Each quarter the African-American Knowledge Community will feature the public policy updates that are impacting our students and practitioners. These policy updates will explore relevant current events and issues that are unfolding in the higher education and national education landscape. Each section will feature a brief synopsis of the article along with author and date published.

The summaries within will address some of these focus areas as well as other pertinent articles impacting African-American students and professionals.

NASPA has identified the following three areas for focus during 2012-2013:

- Student Success and College Completion
- Issues related to undocumented students
- Cost of funding higher education, including related accountability efforts
The African Queen (http://tinyurl.com/avjzrb7)

In this photo spread [see right] a 16-year old white female was chosen to portray the role of “African Queen” in an editorial for the Numéro magazine. Shaded with bronzer this depiction raises questions concerning the dearth of minority models, particularly black, and the nouveau usage of “black-face” imagery in this advertisement.

National Public High School Graduation Rate at Four-Decade High (http://tinyurl.com/ck5ojbx)

The National Center for Education Statistics estimates that in 2010 78% of students who entered high school earned their diploma within four years; the last time graduation rates were at this level was in 1974. Within this success though, disparity still exists between racial / ethnic minority groups. Hispanic students saw the greatest increase overall with 71.4% of their entering students graduating. Versus African-American students were at 66.1% (to provide context, Asian-American students persist 93% of the time).

Don’t Follow the Crowd (http://tinyurl.com/bwfhuug)

This article unpacks the growing concern that HBCUs are lagging behind non-HBCU who are offering more robust courses in online forums (MOOCs). The columnist asserts that “given their historic commitment to providing opportunities for higher education to black students who have been academically handicapped by circumstances beyond their control, HBCUs should deliberately "lag" non-HBCUs that have not made such commitments with regard to the percentage of HBCU courses and degrees that are offered in online formats [continued on next page]

“Why hire a black model when you can paint a white one?”

“The dropout rate of black high school students was measured at 5%; this translates to on average a loss of $130,000 worth of lifetime earnings”
Affirmative Action, Innovation and the Financial Future: A Survey of Presidents

"The diversity we seek and the future of the nation do require that colleges and universities continue to be able to reach out and make a conscious effort to build healthy and diverse learning environments that are appropriate for their missions," the board of the American Council on Education, the country's main association of college presidents, asserted in a resolution related to the case last year. "The success of higher education and the strength of our democracy depend on it."

Inside Higher Ed conducted a survey of college and university presidents and found the following:

§ 70% of campus leaders agreed or strongly agreed that race considerations in admissions had a “mostly positive effect on higher education generally”

§ 58% of campus leaders said the use of race in admissions had a “mostly positive effect on education” at their institution

*As a caveat, some respondents may work at nonselective institutions where race is not considered in admission

Additional discourse in the article called into question the level of honesty respondents displayed when questioned about their support for affirmative action-related policies in college admissions. Some even went on to suggest looking at race as the defining factor has become obsolete and admissions should look more at socioeconomic status as the indicator instead. To learn more, see the article here: http://tinyurl.com/a6urxpp

Written by: Doug Lederman

[Continued from previous] This is not to say that HBCUs should not produce online courses and degree programs, just that they should not be as quick to do so as non-HBCUs because they have deliberately enrolled a higher percentage of students for whom online formats are not good enough … yet”. The piece concludes that resources both financial and human should be directed to maximizing the classroom experience before transitioning students to an e-interfaced learning paradigm.


This three-part video series seeks to document the experience of black men in America. Each video focuses on one word: fear, love, and dream; with accompanying anecdotes and reflections from participants.

Bright Futures changes could impact thousands of Hispanic and Black students (http://tinyurl.com/cje9phf)

Bright Futures is a program designed to help high-achieving high school students shoulder the cost of college. However new requirements, such as higher test scores and stricter eligibility, may have a negative impact on students – particularly minorities, according to a new study.
NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Program

Applications are currently being accepted and are due by May 2, 2013 for the 2013-2014 class. Please identify a student(s) at your institution for this opportunity and share this exciting experience with them. More information may be found via: http://www.naspa.org/programs/nufp/.

Please share updates or opportunities for engagement with the AAKC Public Policy Chair

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