



## **An ALANA Advisory Board Can Help Grow Your Diversity**

by Dr. Charles Taylor

*The purpose of this article is to show how you can use an external advisory board to help your campus improve diversity in a number of ways.*

### **Advisory Boards are Great Tools for Involving ALANA Community Leaders**

Colleges and universities are discovering that they have unique resources right in their own backyard especially if their institution is located in a town with a sizeable ALANA (African, Latino, Asian and Native American) population. Many people object to the term minority so ALANA is becoming increasingly popular.

Institutions are fostering partnerships and engaging ALANA leaders in ways similar to how they've always involved the white community. Those who have created effective advisory boards typically follow these practices:

- They extend very personal invitations that are appealing and special when they initially establish the advisory board.
- They inform potential members that the board will be built upon respect and considered a partnership; and identify ways that members may benefit professionally from being on the board.
- They make a commitment to implement the board's recommendations when possible and promise to provide an explanation when the university is unable to do so.
- They understand that it's not necessary to attract the more visible community leaders. There are often gems at the middle management level, retirees, up and coming leaders who also make excellent members.

### **Use an Advisory Board for Recruitment and Retention**

Perhaps the most popular use of ALANA advisory boards around the country is helping colleges with recruitment and retention. In a report published by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (1997), the Texas Advisory Committee on Women and Minority Faculty and Professional staff listed: "to increase the number of Black and Hispanic students and to reach institutional minority enrollment and retention percentages" as one of its goal. Wright State University (2005) lists "improving student retention" as one of the major functions of their advisory board. Here are proven ways in which advisory boards can assist with recruitment and retention:



## **An ALANA Advisory Board Can Help Grow Your Diversity**

by Dr. Charles Taylor

- Strategic or programmatic advice from the board which may improve student satisfaction and thus aid in recruitment and retention.
- Board members may provide publicity in the community (churches, schools, community centers) which may attract a larger pool of ALANA students.
- Board members may not only aid in recruitment through publicity, they may also be part of the appeal for ALANA students either through their prestige or shared interests.
- Encourage prospective and enrolled students to engage with members of the board by arranging events and gatherings for them to interact.

## **Advisory Board Members Make Great Student Advocates**

In a study on the effectiveness of the Chicano Advisory Committee at Pasadena City College, Edward Hernandez Jr. states, "Often problems affecting minority students and faculty are not communicated in such a way to facilitate change in college policy," (Hernandez, 1974). What his study suggests is that one of the benefits of an advisory board or committee is that it provides ALANA students with advocates who can not only listen and reflect students' voices but can also represent them.

At the University of Pittsburg at Johnstown, "being willing to say a good word about the University whenever or wherever you can" and "being an advocate in the community on behalf of the University," is part of what defines what it means to be an advisory board member. Here are examples of the type of issues advisory board members have advocated for:

- Increasing the number women and faculty of color.
- Improved financial support for ALANA students.
- Change in college policies to meet the needs of ALANA students.
- Implementation of specific programs that meet ALANA student needs.
- Curriculum development and pedagogy.



## **An ALANA Advisory Board Can Help Grow Your Diversity**

by Dr. Charles Taylor

### **Members Can Help Fundraise and Sponsor Scholarships**

Community board members are valuable not only for their thoughts but also for their access to resources that may benefit ALANA students. Members may advocate for scholarships, fellowships, as well as provide personal donations to ALANA students. Funding may be program specific such as bringing a speaker or artist to campus, or to pay for food for an event. It may also take the form of a merit-based award to a student who meets specific criteria. Some universities require personal giving as criteria for becoming an official advisory board member. However, not all higher education institutions require fund raising to take this form. Below are some general ways that members may help with funding.

- Advisory board members may provide professional expertise to develop good strategies for university fundraising, especially in suggesting ways to increase ALANA donations.
- Community leaders, who hold government or government affiliated positions in particular, can help garner state funding for your institution.
- Member affiliation with community franchises, churches, and other institutions can lead to partnerships.
- Members may involve companies and organizations that they work for and or are affiliated with to sponsor scholarships and programs.

### **Members Can Help Students Develop Professionally and Serve as Role Models**

It is most beneficial when there is some degree of connection between the advisory board and ALANA students on campus. Not only does this allow for the board to be more in touch with students' needs but also allows students to interact with ALANA professionals who can serve as role models.

The Maxwell School at Syracuse University describes their board members as "accomplished, distinguished members of the world of business, government, law, education, and beyond" (many of which are graduates) "who share a keen appreciation for the mission of the School, and, with their worldly perspective, they help assure that Maxwell grows and adapts in ways that are tactically sound and well-gearred to the public sectors that Maxwell ultimately serves." What student wouldn't want to be involved with such a distinguished group of professionals? Such a board would not only represent the students' interests, but they also would serve as models of success for ALANA student. In that role:



## **An ALANA Advisory Board Can Help Grow Your Diversity**

by Dr. Charles Taylor

- Members can provide insider knowledge into what the community has to offer and provide students with ways to enrich their academic experience beyond the classroom.
- Members can provide links to internships and employment for students.
- Members can provide students with sound career advice.
- By forging strong ties between students and community, board members may give students direct contact with leaders in their field of interest and thus maximizing their career development opportunities.

## **Members Provide Free Consultation on a Wide Range of Diversity Issues**

Perhaps one of the most encouraging aspects of having an advisory board is that it costs virtually nothing. Board members provide the university with valuable amounts of insight, suggestions, and connections. Members perform research, evaluations, and provide publicity at little or no cost to the institution. Many advisory members consider it part of their civic responsibility to help create a more inclusive campus. That's why they willingly give of their time and talent in helping campuses with:

- ALANA faculty recruitment and retention.
- Combating racism and discrimination on college campuses and within the local community.
- Working to end gender discrimination and inequality.
- Fundraising
- ALANA student recruitment and retention.
- ALANA visibility, inclusion, and representation.
- The creation and implementation of multicultural curriculum and programming

## **Conclusion**

An advisory board is like having your own FREE think tank to help your campus with a wide range of diversity opportunities. Advisory boards broaden the university's network



## **An ALANA Advisory Board Can Help Grow Your Diversity**

by Dr. Charles Taylor

immensely. Each member has access to a pool of knowledge and resources that may be a tremendous benefit to ALANA students and the university in general. So take a closer look at the ALANA communities in your neck of the woods. You may discover a resource that will benefit your institution for many years to come.

### **References**

Advisory Board. Retrieved on October 5, 2011 from, <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/deans.aspx?id=50>

Advisory Board. Retrieved on October 5, 2011 from, <http://www.wright.edu/uc/about/people/advisory-board.html>

College of Health Sciences Community Board Members. Retrieved on October 5, 2011 from, <http://www.csu.edu/healthsciences/communityadvisorycommittee.htm>

Colorado State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, D. r. (1995). The Retention of Minorities in Colorado Public Institutions of Higher Education: Fort Lewis and Adams State Colleges. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Harrison, W. G. (1975). The Advisory Committee in the Community College: An Overview. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Hernandez, E. r. (1974). An Examination of the Chicano Advisory Committee's Effect on the Establishment of College Policy [and] An Examination of the Committee's Implementation of a Chicano Recruitment Project. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Lopez, V. M., & Cuyahoga Community Coll., P. s. (1996). People, Programs, & Partnerships: ABCs of Advisory Committees Technical Programs in Community Colleges. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Olson, Gary A. (2008). The Importance of External Boards. Retrieved on October 1, 2011 from, <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Importance-of-External/45960/>

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, A. n. (1997). The Advisory Committee on Women and Minority Faculty and Professional Staff. Final Report. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Thompson, P. r., & Nova Univ., F. L. (1974). A Case Study: Community Influence upon Curriculum. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.



## **An ALANA Advisory Board Can Help Grow Your Diversity**

by Dr. Charles Taylor

Valencia Community Coll., O. L. (1980). The Black Advisory Committee of Valencia Community College. Guidelines. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

What it Means to be an Advisory Board Member. Retrieved on October 5, 2011 from, <http://www.upj.pitt.edu/3223/>