

Kankakee Community College (KCC) is proud to showcase the Student African-American Brotherhood (SAAB), known as KCC's Brother 2 Brother chapter.

Kankakee Community College is among 40 colleges and universities across the nation who adopted a model of student engagement that was introduced by the organization's founder Dr. Tyrone Bledsoe. In the fall of 2007 the Kankakee Community College (KCC) chapter of SAAB, known as Brother 2 Brother was established.

SAAB's Brother 2 Brother chapter at KCC includes male students primarily of color. The students attend weekly meetings on the college's campus and are mentored by two full-time employees of the college and one adjunct psychology professor who each donate their time for a program they believe in. We also have an administrator who serves as a liaison between the college chapter and the Brother 2 Brother chapter at Kankakee High School. The dean of student services is responsible providing guidance to the group and meets monthly with the students and program advisors.

The students are committed to excelling academically and attend weekly study sessions led by student officers, interested college and community leaders. The students belief that knowledge is power, has garnered interest among a number of campus and community leaders, and now the students are involved in weekly developmental seminars on topics that range from business and social etiquette to volunteerism.

In March of 2008 the president and vice-president were installed as student members of the African American Advisory Group, comprising members of the community and the college. We believe involving students in these participatory type meetings with community colleagues, gives them an opportunity for additional mentoring as they prepare for future leadership roles.

Brother to Brother's membership has grown from seven students who attended regularly during the 2007-2008 academic year, to seventeen students this 2008-2009 academic year. The increase in membership is a testament to the students' commitment to educational and personal growth and Kankakee Community College's goal of supporting their success.

In the past ten months, the students have attended regional conferences at Joliet Junior College and at Prairie State College. In April 2008, the SAAB members of the KCC chapter attended the national conference for SAAB in Matteson, IL where over 39 colleges and universities from across the country were in attendance. The students have developed a sizeable network of peers and "Brothers" at these other institutions that help to confirm the need for well-designed programs that support minority males.

What's most unique about the KCC's Brother 2 Brother chapter is it's close relationship with Kankakee High School's student chapter. We know this partnership is unique to the area and has given many of the high school students strong relationships to their male collegiate counterparts. We are very proud of the fact that our local high school students

are regularly invited to campus to participate in leadership, skill building, personal growth activities, and every few months both groups meet for pizza, videos and bowling.

Chapter advisors have been very thoughtful in their work with the KCC students. Through their guidance the chapter successfully hosted their first regional leadership conference on September 25, 2008. Dr. Bledsoe was the featured speaker and applauded the students efforts for a well organized event. Over 80 students representing seven Illinois chapters attended the day long conference and participated in sessions on team building, public speaking and leadership development. The students are already in the planning stages for the second annual conference next year and have secured Ms. Erin Gruwell, author of the Freedom Writer's Diary as their key note speaker. Ms. Gruwell recently spoke to our KCC chapter and the high school student chapter when the students hosted a showing of the Freedom Writer's Diary movie, in early October 2008.

The Brother 2 Brother program is evaluated by the dean of student services and the chapter advisors on a continual basis. Students are informally assessed on their ability to make oral presentations at chapter and advisory board meetings. This program was established one year ago. The first year's plan was to recruit students to the program by establishing regular meeting times, group activities, and electing officers from the student group. Collection of data consists of attendance at meetings and participation at chapter activities.

Mid-term grade reports were recently added as part of expanding the evaluation and data collection process to include early intervention and academic advising services. This evaluation process gives us the needed data to benchmark students' academic standing and assess academic progress while participating in the program.

The dean of student services will increase data collection for year two as a way of determining the impact on student retention among the Brother 2 Brother program students. Data collection will include term and cumulative grade point averages to ensure students are progressing satisfactorily in their academic programs.

We've witnessed an increase in the member's attendance, their organizational skills. As an example, students were assigned a task of developing an action plan for chapter fundraising. They worked with a local food chain and the chapter was able to raise \$700 that is being earmarked for a student scholarship. We believe this qualitative data is relevant to information and an additional method of determining student engagement and student success.

We are entering the NICA competition as a way of acknowledging the outstanding accomplishments of the students in the Brother 2 Brother chapter at Kankakee Community College. It is their efforts that the college wants to recognize. Five students recently attended the African American Advisory Board meeting and they were each asked to comment on their progress since joining the chapter. Several of the students described the chapter as a family. Another student recently separated from the military,

credits KCC's Brother 2 Brother chapter with "helping me stay focused to reach my goals."