

# Black schools targeting Hispanics

ATLANTA (AP) - Faced with stiff competition for their traditional students, Historically Black Colleges and Universities are now making a push to recruit Hispanics.

Black colleges that want to shore up enrollment numbers are revising recruitment strategies to include more members of the nation's largest and fastest-growing minority. The campuses are hiring Hispanic recruiters, distributing brochures that feature Hispanic students and establishing special scholarships for Hispanics.

"I tell them 'There's a place for you and a need for Latinos to be present on [HBCU] campuses,'" said Nelson Santiago, a Puerto Rico native and recruiter for the historically Black Howard University in Washington, D.C., which has about 170 Hispanics out of 11,500 students.

Santiago and recruiters from other schools, including the all-male Morehouse College in Atlanta, are visiting predominantly Hispanic high schools and setting up booths at college fairs to recruit Hispanics. Morehouse sends recruiters to high schools in southern Florida, New York, eastern Texas and Los Angeles — areas with large Hispanic populations.

"Considering Latinos and African-Americans share a lot of history together that they don't realize, I think it's a good idea," said John Miranda, the 21-year-old son of Brazilian immigrants who is one of 15 Hispanics enrolled at the 2,800-student Morehouse.

Miranda, of Silver Spring, Md., said he picked Morehouse because he was offered a full scholarship funded by an Atlanta foundation that promotes the education of Hispanics.

Morehouse's goal is for at least 5 percent of its student body to consist of Hispanics within five years. If its current overall enrollment holds steady, the school will need 125 more Hispanic students by 2011 to reach that goal.

In the 1990s, Hispanics surpassed Blacks as the nation's largest minority. The number of Hispanics in the United States grew by nearly 60 percent that decade, while the number of Blacks only grew by about 15 percent.

At the same time, the competition for Black students has increased as public colleges nationwide try to improve diversity by recruiting more minorities. Federal courts have forced some state higher education systems, es-

pecially in the South, to meet specific Black recruitment goals under desegregation lawsuits from the 1960s.

The number of Hispanic students attending HBCUs increased more than 60 percent from 1994 to 2004, while the number of Black students grew by 35 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

Some students and alumni worried about the new re-

cruitment strategy.

"I do have concerns," said Earl Nero, a retired Atlanta business owner and 1974 Morehouse graduate. "Since the college has determined they want to stay the same size they are, that would take away space from qualified African-American students."

But having other minorities attending those institutions will help them get "a real life view about what

Black people are all about," Nero added.

Student James Travis, 21, who is Black, said having students of other races on the HBCU campuses bothers him "a little bit" because it challenges the college's mission.

"It's supposed to maintain the historically Black tradition," said Travis, who is from Atlanta's College Park suburb. "I'll have to see how

it goes before I see if I want to change the situation or not."

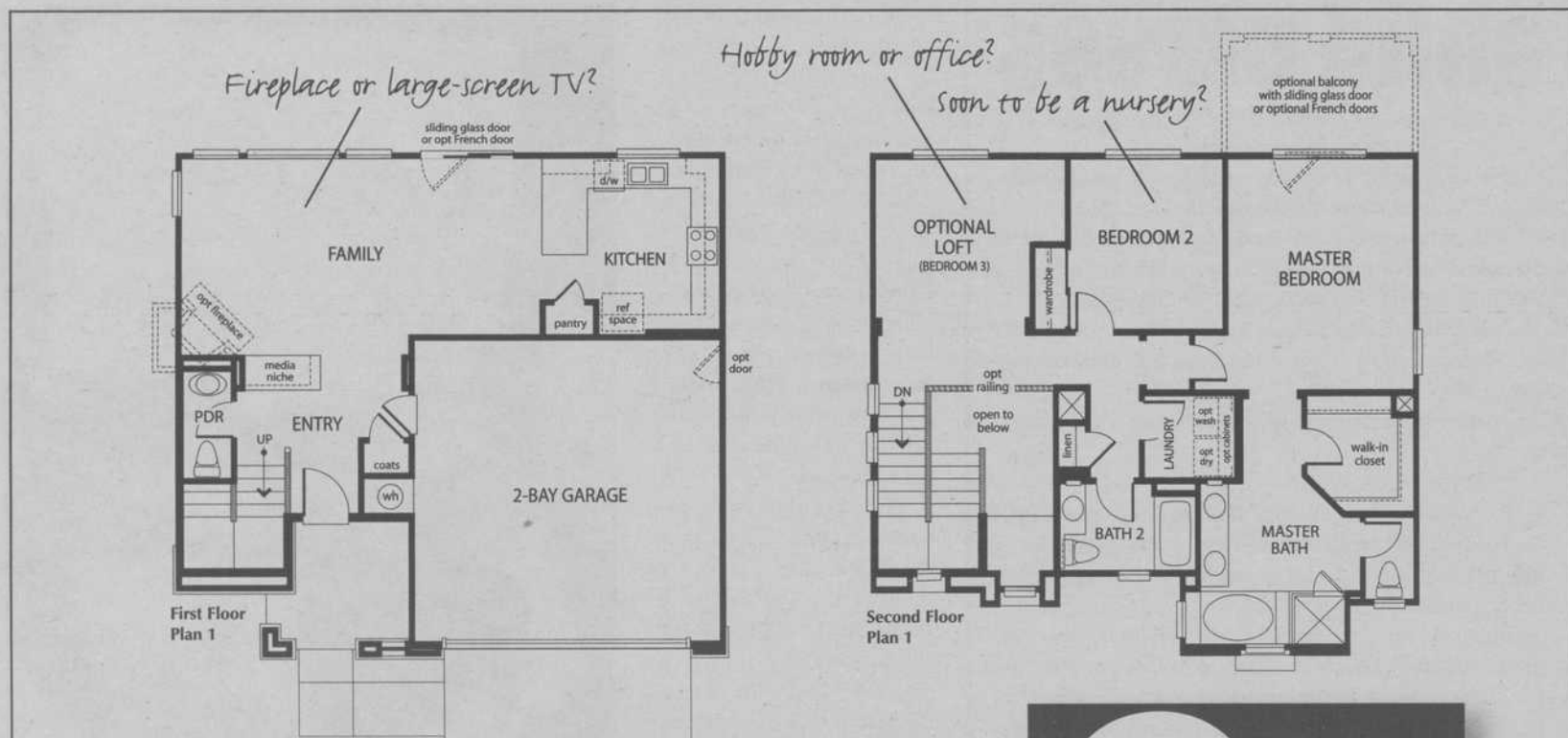
Educators said the nation's two largest minority groups are a natural fit on a college campus.

"They are both underserved communities when it comes to higher education," said Michael Lomax, president and CEO of the United Negro College Fund. "We have got to edu-

cate them so that we can have a competitive workforce in the 21st century."

Miranda, one of 15 Hispanics at Morehouse, said it has not bothered him being on a majority Black campus.

"Since I've been at Morehouse, I've gotten a different perspective on a lot of things," Miranda said, referring to Black history. "I learned a lot that was left out of the schooling I got."



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