



Advancement Via Individual Determination

NEWS RELEASE

February 21, 2014
AVID Center

CONTACT: Liz Morse, AVID Center
Steven Baratte, AVID Center
(858) 380-4800
lmorse@avidcenter.org

AVID Center and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Launch College Success Alliance

SAN DIEGO—AVID Center, a leading educational non-profit focused on college readiness, has formed a regional alliance with Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., an African American male fraternity focused on brotherhood, scholarship, and service. This educational alliance will pilot efforts in Los Angeles and San Diego, providing mentors and tutors for AVID schools and districts in those regions.

“We are honored to have Phi Beta Sigma as our allies committed to student success,” said AVID Center Executive Vice President Robert Gira. “Phi Beta Sigma is one of the most venerable and successful African American fraternal organizations in the U.S., and we anticipate a great relationship with their college chapters as well as their alumni chapters.”

Representatives from both organizations met over the course of the last year to determine the best initial approaches. For AVID Center, the alliance with Phi Beta Sigma addresses a growing college enrollment gap for male students, Gira said, and follows AVID Center’s recent Urban Leaders Convening, which produced a blueprint for school districts to follow in working with male students. The alliance also builds on the recent national roll-out of AVID’s Alumni Association and Phi Beta Sigma representatives were part of the planning process.

Phi Beta Sigma, which was founded at Howard University in 1914, recently celebrated its centennial anniversary. Education has long been at the forefront of the organization’s efforts, said Dr. Michael Baslee, Western Regional Director of Educational Programs for Phi Beta Sigma. “While Phi Beta Sigma focuses on social action through service,” he said. “We are all about teaching and mentoring, which is seen in scholarship being one of our principles and education being one of our programmatic thrusts.”

Phi Beta Sigma boasts more than 100,000 members, with 455 college chapters and 304 alumni chapters. Jeffrey Sneed, Western Regional Director, noted that Phi Beta Sigma is a “brotherhood called to serve.” Both AVID and PBS anticipate the alliance will help close “the male gap,” as far as college readiness and success. Sneed said, “Sometimes they just can’t visualize the payoff.”

For information on the alliance, contact Barbara Smith at AVID Center, bsmith@avid.org or Michael Baslee at Phi Beta Sigma, mvaslee@aol.com.

###

About AVID - AVID is a non-profit, proven college readiness system that closes the achievement gap. Today, AVID is implemented in approximately 4,900 schools in 45 states, the District of Columbia, and 16 countries/territories and impacts more than 700,000 students in grades K–12 and in 41 postsecondary institutions. The AVID College Readiness System transforms a school’s academic culture to increase the number of students who enroll in four-year colleges and succeed in higher education and training.

About Phi Beta Sigma - Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity was founded at Howard University in Washington, D.C., January 9, 1914, by Honorable A. Langston Taylor, Honorable Leonard F. Morse, and Honorable Charles I. Brown who wanted to organize a Greek letter fraternity that would truly exemplify the ideals of brotherhood, scholarship, and service. From its inception, the Founders also conceived Phi Beta Sigma as a mechanism to deliver services to the general community. Rather than gaining skills to be utilized exclusively for themselves, they held a deep conviction that they should return their newly acquired skills to the communities from which they had come. This was mirrored in the Fraternity’s motto, “Culture For Service and Service For Humanity”. Today, Phi Beta Sigma is an international organization of leaders. No longer a single entity, members of the Fraternity have been instrumental in the establishment of the Phi Beta Sigma National Foundation, the Phi Beta Sigma Federal Credit Union, and The Sigma Beta Club Foundation.