It was Friday February 27, and I was attending my first The Holmes Partnership Conference. I had just finished eating lunch with several scholars from my home institution and we began discussing what session we would attend next. One of the ladies in the group suggested that we attend the feedback session that was being facilitated by Dr. Jim McLean, of the University of Alabama. We all agreed that this would be a good idea because the national scholars president emphasized that this session would be important to attend.

When our group reached the room, we were the only students in the room. The facilitator and his staff paused the session and invited us to give feedback on the conference and the organization as a whole. During this discussion, my mind went back to how I first gained interest in the Holmes Scholars partnership. As a masters student at Auburn University, I was first told about the Holmes Scholars program. The first interaction I had with the group was when they hosted a publications seminar on campus. They had invited several prominent faculty within the College of Education to speak. I had heard about the event but was not convinced to go until a friend of mine encouraged me to attend. During the event I was captivated by the level of professionalism exhibited by the Holmes Scholars there. The advisor a Holmes alum herself, carried herself with such grace and authenticity, that I knew I wanted to be a Holmes Scholar when I became a doctoral student.

As the discussion within the feedback session drew to a close, I was asked the question of how could Holmes Scholars build on their legacy of developing partnerships that serve as vehicles to reform teaching and learning in public school and higher education settings. As I thought about all of the scholars and administrators I had met that weekend, all I could think of was the limitless potential of this amazing group of individuals. I shared in my response with Dr. McClean, that we had the potential to be the premier educational scholar organization. I liken our capacity to groups such as the Rhodes and Fulbright Scholar programs. In other words, I would love to see the Holmes Scholars Partnership be recognized by all Colleges and Schools of Education across the nation as the premier scholars program within the field of Education.

So how can we accomplish this, you might ask. Well here is my answer, the National Holmes Scholars Model of Excellence. It focuses on three main areas of implementation, which are publication, promotion, and selectivity. In the following paragraphs, I will explain in further detail how this model can be implemented.

Publication-Holmes Scholars Journal

Currently, I serve as the assistant editor of the international peer-reviewed publication the Journal of School Leadership. It is the journal that we have been asked to submit manuscripts to at this past conference in Jacksonville, FL. I think that publishing is a wonderful way for students to communicate their thoughts and emerging research. I think in our case we can take it a step
further. I believe that in addition to having a newsletter we should develop our own peer-reviewed journal. It would give us as scholars and students outside of our network the opportunity to share or research in a safe environment enabling some of us the opportunity to publish at least once before graduation. This publication could be published once a year or biyearly. I think this would increase our visibility and enhance our standing across the academy.

Promotion-Advertisement at all Major Education Conferences

If resources allow, I believe that advertising our organization at various educational conferences would be a great way to increase our standing across our discipline (AACTE, AERA, ASHE, etc). It would be great to have a representative from the Holmes Scholars Council attend various conferences, having our own booths speaking on behave of us sharing our mission. It would also be nice for us to advertise who we are on major educational websites. We must tell the story of our mission and what we as a team of scholars our doing to advance the agenda of closing the achievement gap.

Selectivity-Standardized Entrance Policy

In our session, it was shared that their is know standardized entrance policy between the Holmes Scholars Partnership schools. I think that should change. As I understand it, there is a general policy but it left up to the particular institution to develop those guidelines. As we continue to attract some of the best and brightest this nation has to offer, and to continue to recruit the premier applicants I think it is in the best interest of our organization to have the same standard for everyone.

I am thankful for this opportunity to be apart of such an illustrious group of scholars and I look forward to our continual growth.