



# Presidents' Round Table Newsletter

*A National Network of African American  
Community College CEOs*

January 2009

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## African American Male Initiative Progress Report

by Dr. Eric Gravenberg

### Accomplishments:

The Presidents' Roundtable has accomplished a number of activities since the April 6, 2008 "African American Males Success Colloquium" in Philadelphia. Illustrative of these accomplishments are the following:

1. Hiring a National Coordinator for African American Male Initiatives.
2. Coordinating two sessions at AACC National Conference, 2009.
3. Under the aegis of AACC (Kevin Christian) establishing a steering committee for the development of a AACC web portal for the creation of national data base of AAMI programs (over 100 national programs have been identified to-date).
4. Identifying and securing collaborative partnerships with institutions and organizations.
5. Sending press releases to a variety of educational institutions, media outlets, political leaders, community-based organizations.
6. Preparing prototype projects to fund four regional pilot programs (see page 2).
7. Drafting proposals to submit to various funding agencies.
8. Developing performance metrics to evaluate efforts and assess outcomes.
9. Identifying exemplary mentor training programs.
10. Convening regional strategy sessions.
11. In collaboration with the four regional coordinators, developing a National Action Plan (see below).



## Teach One, Reach Many

### Goals:

- Increase academic preparation.
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## African American Male Initiative Days

Under the aegis of the Presidents' Round Table, Dr. Eric Gravenberg, National Coordinator for AAMI, will facilitate a series of regional strategies to fulfill the foals of the AAMI project. Beginning in February, regional representatives will coordinate "African American Male Initiative Days" a series of programs

and events that are designed to create awareness and action. These events and activities include, but not limited to, the following:

- Mentoring conferences
- Empowerment workshops
- Tutoring sessions
- Entrepreneurial skills

- Culturally relevant curriculum conversations with teachers.
- Grant writing workshops.

Each region will design their own strategies culminating in reports at the AACC National Conference in April 2009.

*African American Male Initiatives • Strategic Models and Prototypes*

## Increasing Academic Achievement-HAWK

Clearly, the majority of our young African American Males are not completing high school with the requisite academic skills to make them eligible for college or to be competitive in today's rapidly changing and global environment. Tragically far too few African American males attend college compared with other ethnic cohorts. While here are many African American males who are achieving and defying the odds, the challenge is to significantly increase the number of young men who are attending and persisting in college, and completing their degree and career objectives.

To respond to this crisis the Presidents' Roundtable has developed the HAWK (High Achievement Wisdom & Knowledge) project. The HAWK project is based on "best practices" and is designed to complement existing efforts and tailored to meet the needs of students in various regions.

**Target groups:** High school and first-time community college students.

**Objective:** Improve academic preparation in math, writing and critical thinking; tutoring and mentoring; career awareness and college planning; culturally-relevant curriculum and teaching;

group projects and field trips.

**For more information** about the HAWK project contact Dr. Eric Gravenberg, National Coordinator of AAMI.

## Creating Young Entrepreneurs-YEA

The African American community is an important and vibrant part of the national economic, social and cultural landscape. Unfortunately, far too many of our African American young men are financially illiterate. Because they do not receive this formal training either in their high schools or at home, the PRT will promote the development of regional Young Entrepreneurs Academies.

The goal is to cultivate a talented cadre of young entrepreneurs who will ensure the legacy of generating economic wealth and prosperity for the African American community. Target groups include high school/ college age students and young adults. The Academy curriculum will encompass financial literacy, home ownership, budgeting/ credit management, savings/ investment, critical thinking, creating a business plan, projects, field trips and internships. Additional information will be forthcoming.

## Mentoring Our Young Men-BOSS

Studies have consistently shown that mentoring and the persistent presence of positive role models are essential for the emotional and educational development of young African American men. While there are a myriad of service groups, civic and business organizations that provide mentoring for young African American males, these noble efforts could be leveraged to maximize their effectiveness. For example, the training of mentors could be standardized and resource information could be shared more widely.

To this end, the Presidents' Round Table plans to Launch BOSS (Brothers of Superior Service), a strategic mentoring initiative. This effort is designed to "Identify and unify" those mentoring activities for African

***In order to flourish, young African American males need positive role models in their lives on a consistent basis.***

American males. This strategic mentoring and collaboration effort includes business, civic, education, religious and community-based organizations.

Mentors will be aligned with PRT endorsed activities including tutoring, internships, field trips, leadership projects, all culminating in a "Great Leaders Conference."

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## What a Class!!!

By **Dr. Thelma Scott-Skillman**,  
*Lakin Institute Coordinator*

This past October, 2008 I had the distinct honor of facilitating the 2008 Lakin Institute in Dallas, Texas. Facilitating this Institute was, without a doubt, one of the most enjoyable things I have done in a long time! The week-long experience was a life-changing event for the entire class. Observing the growth and development of each Lakin Mentee on a daily bases was phenomenal.

So who is the Lakin Institute Class of 2008? This is a very talented and bright class of graduates. My brief observations are only the tip of the iceberg. The class of 2008 consists of a very diverse group of 11 individuals:

- ★ Six graduates have earned their doctorate degrees. The other five left the Institute understanding the need to obtain their doctorate and steadfast determination to put this goal behind them.
- ★ Ten graduates are currently in upper-level management positions, reporting directly to the CEO of their institutions. One graduate is currently a first-year CEO.
- ★ Graduates have accumulated a combined 150 years of experience in administrative positions in areas of Student Services, Workforce and Continuing Education, Instruction and Academic Affairs, and Institutional Advancement. All graduates have extensive volunteer experience.
- ★ Eight graduates are female and 3 graduates are males.



### Lakin Institute Graduates • Class of 2008

**Dr. Joy Gates Black**

Eastfield College  
Mesquite, Texas

**Arnel W. Cosey**

Delgado Community College  
New Orleans, LA

**Dr. Yasmin Delahoussaye**

Los Angeles Valley College  
Valley Green, CA

**Dr. Deborah C. Fontaine**

Thomas Nelson Community College  
Hampton, VA

**Vernon L. Hawkins**

Brookhaven College  
Farmers Branch, TX

**Zena K. Jackson**

North Lake College  
Irving, TX

**Dr. Kevin J. Jones**

Ivey Tech Community College  
Indianapolis, IN

**Dr. Jamillah Moore**

Los Angeles City College  
Los Angeles, CA

**Kim Evans Rugon**

Louisiana Technical College  
Metairie, LA

**Dr. Frederico "F.J." Talley**

College of Southern Maryland  
Leonardtown, MD

**Mellissia M. Zanjani**

Tacoma Community College  
Tacoma, WA

- ★ By the end of the week nearly forty percent of the graduates indicated a strong desire to pursue the CEO position. Others were more focused on either completing their doctorate or applying for doctoral programs.
- ★ All graduates demonstrate outstanding confidence, a strong commitment to the community college mission, tremendous ambitions and very attainable education and career goals. Their quest to be the consummate professional was most visible. Congratulations to all of you.

The graduates' commitment to leadership and community service is to be commended. They represent their peers extremely well. It is clear that the efforts of the Presidents' Round Table and the Lakin Institute are creating a vibrant learning opportunity for up and coming CEOs. These highlights are only a small sampling of Lakin graduates' successes. Each graduate has a story to tell. This is an awesome class of future CEOs. I congratulate each of them with their future endeavors.

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## Fall 2008 Presidents' Round Table Meeting

The fall meeting of the Presidents' Round Table marked the 25th anniversary of the organization and was filled with a variety of activities. Hosted by the Dallas County Community College District where Dr. Wright Lassiter is chancellor, the meeting honored the original members of the PRT and paid tribute to Lakin alums who participated in the activities for the weekend.

On Friday, October 24, the meeting began with a luncheon that included lively dialogue on leadership and the opportunities and challenges it brings between the Lakin class of 2008, Lakin alums, and PRT members. The evening banquet was the culminating activity for the Lakin class of 2008. Professional development activities on Saturday included a

stirring presentation on working with the media in times of crisis by Dr. Ken Atwater, President, South Mountain Community College, in Phoenix and Teresa Toney, Manager, Governance and Ombuds Services, Maricopa CCD, AZ. Café conversations on a variety of leadership topics were conducted followed by a luncheon at which Dr. Eric Gravenberg updated the membership on progress to date on the AAMI and plans for the future. The evening banquet honored the thirty original members of the PRT, four of whom were in attendance. Dr. Eileen Baccus made a special tribute, expressing gratitude for their foresight and commitment to the ongoing development of African American CEOs in

making the PRT a reality in 1983.

Planning for the activities in Dallas were led by Dr. Andrew Jones, Executive Vice Chancellor, DCCCD. Special thanks is extended to him and members of his staff as well as Dr. Jennifer Wimbish, president of Cedar Valley College, and her staff.



Pictured above are four of the original members of the PRT honored at the 25th anniversary observance: Dr. Richard Turner, Dr. Charles Green, Dr. Roy Phillips, and Dr. Carl Crawford.



Dr. Ernest Thomas, President, Tarant County College and tribute program master of ceremonies with Drs. Phillips and Crawford



Participants in the PRT meeting: Dr. Art Tyler, Deputy Chancellor, Houston CCD; Jon Dozier, Vice Chancellor, Chicago City Colleges; Dr. Doug Chambers, President J.F. Ingram Technical College, AL

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## Announcements & Contact Information

Presidents' Round Table African American Initiative Sponsored Events (Dates forthcoming):

**February 2009**  
African American Male Initiative Days

**February 26, 2009**  
Webinar sponsored by the PRT: *Educating the African American Male*  
Times: Noon, PST; 1:00, EST; 2:00, CST; 3:00, EST



**April 3-7, 2009**  
American Association of Community Colleges Convention, Phoenix, AZ—Plan to attend the following activities—(Details to follow when determined)  
•PRT Spring Breakfast Meeting  
•NCBAA Reception  
•Workshops sponsored by the PRT

**October 11-16**  
Lakin Institute, Chicago, IL



**October 16-18**  
PRT Fall Meeting, Chicago, IL

**Please contact:**  
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African American Male Initiative

For additional information about events and programs:  
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