

December 3, 2013

Executive Report to:

SIU Black Staff and Faculty Council (BSFC) Executive Board
Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education (ICBCHE) Executive Board

Submitted by:

Alfred Jackson, SIU BSFC Treasure, ICBCHE South Regional Vice-Chair

On November 20, 2013, at 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm, the SIU Black Staff and Faculty Council (BSFC) and the Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education (ICBCHE) co-sponsored two ***Fireside Chat***, featuring Dr. Arthur Sutton and Mr. Jonathan Lackland. Dr. Sutton is the IBHE Deputy Director of Diversity and Outreach and Mr. Lackland is the IBHE Deputy Director of Advancement, External and Governmental Relations. Mrs. Felicia Bohanon, ICBCHE Chair, traveled down to take part in the Chats. Instead of a formal presentation, complete with power point presentations, the gentlemen conducted an interactive conversation with the audience concerning matters taking place in Illinois Higher Education that will impact employees and students. The event was hosted in the new Student Services Building on the Carbondale campus.

The 3:00 pm ***Fireside Chat*** with SIU staff and faculty focused on issues impacting the professional audience. Extensive conversation centered on Best Practices for retaining and graduating students, in particular the large number of African-American students recruited this past year and specifically the African-American males. Discussion included early intervention programs for at-risk students, such as the summer bridge program which allowed a limited number of students to attend summer classes that oriented and prepared them for the vastly different educational environment which they would be entering in the fall. Of great interest was the detailed discussion on the Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success. Suggestions were submitted as to how all the concerned college constituents could/should take a more active role in the success of incoming students, to include getting involved in the recruitment process of African-American students and the education of their families and care-givers to the nuances of college life. 30 – 44 faculty and staff, in addition to one community member, attended the session. Dr. Seymour Bryson, former ICBCHE Chair, was also in attendance to share words of wisdom gleaned from more than 40 years of service in Illinois.

The 5:00 pm ***Fireside Chat*** with students highlighted issues of interest to students. Of particular concern to the students were the status of MAP, scholarships/fellowship offerings, and the elimination of programs due to colleges engaging in a business model of operation. The MAP discussion investigated proactive steps students should be considering in the event MAP is cancelled out. Students also discussed possible proactive steps they may need to take in order to be ahead of the game when it comes to researching and applying for scholarships/grants/fellowships, which are sometimes hidden in plain sight (reading is fundamental). Approximately 35 – 50 students attended the session.

Light refreshments were provided during both Chat presentations.