

Call me DOCTOR

by Ted N. Ingram and Adriel A. Hilton

Educational policy-makers address the need to increase the number of African American male teachers in K-12 with programmatic efforts such as the *Call Me MISTER* Program, which seeks to create a pool of diverse educators in disadvantaged school systems. The program attempts to attract talented teachers by offering various incentives, such as tuition assistance and other support mechanisms. Similar strategies are suggested for increasing diversity in American colleges and universities. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), there were 630,092 full time faculty in America's colleges and universities in 2003, and fewer than 3 percent (33,106) of them were African American. NCES put the number of African American male faculty members at 49 percent, just below that of African American females, which is in line with other research showing African American male faculty are less represented than other genders, across racial/ethnic groups.

Our research examined the lived experiences of 18 African American male doctoral students pursuing degrees at three public research universities, all of them predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). We conducted face-to-face interviews in an attempt to learn what factors contributed to their success. Consistently, we found that the role of a male faculty member is vitally important. African American male doctoral students disclosed how the influence of a faculty member played a role in their decision to attend their particular institution, was instrumental in shaping their doctoral student identity,

served as a role model, and very often as a counselor.

One male doctoral student said his decision to enroll in the college was confirmed during a campus outreach visit, upon meeting an African American male faculty member. "I met [Professor], who was a spitting image of me in many ways. We also had shared similar reasons for pursuing political science, and that shocked me!" Having that immediate connection provided this African American male participant with inspiration for enrolling and wanting to follow a similar path to become a professor.

African American male professors were also important to participants throughout their educational experience on campus. Doctoral students were relaxed, yet still professional, when interacting with same-race and same-gender faculty members. One participant explained, "The African American faculty has become the de facto mentor. I know a couple of times I have been frustrated, and I can go to [his] office after hours and just rap. And he can relate. When the door closes, we can talk and it is just us. Just having that outlet is cool. I don't have to worry about who is looking or interviewing me. I have the ability to be myself." Another participant shares similar sentiment regarding the faculty at his institution, adding, "[Professor] is one of the faculty members who is an administrator, and he has become a mentor. His door is always open. As an African American man, I can ask him about his career path. I can ask him what he did and what he would have done differently." Student-faculty interaction is suc-

cessful with the same race and, in some instances, with the same gender, thus they develop a rapport that is quite unique. The ability to speak candidly, without fear of judgment, is often associated with African American male faculty, which is consistently identified as important for African American male doctoral students.

Some doctoral students commented about the flexibility that exists between both African American men, "I can go and knock on [professor] door without an appointment and he will tell me to sit down and we'll talk for an hour whether it's about academics or not. Being an African American man himself, I think he wants to see me [graduate]. He'll help to do whatever he can do to see me finish, but he is going to push me along the way." The participant is able to connect on many levels with someone of similar experiences. Moreover, recognizing the encouragement from his professor further establishes a goal of completion for the student.

This study found that the role of faculty members is paramount to African American male student success. Not only does the presence of African American faculty provide a level of comfort to African American male doctoral students, but role modeling is also seen as effective because students are able to see themselves pursuing career paths similar to those of the professor. In addition to playing an important role helping students to decide on which institution to attend, African American male faculty members are often seen as the ones providing quality and effective mentoring as well. Unanimously, the

see *CALL ME DOCTOR*, page 35

ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS,
continued from page 4

queror. "If you can survive in these harsh streets, you can conquer just about anything." He doesn't claim to know everything but he knows something about will power and music. "If you're in the trap, it makes you grind harder. When you're riding solo-you pop something in and reflect on the lyrics."

Following the creation of his own label **32 Entertainment**, he partnered up with neighborhood friend, Atlantic Recording artist **Gucci Maine**, CEO of **So Icey Entertainment**. OJ churned out 6 mixtapes under **32 Entertainment** and has been featured on many underground mixtape classics. It was his release "OJ DA Juiceman hosted by Dirty Laundry" that jump started his success. His hit count almost tripled and the number of fans requesting him on MySpace exploded. His rhymes reflect his life; what he has experienced in the past and what he hopes the future will bring. "Oh yea, I make songs for the ladies too" OJ states with a smile.

True to his underground roots, OJ's looking forward to releasing two to three mixtapes before dropping his debut album on Asylum Records January 2009.

THAT'S IT FOR THIS EDITION OF ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS. BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE LATEST NEWS ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE CELEBS IN THE NEXT EDITION OF BCT!

■ BCT

CALL ME DOCTOR,
continued from page 24

participants stressed the importance of having meaningful relationships with faculty members as fundamental for growth in the program.

This study validates the importance of having African American men as faculty members at White institutions. Infusing male faculty of color, who embrace mentoring at PWIs, can expand the educational trajectory of African American male students by providing them meaningful interactions with role models. They not only provide guidance and encouragement but African American faculty can also demonstrate for African American male students the ability to persist at a PWI and contribute to their identities as rising scholars. Positive student-faculty interaction, particularly between those who share racial and gender identity, seems to encourage students' success. Based on this study, the researchers recommend collaborative efforts among institutions of higher education and policy-makers in order to increase African American males with PhDs to become faculty members at PWIs. Such efforts will help bridge the gap between African American male faculty members and other racial/ethnic groups and ultimately contribute to the overall success of African American male students. ■ BCT

SCHOLARSHIPS

Area, Field, or Subject: Physics, Chemistry, Communication Science, Engineering, Computer Science, Statistics, Information Science, Material Science

Level of Education for which Award is Granted: Graduate

Number, Amount, and Type of Award: Approximately 6-8 fellowships per academic year. Fellowship includes tuition and fees, textbook allowance, a stipend of \$13,200, and summer employment. Eligibility Requirements: Must be a college senior who is applying to graduate school for a Ph.D. Must be a Black American, Hispanic American, or Native American.

Deadline for Receipt: January 15
Apply to: University Relations CRFP Manager Address Above

BAT CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Ms. Angela England, Scholarship Awards Coordinator

Bat Conservation International
PO Box 162603

Austin, TX 78716-2603

Tel: (512) 327-9721 Ext. 35;

Fax: (512) 327-9724

E-mail: aengland@batcon.org

Web Site: <http://www.batcon.org>

The goal of this program is to support student research that will answer ecological or behavioral questions essential to bat conservation or management; document key ecological or economic roles of bats; or educate people who are directly relevant to conservation success. Submission of research proposal and budget required. Only senior level biology students and graduate students in biological disciplines are eligible.

Academic/Career Areas: Biology; Natural Resources; Natural Sciences.

Award: Grant for use in senior, or graduate years; not renewable.

Number: 12-20. Amount: \$500-2500.

Eligibility Requirements: Applicant must be enrolled full-time at a four-year institution or university. Available to U.S. and non-U.S. citizens.

Application Requirements: Application, references, research proposal, budget.

Deadline: December 15