Understanding Minority Male Persistence and Encouraging Student Success: One Year Later

A Timeline of Recent Efforts at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

UNC-Chapel Hill is working to better understand the experiences of minority male undergraduate students on its campus and to provide better support for their academic success. With academic advisors, faculty, staff and our senior administration, we are striving to gain a strengths-based appreciation of the student experience of minority males and identify best practices for encouraging their success.

In 2011, staff in the Office of Undergraduate Education completed an internal study on the experiences of successful minority male students. The preliminary results of the study were shared at the 2011 National Symposium on Student Retention. Since that time, the University has significantly increased efforts to explore and support the retention and persistence of underrepresented male students.

### 2011

- **Minority Male Retention Study:**
  - The results of the first internal study on the experiences of successful minority male students at UNC are shared across the University and at two national conferences.
  - The study suggested that successful minority male students at UNC—Chapel Hill:
    - I. Are skilled at academic self-management.
    - II. Have self-awareness of their academic strengths.
    - III. Engage in learning activities outside of the classroom.
    - IV. Are likely to intentionally engage with non-minority students.
    - V. May or may not participate in mentorship.

### January, 2012

The University hosted a Forum on Minority Male Student Success for faculty, staff, and students from across campus to explore the habits, perspectives and behaviors of successful male students of color. The day was designed to:

- Continue the momentum that has developed across campus to better understand the needs of Carolina’s undergraduate men of color.
- Respond to student appeals for support, consideration and action on this critical issue.
- Enhance communication and collaboration among groups working with undergraduate men of color.
- Take a strengths-based approach to understanding and supporting the recruitment, retention, graduation and overall success of our male students of color.
- Examine current efforts and exchange new ideas concerning male mentoring opportunities.

Dr. Shaun Harper, a national expert on minority male student success, was the keynote speaker.

### March, 2012

Carolina M.A.L.E.S., a student-led organization, was founded to focus on improving academic, cultural, and social success of minority students at UNC. The group works closely with faculty and University administrators to create programs, policies, and services that support and unite minority male students around academic success.

### Fall, 2012

**Carolina Millennial Scholars Program (CMSP)**

CMSP is a comprehensive program that invites entering first-year and transfer African American, American Indian, and Latino male students to join a cohort of scholars in a program to promote academic and professional success. This retention, persistence and mentoring program is designed to provide students with academic, social, and cultural support in an effort to increase the number of minority males who not only graduate but are also engaged and effective leaders throughout their time at Carolina and beyond.

### 2012

**Changes for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs**

The vice provost positions for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs was elevated from associate vice provost to vice provost. The vice provost for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs (DMA) serves UNC-Chapel Hill as chief diversity officer and serves on both the Provost’s and Chancellor’s Cabinet. DMA serves the University in the areas of diversity education, recruitment, and research on diversity in higher education, and student success in underrepresented populations.

DMA’s portfolio also expanded to include five new positions. These new roles will enhance DMA's focus on student success and retention:

- **Senior Director for Education, Operations and Initiatives**
- **Director for Inclusive Student Excellence**
- **Director for Research, Assessment and Analysis**
- **Educational Programs Coordinator**
- **Diversity Expert in Residence**

**Intentional Collaborative Efforts at Carolina**

The efforts outlined above are possible with the partnership and leadership of several stakeholders invested in student success, including undergraduate students, the Office of Undergraduate Education, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, the Division of Student Affairs, the Department of Athletics, and faculty.

### Next Steps at Carolina

In November 2012, the Director for Retention and the Vice Provost for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs will participate in a state wide meeting hosted by the UNC System General Assembly: “Improving Retention and Completion Rates for Minority Males at UNC.”

In January 2013, Undergraduate Education will hire a Transfer Student Coordinator to support the growing number of transfer students at Carolina. Many of these students will also be minority, male and first generation college students.

In the Spring of 2013, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs will host the first annual 3MP (Minority Male Mentoring) transfer day. It will invite minority male students from community colleges to explore opportunities at Carolina.

The University is committed to continued collaboration across campus to encourage the academic success of minority male students at our University and to meet their unique needs. While we are glad to make progress on this important issue, we know there is much work still ahead. We welcome ideas and best practices from our colleagues.

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