A Statewide Model for Enhancing Black Male College Matriculation and Graduation

The University System of Georgia’s African-American Male Initiative (AAMI)

presented as a Pre-Conference Institute

at the NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RACE & ETHNICITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

May 26, 2009

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THE CHARGE: September 2002

- Conduct research to identify the barriers to college participation for African-American males
- Devise strategies to overcome those barriers
- Create new opportunities for access and participation by African-American males within the USG
- CURRENT MISSION: Enhance the recruitment, retention and graduation of Black males within the 35 campuses of the University System of Georgia
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COMPONENTS OF “THE AAMI”

**USG TASK FORCE**
• 50-Member Task Force on Enhancing Access for African-American Males

**RESEARCH STUDY**
• Conducted quantitative and qualitative statewide research

**REPORT TO THE USG’ S BOARD OF REGENTS**
• Outcomes and recommendations from the research and task force efforts

**AAMI PILOT PROGRAMS**
• Pilot funding provided for programmatic efforts at USG institutions

**STRATEGIC INTEGRATED MARKETING**
• Marketing collaterals aimed at Black males, parents and educators

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THE TASK FORCE PROCESS
Six Task Force Subcommittees:

- Research - Dr. Cathie Hudson, USO
- K-12 Pipeline - Dr. Jan Kettlewell, USO
- Recruitment/Marketing - Dr. Beheruz Sethna, UWG
- Retention - Dr. Portia Holmes Shields, ASU
- Programs of Excellence - Mr. Max Allen, GC&SU
- Partnership Opportunities - Mr. Curley Dossman, Georgia Pacific Foundation and 100 Black Men of America

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THE RESEARCH PROCESS:
• 16 focus groups at eight USG institutions; one with young Black male prison inmates
• One-on-one interviews with USG administrators/staff
• Quantitative telephone surveys with 700:
  ➢ Parents
  ➢ 18-25 year old African-American males
  ➢ High-school juniors and seniors
  ➢ Guidance counselors and teachers
  ➢ USG students, graduates, faculty and staff

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SOME SIGNIFICANT RESEARCH FINDINGS:

- African-American males’ attitudes and perceptions about college are heavily shaped by:
  - Parents’ college attendance
  - Their socio-economic environment
  - Peer-group pressures
  - Academic experiences in middle through high school
  - Relationships with teachers, guidance counselors; participation in civic group programs
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ADDITIONAL FINDINGS:

- **Some Black males are less inclined to attend college because they:**
  - did not receive adequate academic preparation
  - lack the necessary self-motivation and discipline to attend
  - are intimidated by their perceptions of college/afraid to fail
  - see college as too great a financial investment; unable to envision benefits of delayed gratification
  - need to provide financial support for their families; and
  - are directed more toward vocational/technical schools by guidance counselors
  - self select the military

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ADDITIONAL FINDINGS:

- Significant and early intervention is required at the K-12 level.
- Some Black males perceive educational authority figures as rarely concerned about their academic performance.
- Disproportionate tracking to special education; often leads to anger, rebellion, suspensions/expulsion/crime (“Catch-22”).
- Little done to help Black male students maneuver the standardized test/college-application process.
- Once enrolled in the USG, “climate” and support are key factors in retention.

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OVER-ARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS:

• A comprehensive approach is needed to systemically address the “pipeline” problems

• Specific initiatives must address need for:
  ✓ Partnership with K-12 and civic groups directed at similar goals
  ✓ Enhanced communication (with parents, students, influencers) regarding the college-preparation process
  ✓ Targeted programs needed to track Black males toward the college preparatory curriculum at early stage, i.e., 6th grade
  ✓ Data reporting systems needed to identify vulnerabilities and monitor progress

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AAMI PILOT PROGRAMS:

• To-date, six rounds of AAMI pilot programs funded since 2003-2004 academic year, totaling more than $1 million

• Awarded $600K in grants from the Lumina Foundation

• Funds allocated to new and existing programs aimed at serving the needs of K-12 and college-level Black males

• Goal: Enhancing Black male graduation from high school; and enrollment, retention and graduation from colleges and universities in the USG

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STRATEGIC MARKETING EFFORTS:

• Television and radio commercials
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STRATEGIC MARKETING EFFORTS:

• Television and radio commercials

• “Million Dollar Player” Website
A "Million Dollar Player" knows that knowledge is power –
He stays on his ‘A’ game
Every minute of every hour
Cause every second of every day counts in the life league.
Focus & Determination will lead me through the strife
Despite what some say or what others expect
When I stroll across that stage I will have earned their respect
& I won’t stop there; I’m in control of my destiny
Plus I’ve only begun to show the world the best of me.
I’m a “Million Dollar Player” that understands the game!
I’m a “Million Dollar Player,” remember my name,
Cause a “Million Dollar Player” knows there is NOTHING he can’t accomplish,
And that being a playa is more than a lifestyle…it’s graduating from college!

-- Author Anonymous

View the interactive Million Dollar Motto
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STRATEGIC MARKETING EFFORTS:

• Television and radio commercials

• “Million Dollar Player” Website

• AAMI Best Practices Conference Website

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Join us on November 30 and December 1, as the University System of Georgia hosts our "Inaugural AAMI Best Practices Conference!"

News Releases:
- University System of Georgia's African-American Male Initiative Hosts First-Ever Best Practices Conference (PDF)
- Leaders Recognized For Supporting Black Male Educational Achievement (PDF)

Don't miss this historic gathering and information exchange.

www.usg.edu/aami/bestpractices07/
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STRATEGIC MARKETING EFFORTS:

• Television and radio commercials
• “Million Dollar Player” Website
• AAMI Best Practices Conference Website
• Marketing Brochure

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OUTCOMES TO-DATE:

- Black male enrolment in the USG increased by 36 percent
- The gap between the percentage increase of Black males and Black females enrolling annually in the USG is closing.
- USG AAMI programs have grown from three in 2002 to more than 25 in 2009
- Best Practices Conference convened in December 2007
- Pilot programs funded at 23 different USG institutions, investing more than $1 million; many are institutionalized.
- Attracted $600K in external funding at statewide level, and many USG campuses have secured external support

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**NEXT STEPS:**

- Monitor, track and compile AAMI program outcomes and USG Black male performance indicators
- Manage new Lumina Foundation grant
- Launch MDP Website/Marketing Campaign
- Implement SAAB Chapters/Student Engagement Effort
- Training Program Staff on Measurement and Sustainability
- Host Another Best Practices Conference

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WHAT CAN EDUCATORS AND EDUCATIONAL ENTITIES DO?

- Do the research; *track the data -- statewide and institutional*
- Develop marketing collaterals to *cultivate communication* between Black males, their parents, K12 educators and your institution
- Emphasize the need for enrollment in rigorous *College Prep courses*
- Enhance *interaction and programming* (e.g., after-school groups, test-prep programs) *with schools* in your service areas and civic groups serving Black male students (6th grade and up)
- Increase “Campus Visitation Days” and summer-bridge programs to *expand exposure* for “first-generation” students
- Form campus advisory boards and draft action plans to address your institution’s specific needs; *involve community leaders* in those efforts
- *Seek external funding*

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WHAT CAN INDIVIDUALS DO?

• Help change the images and the language that emanate from and depict our community; talk to young people about their role in creating this change.

• Mentor young men; volunteer with civic groups doing such work

• Get your church, fraternity, sorority, professional association involved

• As educators, advocate/sponsor activities aimed at enhancing K-12 partnerships to augment K12 guidance counseling and test preparation

• Emphasize the need for Black males to enroll in College Prep; talk to them individually and collectively

• Talk to parents, individually and collectively (neighbors, civic groups)

• Just do something! Our young men and our community are at stake!!

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Thank you for your interest in the University System of Georgia’s African-American Male Initiative!