



Enhancing Higher Education Diversity



The Supreme Court's decision to prohibit race as a consideration in higher education admission is expected to decrease the matriculation of underrepresented students. The Barthwell Group proposes three key strategies to adapt to this decision to build a diverse and equitable campus within these new parameters.

1. Enhance Recruitment Outreach Strategically

It is critical to have trusted persons such as guidance counselors, current students, alumni, faculty, staff, and even parents who can speak to a student's potential experience. Efforts can be as small as expanding the locations of info sessions to as large as summer learning programs. Regardless of the approach, institutions should increase brand awareness among students and parents, cultivate relationships with trusted advisors of prospective students, and highlight that all students belong.

2. Review Admissions Policies / Practices

Consider whether current admission policies / practices may dissuade applications and matriculation from underrepresented students. Institutions should make the process more accessible and reflect a holistic view of prospective students. Evaluate what is possible with the existing resources or constraints.

3. Ensure Inclusive Campus Environments

Often higher education institutions believe that their campuses are welcoming and inclusive. However, there may be a disconnect between the espoused values and the experiences of underrepresented students, faculty, and staff (both current and applicants). To appeal to prospective students and retain current students, an inclusive environment is imperative to both their experience and academic success.

TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Akosua Barthwell Evans



Dr. Akosua Barthwell Evans is the Chief Executive Officer and Founder of The Barthwell Group. Since launching The Barthwell Group in 2005, she has been primarily responsible for the corporation's impressive growth and development of its prestigious client base (including, Lockheed Martin, TIAA, Indiana University, the U.S. Marines, and the Air Force Research Laboratory). Prior to launching The Barthwell Group, Dr. Evans was an accomplished banker, lawyer, and management consultant. In addition, throughout her career, Dr. Evans has provided leadership to more than 16 not-for-profit organizations throughout the United States through her board service. In 2014, she was appointed to the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for African-Americans by President Barack Obama, in 2015, she was appointed to the Yale Alumni Association Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce, and in 2017 she was appointed to the Yale Alumni Association Board of Governors. Dr. Evans is a sought-after speaker regarding diversity and inclusion issues throughout the United States, including most recently for the Yale University Alumni Association, CalPERS, the International Corporate Governance Network, and Owens & Minor. Dr. Evans is a graduate of Barnard College and the Yale Law School, where she was Co-Marshall of her class and won the Edward D. Robbins Memorial Prize for her writing. She holds an M. Phil. and a Ph.D. from Columbia University where her studies focused on Africa and China.

RECENT ENGAGEMENTS

COMPREHENSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY PROCESS TO DEVELOP MICHIGAN BASED NON-PROFIT'S STRATEGIC PLAN

At The Barthwell Group, we routinely work with non-profits to help define the tone and direction of their organizations future. In this engagement, we began with a series of extensive document review, to better understand previous strategic planning priorities and the current needs of the organization. Next, we interfaced with the Board of Trustees, to understand their unique vision for the future of their foundation. We then led meetings with the Strategic Planning Committee to collaborate on specific elements of the Strategic Plan. Furthermore, we continuously worked with the Board of Trustees throughout the process to obtain their feedback on our progress. Lastly, we finalized the Strategic Plan and facilitated a meeting with the Board of Trustees, staff members, and other stakeholders to present it.

ENGAGING AND INTERACTIVE PROGRAM FOR A NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION'S MID-LEVEL MANAGERS

We began this engagement by collaborating with the client to identify the key areas to focus on for a workshop based on the current organizational climate. Next, we developed the content and materials for the workshop session, designed to enhance collaboration and foster team cohesion among the organization's mid-level managers. We then facilitated the all-day in-person workshop for the organization's mid-level managers. We also included an interactive team building session to end the day, in the form of a fun escape room activity. Additionally, we conducted a follow-up session to update managers who were not able to join the workshop, and will continue this engagement with alternating in person and virtual sessions every quarter.

DEI STRATEGIC PLAN TO EMBED DEI ACROSS A NATIONAL ADVOCACY GROUP

The Barthwell Group met with the advocacy group's Board of Directors to review the organization's previous DEI initiatives and identify the highest priority focus areas to be pursued further. We then facilitated discussions with stakeholders to develop a DEI commitment statement, goals, objectives, and key success metrics to accomplish the vision. We then developed a set of DEI Principles, which communicated DEI expectations for internal and external stakeholders. We also created a specialized DEI Toolkit, equipped with all the resources for external stakeholders, of all levels of experience, to meet these new DEI expectations. Additionally, we conducted a scan of the most suitable e-learning platforms and provided recommendations on the best platform to enhance continuous DEI learning. As we move forward with the engagement, we are developing a framework and assisting in planning the implementation of this DEI strategy.