Vita Jones

Emma Holmes Fellowship Report

Please note that before the end of the semester that the award is taken, you must submit a final report. The Final Report must contain specific examples of:

1)   How this work has impacted your practice?

Working in the faith-based community has enhanced my understanding of how to support African American students as they transition into the higher education setting. My practice as a special educator is informed by the experience of working in the Friendship Baptist Church. Through the PRAISE fellowship I have met with parents and students providing financial aid assistance, college admission/application requirements and resilience techniques to enter California State University, Fullerton. I am able to provide students in the teacher preparation program with current practices to support diverse populations in the classroom setting. Specifically, I instruct pre-service teachers in the following strategies: 1) how to effectively engage with African American parents, 2) how to understand cultural nuances that impact the education of African American students, 3) disseminate statistics about the trajectory of African American students.

2)   How this work will impact work of the College of Education?

The CSUF College of Education has a mission to support a just, equitable, and inclusive environment. To obtain this mission I have established an ethical insider approach to understanding and supporting the African American community in attending California State University, Fullerton. The social justice agenda of the College of Education is furthered by establishing a partnership with the African American community. Over the course of the fall 2017 semester I have met with the pastors, teachers and students to provide college readiness skills. The rapport I have developed with the church has given the College of Education a face and a voice in the community that we care about African American children in the community.

3) How this work renewed your engagement in the field?

Because African American youth often experience academic failure and in some US cities have a 50% dropout rate, I assumed the responsibility to support this population in attaining higher education goals. Through my work with the PRAISE fellowship I have renewed my engagement, vigor and interest in the field of education. My 2009 dissertation entitled, "African American Parental Perception of Resiliency, A Delphi Study" is furthered through the PRAISE project. My dissertation was based on identifying resilient characteristics of African American youth. Through PRAISE I have counseled youth, church educators and pastors on the importance of college attendance and fostering resilience in African American youth. I am comfortable with the faith-based community and strongly embrace the privilege to serve this population in becoming informed about navigating the academic setting.

4)   How you met your stated goals?

PRAISE GOALS

1) Tools for African American student resilience in the educational pipeline.
- *I met with the youth pastor and the educational department of the Friendship Baptist Church on four specific occasions (workshops, educational meetings, one on one settings in addition to email correspondence*
- *I coordinated outreach efforts with CSUF Outreach team to advise students in college admissions/application and resiliency practices*

2) Navigating educational pathways for returning adults.
- *I provided campus information for re-entry students through church workshops (eg.re-entry flyers, veterans information, women's center)*
- *I met with congregants in one on one settings and phone calls to support re-entry into California State University, Fullerton*

3) Empowering families of students with special needs.
- *I compiled a team of CSUF faculty to meet with a family from Friendship Baptist church to support their student transitioning from high school into higher education*
- *I disseminated CSUF special education and disability services information to congregants at a church workshop*