Case Study: Florida Atlantic University
AACTE Network Improvement Community Black and Hispanic/Latino Male Initiative

“The ever-evolving face of public education creates constant challenges for our College. One of our strengths is our partnerships with districts schools and community organizations. Our new strategic plan defines our mission, establishes our values and aspirations, and defines specific priorities. Now we must do the hard work. We must live our values and clearly work on our priorities.”

REASON FOR JOINING THE NIC

- The enrollment of white students in the Florida Atlantic School of Education has steadily declined, yet white female students continue to represent the majority of those enrolled every fall.
- In 2012-13, the candidates included 9 Black or African American males (approximately 2%), 11 Hispanic or Latino males (approximately 2%), and 43 white males (approximately 9%).
- Black and Latino males are at the top of a teacher shortage of unprecedented proportions in the State of Florida.
- 79%, 68%, and 93% of students enrolled in Broward, Palm Beach, and Miami Dade School Districts, respectively, are minorities. Yet, only about 48% of teachers are non-white in Broward—a 31 percentage-point gap; in Palm Beach 30% of teachers are non-white—a nearly 38 percentage-point gap (FLDOE Survey 2, 2016).

NEW INITIATIVES RESULTING FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE NIC

- Development of a Data Management System
  - Tracking of student progression by ethnicity, gender, and other pertinent variables
  - Modeling retention and 4- and 6-year graduation based on relevant predictors, and depending on model accuracy, flag students who are unlikely to graduate for intervention
Examining the effect of intervention for each group by considering its impact on those judged likely to fail and contrasting aggregate graduation rates in respect to the beginning and continuing baseline

- **Implementation of Student Success Action Plans**
  - Flight Plans for all programs that include summer semesters
  - Culturally relevant
  - Review college advising practices and procedures
  - Create Pathways to Graduate Education initiative, which encourages undergraduate students to seek graduate education through enrollment in combined (Bachelor’s to Masters) programs

- **Mentoring Program**
  - Collaboration between Student and Academic Affairs to increase engagement, retention, and graduation rates, especially in at-risk student populations
  - Collaboration with Urban Male Initiative to provide the urban males on our campus a culture of support, empowering them to meet the various challenges that they face both scholastically and socially

- **Hmles Program**
  - Doctoral students in the Holmes Scholars program now assist with both recruitment and retention initiatives

**DISCOVERIES**

- Multiple layers of advising are needed, including culturally relevant, sensitive appreciative methods.
- Training and coaching of faculty is needed.
- Some ideas shared are not currently possible at FAU and some ideas deemed possible will take time to implement.
- Integration of proposed strategies with standing committees in the college serves all.
- Demands are there and the resources are limited.

**OUTCOMES**

- The first cohort of the Holmes Scholars program included five doctoral students.
- The college undergraduate Honors program actively recruits students to engage in undergraduate action research.
- Over six required college courses now include undergraduate research. Exposure to research experiences along with student-faculty connections highly impact retention strategies for all students.