



BROWN

Brown University Providence RI 02912

June 30, 2013

Dear past, present, and future Friends of the Minority Peer Counseling Program:

Congratulations on the celebration of the 40th year anniversary of the Minority Peer Counseling Program! While I was Dean of the College from 1987-1995, The MPC program was affiliated with the Third World Center which reported to the Dean of the College Office. I witnessed the MPC Program's good works and commitment to providing a space for minority students at Brown to work together, learn together, and establish a sense of community, while at the same time reaching out to the larger Brown community.

The MPC program has come a long way. It was originally created by students and, not without some controversy, it was student run. But at the time, there was good reason for it. Brown in the 70's and earlier, like other major institutions of higher learning, was largely a white institution. There simply were too few minority students to provide a critical mass and an environment where students of color could take ownership of their own personal experiences and of their place at Brown. In true Brown fashion, the students were the pioneers. They were the ones who recognized the need for an opportunity to discuss, debate, and examine their differences and needs. In short, they needed to establish a 'comfort' zone where they could come together and work together to celebrate, recognize, and understand who they were, and their critical role in shaping and contributing to not only their own community but also to a larger university community. Over the years, the numbers of minority students grew. In 1987, when I became the dean, minority students comprised only 18% of the undergraduate student body. When I stepped down as dean in 1995, they comprised 27% of the student body. During this time, we agreed after many discussions and debates, some more difficult than others, that it was time for the MPC program to be run as a partnership. So the MPC program worked directly with the Director of Third World Center, Karen McLaurin, to guide and shape the program together.

We have much to thank those who had the insight, foresight, persistence, and energy to create the program originally and those who have led it and participated in it since then for their dedication and commitment. Hearty Congratulations for a job well done, and for your continued success and good works!!!!

Sincerely,

Sheila Blumstein

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