men In College Enrollment

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<th>Race</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>% point gap, women/men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>+13 women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>+9 men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>+12 women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>+4 women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>+10 women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>+1 man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>+3 women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the October Supplement to the Current Population Survey. Note: % point gap calculated prior to rounding. White, black and Asian include the Hispanic portion of those groups. Due to the small sample size for Hispanics, blacks and Asians, a 2-year moving average is used.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER


Shaun Harper’s 5 Things Student Affairs Administrators Can Do to Improve Success Among College Men of Color.
Success and Campus Support Initiatives / Interventions

- **Pre-College Enrollment Programs**
  - Florida State CARE Program: Center for Academic Retention & Enhancement
  - Upward Bound, GEAR UP partnerships
  - Partnerships with local community

- **Transitional Opportunities**
  - Summer Bridge Programs
  - Campus Mentorship Initiatives (targeted to faculty/staff)

- **Partnerships with Academic Affairs**
  - University of Maryland, Baltimore County
  - Freeman Hrabowski, III

- **Targeted Student Engagement & Leadership**
  - Supports preparation and development for job interviews / internships, study abroad, and graduate school (Harper, 2012).
Beyond “Blackness”

Understanding the idea of “onlyness”

“The psychoemotional burden of having to strategically navigate a racially politicized space occupied by few peers, role models, and guardians from one’s same racial or ethnic group” (Harper et al., 2011, p. 190).

Intersecting identities

Race, sexual orientation, gender (identity / expression), socioeconomic status, first-generation status etc. each influences the experience of black students in higher education.
How are Black students faring on your campus?
- Academically
- Socially
- Engagement
- Wellness

What factors exist within the institution that impact Black student performance on your campus?

Where do we go from here?
Recommendations for Practice

- Strengths based approach versus a deficit model
  - Study success and areas of challenge on the retention pathway

- At the campus level
  - Understand the academic expectations of your institution
  - Question your retention and graduation data for Black students
  - Debunk the shared responsibility mindset and instead adopt an institutional responsibility approach for persistence of black students
  - Work with academic affairs to support strengths based academic interventions
  - Educate families and support networks
  - Support micro-communities within greater black student collective (i.e., student organizations, advocacy, visibility, etc.)

- At the national level
  - Community engagement
  - Looking beyond the “exceptions” to circumstance
  - K-12 / postsecondary partnerships (GEAR UP, Upward Bound, etc.)


