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University of New Hampshire is a Leader in Black Student Graduation Rates

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Journal Ranks UNH Second in Nation Among Flagship Public Universities

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DURHAM, N.H. -- The University of New Hampshire has the second-highest graduation rate of black students in the nation among flagship state universities.

According to the latest issue of the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, UNH ranks second among public universities, graduating 66 percent of black students. The University of Virginia ranks first with an 85 percent graduation rate for the black students who entered in the fall of 1996.

UNH's black graduation rate is far above national average of 39 percent and exceeds rates at its comparator land-grant colleges, including those in the Northeast. In the region, the University of Delaware graduates 64 percent of its black students, the University of Connecticut graduates 58 percent, the University of Vermont graduates 51 percent, the University of Massachusetts graduates 47 percent and the University of Maine graduates 46 percent.

"The university prides itself in creating a welcoming, rich academic community that supports and inspires our ever-expanding diverse student population. Our black students are an integral part of our community, and we are committed to supporting their academic success," UNH President Ann Weaver Hart said.

"They have set an example for the state, region and nation, showing that hard work and commitment result in the realization of academic dreams and the attainment of the economic benefits associated with earning a college degree," Hart said.

The number of black students enrolled at UNH has more than tripled in 10 years, largely because of innovative recruiting strategies implemented by UNH Admissions several years ago. According to Jibril Salaam, associate director of admissions, the university moved away from the more traditional approaches to minority student recruitment in 2000, such as attending college fairs at high schools.

Instead, the department began partnering with urban grassroots organizations that already had relationships with UNH's target audience. Once the partnerships were in place, Salaam said UNH Admissions staff and students made personal connections with prospective students, helping to demystify UNH and New Hampshire.

“We are putting UNH on their radar screen from early on. They see the opportunities UNH has to offer because they know a UNH student who they can e-mail and talk to about the university,” he said. “When they are accepted at UNH, they receive a hand-written note from a UNH student congratulating them on their acceptance and encouraging them to attend.”

According to the journal, last fall 400,000 young black students enrolled in college for the first time, but only about 160,000 will earn a degree and reap its benefits; blacks who have a four-year college degree now have a median income that is 94 percent of the median income of college-educated whites.

Large state universities such as UNH educate three-fourths of all black college students in the United States.