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# CASHE CORNER

ACPA

Commission for  
Academic Support  
in Higher Education



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Article #1

### CASHE Corner: News You Can Use

Each issue of our newsletter is intended to inform, educate, and hopefully inspire you in your daily tasks, whether you work in academic support services or in collaboration with these individuals. This month, we focus on how you can get involved in CASHE. Also, check out this month's article on the retention issues surrounding African American males in the community college system.

Our themes change with each edition, so if you have an idea for an article, op-ed, or something in between, feel free to contact Lauren Sanchez, Member Relations, at [lsanchez5@luc.edu](mailto:lsanchez5@luc.edu).

Happy reading!

## Letter from the Chair

Dear CASHE membership-

We are well into the fall semester, the seasons have changed and many of our colleagues are enjoying the fall colors. For many, we look at our calendars and say – October already? Yes, it is time to choose spring semester classes, reflect on mid-term progress and become active in the Commission for Academic Support in Higher Education!

I have often heard people say they do not have time for ACPA activities or they just do not feel motivated to get involved. I would like to give everyone something to think about. Consider two employees in the same position, both do a great job – one is active in ACPA and the other “does not have time” for professional development activities. It comes time for end-of-year evaluations ...

1) Departmental budget / salary cuts. Institutions and organizations across the profession have financial concerns. When money is limited, not every employee can receive a bonus or cost-of-living raise. So, how will the supervisor distinguish between the two good employees? Active participation in ACPA / CASHE can not only keep you connected with fun people, it may also give you that professional edge you need in your employee evaluation.

2) Position eliminations. The evening news reports the unemployment rates from around the county. We as employees need to be active and current in our functional areas. One way is to stay active in ACPA. By building your knowledge base, you become more valuable to your institution. In the unfortunate event your position is eliminated due to cut-backs,

your active connections to ACPA are helpful in your resume and by networking with colleagues from different areas, you may hear about open positions.

3) Career advancement. Few people stay in one position for their entire career. Active involvement in ACPA allows everyone an opportunity to network with colleagues from both similar and different functional areas. By participating in Commissions, Committees and Convention, we are able to practice new skills in a safe environment that can be translated to our professional careers.

So ... how can you get involved? CASHE has some GREAT opportunities.

### Commission Awards – Due October 31

The employees of Academic Support / Advising are truly un-sung heroes of the academic world. Collectively, we can help to change that and recognize people we value in support roles. CASHE will again sponsor four awards. Additional details are available on the website and in this edition of the newsletter.

### Directorate Elections – December 2012

The Commission for Academic Support in Higher Education is looking for additional members to serve on the Directorate. We have several positions that will become open and we need exciting, fun people who want to help move this organization forward. Consider becoming part of a great group of people.

### CASHE Subcommittees – An On-going Process

We cannot do it alone! If you would like to be involved, but you are concerned that you do not want to over-commit yourself, consider joining a subcommittee. Subcommittees pop-up from time to time and are publicized electronically. Over the next few months, you will see opportunities arise. Please consider joining!

Looking forward to seeing you in Vegas!

Becky Shepherd

# CASHE Chair Elections

CASHE needs to elect its next Commission Chair! The Commission Chair elections will occur in conjunction with the ACPA National Elections process (new). Each Commission uses its own system to recruit candidates. The candidate names and bios are due to CASHE by Friday, November 2.

## **Candidate Criteria:**

- a) Must be a current ACPA / CASHE member;
- b) Must have served on the Commission Directorate;
- c) Must have a strong knowledge of “Academic Support”;
- d) Must be willing to fill the responsibilities of Chair-Elect (1yr) / Chair (2 yr.) / Past Chair (1 yr), including attending all ACPA Conferences and attending Summer Leadership Meetings while serving as Chair;
- e) Has demonstrated strong leadership qualities while serving on the Commission Directorate.

## **Responsibilities of the Chair (2 years)**

- a) Administer all activities of the Commission;
- b) Supervise the elected and appointed Leadership position within the Commission;
- c) Make necessary appointments of Commission Directorate members to projects and committees, in accordance with ACPA and Commission procedures;
- d) Represent the Commission to ACPA – internally & externally;
- e) Manage the Commission finances;
- f) Chair all meetings of the Directorate and Commission;
- g) Train new Directorate members;
- h) Ensure the Commission follows all relevant ACPA guidelines;
- i) Submit start, mid and end of year reports to the Chair of Commissions;
- j) IN the absence of a Chair-elect, manages the election process for new members;

k) Attend all meetings for Commission Chairs at ACPA Convention & Summer Leadership meetings.

**Responsibilities of the Past-Elect/Past-Chair (1 year each)**

- a) Chair the Nominations and Elections Committee for the Commission;
- b) Ensure that all Commission elections are held in accordance with ACPA / Commission guidelines;
- c) Assist the Chair in the performance of the Chair's responsibilities as needed;
- d) Work with the Chair to provide efficient transition between officers and Directorate classes;
- e) Complete other tasks assigned by the Chair or by vote of the Directorate

Throughout this edition of CASHE Corner, you will notice some featured members, accompanied by a paragraph or two. Each of these women will be leaving the Directorate at the conclusion of the Las Vegas 2013 Convention. As Directorate members, each has spent the past 2+ years working hard to grow and develop our Commission, so we wanted to give them a chance to tell you a bit about what they do. If one of the positions piques your interest, feel free to contact us for more information, but more importantly, **NOMINATE YOURSELF** for that position! Nominations for Directorate positions are due soon, and elections are December 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>.

**~FOR YOUR INFORMATION~**

## Experience a leadership role in an ACPA Commission!

The Commission for Academic Support in Higher Education Directorate is looking for support professionals who would like to take on a leadership role. The annual elections will be held the first week of December.

The leadership team for CASHE is called the Directorate. Ideally, the Directorate will be composed of 10-15 members. Areas of responsibility are delegated among the Directorate members in cooperative teams of 2-3 individuals. The CASHE Directorate has several openings and is looking for people who would be interested in working on one of the following teams:

**Awards Team** The purpose is to publicize, gather submissions and select recipients for Commission-sponsored awards. Activities include: promote awards and take nominations; recruit members to assist in the evaluation of awards; inform recipients of their award and invite them to the Convention to receive the award, recognize reviewers for their contribution to the process.

**Web Communications Team** The purpose is to provide timely and effective communication to members of CASHE while promoting and maintaining membership dialogue. Activities include: working with ACPA International Office to maintain the listserv; maintain and update the CASHE website, seek website content from members of CASHE, maintain CASHE's Facebook and blog presence.

**Convention Programs Team** The purpose is to plan, organize and implement the procedures for selection of CASHE sponsored programs for the annual ACPA Convention. Activities include soliciting program submissions; recruit program reviewers for CASHE sponsored programs; collect reviews and announce what programs have been approved; correspond and coordinate with the ACPA Convention Programs Chair.

**Convention Services Team** The purpose is to ensure the CASHE presence during the annual Convention. Activities include reserving space for the CASHE Showcase table; coordinate logistics of the CASHE Social reception; plan transportation and decoration of the CASHE banner and display board; work with on-site food/beverage to secure services.

**Membership Relations Team** The purpose is to provide CASHE members with information about the Commission activities, events and issues important to members. Activities include the assembly of the quarterly newsletter; collect information on current projects and Commission updates; coordinate online publishing with Web Communications team.

### What does it take to be on the Directorate?

- To be considered for a Directorate position, candidates must:
- Create a bio that will be used for the election process
- Be willing to commit to a 3-year term on the Directorate
- Be a current member of ACPA and CASHE
- Have a strong interest in Academic Support
- Be willing and able to take on a leadership role
- Be willing to fill the responsibilities of a Directorate Board Member
  - Attend all ACPA Conferences during their tenure
  - Work on CASHE activities at the Conference



**Renee Nilsen, Convention Programs:**

Having a leadership role with CASHE has been extremely rewarding, especially as a newer professional in the field. It has provided me tremendous opportunities to network. I have made many connections by attending the annual conferences, which being in a leadership role has allowed me to do. In addition, as a Directorate member, I have built a very strong small group of colleagues working in various areas of academic support.

In my role organizing the behind the scenes aspects of sponsored programs for CASHE, I am able, from a unique perspective, to see the amazing work that individuals in academic support create and implement to help students. I am also able to connect personally with individuals interested in stronger involvement with CASHE, as often people start with program reviewing and then look to grow their own leadership in our Commission. It has been a wonderful tenure, and I am sure others will find it equally beneficial to their professional experience and development.



Join us on Facebook and LinkedIn.

**CASHE Facebook Group:** If you are a Facebook user, please join the ACPA Commission for Academic Support in Higher Education group. This is an easy, quick way to stay up to date with CASHE happenings and in touch with other academic support professionals.

**CASHE LinkedIn Group:** We are also on LinkedIn. Please join our group, as we continue to find ways for academic support professionals in higher education to connect with one another. Search "ACPA Commission for Academic Support in Higher Education" to find us.

Words to Work By:

“Success is getting what you want; happiness is wanting what you get.”

~Anonymous



## **Male Voices: A Discussion on Environmental Influences and Learning Commitment in the Community College Context**

*Dr. Charlene Adams-Mahaley*  
Academic Advisor,  
Houston Community College

Educational leaders and student service practitioners in higher education have long recognized the critical need to improve the college retention rate of African American men enrolled at 2 year colleges. Problems relative to lower degree persistence, decreasing college enrollment, and graduation rates within this male population, in comparison to other ethnic-gender groups have appropriately created a national movement in the United States to address this long standing complex or ambiguous problem confronting the open access institution.

Difficulties connected to income and pre-collegiate preparation factors have been given as traditional explanations to suggest that these situational determinants have a direct impact on Black male achievement. Also, with equal attention, empirical research over the past four decades has reported that a variety of non-cognitive factors and campus environmental variables may have a higher direct impact on the overall personal college experience of both young and middle adults (regardless of ethnic or gender identity).

Thus in an attempt to contribute to our understanding of the relationship between environmental influences and learning commitment specific to Black men, and their subjective well-being within the open access community college structure, this present article focuses on reviewing valuable comparative qualitative information gathered from individual interviews with a small number of preselected African American and African immigrant college-age men enrolled in either their first or second year at a Texas institution.

The lengthy qualitative in-depth interviews, which were conducted to expand the quantitative research findings to a mixed-methods retention study performed earlier by the author,

drew exploratory input data and insights into students' achievement beliefs about their college setting, key learning support services, learning commitment, behavioral adjustment, cross-cultural interactions, and academic interests from their perspective. In this regard, from a counseling lens, the narrative responses representing six thematic areas at a single medium-sized college were: (a) college setting, (b) personal adjustment, (c) learning support, (d) college commitment, (e) cross-cultural interactions, and (f) academic interest. In summary, the qualitative data clearly illuminates that a pivotal relationship exist among the conjoined constructs relative to supportive learning environment and college commitment for both African American and African immigrant interviewees in the postsecondary school context.

### **Qualitative Results**

*College Setting and Personal Adjustment* With regard to campus influences and personal adjustment, responses coded under this theme were mostly on the positive side of shared experiences. Sixty percent (60%) of African American male students revealed having frequent student-faculty interactions, but a modest few had regular counseling visitations. In addition, a few students noted a positive peer network and involvement in sports as a motivating experience to stay in school. As for African immigrant international students, all expressed frequently meeting with a faculty member, designated school official (DSO), or academic counselor on a regular basis for guidance throughout the semesters.

Overall, it was found that these respondents (African American and African immigrant) commonly felt that they had many excellent classroom instructors that were influential in improving their academic performance and integration into the campus community. An African American student stated that,

The instructors are good. They will help if you ask them for support. In physics, my teacher would talk to me after class to help me understand something I might have a problem with. Because I work in the afternoon I can't make it to tutoring.

Another African American student felt the support staff such as the librarian and admission personnel were great mentors and positively contributed to his personal adjustment and persistence.

***Learning Support and College Commitment.*** In most cases, African Americans and their African immigrant counterparts were identical in describing a sense of motivation to complete college. However, more African Americans expressed that they were unsure of their academic goal in the first or initial semester, and partly enrolled because they desired a better job. Across the group, many agreed that low motivation could negatively attribute to a lack of learning commitment, to complete courses in the first and sometime second semester. One African American respondent shared,

College was not mandatory for me. If I finish, I will be the second in my family to attend college. The reason I wanted to go to college is because I want to strive for something higher.

Relative to college commitment another student openly expressed,

Having a higher education will help me to succeed and I need a better job. My previous jobs were low pay and hard work. I'm an engineering major. By coming here I'm able to finish my core classes and transfer to the University.

***Cross-Cultural Interactions.*** Overall, across the group, interactions with diverse people were perceived as important to their campus experience. Many of the respondents from both groups attributed part of their current persistence to positive interpersonal experiences with students of many different ethnicities. Due to the small class size, the African American men commonly found it easier to meet new people of different cultural backgrounds. One African American respondent expressed that coming from New Orleans; he had few friends of different ethnicities,



Here, I think pass race, I get along with everyone. I even have a friend from Russia and I never thought I would meet someone from there. Really, I don't seek out friends of the same race. I feel connected to everyone.

However, among the African immigrant group, one respondent found it somewhat difficult to meet new students inside the classroom. Nevertheless, outside the classroom the African immigrant group established positive own-group and intra-racial relationships with other international students from Africa and with diverse non-Black international student groups. One African respondent stated that establishing relationships within the classroom environment were critical to student success. For example, the student shared the following,

In my country we are very social. Everyone knows each other. Here you can spend the entire semester and not know anyone. People here are not social. You need friends inside the classroom to help you recover work if you're absent or to share notes. What I learned from my culture is to be friendly and build good relationships and be helpful, but cautious.

***Academic Interest.*** By academic interest, the author means students interest in college attendance and the expectancies for academic success, which may aid in shaping the value one places on college participation and on the overall learning experience. Therefore, it is with this definition in mind that the following responses were gathered. Students from both groups indicated that they held a high regard for higher education, which seemingly influenced their decision to enroll in college. In fact, when asked to describe their overall achievement and effort in college, all the African immigrant students responded “*high,*” “*successful,*” and “*good.*”

Other African students believed that pursuing a formal education was important to achieving their ultimate career goal in the future,

I want to improve my learning. When you are educated you see things differently. You learn to communicate and you have the means to contribute something to your country when you enhance your skills.

They also demonstrated a high self-efficacy and envisioned being able to transfer to a 4-year school and graduate from college with degrees in high-paying career areas within 4-years. In contrast, a majority of the African American males expressed an equal desire to persist in college and eventually transfer, but were not as optimistic about reaching their educational goal within 4-years. As for emotional support, the African immigrant respondents strongly attributed family support, cultural traditions, and positive friends as responsible for encouraging strong study habits and the discipline necessary to achieve high academic grades.

With regard to academic major, more students in the African immigrant group were pursuing science related STEM careers such as premedical, computer technology, or engineering, which required a stronger academic background in math and the sciences. For African American students, they felt their prior secondary school performance, in particular math, needed to be stronger to prepare for careers in mathematical and science related fields such as engineering, pre-medicine, and computer science. Thus, the academic majors commonly identified by the African American respondents included business, communications or media technology, criminal justice, education, engineering, and psychology. Moreover, although they equally valued the college degree, they conveyed experiencing high stress in attempting to successfully balance school, work, and personal financial demands to maintain housing and transportation needs.

One student shared that his fixed work schedule was becoming demanding,

I would like to attend study groups, but I haven't had the time. Work prevents me from participating, so I have to remain self-motivated because I just don't have the time right now. I work 29-40 hours a week.

Thus, as a result, outside work obligations dually undermined this student's academic performance and shortened his study time away from the campus setting. However, the author believes that if more work study or hourly employment opportunities were available, students may have a better chance of creating balance and have more time to focus on grade performance. In other words,

when working outside the college niche, it is far too easy as a commuter student for work to become the priority, which can potentially impede a long-term college commitment.

In conclusion the stimulating views provided by the participants, suggest that a strong value is placed on higher education and that the importance of bicultural socioemotional linkages within the college environment, and support from peers or kin systems is crucial to both groups persisting semester-to-semester. Moreover, the shared perspectives, establish the fact that the popularly held view that if one is not persisting then they must not value the educational process or the college degree is inaccurate. Essentially, the findings show that the African American respondents in particular, have an equal genuine interest in reaching their education goal and retention is more likely to occur when they feel connected to the institution and also when individual supportive services and multicultural student development programs are mobilized to assist with reaching their academic goal in spite of personal demands.

Questions or comments? Dr. Adams-Mahaley can be reached via email at [c.adamsmahaley@hccs.edu](mailto:c.adamsmahaley@hccs.edu).

#### **Gala Jackson, External Relations and Partnerships**

The team lead for External Relations and Partnerships seeks opportunities to develop partnerships between CASHE and relevant internal ACPA entities, along with external entities to ACPA. The person in this position is in charge of building and maintaining partnerships across and external to ACPA, as well as providing information to the commission about activities of these groups.

This position also seeks to maintain listserv involvement with liaison groups, while keeping CASHE and liaison groups informed of activities and pertinent information.

The person in this position must have a love for relationship-building, connecting, and a bit of networking. A “big picture” outlook doesn’t hurt either!



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

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**Cathy Dugan**

**Faculty Member, Indiana  
University of Pennsylvania**

**Director/Chairperson,  
The Advising and Testing  
Center**

**ACPA since:** 1981

**CASHE since:** I've been involved on and off over the years, though not sure how long.

**Why I got involved in CASHE:** Consistent with my work with advising supports, DSS, general interest in tutoring; background in DSS and in TRIO. Our university student population is wide and I perceive academic support to be integral to many facets of our student populations.

**Interests:** Professional--advising; DSS; transition to and from college; retention; grad student development as professionals. Personal--travel; England; reading; helping college students.

**Things you'd never expect:** Born in Toronto, raised in Ontario, New York (state and near city); PA, and CT; spent summers on my grandmother's island on Georgian Bay Ontario; lived in England; traveled in Europe and Middle East; now PHOBIC of flying; won a trip to Sedona, AZ and (actually) flew there for our 25th anniversary! LOVE Toronto and Boston!

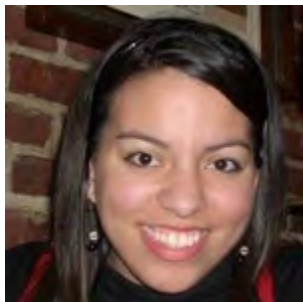
**Recently read:** Generation on a Tightrope – very good

Our next edition of CASHE Corner will be convention –themed, so start thinking about submissions, which will be due January 31<sup>st</sup>. If you have suggestions for best practices in attending professional conferences, networking tips, or anything in between, contact Lauren Sanchez, Member Relations, with your ideas.

**Nicole Gahagan, Web Communications and Social Media**

The Web Communications and Social Media team lead is responsible for ensuring timely, ongoing communication amongst CASHE members via a variety of online platforms. Primarily, this individual relays information about Commission and ACPA happenings, but might also generate conversation about important academic support issues. The Web Communications and Social Media team lead maintains the ACPA webpage, Facebook group, and Linked In group, as well as the Commission listserv.

The individual fulfilling this vacancy can benefit from the opportunity to interact with various CASHE members. Generally, the Web Communications and Social Media team lead is the first-point of contact for members interested in becoming involved with CASHE. This person also benefits from regular interaction with other Directorate members who need information relayed to the CASHE and ACPA audiences.



**Lauren Sanchez, Member Relations**

For the past (almost) three years, I have had the pleasure of serving as the Member Relations team lead for CASHE. In that time, I've been responsible for not only soliciting, editing, and designing content for our quarterly newsletter, *CASHE Corner*, but I've also been in charge of member outreach projects, such as communications with new members, planning our social activities at Convention, and keeping our membership up-to-date on all CASHE activities.

I've enjoyed my time in this position immensely, but I look forward to seeing how much greater a job the next person can do. The person filling this position must be someone who enjoys creating things, be it newsletters, fliers, or anything in between, as well as someone who loves organization, and some (very easy) event planning. Don't hesitate to contact me with questions!