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MSCC's Title III PBI Staff Attends Black, Brown, College Bound Summit

TAMPA, Fla. – Staff members of Mid-South Community College's Title III Predominantly Black Institution Grant department participated in the recent 6th Annual Black, Brown, and College Bound 2012: Meeting the Challenge of Higher Education Summit.

Hosted by Hillsborough Community College, the conference focused on the theme, "And Still We Rise: Turning Hurdles into Triumphs for African American & Latino Males."

PBI staff members said they left the conference more knowledgeable of the tools necessary to develop the engagement and self-confidence of African American male students to increase their success, retention, and completion as specified within Goal II of the Title III Grant.



LUNCH BREAK AT SUMMIT -- Paula Rose- Greer, left, MSCC Title III PBI Grant Director, poses with Yolanda Reyes-Guevara, Director of Student Life at Alamo Colleges, and Perry Studevent, Financial Aid Counselor for the University of North Carolina, during a lunch break at the 6th Annual Black, Brown, and College Bound 2012 event.

Paula Rose-Greer, Director of MSCC's PBI Grant, attended a session strategically titled, "It's All About the Benjamins: Five Things College Students Get Twisted." The session focused on the foundational barriers and challenges that consistently divert African American students from college completion.

Rose-Greer said the overall message of the "Benjamins" session was, "The goal is not merely to go to college but to GRADUATE from college."

Institutional data at MSCC suggests that for all students graduating over the past 10 years or more, most have required a minimum of six years to complete a two-year degree, in large part because of part-time enrollment and the need to complete developmental courses before entering college-level work.

The presenter listed five barriers that hinder students from receiving a diploma: difficulty in deciphering between education (lasting achievement) and credentials (short term gain/material possession); failing to define a purpose; putting too much stock in what people have and not enough in who people are; fear of failure, and preparing only for the expected.

Robert Oselen Jr., PBI Academic Counselor at MSCC, attended "It's Bigger than Hip Hop," a session that focused on how that culture has been and continues to be used as a tool of self-empowerment. The presenter discussed Hip Hop's core values and showed how to apply them toward empowerment and self-improvement.

Oselen said he left the session with two major ideas.

"One, we have an obligation to increase retention and improve academic success for our marginalized male population, which includes African American, Latino, and academically underprepared male populations," Oselen said. "Two, our obligation requires us to determine what our young men need and to use this information as a guide with developing programming which will contribute to their academic and social success."

Ramone Smith, MSCC Academic Counselor for PBI, attended the session "Making Connections to Make a Difference with African American and Minority Males" facilitated by Montgomery County Community College of Philadelphia.

This session engaged the attendees through discussion of data from MCCC that detailed its attempts to increase retention and success of the minority males at the

institution. Using mentoring as a vehicle to address the success rate of those identified students, the Pennsylvania college reached an 82% retention level for that particular population.

“This was a definite highlight of the conference for me as we face similar demographics at MSCC,” Smith said.

In addition to the above session, Smith also attended the session, “Building Alliances: Supporting Men of Color,” featured information on what support services students of color need in order to succeed in college. Attendees were given information on the “do’s and don’ts” from the minority students’ perspective.

“It was great to hear from students on what they actually feel is needed to help them succeed,” Smith said. “Having adequate resources for students of color makes the difference when trying to provide them with an educational atmosphere that meets their needs.”

For additional conference details or information about becoming involved in student-success initiatives at Mid-South Community College, visit the PBI office located in the Sandra C. Goldsby Library in the Donald W. Reynolds Center for Educational Excellence.