Community Scholars Program

The Community Scholars Program is based on the premise that local communities surrounding the university are a rich source of potential graduate students. Yet, due to the insular nature of the traditional recruiting process, many potential scholars are overlooked, particularly scholars of color in the local community. The Community Scholars Program was designed to tap into social and political networks to identify and recruit successful African American and Latino school practitioners and educational activists who are interested in pursuing advanced degrees. In March 2007, the first cohort for the Community Scholars Program was identified. Two faculty members hosted a house meeting to introduce candidates to graduate programs and to explain the admissions process. Through informal dialog, faculty assisted the candidates in exploring the assets they bring to graduate studies and understanding how to capitalize on those assets to become successful scholars and public intellectuals. Additionally, faculty provided guidance and resources for addressing barriers candidates may face either in the application process or once enrolled in the program (e.g., need for financial aid, support with family responsibilities, etc.). The program has proven hugely successful; 7 of 12 candidates who participated in the first cohort were selected as finalists for entry into the Ph.D. program for fall 2007. Four other participants are looking to enter the M.Ed. program or the Ph.D. program in the coming academic year.