



WE ARE BECAUSE YOU ARE

Introduction ~ Underrepresented and At-Risk Populations

Hi, I am Bernard McCree, Assistant Dean of Students for Underrepresented and At-Risk Populations. I have been in this role for over 3 months now and am housed within the Dean of Students suite in Stratton 119. I am not new to KU, having started my 16th year in August and served formerly as the Director of Financial Aid Services. So familiar place, new job, same building, different floor and a new challenge to explore and elevate.

The purpose of this role is to deeply examine all the ways underrepresented and at-risk students are being supported at Kutztown, including systems, programming, and other resources in place and designed to meet the diverse needs of this unique population.

What does underrepresented mean you ask? Historically, it means that certain groups of people were overlooked, disregarded or simply ignored when it came to education, jobs, access to medical treatment, unfair housing practices and even, their ability to vote. In our world, we want to eradicate any barrier that keeps a student from having the opportunities that are afforded them. Opportunities that open closed doors, break glass ceiling and channel negative energies to positive streams of hope for a brighter future.

Our hope is to work with these student populations to determine their challenges and eliminate the barriers that hinder their success here at KU. Being at-risk poses a different threat to our students. Some of the key indicators are housing insecurity, food insecurity, socio-economic barriers, mental health issues, just to name a few.

Our goal is to change how we see, hear and inspire our students, which must be a collective campus effort and to get them to the finish line, ultimately– Graduation!

PASSHE defines Underrepresented Minority (URM) students to include the race/ethnicity of American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Hispanic and two or more races.

CHAMPIONS - Talk the Talk, Walk the Walk!

We want to offer you the opportunity to become a Champion Mentor for our underrepresented minority students (URM here at Kutztown University). Research indicates that students who have a positive engagement with a mentor are more likely to persist towards graduation and complete their educational journey. Currently, I have identified approximately 40 perspective mentors around campus and continue

to reach out to anyone who shows an interest. A mentee-mentor relationship entails work, commitment, and follow-through on both sides if it's going to be successful. Here are some key traits for good mentor engagement.

- Good listener/sounding board
- Flexible
- Value diversity of perspectives
- Knowledgeable
- Nonjudgmental
- Able to give constructive feedback
- Honest and candid
- Able to network and find resources
- Successful in career
- Willing/able to devote time to developing others
- Eager to learn

If you are interested, please complete the form via the QR code.

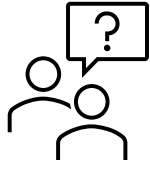


ADVISORY GROUP

We've gathered several unique individuals to help guide us into an advisory group. They are:

- Dr. Marlene Fares, Asst. Professor and Advisor to Exploratory Studies Program
- Alyssa Oakley, Coordinator for Student Success
- Nadia Daher, Student Assistance Coordinator for Special Populations
- Charles (CJ) Brown, GA for AIMS and Counseling Program Grad Student
- Cameo Pritchett, Academic Advising (KU Alum) – CCP, Philadelphia

In our initial meeting, they have already brought some exciting topics to the table for discussion to assist our students in persisting throughout their process. It is outstanding to have dedicated focused professionals on board with a focus on helping our students succeed.



Did You Know?

Kutztown offers several resources available to all our students, which certainly can address the specific concerns of our underrepresented and at-risk students. Here are some of those opportunities:

- Student Success
- Academic Enrichment
- Student Assistance
- TRIO
- ACT101
- PROFS
- AIMS
- SISTERS
- Our Inclusion Centers – Multicultural Center, Women’s Center, LGBTQ Resource Center and Military and Veterans Center

Thought of the Day ~ Malcolm Gladwell

The fact of being an underdog changes people in ways that we often fail to appreciate. It opens doors and creates opportunities and enlightens and permits things that might otherwise have seemed unthinkable. The visionary starts with a clean sheet of paper and re-imagines the world.



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