

*Recruiting and Advising Minority
Students in Cooperative
Land-Grant/HBCU Programs*

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Goals

- Why is there a need for cooperative programs with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)?
- Introduce types of cooperative degree programs
- Explain work that needs to go into designing and implementing
- 3+3 Degree Program between MSU & TU
- Discuss administrative issues that affect students
- Educational and social challenges students encounter



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General Need for Diversity in NR

- Field needs to be diverse to better communicate with diverse cultural publics and recruit them into careers and outdoor recreation activities (e.g., mentors)
- Without diversity, questions will increasingly be raised about the social significance of natural resources programs
- Minority politicians elected by minority groups will start questioning relevancy of agencies and university programs and direct monies elsewhere
- Diversity vigor ~ different perspectives will let natural resources management evolve more quickly

Why Land-Grant Institutions have Difficulties Recruiting African American Students

- Historical relationship of African Americans with Ag & Natural Resources in the South not a pleasant one
- Not a respectable field; need to escape; need to become a doctor, lawyer, or engineer
- Low participation in NR-related outdoor recreation
- Institutional discrimination in recruiting
- No minority faculty!!



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Why Cooperative Programs are Needed

- Many African-Americans who have interest in Ag and Natural Resources matriculate to HBCUs or develop interest while they are there
- Federal agencies have strong presence and programs with HBCUs to diversify workforce
- Most HBCUs don't have large programs in Ag or Natural Resources, and students are under-prepared for work in federal agencies or for graduate school
- Larger Land-Grant institutions can fill the void in student knowledge in respective fields

Types of Cooperative Programs

- Sole Degree: 3+1 programs where students attend HBCU for 3 years, LG for 1; graduate from HBCU
- Joint Degree: 2+2 programs that result in diploma with both schools listed
- Dual Degree: 2+2, 2+3, 3+3 programs
 - Associate degree (HBCU), B.S. (Land-Grant)
 - B.S. (HBCU), M.S. non-thesis (Land-Grant)
 - B.S. (HBCU), M.S. thesis (Land-Grant)

MSU/TU 3+3 Program Components

- Students attend Tuskegee University first three years completing 98 hours in Biological Sciences, Liberal Arts, Physical and Mathematical Sciences.
- Students then transfer to MSU for their fourth year to complete 30 hours in Wildlife, Fisheries, Zoology, and Botany; 32 hours in Forestry
- After fourth year at MSU, Tuskegee confers B.S. in Environmental, Natural Resources, and Plant Sciences with an Option in Wildlife or Forestry

3+3 Program Components

- During fourth year at MSU, students take the Graduate Record Examination
- Students need to meet normal entrance requirements for admission to the graduate school
- After admission to graduate school, students will complete an individualized program of study, remaining courses needed for certification, a thesis, and final oral exam
- M.S. Degree in Wildlife Ecology (wildlife or fisheries emphasis), or Forest Resources



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What needs to be done Administratively?

- Development of MOA (curriculum and infrastructure)
- Designation of long-term liaisons at each university (communication)
- Contacts needed for:
 - Student Support Services
 - Admissions Office
 - Registrar's Office
 - Provost's Office
- Curriculum changes at both universities
- 5-year review/update of MOA & Program



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Recruiting Students into Program

- Need to know who students are early in their undergraduate program to help foster relationships
- Multiple site visits are essential to get them familiar with the environment and feeling comfortable
- Knowing why!!!: “Appreciating the deep meaning of diversity” (Lee 2009)
- Breaking barriers quickly is essential: “Nurtured Advising” (Williams et al. 2008)



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Recruiting Students

- MSU is “The People’s University” with top-down commitment to diversity initiatives
- Highest percentage of African-American undergraduate enrollment in Mississippi outside 1890 Universities at 20%.
- Courageous Conversations (Singleton and Linton 2006)
 - Mississippi “is not burning”

Supporting Social Justice (Lantta 2008)

- Creating a “safe” environment
 - Décor, posters, and pamphlets in buildings
 - Pictures of current students
 - Incorporation of diversity and harassment components into courses



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Once Students Decide

- Getting students to Land-Grant early so they can become accustomed to their surroundings, town
- Need to apply early so liaisons know if there are any issues from registrar's review of transcript
 - Pick an Option (5 in FO, 4 in WF)
 - Not listed as senior, they can't register first and often required MOA classes are filled and they must be forced in by instructor.
 - Sometimes they don't have required MSU pre-requisites for courses and are blocked by the system.
- Tuition waivers, student aid, books, tuition payments are big headaches

Problems and Preventing Them

- Forcing students into classes and unblocking occurs but often doesn't sit well with instructor
- Introducing students to faculty at faculty meetings is important so they know who these “new faces” are
- Informing college faculty of programs must be done annually
 - Raise social justice issues
 - Encourage conversation
 - Think of program students when job opportunities arise



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Student Success

Student	Gender	TU GPA	MSU GPA
1	Female	2.62	2.38
2	Female	2.60	2.53
3	Male	3.64	3.56
4	Female	3.18	2.85
5	Male	3.08	3.58
6	Male	3.10	3.10
7	Female	3.14	2.58



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Student Adjustment

- Males have adjusted better than females.
- Males have completed their program on schedule; only 1 of 4 females have completed in two semesters.
- Getting them involved in MANRRS is critical because it is something they are familiar with and keeps ties to friends back at TU through regional and national activities



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Advising Students for Graduate School

- Out of 7 students, only 2 have really had a desire to stay for M.S.; 2 have gone elsewhere; 3 started work
- Puts advisor in a awkward predicament as allegiance lies with MSU and goal is to produce grad students
- Do what is best for student and try to convince administration it is still a worthwhile endeavor
- Universities can't be greedy, we need some consortiums to tackle this as a whole

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