

PRACTICES EXCHANGE

NEWSLETTER

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Responding to the Crises

In order to provide a forum for YWMC members to share strategies and raise questions regarding the COVID-19 crisis as well as the crisis to address racial and social inequities, we have continued to hold Open Forums via our Zoom platform for members in general and for faculty. Information regarding links to these sessions is sent out via the email lists for YWMC Google Groups. We welcome any members who wish to join the conversation. In addition, we are in the process of creating a list of publications, project descriptions and other related materials that YWMC members have found useful in addressing issues of equity and justice on their campuses, with an emphasis on materials authored by YWMC faculty and staff. If you have references you'd like us to include, please send to Ann Landis, annlandis@gmail.com. Readers may also find previous YWMC publications useful for thinking about these current issues (see: <https://yeswemustcoalition.org/publications-webinars>).

YWMC MEMBER SHOWCASE: Holy Names University

Holy Names University (HNU) in Oakland, CA, was founded in 1868 by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. Rooted in Catholic intellectual and spiritual traditions and a strong belief in social justice, the University's mission is to empower and prepare a diverse student body for productive lives of leadership and service. HNU was a founding member of the Yes We Must Coalition, joining in 2011.



The University celebrates its exceptional racial and ethnic diversity and is consistently ranked in the top ten most diverse regional universities of the western region by *U.S. News & World Report*. HNU is a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and an Asian American Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (ANAPISI).

HNU's small class sizes and courses in varied formats and schedules strive to meet students where they are, particularly first-generation students. During the 2019-2020 academic year, 38% of undergraduates were first-generation college students. Over 50% of HNU students are eligible for Pell grants. HNU's scholarship programs help make a small, private school education within reach for many students who wouldn't otherwise consider one.

Students are set up for success at HNU. Each one is paired with an academic adviser who works with them from enrollment through graduation. Free tutoring, test prep, career counseling, and psychological counseling are also available.



HNU's First-Year Experience program, The Connections Project, supports the development of a first-year student's identity both as a college student and a member of the HNU community. Seminar classes incorporate a common reading book focused on a current social issue.

The program also teaches transitional skills essential to college success, such as study skills and accessing campus resources. The year culminates with a signature project in which students answer two key questions in a presentation format: "What cause are you passionate about? How does it connect to one of the core values of the Sisters of the Holy Names?"

Students join service projects in the Oakland community, such as planting community gardens or volunteering at a food bank. Programming related to diversity and civic engagement, mental health and identity exploration, and affirmative consent are also important components of the student experience.

The University has recently announced a new Academic Strategic Plan that aligns the institution's historic social justice mission with the needs of today's students. The work begins with the addition of an Ethnic Studies major, available fall 2021.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, HNU is offering classes entirely online during the 2020–2021 academic year. To support a small number of students who needed housing, the University has kept residence halls open with safety precautions in place. HNU continues to provide basic needs support such as a food pantry and a clothing closet, as well as technological support such as a laptop loaner program and study space with internet access.

Holy Names University's idyllic, 60-acre campus offers panoramic views of San Francisco Bay and access to vibrant Oakland neighborhoods, wooded hikes and other outdoor adventures. HNU welcomes our YWMC community members to campus once COVID is behind us. Visit us online: [https:// hnu.edu](https://hnu.edu).

Institutional Resources/Practices

Leadership Programming for Black Male Students

The Black Male Leadership Academy (BMLA) at **Roosevelt University** (IL) was started in the summer of 2014 by Roosevelt's St. Clair Drake Center for African and African American Studies. BMLA reaches out to promising young Black teens who are entering their sophomore year of high school, helping them build up four capitals: intellectual capability, cultural experience, social grace and leadership skills. The program pairs talented but at-risk Black males from Chicago high schools with African American male students, faculty and staff at Roosevelt. The program offers a one-week summer session as well as programming on the second Saturday of every month at the University. Activities have included camping trips, courses in African Studies, and exploration of different areas of Chicago, including visits to institutions in the financial district.

This fall Roosevelt welcomed into its first-year class several students who had attended the Academy as high school students and who are now serving as BMLA mentors. Commented one of these first-year mentors about his own experience in the program in high school, "Coming into this program where there were so many older people, experiencing a college environment and whether it could be a place I would fit — I saw all the opportunities I was missing out on. My mentors showed me that we can rise above the statistics without sports being the only way out — school can be the way, too."

For further information, contact: Michael Ford, Chief of Staff, mford@roosevelt.edu.

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. We are particularly interested in examples of how members are addressing issues of social and racial justice on their campuses this year. Send brief descriptions to Nia Lane Chester, YWMC Program Manager. niachester@gmail.com.