

# Recruitment and Retention of African American Students in the Field of Physical Education

IUPUI



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## Introduction

### Background:

- In the beginning to mid-nineteenth century, physical education was segregated to a point where African Americans were not full participants in AAHPER.
- Southern state AAHPER organizations grew as a way for African Americans to network and organize for equitable representation.
- Graham (1987) suggested the answer to the issues of underrepresentation of African American students and faculty in professional organizations (a) involved the provision of financially attractive incentives for African Americans to pursue physical education and (b) recruitment of African Americans into higher education while monitoring their academic progress.

## Literature

•Tobolowsky, Outcalt, and McDonough (2005) explain five factors that significantly influenced the selection of HBCUs: 1) family legacy and expectation, 2) academic prestige, 3) non-competitive admissions, 4) interpersonal comfort, alumni representation, and 5) campus tours.

•Tinto (1993) asserts that African American students use peer group associations, participation in extracurricular activities, and interaction with faculty and staff for social integration.

•Mentoring is necessary to prompt African American students to pursue graduate education (Hodge, Brooks, and Harrison, Jr, 2013), with modeling being of particular importance.

•Thomas (2003) observed that the reason “we have difficulty attracting faculty of color to our institutions is a direct result of our failure to attract students of color to our doctoral programs” (p.8).

## Method

Participants received school funding to attend the 2013 AAHPERD Convention.

Participants were involved with:

- Sessions
- Presentations
- Forums
- Volunteer opportunities
- Discussions with mentors in the field

Ethnographic interviews, written discourses and surveys of participants (N=3) were analyzed using content analysis.



## Research Questions

- (1)What can small HBCUs do to recruit professionally minded, African American students to PETE programs?
- (2)What can small HBCUs do to retain and support professionally minded, African Americans in undergraduate programs?
- (3) How do African American student's view professional membership, professional development, service to the profession, and research in PETE?
- (4)How can African Americans be motivated to continue on to graduate education?

## Surveys of Participants Covered the Following Topics :

- Entry into the profession
- Professional engagement
- Professional development

## Findings

### Perspectives Before Convention:

- None of the participants were interested in graduate education.
- Participants thought professional engagement and development were important, but none could distinguish the difference. When asked, “What does it mean to be professionally engaged?” a participant responded,

*To be apart of things in the community that help you build on your professionalism as an individual. As well as knowing how to present yourself in a professional atmosphere.- Jonathan*

- Participants viewed professional development as important for getting ahead in their field.

### Perspectives After Convention:

- Participants found the meetings with the AAHPERD mentors to be beneficial.
- Participants had a better understanding of African American history in Kinesiology and their potential as leaders.
- Participants expressed interest in pursuing graduate education and professional development.
- Participants requested having guest speakers come to campus, participating in workshops, and going to other conferences.

## Conclusions

- Results of this analysis provides a necessary lens into what actions are needed to recruit and motivate African American students to pursue not only careers in physical education, but graduate education.
- Professional convention attendance and mentoring positively affect student interest in PETE and graduate education.

## References

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