

Nominee: Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum

Organization: Spelman College

Category: Education

Seventh Annual Awards, February 23, 2010

Examples of how this person demonstrates INTEGRITY:

1.) Under her leadership, the budget process has become more transparent. BDT implemented an annual State of the College where she reviewed projected revenues and expenses for faculty and staff, as well as a SGA-sponsored State of the College for students. Using simple charts and clear language, she reviews the institution's sources of income—tuition, endowment and fundraising, and important factors associated with them. She also discusses expenses, graphically displaying how revenue will be spent and any underlying factors associated.

This is a practice that has been in place for seven years, but was increasingly important in 2008, and in 2009 when the College announced a \$4.8 million dollar budget reduction due to a worsening economy. To further engage the campus in the process, BDT increased the number of campus conversations—hosting two State of the College Addresses, town hall meetings and conversations with Faculty Council, Staff Council (formed under BDT), Leadership Council and Resource Allocation Committee (formed under BDT).

Her open communication style and willingness to talk candidly about the institution's finances and engage others has earned her respect. Faculty, staff and students may not always like the final decisions that she has to deliver about the budget, but they respect and appreciate a process guided by mutual respect and collaboration.

In May 2009, BDT set out to save as many seniors as she could when the economy sank to historic proportions and a high percentage of students were threatened with not graduating due to lack of access to financial aid. She noted that it would be terrible to have students make it as far as their senior year and not graduate due to lack of financial aid. Because of her concern, she regularly contributes her own money to the President's Safety Net Fund/Starfish Initiative to help struggling students. In fact, the money she generates from lectures and awards is donated to the fund. When she won the prestigious Brock Award for being a national leader in education, which came with a \$40,000 cash prize, she established a scholarship in honor of her mother. Many have been inspired by her consistent giving and have stepped up their support, namely alumnae, faculty and staff. The 2009 campus campaign boasted the highest percentage of participation at 48.6% and dollars donated to date at \$73,231. Alumnae increased their support to the College as well with a 30% participation rate, the highest in the institution's history and among the highest of HBCUs. Students heeded the call as well and raised \$8,000 to support their struggling sisters. In the end, BDT achieved her goal of saving seniors in financial distress to ensure they graduated. More than \$800,000

has been raised to date to support the Starfish Initiative.

Examples of how this person demonstrates RESPECT:

The decision to close the Edelman Childcare Center at the College was a difficult, but necessary one. The Center has a long list of distinguished alumni, including members of Martin Luther King, Jr. family and a host of other influential Atlanta families. Alumnae have a connection with the Center as former residents of the campus and some as students pursuing careers in education and other majors have worked in the Center or on projects affiliated with it. The executive director position at the Center has traditionally been held by an alumna, and alumnae taught there as well.

The Center had been running at a significant deficit for a few years, and the decision was made to close it, which became of the items included in the \$4.8 million reduction to the 2009-2010 operating budget. The College knew there were many who loved the Center, but did not know the financial story of its recent years, and BDT took time to meet with and educate parents and alumnae about its finances and how closing it would help Spelman better help struggling students on campus.

There were many parents, some who were alumnae, who fought to keep the school open. They requested and were granted several meetings with key administrators, and developed a proposal to make the Center a self-sustaining entity through the leadership of the Parents Association. Some meetings were emotionally charged, but BDT always kept her composure, acknowledging concerns while sharing unknown financial facts, and allowing attendees to air their issues without criticism. She also allowed the parents to pursue this option within a specific timeframe. Unfortunately, the effort was not successful. Although the decision came at a cost (delaying the closing meant additional loss of revenue), she showed respect for the parents and their efforts to save the school. In the end, the institution still had to move forward with the unpopular decision of closing the school.

Examples of how this person demonstrates RESPONSIBILITY:

When talking with the parents about the closing of the Edelman Center, BDT admitted that the College had made some mistakes in the management of the Center, and that she too was saddened that it would have to close. She talked about how and why it was difficult to make the decision, noting that she accepted the Parents Association request because she told them that she herself faced the same situation when she worked for an institution that had to make a similar decision when her sons were of childcare age. She was part of a Parents Association had worked to transition a college-supported childcare center into an independently run and operated entity. She knew how they felt because she had walked in their shoes. Now, as the chief administrator of a college she sat on the opposite side of the issue and had to make a difficult decision based on a different set of factors.

Please relate an incident demonstrating leadership character:

BDT has worked to raise awareness of the importance of health and wellness on campus, from encouraging the display of nutritional information in the cafeteria to expanding vegetarian options and fitness center hours so that faculty and staff can take advantage of the facility. She has been a vegetarian for many years, and enjoyed exercise, but in 2009, she began working out with a personal trainer. Prior to eliminating light breakfast items as part of her weekly cabinet meetings in 2009, she provided fresh fruit, yogurt, breakfast bars in lieu of donuts and rich pastries. She was a big supporter of the CNN Fit Nation campaign held at Spelman during the 2006-2007 academic years, an effort to raise awareness of obesity. A panel on the topic featuring Sonjay Gupta, Spelman's Director of Health Services Brenda Dalton, Morehouse School of Medicine's David Satcher and others was hosted on campus, and that was the year that display of nutritional information in the cafeteria was launched. The campaign also included a series of Spelman-generated health and wellness articles were printed in four issues of the Comcast Cable Guide, and a public service announcement contest for students with airing it on cnn.com as the top prize. It was a wonderful initiative to get faculty, staff and students focused on health and wellness.