

Commit dedicated staff and funding for initiatives to educate and retain students of under-represented ethnicities.

CURRENT CHALLENGE:

Fresno State's African American student enrollment has been in a downward trend (-21.7%) since 2011. Total enrollment has dropped from 4.6% to 3.3% in 5 years. The population of African Americans in Fresno County is 5.9%.

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

My suggestion is to address this crisis immediately by:

- Committing dedicated staff and funding for initiatives to educate and retain students of under-represented ethnicities. (African American students specifically)
- Intentionally recruit local African American students (especially young men) beyond Super Sundays in February at local churches. This strategy has proven ineffective.
- Seek out partnerships with African American leaders/alumni to mentor and give internships to these students.
- Seek out grants that will boost college and career readiness for African American students.

BENEFITS TO FRESNO STATE:

Fresno State prides itself on being diverse, serving underrepresented students and being reflective of the community in which it serves. A benefit is that it may attract a more diverse faculty and staff because of the diverse student population. Reversing this perilous trend of declining African American enrollment will give Fresno State greater success in identifying and nurturing local talent. Partnering with local political and business leaders will increase student support and strengthen ties to the community.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

I suggest that committed funds and personnel should be dedicated to strengthen our relationships in the African American community. We are doing outreach to these students, but the staff doing the work is doing it as a "side assignment" and not as a dedicated position (e.g. Edge Initiative). This trend is reversible if made a priority.