

To: Faculty Council
From: Juntura Committee, A. Rouyer, Chmn.
Subject: Position Paper Explaining the Attached Ethnic/Disadvantaged
Academic Advisory Program
Date: March 11, 1974

POSITION PAPER: ETHNIC/DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

For the past four years, the Juntura Committee and the Office of Intercultural Programs have been involved in extending traditional University services to students from ethnic or disadvantaged backgrounds. During this time the enrollment of minority students has increased from fewer than 20 students in 70-71 to approximately 75 students in 73-74. Also, the following statement was approved by the University faculty and the Board of Regents in the summer of 1971; it reads:

The general policy of the University, as it relates to minority cultures or educationally disadvantaged segments of our nation's citizenry, is to create a campus environment that will allow for their recognition by the faculty and general student body in a way that will afford these students a better opportunity to compete and attain an education in keeping with their individual ability and concern.

This policy has provided the rationale and incentive for the services and programs that currently exist. Among these services are:

1. contacting potential minority/disadvantaged applicants, counselors, and agencies informing them about the University of Idaho;
2. providing assistance in understanding and completing application forms;
3. acting as a clearing house and coordinating agency for the processing of applications by other University offices;
4. acting as an advocate for the student in the Financial Aid and Admissions processes;
5. assisting the Financial Aid Office in preparing aid packets for Special Programs students;
6. communicating with Special Programs students and helping orient them to the University both before and after enrollment;
7. keeping records and files on all Minority/Special Programs students and preparing reports on their status and progress.

While these services and programs have served to increase enrollment of minority/disadvantaged students at the University and have helped to make higher education a more realistic alternative for some disadvantaged persons, they have essentially been temporary, band-aid approaches to serious, long-range concerns. A comprehensively planned, adequately funded, and professionally staffed program for ethnic/disadvantaged students should be implemented as soon as possible.

Such a program should recognize the following realities. First, the University is located in the northern part of a largely rural state and is thus removed from both the major population centers and most of the centers of ethnic population in Idaho. This means that any program aimed to serve minority students must take into account the dislocation and alienation the students will likely encounter here. More specifically this means that most students will need a familiar place where they can get away and find security among friends and comfortable surroundings. Minority students will also need "role models" or counselors/advisors who can help them relate to their communities and ethnic backgrounds and who can also help translate for them the realities and exigencies of University life.

Second, any comprehensive planning needs to recognize that most students from ethnic/disadvantaged backgrounds are not as adequately prepared to compete for an education as are their white, middle class counterparts. This necessitates remediation on several levels. First, advisors, teachers, and departments need to be prepared and trained to offer special assistance to these students. Second, the Learning Resource Center needs to be expanded so that more math and science skills can be taught there. Third, students should be cycled into a relatively restrictive, well evaluated, common curriculum for their freshman and, if necessary, sophomore years. Also, the academic progress of the students should be continually monitored and evaluated.

A comprehensive program should recognize that minority/disadvantaged students in higher education are generally less well oriented both to career opportunities and to the requirements and complexities of professional life than are their white, middle class counterparts. Therefore, an orientation and career counseling program should be instituted and contact with the student maintained throughout the student's enrollment at the institution.

Like all students, students from ethnic backgrounds feel powerless over the forces and structures that influence their lives. Unlike white students, however, they do not have implicit faith in the system nor do they trust that they have a place in it. Therefore, actions, programs, changes, even services, are viewed with suspicion and alarm. Any program designed to meet the needs of the students must involve the student in its planning, implementation and evaluation. Also, the institution needs to understand that it acts and is seen by the students as acting in a racist manner, even when its conscious intent is to mitigate racism.

Lastly, like all students, ethnic/disadvantaged students are seeking and trying out their identities and future roles in society. However, for minority students, the difficulty of this process is compounded by all the historic, sociological, political and economic factors that have contributed to their being "minority" students in the first place. Some of these factors may never be replicated, but special efforts to hire competent minority personnel in all levels of the University must be made. Also, the more autonomy that can be given to the area of ethnic programs and services, the greater the impact on the system and on the students.

In conclusion, it should be recognized that this position paper is concerned with institutional racism, whether it is conscious or sub-conscious, whether it is intended or perceived. There is no remedy for racism, but there can be remediation. The accompanying proposals, which are based upon the foregoing analysis, outline specific steps that can be taken toward such remediation.

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Subject: Ethnic/Disadvantaged Student Academic Advisory Program
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A. Administrative Responsibility - Director

The Director will assume a full-time staff position. Preferably the person should be of American ethnic background, i.e., Chicano, Black, American Indian. The Director will work under the direct auspices of the Academic Vice President. The Director will have consultant services available from the Assistant Dean for Student Advisory Services responsible for advising American ethnic/disadvantaged students. The Director's responsibilities will be as follows:

1. To have an operational and philosophical understanding of the program.
2. To coordinate the needed functions that are required to implement the program.
3. To establish an advisory faculty bank that would be committed to meeting regularly with students on a personal and advisory basis.
4. To evaluate the program utilizing the methods of a questionnaire and group feedback sessions, with the purpose of soliciting from the student what would be most facilitative to individual needs.
5. To direct and support the Student Coordinators through an inter-personal exchange of program process.
6. To review all Freshman and Sophomore academic schedules with the purpose of matching pre-college test scores and personal interviews to the individual's interests and abilities.

B. Student Coordinators' Responsibilities

There will be three Student Coordinators, preferably one from each ethnic group, who will be responsible for meeting with students and developing relationships that would foster a relaxed atmosphere. The Student Coordinators should receive some type of compensation for their work such as resident assistantships, free board and room or irregular help monies. They will help in formulating program plans that are "action" oriented and will encourage the development of students. The specific duties of the Student Coordinators will be as follows:

1. To develop relationships with Freshman and Sophomore students that foster good communication for the scholastic and personal development of the students.

6. Keep a calendar on times met.

7. Use the time in whatever way the advisor and advisee feel would be most beneficial, e.g., discussing academic problems, engaging in career investigation, visiting laboratories, or just visiting.

D. General Faculty

The cooperation and participation of the general faculty will be needed for the complete operation of the program. Each student's professor will be contacted by the Student Coordinator once a month with a monitor sheet. The feedback obtained from the monitor sheet will serve to deal with academic problems while there remains time to resolve them. Also the feedback may serve as positive reinforcement. The professors can feel free to contact the Student Coordinator or other personnel with whom he/she might need to meet in reference to minority student needs.

E. Orientation to the University (2-4 credits)

The objective of this class is to enable the student to survive academically and personally in the University environment through intensive orientation to the University in the following areas:

1. To have an understanding of the general operation of the University.
2. To develop communication skills for classroom situations.
3. To develop an understanding of the University catalog.
4. To practice communication skills in micro lab situations.
5. To be able to utilize the library to a maximum.
6. To meet and interview various professors, administrators, student service personnel from the University.

2. To disseminate a monitor sheet to each student's major professor in person.
3. To complete a follow-up monitor sheet once a month.
4. To assist students in academic work.
 - a. To make the students aware of important dates at the University, such as orientation, curriculum counseling, registration, last day to add or drop a course, and finals week.
 - b. To assist students in allocating their time and organizing their studies.
 - c. To direct afternoon and evening study sessions.
 - d. To encourage and influence students in maintaining good class attendance, participation, and learning attitudes.
 - e. To encourage good study habits, including note-taking, completion of assignments and preparation, for which assistance may be provided.
 - f. To determine what assignments have been made to the students, to clarify them when necessary, and to follow through to completion.
 - g. To review progress with students on a weekly basis, make contact with instructor if necessary to clarify problem areas.
5. To assist students in finding help for their personal and social adjustment problems.
6. To help students recognize when they need tutoring, arrange for it, and then see that the student follows through.
7. To assist in accumulating and evaluating the data for program and student development.

C. Faculty Advisor

The advisor preferably will be a faculty member in the student's major field (if a faculty member can not be obtained perhaps a graduate student or another faculty person who has knowledge of the student's academic interest could accept the role). This person will perform the following duties:

1. Advise student regarding academic scheduling. When scores on ACT or SAT standardized tests so indicate, ethnic/disadvantaged students may be limited to 12 - 14 credits hours per semester.
2. See students at least twice a month.
3. Work toward developing a personal relationship and sharing professional expertise with the student. (This might better be understood in terms of the Advisor sharing his or her experience in college and guiding the student in the present college environment.)
4. Give students an opportunity to identify with a professor as a friend and a potential professional role model.
5. Keep a personal folder as a reference and make contact notes when needed.