



**National Career Development Association**

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**The National Career Development Association Leadership Academy Action Learning Project Proposal**

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**Participant:** Dr. Yamonte Cooper

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**Leadership Academy Class:** LA Class X, 2015-2016

**Project Title:** Improving African-American Male Inclusion and Involvement within NCDA

**Client:** NCDA members who are African-American men

**Relevant NCDA Entities:** NCDA Board / Committee on Diversity Initiatives and Cultural Inclusion

**Project Description:**

NCDA's long-term plan of "diversity in membership and leadership" is an important goal for the organization that includes outreach to members from different groups. One group that has been identified as having the lowest numbers of involvement is African-American (AA) men. African-Americans are the second largest ethnic group after Caucasians that form NCDA membership. However, as of June 2016, NCDA's total of 551 AA members is only comprised of 77 men, representing less than 1% of the total membership. This is unrepresentative of the actual number of AA men utilizing counseling services. Therefore, promoting the inclusion and involvement of AA men affords NCDA the ability to grow, retain, and increase its total membership base.

The outreach plan for AA male members should include participation on NCDA committees, publishing articles in NCDA magazines, presenting at the Global Conference, and support for leadership opportunities. To accurately determine the needs and tools required to successfully implement this plan, an online needs assessment will be developed and distributed to current AA male members. The assessment will contribute to the understanding of how NCDA can create an

inclusive environment for AA men. In addition, the assessment will examine how NCDA can facilitate increased involvement of AA men.

### **Summary/Conclusion:**

A total of 32 out of 77 AA men (42%) completed the survey and were given the opportunity to select multiple professional identities. The majority of the respondents (39%) identified as master's level counselors. 19% identified as doctoral level counselors/students. 16% identified as counselor educators with a master's degree or higher. 10% identified as master's level counselors in training. 32% identified as "other" which included a master's in education and career development program facilitators & specialists. 50% of respondents had been a member from 1-5 years. 22% had been a member less than a year. 16% had been a member 6-10 years. Results of the survey indicated the following:

- Participants were asked to rank their top reasons for joining NCDA:
  - 55% indicated being interested in professional development opportunities as their primary reason while 41% indicated commitment to the profession. Further, 15% identified "other" where networking was a common theme identified by the respondents.
- When asked about their current involvement in NCDA in the past year:
  - 75% indicated that they have not been involved in any activities listed.
  - 19% indicated that they had submitted a proposal to present at the annual conference.
  - 9% indicated that they wrote or co-wrote an article (Career Convergence Web Magazine, Career Developments or the Career Development Quarterly.
  - 9% indicated that they attended NCDA's annual global conference.
  - 6% indicated that they delivered a presentation at NCDA's annual global conference (this includes a roundtable presentation and/or 70-minute presentation).
  - 3% indicated that they attended an NCDA PDI.
  - 13% selected "other" where serving on the CDQ and CDF boards where identified as well as a respondent citing the lack of responsiveness in addressing career related concerns of students of color.
- The majority of respondents 84% indicated an interest in becoming more involved in NCDA.
- Participants were asked how welcomed and included did they feel as a member of NCDA:
  - 37% reported feeling indifferent.
  - 31% reported feeling completely welcomed and included.
  - 31% reported feeling somewhat welcomed and included.

- Participants were asked to rank how NCDA could be more welcoming and inclusive:
  - 38% indicated NCDA diversifying leadership team/leadership academy with AA men.
  - 33% reported already feeling welcomed.
  - 21% reported NCDA providing networking and mentoring for AA men.
  - 12% reported NCDA reaching out to include more AA male practitioners in discussions about target clients.
  - 8% reported NCDA including a focus on AA male clients.
  - 8% reported NCDA providing more webinars and regional activities that includes topics related to AA men.
- Participants were asked how could NCDA be more welcoming and inclusive of AA men. A total of 27 individuals responded to this open-ended question. Overall suggestions included the following:
  - Partner with HBCUs and target career service offices and recruit AA men.
  - Provide mentorship and networking opportunities for AA men.
  - Highlight accomplishments of AA men in the field.
  - Provide leadership opportunities for AA men in NCDA.
  - Include articles from AA men in the Career Developments Magazine.
  - Provide opportunities for conversations about race and career development.
- Participants were asked how could NCDA recruit and retain AA male members. A total of 29 individuals responded to this open-ended question. Overall suggestions included the following:
  - Partnering with organizations such as the National Association of Black Social Workers or the Association of Black Psychologists.
  - Recruiting AA men from HBCUs.
  - Providing leadership development opportunities for AA men within NCDA.
  - Include AA male keynote speakers at the NCDA Conferences.
- Participants were asked what would compel them to pursue a leadership opportunity in NCDA. A total of 26 individuals responded to this open-ended question. Overall suggestions included the following:
  - Feeling valued and supported by NCDA.
  - Being encouraged to pursue leadership opportunities.
  - The support and ability to make an impact within the organization.
- Participants were asked what do they view as the major challenges that face AA clients as they seek to create meaningful and dignified working lives. A total of 28 individuals responded to this open-ended question. The responses included the following barriers:
  - Discrimination, stereotypes, and racism.
  - Discrimination and racism in the workplace.
  - Lack of leadership opportunities in order to be a change agent.

- A lack of multicultural competence among practitioners.
- A lack of AA male counselors.
- A lack of social capital (networking, marketing, exposure to the world of work, career preparation, training & resources).
- Economic inequalities (socioeconomic history/barriers, poverty & financial literacy).
- Negative imagery/depictions in the media.
- Participants were asked to indicate any other suggestions that they might have for NCDA as it seeks to enhance its attractiveness to AA men. A total of 21 individuals responded to this open-ended question. Overall suggestions included the following:
  - Use social media to promote outreach to AA men.
  - Collaborate with leading AA male researchers that include research on AA male vocational and career life.
  - Include inclusive marketing that profiles AA male members.
  - Develop networking and professional development opportunities for AA men that includes mentorship and leadership.
  - Include more AA male presenters.
  - Actively recruit more AA men.

**Recommendations:**

The following recommendations are being provided to NCDA:

- Partner with HBCUs and target career service offices and actively recruit AA men.
- Partner with organizations such as the National Association of Black Social Workers or the Association of Black Psychologists.
- Collaborate with leading AA male researchers that include research on AA male vocational and career life.
- Provide leadership, mentorship, and networking opportunities for AA men in NCDA.
- Include AA male keynote speakers as well as presenters at the NCDA Conferences.
- Include articles from AA men in the Career Developments Magazine.
- Highlight accomplishments and profile AA men in the field including members.
- Provide multicultural competence training to career development practitioners.
- Provide opportunities for conversations about race and career development.