Case Study: University of St. Thomas
AACTE Network Improvement Community Black and Hispanic/Latino Male Initiative

“The NIC process solidified many of our recruitment and outreach efforts across the many communities of color and influenced new focused efforts into recruiting Black and Hispanic/Latino men specifically into teacher education.”

REASON FOR JOINING THE NIC

• Accreditation Process: Through the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accreditation process, UST began to focus more attention toward the diversity of teacher candidates since they did not match the diversity of our communities.

• Strategic Plan: UST developed a strategic plan that included “embracing our differences as one human family,” and further comprises goals and objective including the recruitment, retention, and welcoming of students, faculty, and staff of different cultures.

• College Diversity Plan: The College of Education, Leadership and Counseling’s (CELC) diversity committee has been working to design, implement, and evaluate a diversity plan for the College.

NEW INITIATIVES RESULTING FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE NIC

Recruitment efforts were revitalized and exemplified by recruiting at the following events or organizations:

• Minneapolis Public Schools Grow Your Own and St. Paul Urban Residency (SUTR): Both programs (in partnership with Minneapolis and St. Paul Public Schools) aim to prepare more teachers of color. These residency programs offer a unique opportunity for paraprofessionals who already have bachelor’s degrees to earn teacher licensure.

• Somali Parents Autism Network Fair: This gathering of information and resources for Somali parents also allowed UST to educate about the need for more Somali teachers with autism licenses.
• American Indian Education Fair: UST had an exhibit table stressing the need for more males of color in teaching.
• Career Days at Minneapolis high schools with AchieveMPLS: This is a nonprofit partner of the Minneapolis Public School System offering career and college readiness programs, educational events and financial funding opportunities for students, teachers, and support personnel.
• Meetings with Twin Cities Chapters of Educators Rising: UST discussed ways in which to recognize and intentionally recruit more males and more students of color.
• CLUES (Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio) Fiesta Latina: CLUES is a non-profit service agency committed to advancing the capacity of Latino families.
• The Twin Cities Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota: UST has joined with individuals, institutions and organizations around the common goal to double the number of teachers of color and American Indian teachers in Minnesota and ensure that at least 20% of candidates preparing to teach are persons of color and American Indian.
• Community spaces and work with Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, Council for Asians and Pacific Islanders, Council for Latino Minnesotans and the Minnesota Council for Indian Affairs: Working with the councils helped give a “community voice” to the need for a more diverse teacher workforce.

DISCOVERIES
• Resistance to change: Internally, we received some resistance to change.
• Limited resources: Increasing efforts without added resources continues to be a challenge.
• Staff turnover resulted in inadequate time for a complete transfer of knowledge.
• Lack of understanding: There were some “knowns,” such as the steering of mathematics and science students to more financially lucrative professions. But what came as a surprise to some of us was the information shared by some of our prospective teachers: they had been advised not to become teachers by their parent(s) who are teachers. Concerns shared by those engaged in and committed to the profession included the pay, hard work, lack of recognition, the difficulty of obtaining licensure, and the financial burden of student loan debt.

OUTCOMES
• Participation created positive feedback and synergy.
• There is renewed faculty interest in learning to enhance their instruction and curriculum to be culturally responsive, to increase our students of color in teacher education, and to create new programs and enhanced curriculum.
• The goal of increasing teacher diversity is aligned to our work and is providing a platform of learning with other universities.