Bakersfield College African American Mentoring Program Awarded Innovation of the Year

AAMP having a positive effect on African American student success

The Bakersfield College African American Mentoring Program (AAMP) and the main academic coordinator for the program, Julian West, have been awarded the Innovation of the Year by the League for Innovation in the Community College organization. The award includes an honorary certificate as well as the opportunity for the recipients to share their innovation at the 2019 Innovations conference to be held in New York City in February 2019.

AAMP helping African American students reach academic and career goals

The AAMP program addresses the combined issues of the disproportionately low academic success rates and persistence through the college matriculation process of African American males with the success of mentoring programs. By incorporating strategies such as drop-in mentoring, resiliency guidance, problem resolution, general (non-academic) assistance, and “real talk” (real talk facilitates honest conversations about issues beyond the classroom that have an impact on student success) this program helps African Americans both rise out of poverty and maintain upward mobility over the course of their adult lives.

The AAMP program also includes a female mentoring program that matches faculty, staff, and community leaders with African American female students in addition to the mentoring program for African American males.

Both student groups are encouraged to enroll in fifteen credit units per semester (30 units annually). Mentors assist students in completing college-level Math and English courses during their first year. AAMP also sets high expectations, giving the students goals to attain and the support to help them attain them.

Student progress results encouraging

More than 600 students currently participate in the program, which provides a network of passionate professionals on campus and in the community, who are dedicated to the students’ success. The percentages of students who complete college courses in English and/or Math have shown significant growth, and the African American student enrollment in support programs such as Summer Bridge and financial aid assistance have also increased significantly. Sonya Christian, President of Bakersfield College, says, “We are so happy to see this award and recognition of the AAMP program.”