

DIOP SCHOLARS PROGRAM

By Teresa Aldredge

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The Diop Scholars Program (“Diop” is “scholar” in Senegalese) at Cosumnes River College began in fall 2006. The impetus for the program at Cosumnes River College came from faculty who were having “courageous conversations” about the plight of the African American student population. Current and historical data from the institutional research office show that African American students have the lowest success, persistence and retention rates of any ethnic group in the district. A handful of faculty continued to meet to fully flesh out the parameters of the program and to write a proposal for implementation to the college administration.

The mission of the DIOP Scholars Program is to intervene in the academic experience of African American students to increase persistence and retention rates at Cosumnes River College. In cooperation with the mission of Cosumnes River College, the program provides opportunities for individuals to achieve their maximum potential and to contribute to the well-being of the larger community. The program model is a year-long learning community whereby students simultaneously enroll in English Writing 101 (College Writing) and HCD 110 (Building Foundations for Success) in the fall semester and English Writing 300 (College Composition) and HCD 310 (College Success) in the spring semester. Culturally responsive pedagogy

is infused into the curriculum of all Diop Scholar courses. Students participate in a mandatory orientation and extracurricular activities outside the classroom, including five hours of community service, campus activities (including the Diop Club) and college tours. Students are required to see a counselor once per semester until they reach their stated goal. The 2011-12 cohort has 35 students enrolled in both classes. Historically the program has enrolled a total of 216 students.

Although the program does not have a permanent funding source, the administration continues to support the program efforts each year. The Diop Scholars program is a consortium member of the statewide Umoja Community of California Community Colleges, Incorporated (<http://umojacommunity.org>) which provides professional development training for over 30 similar programs in the California community college system. LRCFT served as a major sponsor for the recent Umoja VII Conference held at Sacramento City College on November 4-5, 2011. Nearly 300 students, faculty and staff were in attendance.

For more information on the Diop Scholars program, contact Teresa Aldredge, Diop Scholars Counselor: 916-691-7368 or aldredt@crc.losrios.edu.



Teres Aldredge (center), surrounded by Diop Scholars