

Chapter 1

Existing Retention Strategies: Their Shortcomings and Benefits

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ABSTRACT

Most HBCUs have come up with a number of retention strategies which are largely implemented through the support that these institutions receive from the federal government in form of grants. Some of the strategies that will be examined in this work include (a) social integration/social involvement, (b) first year programs, (c) Meyerhoff scholars program, (d) bridge programs, and (e) academic coaching and counseling. These strategies have positively impacted the education quality. Being that the federal government remains to be a funder of these programs, many initiatives can be developed with no extra funding at all.

INTRODUCTION

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were formed to provide equal opportunities of education for African Americans when other avenues for equal participation were still closed to them. Many people developed as leaders while they attended these institutions. Moreover, they promoted the advancing of social equality for everyone in the country. However, through qualitative investigations, many people are currently worried about HBCUs' retention rates, success levels, and engagement of students in the activities of these institutions (Landry, 2004).

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SOCIAL INTEGRATION/SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

The most common implemented strategy by most HBCU institutions is student involvement. According to the studies on HBCUs, Black students who spend more time taking part in various social activities consider this helps them persist in completing their education since they find themselves to be part of their institutions' social environment (Townsend, 2007; Skipper, 2003). Therefore, HBCUs' students who are more socially involved are socially more supported and are likely to be retained in their various learning institutions.

Social Integration entails such behaviors as the student-staff relationship, building of relationship with peers, and the use of facilities at the disposal of students while in campus, extracurricular activities, and personal experiences. Activities that can help students scale up their relationship with the staff include seeking advice and socializing with them during the out-of-class periods. Building one's relationship with peers may involve initiating friendship with students who have different background characteristics or entering a conversation of those of different views. The extracurricular activities include such undertakings as registering and participating in various student organizations.

HBCUs have been identified to be very concerned about the creation of the high level of connectedness while also promoting an environment that allows their students to have a great sense of belonging. This is based on the deliberate effort by college and university personnel that specialize in different students' affairs. The office of the student affairs is often tasked in promoting connectedness and the sense of belonging among the HBCUs' students. This is achieved through coming up with the activities that encourage students to have close relationships with their administrators, faculty members, as well as colleagues. These relationships and activities have a great influence on the social and academic development Black Students (Darryl, 2010).

In such a way, students who join HBCUs activities do experience reduced problems in relation to the necessary adjustments since they can take advantage of the social networking and increase their involvement in the relevant social activities (Darryl, 2010). This has seen an increasing number of students exhibiting a greater level of satisfaction when it comes to experiences they have with their colleges, as compared to their colleagues at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs; Darryl, 2010). This has, in turn, seen an increasing number of Black students remaining in their respective colleges and universities until they finish their studies (Darryl, 2010).

FIRST YEAR / FRESHMAN EXPERIENCE

According to US News and World Report (2015), one and three students will not return to their second or sophomore year of college. The freshman experience often determines the kind of retention and academic success in HBCUs. Most HBCUs engage in the development and implementation of different comprehensive programs that focus on enabling the first year students to adapt to the university and college lifestyles. Carey (2008) emphasized that all the staff, leaders, and faculty members should be committed to such programs in order for these first year experiences to be successful. Equally, Carey (2008) suggested that any first year program meant to improve retention should meet a number of criteria; relying on proven research, institutionalizing it, becoming a regular part of the college service,

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