**YWMC MEMBER SHOWCASE:** Huston-Tillotson University, Austin, TX

With deep Texas roots, **Huston-Tillotson University**, Austin's oldest institution of higher learning, is celebrating its 143rd anniversary. Huston-Tillotson (HT) is a small, private, faith-based liberal arts institution located in historic East Austin with a mission of service to a diverse student population through a legacy of leadership and excellence in education, connecting knowledge, power, passion and values. Under the leadership of its sixth president, Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette, HT is guided by the Core Values of I.D.E.A.L.: integrity, diversity, excellence, accountability and leadership. The University has been a member of YWMC since 2016.
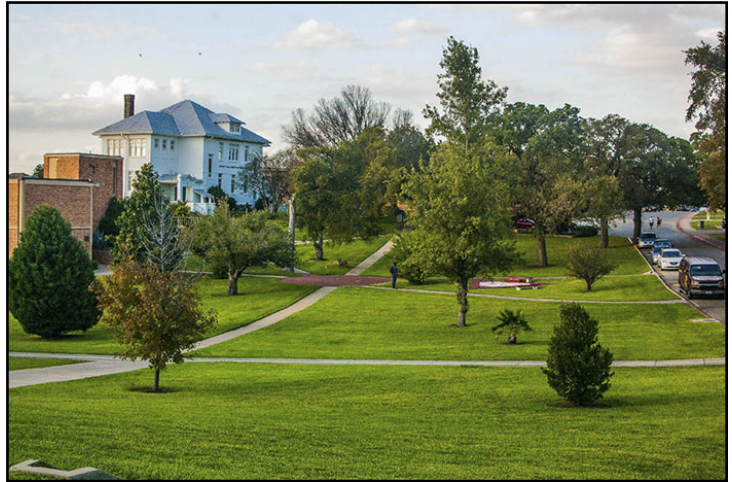
Classified as an historically black college and university (HBCU), Huston-Tillotson has an undergraduate enrollment of over 1100 multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-faith students. The HT student population is comprised of approximately 63.8% Black, 26.9% Hispanic/Latino, 5.4% White and 5% international students who come from around the globe including Africa, the Caribbean, China, Italy, Mexico, Serbia, Sri Lanka, and Venezuela. Seventy percent are Pell-eligible. HT is a member of the YWM Student Exchange Program and also has a Summer Study Abroad in China Program as well as opportunities to travel on mission trips to countries such as Belize, Costa Rica, and Haiti.

Huston-Tillotson offers more than 20 areas of study in both Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees including business administration, computer science, criminal justice, education, and kinesiology. Recognizing that the needs of the adult learner differs greatly from the traditional college student, HT's Adult Degree Program devotes significant resources that support nontraditional students through to graduation. Huston-Tillotson also offers two graduate degree programs including a new MBA starting in Fall 2019.

HT focuses on research and interdisciplinary approaches, including a campus-community empowerment against drugs and HIV/AIDS initiative led by

psychology majors, and programs within the interdisciplinary Center for Sustainability and Environmental Justice. Research initiatives also support attainment and sustainment of STEM scholars. With support from a grant from the Department of the Army, Technology Integration and Outreach Division, the Computer Science Department enables students to study and develop advanced robotic systems to assist people in their homes and workplaces, with particular attention on identifying safety issues within human-robot interactions.

Newly opened in December 2018, the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation offers entrepreneurial education, provides incubator services, and assists individuals in the local community, especially women and minorities, to launch new ventures. Career development is also supported via the UNCF® Career Pathways Initiative (CPI), which is designed to provide a seamless path from college to career. This past fall, HT created the Center for Academic Innovation and Transformation (CAIT) with the goal of offering a robust schedule of opportunities for faculty and staff to develop skills and knowledge in innovative and transformative pedagogical best practices and assessment methodology. Through the Center and other venues, HT faculty are offered a range of multi-modality trainings and other developmental opportunities that enhance learning experiences inside and outside the classroom.

## Institutional Resources/Practices

### Faculty Development

In an effort to better serve its freshmen students, **Robert Morris University** (IL) developed an online First-Year Experience (FYE 101) professional development course for faculty and staff that was first delivered in May 2017. The 10-week course was co-developed by the Title III grant team, whose goals focus on freshmen retention, and the academic deans.

The course focuses on a different topic every week, such as instructional technology, metacognition, and experience-based learning. The weekly content requires approximately 1–2 hours of self-directed learning through readings, videos, podcasts, and infographics. Each week culminates in a homework assignment that is assessed by a course facilitator, either a dean or Title III member. The assignments reinforce the week's materials while also exposing faculty and staff to different technologies. For example, the Week 1 assignment is a quiz in our LMS, Blackboard, that asks questions about the week's content while demonstrating different types of quiz features and functions that faculty may not have known about or used frequently. As another example, in Week 5, everyone develops a Google Slides presentation asynchronously to see how cloud technology can be used by students for remote collaboration.

During the initial roll out, all Freshmen Faculty were required to take the course. Freshmen Faculty are designated by the Vice President of Academic Administration and Dean of Faculty as instructors with an established track record of success with first-year students who are then scheduled predominantly in freshman courses during the Fall term. All Academic Advisors were also required to take the course, even if they were not in the classroom, as the course lessons still identified strategies for how they can better serve freshmen, while also providing them additional insight into how our faculty work with the students.

The final assignment of the course requires participants to put in writing how they plan to incorporate the lessons and tools from the FYE101 course into their roles/courses. Aside from seeing these plans go into action, the course resulted in increased use of the various instructional technologies to which participants had been introduced as well as more reflective faculty discussions about effective pedagogies for our students. For further information contact: Paul Gaszak, Associate Provost, at **pgaszak@robertmorris.edu** and/or RMU's Title III Coordinator Joseph Barda at **jbarda@robertmorris.edu**.

**Summer Bridge Programming**

Sponsored jointly by the State Education Department and **Keuka College**, the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) at Keuka College (NY) supports New York state high school graduates and GED holders who do not normally meet admission criteria but have the potential for success. In 2014 the Keuka College Summer Institute (KCSI) was started to provide our HEOP students with a required pre-first-year, four-week mandatory residential summer program to assist them in making a more seamless transition from high school to college. During this program HEOP students take three courses and participate in co-curricular activities to get a head start on college life.

Additionally, students attend one-hour KC Enrichment sessions at least three times per week that are intended to further supplement transition to college. Some of the session topics include: Student Conduct and Community Standards, Introduction and Overview of Health and Counseling Services, Importance of Knowing Your Neighbor, and Mindfulness: Calm My Nerves. KCSI is of no additional cost to students and includes housing, books, meals, transportation, admission to outside events, and tuition for summer courses. Retention of HEOP students entering in 2017 and 2018 has been high with 100% of both cohorts returning for their second semester, and 85% of the 2017 cohort returning for the third semester.

Enhancements to the program to boost retention going forward include adding a component to the KC Enrichment series focusing on building a safe and respectful community, and additional training for our Peer Mentors, including a one-credit "Life-Skills" course for the 2019 fall semester. For further information, contact: Lisa Thompson, Director, HEOP, **lthompson1@keuka.edu**.

## YWMC Webinar Series

The next YWMC Webinar in our Spring Series will focus on Promoting Success among First-Year Athletes and is scheduled for Thursday, April 18, at 4pm ET. To register for this event, go to: **https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_7u8n1CK1Tt2-BZu2CMNDXQ**. Recordings and accompanying slides of past webinars are available on the YWMC Website (**https://yeswemustcoalition.org/publications-webinars/#webinars**).

## Submissions for Future Issues

YWMC members are encouraged to submit examples of policies, practices and/or resources that you have found to be effective in promoting student success and that you would like to share with your YWMC colleagues. Send brief descriptions to Nia Lane Chester, YWMC Program Manager. **niachester@gmail.com**.