

## RECOMMENDATIONS IN CONNECTING WITH BLACK STUDENTS

*TO SERVE YOU AS YOU SERVE YOUR STUDENTS...*

### **Things I wish my staffworker understood about being Black:**

- My **background**: personal and family, as well as the broader Black/African American experience  
Consider reading at least one of these:
  - Carl Ellis, *Free At Last? The Gospel in the African American Experience* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996)
  - Glenn Usry and Craig Keener, *Black Man's Religion: Can Christianity Be Afrocentric?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996)
  - Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean, and Hispanic Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000)]
- My **experience compared to other Black peoples**: African Americans (Westerners, Southerners, Easterners, Midwesterners, etc.), African Caribbeans, African Canadians, African nationals, etc... (its similarities to others, yet its peculiarities and specifics);
- My **general interest in my community** (*I am because we are*);
- My **ethnicity as an essential part of me, but not as the only part of me that is important** (there is also gender, economics, politics, theology/religious life)
- **How very different InterVarsity may be from anything else I have ever experienced** (church, job, community, family), and that I may find it difficult to translate my IV experience to those in the other spheres of my life;
- Just because I may be loud, boisterous, and/or opinionated (i.e. I have verve), it doesn't mean that I don't like you or this fellowship;
- What I am **passionate** about, and *why* I like what I like;
- **The role InterVarsity may play (or not play) in my life**; my church, my family, my job, other clubs, ethnic-specific organizations—these are just a few of the other commitments I (may) have scheduled in a week. I may limit my involvement with InterVarsity because I don't trust you or the organization—yet. Give me some time, and my commitment may grow.
- Although I am Black, **I may not be particularly committed to multiethnicity or racial reconciliation**, and may know very little about it. Unless I am an older student with experience in this area, it wouldn't be wise to look to me for leadership in these areas.

### **Questions that would be helpful for my staff worker to ask me (both initially, and as you get to know me better)**

- Why did you get involved with InterVarsity? What attracted you to this group?
- What was it like growing up in your family? What were your fondest memories? Your hardest memories? What kinds of relationship do you have with your mother? Father? Siblings? Are there any family events that are important for you to commemorate/attend?
- How has your family been able to support you while you're in college? Who from your family (nuclear, extended) attended college?
- What do your parents/church pastor think about your involvement with InterVarsity? *When might I as a staffworker (and some of your fellow students) be able to meet them* (not an *if* question, but a *when* question)?
- What are your current local church commitments? When can I meet your pastor?
- How many hours per week are you working?
- Are you involved with any other clubs/organizations on campus?
- How do you relate to the other Black students in our InterVarsity group? To the other Black students on campus? What do they think of this group and your involvement in it (if you know)?
- What do you like about this group? What aspects of the group give you dissonance?
- What are some of your dreams/aspirations for our InterVarsity group?