Minorities in Hospitality Management

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Although diversity in hospitality management benefits from business open-door policies and managerial development programs, it will be necessary for educational programs to go well beyond their traditional recruitment and retention programs to help minorities pursue opportunities in the hospitality field. This article reviews minority participation in the field and proposes some strategies for success.

Project 2000 represented an opportunity for home economics to address a critical issue in higher education. Though not the first field to approach the problem of minority under-representation, home economics has positioned itself in an active, rather than reactive, mode. As the representative of hospitality management to Project 2000, it is my responsibility to inform home economics professionals that they face a dual problem in this particular area. The issue of minority under-representation is paramount, but the field of home economics must also come to some consensus on its approach to hospitality management. Although most hospitality programs are home economics-based, few top-rated hospitality programs (Calnan, 1988) are in home economics. In addition, programs in home economics generally have less prestige with the hospitality industry; thus, their graduates often have less opportunity upon graduation than students from non-home economics programs. This latter issue is critical to the future of home economics because it makes an impact on the representation of minorities.

The question of whether home economics and hospitality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2.0m</td>
<td>7.3m</td>
<td>30.0m</td>
<td>9.0m</td>
<td>48.8m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 (est.)</td>
<td>2.1m</td>
<td>8.8m</td>
<td>34.1m</td>
<td>10.0m</td>
<td>57.2m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 (est.)</td>
<td>2.2m</td>
<td>10.7m</td>
<td>38.4m</td>
<td>12.8m</td>
<td>74.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020 (est.)</td>
<td>2.3m</td>
<td>12.6m</td>
<td>41.8m</td>
<td>15.0m</td>
<td>91.7m</td>
</tr>
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management can build minority participation is one to which there is not a simple yes or no answer. There is a common denominator, however; there must be a strategic plan which clearly establishes goals, procedures to achieve these goals, and measures which will determine if these goals have been met.

Issues addressing minorities in the field of hospitality management will be addressed in this paper. Strategies which have been utilized successfully will be presented so that individual readers and programs can determine which ones might best fit the needs of their specific programs.

Home Economics Mission

The underlying philosophy of home economics has been clearly established, particularly by Brown and Paolucci (1978). In my opinion, the problem with the philosophy, and this issue of minority under-representation, is that home economics has never brought the two together. All too often the profession has stated its intention but has not followed through. It is well-known that minority students tend to prefer institutions which emphasize teaching and a more personal approach (Stanton, 1989). Much of the success of predominantly minority institutions is due to this factor. The Carnegie Foundation (Boyer, 1987) noted that students are more comfortable and appreciate the learning process to a higher degree in an institution where students are the focus, not research. Therefore, programs which continue to emphasize research at the expense of teaching and student services are not likely to succeed in increasing minority participation.

It is, as Siewert (1990) noted, time to get serious about minorities as well as all students. With the exception of consumer studies, fashion merchandising, and hospitality management, home economics departments have difficulty attracting students. There is no need to alter the philosophy of focusing on families. What is needed is a new perspective of implementation. Such factors as caring faculty and staff, faculty and staff available for students, teaching as a priority, and quality academic and occupational advising must be emphasized. Such efforts must start with top administrators and be clearly presented to all faculty of the program or institution. Home economics programs will also need to reach out to other disciplines in order to form coalitions in strengthening the appeal of
academic programs to minority students.

The Minority Population

There continues to be dramatic changes in the population mix of the United States. These changes will affect every aspect of society, including education. By year 2000, there will be over 30 million foreign-born Americans (Bureau of the Census, 1991), the most in our history. The large increases among Asians and Hispanics will continue, with Hispanics soon to become the largest minority group. Table 1 illustrates the projected population by group and percentage of population.

In Table 2 we can observe the college population of minority groups. Although Asian Americans represent a greater percentage of students in higher education than their percentage of the population as a whole, African Americans and Hispanic Americans are significantly underrepresented in higher education. The higher education participation of Native Americans mirrors their overall population representation.

Minority underrepresentation should not surprise us. Desegregation in higher education dates only from 1954 in Brown vs. Board of Education. Although this Supreme Court decision found segregation unconstitutional, discrimination was not truly addressed until the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It was not until the late 1980s that all 50 states had approved plans for desegregating higher education. Today, only 15 states have higher education minority enrollments in excess of 20 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 1988), while 19 states have less than a 10 percent minority enrollment. Although the figures in Table 2 represent an increase in head-count enrollment, Native American participation has remained stable in terms of percentage, but African American participation has actually decreased. Hispanic American and Asian American enrollment percentages are increasing at an estimated three times the rate of African Americans and Native Americans. African Americans are now enrolling in increasing numbers at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), leading to further decline in their participation in predominantly white colleges and universities. A more enlightening picture of the minority situation emerges from graduation rates. From the figures in Table 3, we observe that with the exception of Asian Americans at the bachelor’s and master’s degree levels, the educational attainment of minority students peaks with two-year degrees.

Tables 4 and 5 are presented in order to dramatize the enrollment percentages of minorities in hospitality management. The institutions represented all have hospitality management programs. The number of institutions enrolling minorities in proportion to their population are few, although it appears that home economics-based programs are less likely to enroll minorities than programs not based in home economics. In fact, the few programs in either Table 4 or 5 which exceed national averages are themselves located in states, or areas, which allow them to take advantage of host minority populations.

Hospitality Management Programs

There are, at present, over 500 two-year and vocational programs and an estimated 160 four-year programs in hospitality management. Like home economics, they suffer from lack of a single common name, although hospitality management represents the modern terminology. These hospitality...
programs are housed in various schools or colleges or may be standalone programs in a university or even be a single institution by itself. There are large programs in excess of 1,000 students, and there are small programs of less than 50 students. A recent development is graduate education, with 36 programs now offering graduate as well as undergraduate degrees in hospitality management education. Two factors common to nearly all programs are a lack of qualified faculty and high student-to-teacher ratios. Other factors commonly associated with hospitality management programs are an emphasis on teaching and close ties with industry.

Prior to examining the studies on minorities in hospitality management programs, two important groups need to be identified. The first is the Historically and Predominantly Black Colleges and Universities Hospitality Management Consortium (hereafter known as the consortium), a special interest group in the Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (CHRIE). Founded in 1985 the consortium developed from a meeting of several hospitality management program directors with the U.S. Department of Interior National Parks summer-employment program. The need for further dialogue on issues related to hospitality management programs on black college campuses was the stimulus for organizing this group. The primary mission of the consortium is to assist member efforts in planning, developing, implementing, and sustaining hospitality management and related programs with graduates of the highest quality (Consortium, 1989). Today there are some 20 member institutions and 12 allied member corporations. It should be noted that the member institutions educate the majority of college-trained African American hospitality management candidates. The consortium meets twice each year to exchange information and ideas as well as to engage in faculty and student development. The second group, recently established at the University of Houston, is the Hospitality Industry Hispanic Development Institute (hereafter known as the institute). The institute was founded to increase and expand the opportunities of Hispanics in the hospitality industry. The institute has initiated a high-school recruitment program for Hispanics in the hope of increasing the level of educational achievement necessary for success in college.

Despite efforts by these two groups, few studies have been conducted on minorities in hospitality management education. Two which stand out for discussion are authored by Stanton (1989) and Jaffe (1990). Stanton conducted what should be referred to as the premier study of minorities in hospitality education. His purpose in this inaugural research was to determine if minority underrepresentation was in hospitality programs alone or was a factor related to the institution’s overall enrollment. A secondary objective of this study was to compare proportions of minority graduates with their proportions in the hospitality program enrollment. Stanton looked at the 20 leading hospitality programs as determined in a study by Calnan (1988). Eighteen of these programs responded in the study and provided Stanton with data from Fall 1987 and 1988. Figures obtained in the study indicated enrollment averaged 10,070 majors in these programs in the two years examined. There was little or no change in enrollment in any of the programs. Minority enrollment also exhibited little change. Native Americans comprised 0.4 percent of hospitality majors, African Americans accounted for 5.33 percent, and Hispanic Americans 2.85 percent. The latter group does show signs of increased enrollment in these identified programs. Seven institutions accounted for over 74 percent of total minority enrollment in the hospitality programs. Each of these programs is located in an institution with a significant minority population. The number of minorities graduating from the 20 programs was found to be extremely low, in no way matching enrollment.
proportions. In fact, five of the institutions in the study accounted for 68 percent of minority student graduates.

Jaffe (1990) was the first to identify programs and policies directed toward recruitment and retention of minority students in hospitality management programs. He received data from 55 four-year hospitality programs, with half reporting enrollment in excess of 150 majors. Most programs reported minority enrollment of less than 10 percent. Sixty-five percent of the programs had no minority faculty, and another 20 percent reported one minority faculty member. The recruiting tool most often utilized for undergraduates was minority scholarships, and tutoring and a minority affairs coordinator were most often reported as retention activities. It should be noted that these activities were, for the most part, based at the university level and not with the specific hospitality program. The most critical point about this study was that it identified hospitality management as an area which lacks a cohesive program in minority recruitment and retention activities.

Hospitality Management Employment

Employment opportunities for minority students in hospitality management are plentiful as they are for all hospitality students. It has been estimated that hospitality managers fall into the largest job-growth category established by the U. S. Department of Labor for the next decade (29 percent increase by 2000). No studies on actual minority hospitality managers exist, but recent data reported by the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission suggests that 91 percent of all managers are white men or women. The U. S. Department of Labor, along with other sources, estimates that the majority of new workers in the future will be from a minority group. Most companies pursue traditional minority recruitment patterns and what is referred to as "open door" affirmative action programs. It will be necessary in the future to go beyond these traditional programs to help promising young people prepare for college, to nurture them in their academic career, to interest them in a corporate career, and to foster their progress in the managerial ranks.

Programs developed for minority students in hospitality management must recognize the needs and expectations of these students. The area of expectations has been a recent area of study by hospitality educators. Unfortunately, none of the studies yet conducted have included a large enough sample from which to draw conclusive evidence. In addition studies have not distinguished between majority and minority students. From the studies conducted on hospitality program graduates, however, certain motivating factors emerge related to recruitment and retention: reasonable salary, good training program, opportunity for career development, reasonable hours, opportunity for promotion, and good working conditions. In perhaps the most broad-based study of hospitality program graduates, Pavesic and Bryner (1989) noted that the institution attended had a profound influence on employment status. While there are many hospitality programs, the top 20 dominate in terms of prestige, industry support, and employment opportunity. Students from these programs tend to get the inside track on their competitors in terms of summer jobs, internships, and access to major hospitality companies.

The business community has created many programs to aid minorities in managerial development. Among the well-known is InRoads, recently celebrating its 20th anniversary. Today, over 1,000 companies nationwide participate with internships and additional means of corporate support. The program identifies promising minority high school students, prepares them for college, places them in supervised corporate summer internships, and provides counseling and support services to groom them for corporate careers. For African Americans specifically, the National Business League is an organization which advocates African American business development. A similar role is played by the U. S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce for Hispanic Americans. Federal agencies which exist to assist all minorities in business development include the Small Business Administration and the Minority Business Development Agency.

Within the hospitality industry, several programs are well-known and respected for their focus on minority issues. BBD Enterprises, a large Burger King franchiser, provides child-care services for its employees in a joint arrangement with a regional community child-care service. Pizza Hut has developed a mentoring program for newly hired minority and women managers. The new employees are placed with personnel (two levels above) who serve as role models. Marriott Corporation has instituted free medical research and counseling in selected areas. A private health education company was hired as a resource center, not a diagnostic center. Employees can obtain information on the status of the latest medical research on a particular illness, treatment options, or the health care delivery system. In addition, numerous programs have been developed in coordination with state and local organizations for hourly employees, potential
employees, and grammar school children. Hospitality companies have recognized that the future labor force will indeed differ from today, and they are laying a foundation of programs designed to encourage pursuit of opportunities in the hospitality field.

Strategies for Success

There are no secrets as to what will work to bring minorities into home economics, nor is there any need to rediscover strategies which already exist in other areas. The following strategies have a record of success. Basic goals must be established and met or minority underrepresentation will continue.

Although our attention in higher education has focused on recruitment and retention, these are but a part of the overall plan. We must start with adequate preparation of young people for potential college training, increase their participation in higher education, provide more role models in education and industry, and provide career paths for these young people to pursue. Universities, until recently, have not become involved with grammar schools or high schools in helping to prepare young people for college. One of the first steps must be the recognition that we should not treat all minorities as though they have common problems. There must be what Attinasi (1989) calls early anticipatory socialization for college. This means working with families, teachers, community workers, and religious leaders, all of whom are in contact with these minority youth daily. In other words, we must begin constructive intervention when children are young, and we must work with them in their environment. This gives advantages to programs located near minority population centers. In the case of Hispanic Americans, 90 percent live in just nine states, and over half live in urban areas.

Another example of a preparation strategy is pre-college classes or enrichment programs. These go beyond a cursory campus tour or talks by an administrator. These involve bringing minority students to campus for a defined period of time and exposing the students to requirements, expectations, and procedures in your program.

Once we have prepared young people, we can recruit them to our programs. There is much discussion about eliminating admissions standards for minorities or decreasing them in order to achieve acceptable levels of minority representation. In order to get students to even consider college, preparation must come first. Differences in preparation cannot be eliminated in the short term, however, therefore, colleges must provide support services and extra time for degree completion. But the ultimate goal needs to be one standard for all students. Extended orientation programs must be conducted, preferably for the entire freshman year.

We must strive for a constructive multicultural campus environment where students are encouraged to become involved and to achieve. Universities must go beyond the traditional definition of affirmative action and equal opportunity. There must be a network of internal programs including representation from all campus segments. These networks should consider outreach to other colleges, particularly minority schools, and to community groups and businesses representing minorities. One such program now found in several large hospitality programs is the Society of Minority Hoteliers. All students in the hospitality program can participate with considerable contact with industry and other institutions. It might be helpful for higher education to adopt a philosophy similar to the Department of Defense. The “Be All You Can Be” program has proven quite successful and is one in which minority participation has markedly increased.

Another area which has seen increased minority enrollment is proprietary schools, primarily vocational-technical, which are often not accredited but offer opportunity for minorities. Noting that minority students often end their education with a two-year degree, four-year schools should develop both intra- and inter-state networks, emphasizing articulation agreements and ease of transfer.

Research-oriented universities face a major challenge in making their campus environment conducive to minority participation. Usually their large size and emphasis on research create barriers for all students but particularly for minorities. These campuses are perceived as impersonal and racist. Teaching-oriented programs have a significant edge by providing comfortable environments and faculty dedicated to helping students learn. The choice for the institution is clear: change the individual student, or change the institution. If the expectation is for the student to do all or most of the changing, the institution will effectively limit its role in minority higher education.

Programs will also have to provide role models of minority faculty and/or graduate students. This presence extends to college staff and administration, as well as to industry. This particular strategy may be most applicable to research-oriented programs. These institutions can create programs designed to develop minority faculty. All schools should consider seeking assistance from state, local, or regional offices of higher education to provide funds for fellowships, scholarships, and grants. One potential program
might be to inaugurate a free
summer-study graduate program for
minority students. Another would be
to hire minority instructors (perhaps
from industry), who lack full
credentials, to teach part-time in
your program and to support their
degree completion. Finally, we
cannot overlook administrative
commitment. Data on minority
student experiences must be
compiled. Such data would provide
an empirical basis for policy
decisions. The strategies
implemented must be broadly
applied, not narrowly focused. The
commitment must be toward
positive and effective change.

In the case of home economics
and hospitality management, the
stage has been set for change. For
more than 20 years, the American
Home Economics Association
(AHEA) has talked about minority
underrepresentation. Project 2000
was the starting point for resolving
this issue. Individual programs must
adapt strategies which are
applicable to their own
environment. A final suggestion
would be that AHEA consider
sponsoring an annual award for
institutional excellence in minority
development. Selected programs
would serve as examples for other
educational programs and would
demonstrate the profession’s
commitment to minority
development.

As educators, we have a
responsibility to lead in the efforts to
diversify our society. Not to do so
will result in greater alienation by
growing segments of the population
and in increased social tension in a
conflicted world. We must join
together to expand opportunity, not
close the door on individual
aspirations.

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