

Critique

Jenkins' and Terrell's assessment of factors contributing to the attrition of undergraduate minority students is written in such general terms that it does not make a clear statement of the problem. Further, while their use of Kathleen Burlew's study may have provided some specific insights, to say out of context that "since students may lose interest in educational goals, an occupational end is needed to sustain their motivation to continue" comes perilously close to a rationale for consigning minority students to vocational programs.

The fundamental problem is the all-pervasive one of institutional racism. I do not mean to imply that most colleges and universities *actively* discriminate against minority students for this is obviously not true; many institutions have established programs aimed, to some degree, at compensating for past prejudicial behavior. Rather, this kind of racism manifests itself in subtle but no less powerful forms. Jenkins and Terrell have cited the need to sensitize faculty and administrators to non-white styles and values. I suggest that more than awareness alone is necessary; people must develop a positive appreciation rather than merely a tolerance for cultural differences.

Hiring (and tenuring) minority faculty, and providing minority counselors, even requiring students to make use of them, do not create a hospitable environment as long as the implicit administrative assumption is that to cope, these students must become "like us." A profound change has to take place in prevailing campus attitudes and practices if the attrition of minority students is to be halted. *The price of academic success achieved through conditioning students to adapt to situations which inherently devalue their self-images is simply too high.*

Ultimately, the true indicator of an institution's commitment to any endeavor is its funding priorities. Those colleges and universities really willing to put their money where their publicity is are also likely to develop the kind of setting which fosters growth among all members of their communities.

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