

MSI, HBCU & PBI Mentor Colleges Selected by the “Wal-Mart Foundation, AIHEC/HACU/NAFEO Student Success Collaborative”

Washington, DC (March 18, 2011) – Alliance for Equity in Higher Education announces the selection of eight (8) institutions currently serving under-represented groups to receive Mentor Institution Grant Awards. The \$100,000 grants provide the opportunity for this community of colleges to share their expertise in retaining and graduating first-generation college students. The two-year collaborative initiative implements a mentor/protégé model that allows successful Hispanic Serving, Historically Black and Predominantly Black as well as Tribal Colleges with developed recruitment and retention models to mentor other NAFEO/AIHEC/HACU institutions who seek to develop retention plans. The identification of practices in student retention, and implementation of successful strategies to improve their ability to retain first-generation minority college students would also be a focus of this initiative.

The Alliance awardees were selected through a highly competitive process which focused on the strengths of these colleges that including a plan, effort and implementation model representing a wide range of retention strategies and best practices. Successful strategies such as early outreach to high school students, summer enrichment programs, student orientation, learning support centers, first year seminars for entering students, family nights, and faculty/staff/ student support sessions were identified by one or more MSI. Several institutions have already conducted professional development seminars and hosting conferences on minority student success.

It is the intent of the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education through this pilot initiative, to increase the college success of additional candidates at other like type Institutions. Through demonstrating and disseminating several empirically based methodologies designed to increase the retention and graduation rates of students, the Alliance hopes to retain and graduate larger number of students. Combined the Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Hispanic-serving Institutions (HSIs) and Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), educate more than one-third of all students of color in the United States. The ultimate goal is of the collaborative is to strengthen all of the Alliance Institutions in order for them to contribute in a significant way to the realization of the new national goal of having sixty percent (60%) of Americans with a college degree by 2020.

Through review of applications by external reviewers eight institutions were selected to participate in the initial phase of the collaborative as mentor institutions. The eight mentor institutions include: Institute for American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, NM, Leech Lake Tribal College in Cass Lake, MN, Wiley College HBCU (Private) in Wiley TX, Kentucky State University HBCU (Public) in Frankfort, KY, J.F. Drake Technical College PBI in Huntsville, AL, California State University-Fullerton in Fullerton, CA, St. Mary’s University in San Antonio, TX, and Community College of Denver in Denver, CO.

The Alliance for Equity in Higher Education is comprised of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

(HACU) and the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO), which serves Historically Black Colleges and Universities/ PBIs. In a joint statement, CEOs from Alliance, Ms. Carrie Billy (AIHEC), Dr. Antonio Flores (HACU), and Attorney Lezli Baskerville (NAFEO), said, “It is exciting to bring together the most successful mentor institutions from the Hispanic Serving Institutions, the Historically and Pre-dominantly Black Colleges and Universities, and Tribal Colleges and Universities. This is definitely an opportunity to put some of the best minds together to seek ways to improve the success of all. We are very appreciative of the support of the Wal-Mart Foundation in helping us make this all possible.”

This initiative is being funded and implemented in an effort to find ways to increase retention and graduation rates of students attending the Alliance Institutions therefore increasing the student’s success. The Wal-Mart Foundation’s commitment to increase the success of first generation college students across these three groups of IHES is very timely and fitting to the collaborative project.

“Supporting education initiatives is a priority for Wal-Mart because we see it as an investment in the next generation. Students today are the leaders of tomorrow,” said Margaret McKenna, president of the Wal-Mart Foundation. “Supporting the Alliance and their member institutions will help ensure first-generation college students receive the vital support and guidance they need to graduate.”

The next phase of the process will be to solicit applications from the same groups of Institutions seeking to become protégé institutions. These institutions have expressed a desire and need to be a mentor and receive training from like IHES who have models for student success. The end goal is of the collaborative is to strengthen Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) in order for them to contribute in a significant way to the realization of the new national goal of having sixty percent (60%) of Americans with a college degree by 2020.

The Alliance was established in 1999 and currently represents more than 600 MSI campuses. The Wal-Mart Foundation AIHEC/HACU/NAFEO Student Success Collaborative is made possible by a generous \$3 million grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation. More information can be obtained by contacting AIHEC at www.aihec.org, HACU at www.hacu.net, or NAFEO at www.nafeo.org.

About Philanthropy at Wal-Mart

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