

I am Adekemi Omoloja, a junior at Missouri State University in pursuit of a Bachelor of Science Degree in Cellular Molecular Biology with a minor in Chemistry. I possess many identities: Nigerian, Multicultural student, campus leader and scholar.

I am still in attendance at Missouri State University due to the TRIO Student Support Services program, which has aided me financially, academically and personally in navigating this Predominantly White Institution. This would be beneficial for some of the 2,255 underrepresented students currently attending this university. Unfortunately, TRIO caters to only 150 students and that is where the University plays an integral part. The Climate study poses the question, why can't we expand this program further to serve even more students?

Because the answer to this question is crucial to the success of minority students, Resolved: the University ought to be held accountable for its commitment to Diversity and Inclusion.

The University prides itself on the growth of diverse student population, but unless there are resources in place for student development, retention will continue to be an obstacle moving forward. Under the premise of funding and resources, I will provide three ways retention for students of color can be improved.

- I. **Restructuring of the Jumpstart program. The Jumpstart program is an accelerated summer program targeting incoming students who are underprepared for fall courses.** I credit the University in implementing a summer bridge program. This can improve enrollment, retention, and satisfaction rates for students. However, there is a structural and counterproductive issue with the program. How it is funded.
 - A. This program is geared toward students who “do not meet traditional freshman admission criteria based on GPA, class rank, or test scores.”
 - B. Because students tend to use financial aid to pay for enrollment in the program, the program does not fully relieve students of burdens associated with being underprivileged. And not being able to pay for the rest of their academic year.
 - C. The university could combat this inequality by including Jumpstart as a part of Multicultural Programs. Giving these students a place in the university budget, not only increases retention, but diversifies the program's portfolio.

- II. **A Development of a Program similar to that of TRIO that would extend resources to all students of color at Missouri State university.**

- A. Like TRIO it would provide services such as, Tutoring, Reading/Study Skills Assistance, Career Exploration, Academic Advising, Personal Assistance, Financial aid paperwork assistance, Assistance with your scholarship search, Volunteer Opportunities and Leadership Opportunities.
 - B. **The aforementioned services contribute to high retention in higher education and Missouri State specifically.**
 - C. **Trio Services Retention Rates** - Retention Rates for Trio- 95% and Graduation Rates for trio- 83% Graduation Rates at MSU- 53.4% for 2013 44% Af-Ams 48% Hispanics
- III. **The Reevaluation of Budgeting in Multicultural Programs and Diversity initiatives**
- A. With the future goals for increasing diversity, multicultural programs needs to increase the budget to adequately adhere to Missouri State's pillars.
 - B. The climate study suggests that the university, Focus more on how to increase the number of people (faculty, administrators, staff and students) participating in diversity activities, workshops, conferences, etc. so there is widespread campus participation. **This will take resources and more importantly funding.**
 - C. According to the Climate study "There never seems to be enough money for further diversity training, education, programs, etc.," The suggestion would be for the university to prioritize fundraising from donors, alumnae, etc. to increase University-wide funding on diversity.

The climate study itself states there is a tendency for universities to take no action However, ignoring such a wealth of information is to ignore the reality that an increase in enrollment of underrepresented student groups is not the same as guaranteeing educational equity for those students.