Attracting Native and African-American Students to Education Abroad – Successes and Failures

Forum on Education Abroad - March, 2018

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Why is this Important?

• While underrepresentation within higher education is growing, troubling gaps still exist

• Overall Graduation rates:
  • White Students: 62 percent
  • African American Students: 38 percent
  • Native American Students: 25 percent

• Access and equity
Race/Ethnicity Representation of U.S. Students in Study Abroad and Total College Enrollment

*Data from national Center for Education Statistics, reflecting total number of U.S. students receiving undergraduate degrees in 2014/15

Open Doors is conducted by the Institute of International Education with support of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. Online at: www.iie.org/opendoors
Why is this Important?

• Studies have consistently shown a correlation between study abroad and graduation rates across all ethnicities

• Being intentional regarding access is an imperative every office should have
Northern Arizona University Overview

• Regional State University (only three in state)

• Approximately 22,500 on-campus students
  • African American: 629
  • Native American Students: 592

• 40 percent of NAU Freshmen identify as first-gen

• Larger underrepresented population than national average

• Top 10 Native-serving institution in USA
NAU and Study Abroad

• Approximately 750-850 students annually

• Heavy exchange focus

• 4-5 percent higher underrepresented rate than national average, however still room for improvement with NAU’s demographics and values
Native and African-American Participation Increases

• From 2014-2016, the number of African American students participating in study abroad doubled

• From 2013-2017 the number of Native American students participating in study abroad increased by 150 percent
Past Efforts that Weren’t as Effective

• Increasing presence in offices and at events

• Still beneficial overall

• Didn’t see increases in our general program applications though
Unique Opportunities and Challenges Recruiting African American Students

• Start with the obvious, often overlooked opportunities
• Supportive leadership is instrumental
• Challenges can be summarized as 3 key barriers to participation
Program Support and Models for African American Students

• Relevance
• Resources
• Retention
Unique Opportunities and Challenges Recruiting Native American Students

• Identifying cultural norms within community

• Recognizing the cost barrier for many Native students

• Coming up with programs that are sensitive to cultural concerns

• Having other students as ambassadors (smaller pool)
Program Support and Models for Native American Students

- Indigenous faculty-led program
- Collaborate with indigenous populations abroad
- Bring those groups to USA
- Include elders as group leaders
- Have celebrations and ceremonies incorporated that include community and traditions
- Provide real and continued financial support
Take-Aways

• Find and utilize your mentors students identify with

• Put your university’s money where it’s mouth is – tie back to the mission when approaching VP, Provost, or President
  • Example: Retention of Native American students is on President’s strategic plan

• Tailor programs to resonate within families and communities
Discussion