MEMBERS OF THE AFRIKAN DIASPORA COMMUNITY

AFRIKAN DIASPORA RECRUTIMENT & RETENTION STRATEGIES

05/10/15
The Problem…

We, as members of the Afrikan Diaspora, believe that it is the responsibility of the University of California, Davis to establish systems and resources to effectively recruit and retain Black students, staff, and faculty. We also believe it is essential to ensure the environment is conducive to succeeding, which is not our current state at the University of California, Davis.

With low graduation rates (33% within 4 years for the 2010 cohort) and a small presence (3.2%), there is a distinct need for the retention and recruitment of Afrikan & Afrikan American students at UC Davis. Compared to Afrikan & Afrikan American students, White students’ performance level is 200% greater, demonstrating a distinct need to provide additional support. With only 1,101 students that identify within the Afrikan Diaspora, among a sea of 34,508 in total, isolation is far too common with the Afrikan Diaspora (sariweb.ucdavis.edu).

Recent incidents of hate and bias on this campus only reinforce the need for a more inclusive environment, more culturally-competent UC Davis population, and more exposure to members of the Afrikan Diaspora to overcome the oppression embedded within this institution.

2. On multiple occasions, most recently spanning from 2010-2013, Dining Services has hosted Black themes, serving stereotypical
foods: fried chicken, watermelon, and other racists and offensive dishes that is not an accurate representation of “Black culture.”

3. During Winter 2014, a student was called “n-gger” twice by a group of students driving by.

4. Many students have reported being ill-advised to change their major, and thus the direction of their lives, as opposed to being provided with adequate support to achieve academic success.

Understanding our current state, we have compiled a list of solutions to begin actively working towards increasing the recruitment and retention of students within the Afrikan Diaspora.

The Solution…

While the UC system has made progress in diversifying its institutions in the past forty years, there is still a desperate need to thoroughly assess the current standing of the Afrikan Diaspora Community at UC Davis. African and Black students on this campus are challenged with structural deficiencies and lack of institutional support there needs to be a deliberate and aggressive recruitment and retention strategies in place that are institutionalized and sustained by administration with input from current UC Davis student and alumni.
Retention

1. Black Resource Center

As it is understood the creation of a Black Resource Center is underway. By implementing the following components into the center, the space will serve as an inclusive space for students and provide resources to help retain students.

- **Student Involvement in Hiring**
  - The Cross Cultural Center (CCC) African Diaspora Coordinator along with African Diaspora Cultivating Education (ACE) Student Director, should work in conjunction with the Black Student Union President (BSU) to serve as the two co-chairs of the hiring committee for Director of the Resource Center, and serve as committee members for the hiring of all additional staff. If either the of those roles -- CCC African Diaspora Coordinator or ACE Student Director -- are not filled, the BSU President should serve in their place. In any case where neither position is filled, the BSU President and a student appointed by the BSU President should serve in that capacity.

- **Holistic Advisors**
  - The creation and hiring of two full-time Holistic Advisors for Student Success positions to provide students of the Afrikan Diaspora with support beyond academics, while also advocating on students’ behalf to academic affiliates; at all times position security should be maintained. The Holistic Advisors should be responsible for providing students with co-curricular support and advocating for students’ behalf.
• **Professional Development Advisor:**
  o The creation and hiring of one full time Professional Development Advisor that should be responsible for the following:
  o The advisor should be responsible for the establishment of a targeted mentorship program, pairing students with members of administration, faculty, and alumni to engage in research, postgraduate education, and career guidance, composed of various tracks including Pre-Health, Pre-Law, Business, Engineering, Education, Journalism, and STEM.
  o The Professional Development Advisor should work collaboratively with the African Continuum and the African & African American Alumni Association and the Internship and Career Center,
  o The Professional Development Advisor should establish other formal and informal mechanisms to increase the engagement amongst students and alumni, including mixers and socials.

• **Additional Resources**
  o One tutor, at minimum, for each subject including: Calculus, Writing, Chemistry, Physics, Engineering, and the addition of others upon request or expressed need by students or center staff to provide academic support during optimal center hours.
  o The presence of one Financial Aid Advisor, at minimum, available for 2 office hours a day.
  o The creation and hiring of one part-time Black Leadership Council (BLC) Student Programmer position to assist in the planning and implementation of strategic community programming and address issues of campus climate amongst the Afrikan Diaspora.
• **Structural**
  
  o There should be allocated office space made available to organizations, departments, and students within the Afrikan Diaspora.

2. **Black Aggie House**

   Establish an African American & African Student House, comparable in size to, at least, that of UC Berkeley’s Afro House. The house should include the following:

   • A board of faculty and staff within the Afrikan Diaspora to oversee the operations of this facility.
   
   • Two part-time, live-in Student Coordinators to coordinate programming and holistic retention and support events, who receive a minimum wage salary in addition to waived housing costs.
   
   • Housing cost should be assessed to each resident’s student account, similar to first-year dormitory housing payments. All funds in excess of facility costs should be retained for the use of holistic support within the Fred Hampton Black House or Afrikan Diaspora at UC Davis via the distribution of grants.
   
   • Programming Funds
3. The African American & African Themed Program (AAATP)

The Floor should remain a space for students of the Afrikan Diaspora, engaging in aggressive recruitment to ensure students who identify within the Afrikan Diaspora or purposefully select AAATP reside on the AAATP Floor. As well as hiring Resident Advisors and a Cultural Programmer that identifies within the Afrikan Diaspora and has knowledge of resources within the Afrikan Diaspora.

- To aid in this effort, the BSU President should be a chair on the committee in addition to staff member appointed by the Black Leadership Council.
4. Increase Black Course Offerings
An implementation of this sort is of great need to ensure students within the Afrikan Diaspora see themselves represented in the course offerings and to ensure they do not continue to feel a sense of discomfort. At minimum, the course offerings should include the following:

- An Afrikan/Black Psychology course in the Psychology Department, as well as the option of Afrikan/Black Psychology as an emphasis within the Psychology major.
- Others course offerings among the subjects of arts, humanity, philosophy, and language.
- To effectively meet this demand, we request a task force

5. Diversity Requirement
The implementation of a more stringent diversity requirement, removing Nutrition 10 as an option for completion and requiring the fulfillment be a course explicitly addressing the subjects of ethnic and/or gender studies.

6. Increased Support for Existing Community Programs
An increase in support for existing community programs will allow for an increase in awareness of the resources available to students, which should help to reduce accounts of isolation and lacking access that students within the Afrikan Diaspora have reported.
7. **Black Art**

The University of California, Davis should reflect the beauty of the Afrikan Diaspora by incorporating Black art throughout campus in the form of two murals, with students involved in the design and placement.

8. **Cross Cultural Training & Education**

Mandatory annual training and continuing education on cross cultural awareness and issues affecting underserved communities, as well as intercultural communication training for ALL UCD Staff/ Faculty/ Administration. Training and education should include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Addressing issues of educational equity
- Identifying implicit bias and institutionalized discrimination
- Anti-blackness and ways to combat anti-blackness
- Ways to navigate and facilitate conversations around issues of race, religion, sex, gender, ability, politics, power, privilege, social justice, environmental justice, health care, discrimination, white supremacy and Black Liberation etc.
9. Increase in Black Faculty and Staff

Just as there is a need to increase the percentage of Black/Afrikan students at UC Davis, there is also a need to increase Black/Afrikan Faculty and staff who are well qualified and experienced to serve such students. Thus, there should be an increase of faculty and staff members within the Afrikan Diaspora in all campus departments, especially within the fields of STEM.

- Although the recruitment of faculty within the Afrikan Diaspora is of great importance, there is a need to sufficiently provide support to effectively retain them. Therefore a support system to prevent isolation should be established.

Recruitment

1. Increase in Black Students

The drafting and implementation of an aggressive recruitment strategy plan by admissions to ensure the percentage of students among the Afrikan Diaspora at UC Davis is reflective of that of the population in California (currently 6%), including the following program:

- Black Admit Weekend: We request the implementation of a Black Admit Weekend, to be named Black Aggie Weekend, to allow for admitted students within the Afrikan Diaspora to personally experience our university, serving as a direct effort to increase recruitment of students within the Afrikan Diaspora.