Early Arrival Program Kicks of Autumn Semester for ODI Scholars

Making the transition from high school graduate to college student can be, at best, a challenge: students must navigate the changes in academic rigors between high school and higher education as well as learn to budget their time and resources. New students may come to college with a sense of excitement that can be mixed with anxiety about classes, making new friends, and being on their own. But for 58 incoming male African American students at The Ohio State University, being new to campus got a little bit easier: these freshmen were enrolled in the Early Arrival Program (EAP) offered by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion’s Todd Anthony Bell National Resource Center on the African American Male (BNRC).

Each year, African American undergraduate students who participate in the Early Arrival Program learn about resources and strategies designed to help them succeed in college and develop strong leadership and professional skills. These students attend workshops and presentations that help them adjust to the rigorous academic environment of Ohio State, which include priority management, the development of peer and professional relationships, and information on how to access and utilize resources. Students also learn to deal with challenges or misconceptions they may encounter and the importance of help-seeking behavior. EAP participants also are encouraged to see the diversity within their peer group, expand their boundaries, and find the commonalities in other participants’ experiences.

The BNRC’s Early Arrival Program has had a positive impact on the disparity in retention rates for African American males: since the first group of students participated in 2005, the second year retention rate for African American males attending EAP has risen from 96% to 97.9%, exceeding the same retention rate for all Ohio State students, which is currently at 93%. Students have remarked that after connecting with fellow participants in the program, they don’t feel like they are going through college alone, having created friendships that last long after graduation. Other
attendees have commented on the sense of brotherhood that made easier the transition from high school to college and how the program provided them with the leadership skills that can have a positive impact at Ohio State. These students’ time at Ohio State is full of meaningful connections with other EAP participants and with the resources available through the BNRC, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the university.

This year’s Early Arrival Program took place the weekend before classes started, from August 14-17, 2013 and offered students the opportunity to move early into their residence halls. For more information about the BNRC’s Early Arrival Program, please click here.