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## Fostering Diversity at Smeal



The Smeal College continued its commitment to foster and enhance diversity among students, faculty, and administrators, introducing several new initiatives that expanded minority representation in the areas of enrollment and retention, developing benchmarking data from peer institutions, and offering workshops and courses that reflect changes within the marketplace.

Over the past year, the college's minority alumni provided extensive career and mentoring advice for MBA students, helping to strategize the best ways to attain long- and short-term job goals through interviewing sessions, perfecting résumés, and taking advantage of the University's comprehensive career fairs. In addition, alumni teamed with current Ph.D. students to aid ongoing efforts in recruiting more minority Ph.D. candidates.

The past year was a successful one for a team of four MBA students who attended the Chrysler-sponsored twenty-fifth annual National Black MBA Association conference. Student teams from thirty-seven institutions were charged with recommending short- and long-range marketing strategies to wean consumers from zero-percent financing incentives and large cash rebates. Members of the Smeal team—sponsored by Boeing—were selected based on merit, course work, and public-speaking ability.

MBA students also had the opportunity to advance diversity through a new course taught by Juan Johnson, vice president at Coca-Cola and president of the Diversity Leadership Academy at the American Institute for Managing Diversity. The course, Strategic Diversity Management, used action learning, case studies, and real-time applications to teach students how to effectively adapt and manage diversity for maximum organizational benefit.

The past year also ushered in several new undergraduate initiatives and continued others. The Black Male Leadership Symposium, facilitated by Black male alumni, MBA students, faculty, staff, and administrators, was launched to help with matriculation and retention of African American men in the college. In monthly workshops developed to explore ways to reach those goals, facilitators discussed topics such as the identity of Black men in academia, diversity in the corporate environment, and developing leadership potential.

Minority first-year students took advantage of a new program to help ease transition into college life. The Freshman Leadership Program provided a venue for first-year students to identify and promote leadership skills while helping to ease common transitional problems, particularly those that affect retention.

An initiative to increase undergraduate parental involvement was also established. With a newsletter sent out each semester along with individualized letters and an



end-of-the-year conference call, the college worked to ensure students positioned themselves to achieve short- and long-term career goals. Discussions on topics such as academic performance and choosing the right major assured parents of undergraduates that they are a key part of the educational process.

In ongoing diversity efforts, Smeal participated in its fifth annual Striving Towards Awareness and Respect for Tomorrow (START) conference, coordinated by Smeal students in collaboration with those from other Penn State colleges. The college also continued to work toward increasing available scholarship money; expanding outreach efforts in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico; and staying on course in recruiting minorities for Ph.D. programs and faculty/staff positions.

