Black Students’ Experiences at Predominantly White Institutions

Before the meeting:
- Email attendees the following article:

Materials for session:
- Must have access to a computer and screen to show video.

Outline
- Introduce the catalyst behind the brown bag, black students across the US sharing their experiences as students in predominately white colleges and sparking a conversation in the news and through social media. Quickly show examples, listed at the end of this outline. [5 minutes]
- This brown bag provides an opportunity for the library to be aware/discuss this topic as well, since it is directly relatable to campus. [2 minutes]
  - Share [your community’s] demographic statistics
  - The Only Black Student article in the Daily and book, written by a UW student in 2009 to describe his experience at UW.
- Show “Being Black at UCLA Law School” Video [8 minutes], as we watch the video ask people to think about the article and if they see an ideas presented by the article in the video.
- Discuss article, “The Black Student Experience at Predominately White Colleges: Implications for School and College Counselors.”
  - Frame article as a lens for understanding aspects of the black college students’ experience, not representative of all students.
  - Write 2-3 topics/questions on the board to stimulate conversation.
  - Post ACRL Diversity Standards
- Questions/Final Comments [5mins]
- Assessment piece [5 min]

Questions
- The article talks often about creating a sense of identity or belonging. In particular, having to alienate friends and family to succeed. Is this a new concept? A surprising concept?
- How does the need for community affect the college experience, the ability to succeed in college? Is there a connection?
The end of the article talks about implication for college counselors. Are there any implications for the library or what role we as the library play in students’ lives?

What role do cultural norms play in this article (othermothering, mentors, encouragement, and expectations)? Are there other ways that these cultural norms affect students’ college experiences?

Notes

With this article I hoped to present new ideas or perspectives on the experiences of some, not all, black students. Some of which are reflected in the video. For instance, the need to make your own community or being constantly aware of a feeling of “otherness.”

Recurring themes (in article and videos):

- Sense of isolation
- Creating or finding a space on campus, student organizations, feeling an obligation to create the space as well.
- Additional pressure to do well from black faculty, the concept of othermothering.
- Being the voice of your community, policing how you express yourself for fear of perpetuating a stereotype.

Examples

Being Black at the University of Michigan

To Be a Black Man at UCLA

I, too, Am Harvard
Tumblr
http://itooamharvard.tumblr.com/
Buzzfeed’s take
http://www.buzzfeed.com/alisonvingiano/21-black-harvard-students-share-their-experiences-through-a

Being Black at UCLA Law School
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/02/14/ucla-law-school-diversity_n_4789763.html?utm_hp_ref=ucla

The Only Black Student (UWS)
http://dailyuw.com/archive/2009/12/08/imported/only-black-student#.UxY6ds5xBnM