

GOOD BETTER BEST

Business Education Scholarship Team



Since its first session in 2004, 23 students have successfully completed the BEST program at Webster University, School of Business and Technology. Students participated in 9 weeks of intensive hands on and engaging coursework (current syllabus attached). District administrators at 17 St. Louis Metropolitan city and county schools supported student representation in the BEST program came from the following schools; Webster Groves High, Beaumont High, Career Academy, University City High, Central VPA, Soldan IS, Rockwood Summit, Kirkwood High, Clayton High, McCluer Senior, Berkeley High, Jennings, Hazelwood Central High, Hazelwood East High, Lutheran High North, Cleveland Junior Academy, Metro Academic and Classical High and Gateway Institute of Technology.

The goal of the BEST program has been to expose minority and economically challenged students to a variety of education and outreach activities in order to prepare them towards the pursuit of a degree in business and ultimately a successful career. In line with the BEST program goals, the School of Business and Technology have focused its recruitment efforts on students who are seeking a career in business. As a result, 100% of the students who participated in the program have academic and career goals that cover many areas of the business sector; management, administration, accounting, human resources, entrepreneurial and international business. Several students added disciples in conjunction with the business emphases in areas of political science, law, physics/chemistry, communication arts and computer science.

The perception is that most high school students, especially African American students do not take advantage of higher education opportunities. Contrary to this perception, BEST students see higher education as a means of reaching their future goals. The program is tailored to help students understand the importance of not only seeking higher education but completing a degree in higher education. Thus far 90% of the students in the BEST program have applied or enrolled in a local or state college/university. Of the 2003/2004 program students 90% are still enrolled in higher education and are on track to graduate within 1-2 years. The 2005/2006 program students are beginning their higher education careers this fall 2006 and show no indication of letting anything hinder their progress to success. The choice of higher education institutions in which the BEST students have enrolled include; Arkansas State University, Florida A & M, Ottawa State University, St. Louis Community College @ Forest Park and Meramec, Tennessee State University, Truman state University, Washington University, Webster University. In Spring 2006, a \$1,000 Energizer Leadership Scholarship was awarded to Raven Johnson. Ms. Johnson is currently enrolled at Webster University with future career goals in International Business.

The BEST students are serious minded and committed to the program. We report that participating students had 100% attendance record and gave serious attention to completing the BEST program. Students did not allow transportation or family issues to impact their participation level. The BEST program was supported through the active participation of counselors, parents and guardians who attended many sessions and participated in meaningful sessions with their students. In addition, the sessions were facilitated by professors and business leaders who donated their personal time and resources to contribute to the success of the BEST program. This support shows that it does require a team effort to educate and motivate our students to succeed.

In continuation of the BEST program at Webster University, we see opportunities for growth in the area of mentorship. In harmony with the program goals, we'd like to improve the chances for students to mentor with business leaders, especially African American leaders who can give personal and professional examples of success. This added benefit for the Best students will increase awareness for the need to be dedicated, persistent and goal oriented in their pursuit of higher education and future careers. Thus far, only 5% of the BEST students have had the opportunity to take advantage of a mentor/mentee relationships which in most cases lead to summer internships with local businesses. We'd like to see 100% of our BEST students in a mentor/mentee relationship and continued support from the Regional Business Council and its resources will allow us to expand this opportunity to the students. At the mentor/mentee reception, representatives from the following organizations were on hand to celebrate the success of our students; The RBC, BJC, Colliers Turley Martin Tucker, CCIM, HOK Group, Online Corp, CMS, National City, Centric Group and GKN Aerospace.

I believe that the only threat to the future success of this initiative is not to continue it. Recent BEST graduate, India Clark, a highly motivated student in the BEST program will attest to this. Ms. Clark has taken her education very seriously and is currently enrolled at Howard University pursuing a major in accounting with a minor in legal communications. This is what she says about college, "I like it here because you are able to grow personally and intellectually. I believe I have made a good choice." Dr. Akande, Dean of the School of Business and Technology encouraged students to not set limits on what they can achieve. Dr. Akande has shown the BEST students how to think outside the box and reach for higher goals. It is only with the continued support of the Regional Business Council we can continue to aim for and achieve these goals with 100% success.

2003/2004 BEST Students: Conrad Jabari, Kourtney House, Teranee Hutch, Chris Jones, Marquita Jones, Jared Lewis, Brittany O'Bryant, Isaac Posley, Ellis Rowry, SiMyra Tyson and Pamela Young

2004/2005 BEST Students: Ryan Baker, India Clark, Joy Daniels, Wynton Foster, Raven Johnson, Ariadne Little, Phillip Lloyd, Christian Nelson, Brandy Taylor, Seriah Watt, Terril Williams and Matthew Wooden