BLACK MALE SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT: Black Male Success in Higher Education

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The purpose of this creative project was to design an African American /Black Male Resource Center that fosters positive experiences for African American males at institutions of higher education that many lead to higher to retention and graduation rates. The program designed will provide flexibility for use at various institutions of higher education and could be customized to fit the individual circumstances of various campus sizes, populations, and budgetary means.

To better understand the multiple challenges Black males face in higher education, a review of the literature on Black males and their journey through higher education was conducted. The literature review was composed of websites, academic journal articles, and books. After analyzing literature for best practices that support the success of African American males, three examples of best practices were identified. After information and data were collected and analyzed, they were used to develop the proposed programming model for African American males.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I decided to design an educational programming model for Black males because I felt there was a need for such programming in higher education. Many institutions have good intentions for their students and do a great job at meeting all necessary needs. However, as a Black male and through my assistantship and practicum experiences working with Black men, I felt that there needed to be more educational and mentoring opportunities for Black males.

I would like to first thank Dr. Kay Bales. This creative project would not have been possible without her support and guidance. Without her dedication, and direction, this project would not have been a success.

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I would be remised if I did not also thank all the faculty of the Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education program at Ball State University. They were the experts I turned to when I had a question about how issues are resolved in the field of Student Affairs. You have taught me so much this year!

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Students of color are consistently representing a higher percentage of the total students attending postsecondary institutions each year in the United States. Within this group, African American males are some of the least represented. However, African American males are an important group of students who are served in higher education. Because of the differing viewpoints they offer both in and out of class, there are many benefits for their counterparts and the African American males alike. Since many of these males have additional needs and concerns that need to be met and managed, institutions of higher education can provide targeted programming to assist these students through different stages of their college career.

Retention and graduation rates are important issues state legislatures often task higher education institutions to control. As of 2006, African American males nationally held the lowest college completion rate (32.8%) between sexes and among all racial/ethnic groups in higher education (Davis, 2008). This is due largely to unacceptable racial-ethnic gaps in college graduation and intensified external pressures for institutional accountability for students learning. This has lead to stagnant college completions rates (Bok, 2006). Likewise, postsecondary institutions should be able to offer African American/Black males’ students a space that is designed to combat the barriers many of them face at institutions of higher education as it relates to retention and graduation rates. Black students benefit from Summer Bridge Programs, adaptations to traditional services and mentoring. When additional offices in the institution collaborate
with helping to organize and facilitate events, they ultimately help to improve the recruitment, retention, graduation and employment success of Black males attending their institution.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this creative project was to design an African American/Black Male Resource Center that fosters positive experiences for African American males at institutions of higher education that many lead to higher to retention and graduation rates. The program designed will provide flexibility for use at various institutions of higher education and could be customized to fit the individual circumstances of various campus sizes, populations, and budgetary means.

**Statement of Need and Importance**

The educational problem starts well before Black males reach the threshold of higher education. Many of the larger problems start in earlier education. According to research conducted by Jackson and Moore (2008) in the *American Behavioral Scientist*, the problem for Black males starts at an early age. African American males are bombarded with negative images through mass media of people that look just like them (i.e., broken families, and socioeconomically issues). According to Garibaldi (1992), education statistics consistently reveal that Black males cluster at the bottom of the distribution of virtually every indicator of school failure such as dropping out, absenteeism, suspension and expulsion, and low standardized test scores. It is also noted that Black males are overrepresented in central cities school districts where there is high poverty, high crime, and racial isolation.
Methodology

This creative project was developed utilizing a variety of resources. A review of the literature on Black males and their success in higher education was conducted. While the resource center at The Ohio State University was the primary focus of the research, additional material was collected from the University System of Georgia and The Center for African American Males: Research, Success, and Leadership. The research provided suggested topics and activities for Black males that guided the development of this creative project.

Limitations of the Project

The limitation of this project is that the programming model will not be specific to any one institution. No matter where it is implemented, it will need to be adjusted and altered to fit the specific needs of the student population, as well as the campus environment. Such factors as campus size, location, resources, and size of the Black male population, and the culture of the campus and students will dictate what can be realistically implemented and in what capacity it can be done.

Definition of Terms

Throughout this creative project terms were used that could have complex meaning or multiple definitions. For the purpose of this project the following definitions were used.

Academic Preparedness: the basis of students’ precollege academic performance as measured by one or more of high school grade point average, high school rank, college entrance test scores (specifically math scores), high school college preparatory courses,
advanced placement courses, the quality of high school attended, and quality and intensity of high school curriculum.

**African American**: an US citizen having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa

**Black**: any persons whose ancestors were born in Africa

**Matriculation**: to be continuously be enrolled in a college or university

**Mentors**: faculty or other supportive adults that have a relationship with the institution. This includes but it is limited to: professors, professional staff, and other employees.

**Minority**: individuals who are not part of the ethnic majority; individuals with low socioeconomic status and lack the same resources as members of the middle- and upper-social classes.

**Success**: accomplishing the purpose of college within the allotted time set for each degree requirement.

**Students of Color**: students that are African American, Latino or Hispanic American, Asian American, Native American, Middle Eastern American, or Multiracial.

International students are excluded.

**Organization of Project**

In Chapter One the purpose and overview of the project was provided. Chapter Two will review information and published literature essential to the project. An explanation of the methodology for designing the center will be discussed in Chapter Three. The final chapter, Chapter Four will provide a detailed programming model for such programs that can be implemented with minor alterations at any institution of higher education.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Summary of Project

The purpose of the creative project was to design an African American /Black\textsuperscript{1} Male Resource Center that fosters positive experiences for African American males at institutions of higher education that many lead to higher to retention and graduation rates. The program designed will provide flexibility for use at various institutions of higher education and could be customized to fit the individual circumstances of various campus sizes, populations, and budgetary means. This literature review examined retention issues and underlying factors; professional responsibilities; assessment; best practices; and implementing retention programs.

Retention Issues

This section is comprised of subsections that will provide supplementary research on the issue of retention as it pertains to Black males in higher education. Retention is a crucial measurement of success at any intuition. As more students are retained every year the rate of graduation will be higher. Student success equals higher retention and graduation rates. This becomes a continuous cycle for institutions long term. There are a great deal of factors that play into issues surrounding retention and success. Education has a profound impact on both the individual and society. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) shows that African

\textsuperscript{1} The terms “African American” and “Black” are used interchangeably throughout this paper.
American high school graduates enroll in postsecondary education at lower rates than whites. Although there are a greater number of Black students entering college than in previous years, fewer earn degrees when compared to non-Blacks. As of 2006, African American males nationally held the lowest college completion rate (32.8%) between sexes and among all racial/ethnic groups in higher education (Davis, 2008). This is due largely to unacceptable racial-ethnic gaps in college graduation and intensified external pressures for institutional accountability for students learning. This has lead to stagnant college completions rates (Bok, 2006). Moreover, this can be linked to numerous issues with both Black males and the higher educational system. According to research conducted by Jackson and Moore (2008) in the American Behavioral Scientist, the problem for Black males starts at an early age. African American males are bombarded with negative images through mass media of people that look just like them (i.e., broken families, and socioeconomically issues). There is rarely imagery of African American males and academic success or any positive impact on society. There are too few images of “successful” African American males.

Despite all the advances in civil rights in our nation, feminist movement, sexual liberation, when the spotlight is on black males the message is usually that they have managed to stay stuck, that as a group they have not evolved with the times. (hooks, 2004, p. ix)

The amount of attention the issue of educational plight has gotten does not mean that it will create enough positivity within the community to manifest change. The researchers lend the idea that African American males are first seen as part of a group then as individuals. This is perhaps why as a group Black males are consistently and
collectively affected by the negative stereotypes (Jackson and Moore, 2008). According to McGuire (2005), past research on the literature has shown there has been little attention given to solving educational problems for African American males, but more emphasis on documenting of the issues. There are a great deal of factors that play into issues surrounding retention and success; these will be covered in supplemental subheadings.

**Academic Preparedness**

One of the major underlying issues for Black males is coming to college under-prepared. Although some of these issues can be outside the barriers of higher education, it is important to know what makes Black males successful. According to researchers, the level of academic preparation in high school is positively related to high school graduation rates (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2000), college entrance examination scores (Horn and Kojaku, 2001), predisposition toward college, college enrollment, representation at more selective colleges and universities, (Hossler, Schmit, and Vesper, 1999) rates of transfer from a two-year to a four-year institutions, progress toward earning a bachelor’s degree by age 30, college persistence rates, and college completion rates. Many of the minority students who make it over the college admissions hurdle arrive on campus only to find they do not possess the requisite academic skills to succeed. According to Garibaldi (1992), education statistics consistently reveal that Black males cluster at the bottom of the distribution of virtually every indicator of school failure. According to Rogers and Summers (2008) the lack of positive attitudes toward institution, academic self-efficacy, motivation, achievement goals, attributions, and ethnic and bicultural identity development all impact the African American experience in higher education.
Thus, a high percentage of these students end up on the remedial or developmental track. According to Astin (1975) without the prerequisite skills needed to survive the rigorous curricula of most college campuses, many students underachieve and leave college during their freshman year or before their sophomore year of college begins. Leaving college as a freshman does not benefit any one. A college degree has replaced the high school diploma as a mainstay for economic self-sufficiency and responsible citizenship as supported in the research conducted by Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie and Gonyea, (2008). Having a higher level of education provides better opportunities for greater income and potential of career advancement. Given that a relatively large percentage of Black males entering college are first-generation students it is important to understand what implications the campus has on these students successes.

**Campus Climate**

Institutional fit and campus integration are important to retaining college students; campus climate mediates students’ academic and social experiences in college. While there are many normal challenges associated with maneuvering through the college system for any college student, minority students at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) encounter additional stresses that come from being a minority. In a qualitative study conducted by Hall (1999), African Americans who attend PWIs often seek out ethnic and cultural organizations with “critical masses” of African American students to help reduce the isolation and alienation often found on predominantly White campuses. In an additional study, Smedley, Myers, and Harrell (1993), found that minority students at PWIs experienced stress on five separate factors, including social climate, interracial stresses, racism and discrimination, within-group stresses, and achievement stresses.
Some of the major issues identified were: (1) “not enough professors of my race”; (2) “few students of my race”; (3) “racist institutional policies and practices”; (4) “people close to me thinking I’m acting “White””; (5) and “doubts about my ability to succeed in college.” Minority students who are inadequately prepared for such non-academic challenges can experience culture shock.

Additionally, Vincent Tinto (1987) wrote in *Leaving College: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*, retention is a function of the degree to which a student becomes academically and socially tied to campus life. The quality of faculty-student interaction and the student's integration into the institution are fundamental factors in student attrition. Special attention has to be directed to features of retention programs, which includes actions taken by the college/university to provide variations in policy necessary for different types of students and colleges. According to Strayhorn (2008), Tinto’s theory challenges all divisions of an institution to become more aligned in helping students become successful. Along with the campus climate, financial reasons are a huge indicator of college persistence.

**Financial Aid**

Financial aid is a critical part of the persistence puzzle. According to *Retaining Minority Students in Higher Education: A Framework for Success* by Swail (2003) economic theory and educational research suggest that for students to persist to a college degree, the returns for receiving the degree must outweigh the costs of attaining it. Because attending college has direct, indirect, and opportunity costs for students, financing decisions have both short- and long-term effects on college persistence. Students’ ability to pay for college consists of two dimensions: an objective component,
reflecting students’ availability of resources, and a subjective component, reflecting students’ perceptions of their capacity to or difficulty in financing a college education. It is likely that these factors also influence students’ decisions about college choice and persistence. In the 2010 U.S. Census, the median household income of African American families headed by a householder age 45 to 54 (the families most likely to have traditional college-age children) was $48,825 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). By comparison, white households had a combined income of $73,847.

Although some ethnic groups historically are averse to financial debt (Thomas, 1986), loans are nonetheless a standard component of most financial aid packages. Institutions must consistently review their packaging procedures and ensure that students and families are educated about the loan process and that the loan represents a long-term investment against future returns. The delivery of accurate and easy-to-follow information regarding loan availability and regulations is an important factor for families.

**Professional Responsibility**

The responsibility of retaining students rests with the professionals that serve them. It is the duty of the institution to ensure students have a campus climate in which they can feel supported. One way of creating a balanced campus is through staffing. Faculty of color remains significantly underrepresented in higher education (Jayakumar, Howard, Allen and Han, 2009). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics the national makeup for faculty of color, including Black/ African American (6%), Latina/os (4%), Asian American (6%), and American Indians (0.5%), which makes up only 16% of the full time professoriate. The research indicates the presence of faculty of color is strongly related to successful recruitment and retention of both students and
junior faculty of color (Jayakumar et al.). There is a need for Black males to believe that faculty are evaluating them fairly, and working on their behalf (Vella, 1994). This is evident in the direct reflection of the degree completion rates, which are considerably lower for historically underserved students. As of 2002, the six-year completion rate for African American students was 46% (Kuh et al., 2008).

Furthermore, student affairs personnel must recognize that African American men are a distinctive group in that they are disadvantaged by inadequate educational preparation, low high school graduation, and college attendance rates. Given this reality superficially addressing the needs of African American men is not enough (Noguera, 2003). Kunjufu (1986) documents the “failure syndrome” by which as early as the fourth grade Black males become aware that schools do not invest in their learning process. Campus administrators have a clear obligation to overcome the common message of the “failure syndrome” that is so often conveyed in almost all aspects of American life “convincing inner-city black males that they are merely an ‘endangered species,’ expected to drop out of school, forbidden to apply to college, destined to be unemployed, and somehow to be excused for not accepting responsibility as men.” (Hopkins, 1997, p. 79). According to a study by Fleming (1984), it is important for student affairs professionals to create an environment that is embracing, nurturing, and less hostile for African American men.

Within the academic division there are also expectations of responsibility to educate students and provide diversity within learning environments. According to a study conducted by Strayhorn (2008) on the role of supportive relationships in facilitating African American males success in college, the author uses Sanford’s challenge and
support theory along with Tinto’s theory on retention as a guide to measure the relationship between academic achievement, satisfaction and supportive student relationships. The study shows academics and student (social) development is a function of challenges balanced by an appropriate level of support. Creating support systems across institutions as a whole is imperative to overall success. There has to be balance between both the academic affairs and the student affairs divisions. This allows for success and maturation for all students but especially Black males. The next sections highlight the important implications assessment has on the retention of Black males.

Moreover, student affairs professionals and their academic counterparts should take great care to develop an understanding of Africa American men’s culture and then develop effective interventions based on that new understanding. Certain situations may call for unique efforts focused on the specific needs of African American men (Cuyjet, 1997). Essentially what is required is an academic environment that is welcoming and supportive for African American men.

**Assessment**

Assessment is an essential tool for measuring programs or services. There have been numerous studies done on the topic of Black males in higher education. In a descriptive qualitative analysis conducted on African American males in higher education by Hall and Rowan (2000), found students encountered various forms of oppression. The study addressed the characteristics and differences between African American males and institutions of higher education that enable academic failure. The main purpose of the study was to determine qualitatively the differential status of African American males.
and the reasons they give for declines in enrollment and graduation from higher education.

Furthermore, the study conducted by Strayhorn and Terrell was an assessment on the impact mentoring had on the satisfaction of Black students (Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). The data reveals the important benefits of mentorships as well as the ill effects of not obtaining mentorship. This study was conducted as a secondary analysis of the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) Research Program. The CSEQ is used to collect information about students’ experiences in three key areas: college activities, college environment, and estimates of gains. Of the 554 Black students in the sample, there were 196 males. The study found the differences in Black male students’ satisfaction with college was based on their relationship with a faculty member. These results offer insight into how the nature and scope of a mentoring relationship can have on Black males in higher education. The results cannot be generalized to all Black males or all institutions. However, Tinto (1987) suggested that effective retention lies in the college's commitment to students. The content, structure, and evaluation methods for assessment of student retention and departure are considered, along with the use of assessment information for developing effective retention programs. Tinto (1993) suggests that the development of a system should primarily be student centered. That is, it must collect information on every aspect of student development and focus on that progress. The collection of information provides the institution with a snapshot of students’ progress; according to Tinto, it should detail a student’s social and academic experiences “as understood by students” (p. 214). In doing so if an institution were to create a program based on mentorship to focus on retention issues, the results and
learning outcomes should be measurable and assessment could be applied. Tinto’s description (1993) of a retention assessment system emphasizes three main requirements for success: the system must be comprehensive, longitudinal, and recursive.

The process must be comprehensive. The system must incorporate both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection to ensure that a representative portrait is developed of each student. Surveys and other instruments can collect important information on student progress but are susceptible to low response rates. The use of qualitative methods, in the form of focus groups, interviews, and other designs, helps fill information gaps and triangulate the information. These requirements are discussed below.

The process must be longitudinal. Because the process of student withdrawal from higher education is longitudinal in nature, student assessment must also be longitudinal. Therefore, collection and monitoring of student progress must involve more than the freshman experience and preferably begin before students are officially admitted to the college. The advantage of this practice is that school officials can become aware of potential needs before the student comes to the campus. Thus, the college can prepare in advance for each student’s social and academic needs.

The process must be recursive. Recursive refers to the continuing process of data collection to develop university-wide trends among the student body. Only through an ongoing collection and analysis of student and organizational data can trends be developed; analysis of these trends provides the normative reflection to identify successes and remaining challenges on campus. This data analysis, by nature, is an important component of continuous improvement.
Best Practices

When dealing with issues within higher education it is often best to check the pulse of other professionals and institutions to see what works best. In order to provide support for Black males a total of three different models were studied and compared. The first was The University System of Georgia (USG). In 2000, the USG verified that institutions within its state system enrolled a low percentage of African American males in comparison with the percentage of African American males in the state’s population. A statewide study conducted by The African American Male Initiative (2002), a task force of the USG Board of Regents on the attitudes African Americans males had toward college focused on 750 individuals at or near eight USG institutions. The findings of the study offered clear evidence that many African American males perceive significant barriers to going to college, and these barriers, perceptual, academic and socioeconomic, began to appear early in their lives. Moreover, the study went in-depth to focus on the specific obstacles to attending USG institutions, the respondents offered concise criticisms of existing recruitment efforts and in general expressed little knowledge about or sense of connection with USG institutions even in their own communities.

In an effort to combat the findings of The African American Male Initiative Study, the Board of Regents approved six $10,000 grants to USG institutions to initiate or expand programs aimed at enhancing the participation of African American males in higher education. The six institutions were Albany State University, Atlanta Metropolitan College, Coastal Georgia Community College, Fort Valley State University, Savannah State University and The University of Georgia.
According to the USG website, institutions are able to submit proposals for grant funding for programs that address the educational needs of Black males. In its seventh year of funding awarded to USG programs eight program proposals were selected totaling nearly $235,000. According to the award report released April 2010 by the USG’s African American Male Initiative, since 2002, the enrollment of Black males in the university system has increased by 56.78 percent, from 17,068 students in fall 2002, to 26,760 in fall 2009. In addition, Black male graduation rates within the USG have improved significantly, and improvements in retention also have been achieved (2010).

The second model researched was The Center for African American Males: Research, Success, and Leadership (CAAMRSL). CAAMRSL is located forty-five minutes from downtown Atlanta and is an independent non-profit corporation, whose mission is to address the challenges faced by African American men in education by focusing on three main areas: research, modeling and training, and programming. Dr. Said Sewell, founder and director said in an interview with *Diverse: Issues in higher education* (2010) there are four goals in which the Center operates. The primary goal is to address the challenges faced by African American men in post-secondary institutions. The second goal is to expand the conversations among African American male faculty, staff, alumni, students, parents, and community leaders about these efforts. The third goal is to create a formal framework for working with African American males on predominately white college/university campus. The fourth goal is to formulate and implement initiatives that address the societal, cultural, psychological, spiritual, economic, and historic challenges of African American males inside and outside of the
classroom. The fifth and final goal is to develop a stronger brotherhood among African American males.

Additionally, Dr. Sewell mentioned CAAMRSL has received more than $8 million in public and private grants and donations. The monies are used to complete the several objectives set forth by the center. These objectives include conducting and publishing original research on Black males, and creating a climate that fosters healthy mentoring/social relationships between African American faculty/staff and African American male students outside of the classroom.

The last resource researched was The Ohio State University. The Ohio State University is one of the leaders in retaining Black males across the country. In the article “Black Male Rising” found in the Diverse: Issues in Higher Education Feintuch (2010) gives the history of Ohio State and their retention and success relationship with the Black male population. In 2003 the retention rate for Black males was 80.7 percent. The following year The Bell Resource Center was founded to meet what the State of Ohio and Ohio State University both deemed as an immediate issue to aid in the growing concern over the retention of Black male students. Five years later the retention rate reached 89.3 percent in comparison to 92.8 percent of the general student population.

The resource center focuses on the individual needs, individual achievement, positive role modeling and the acquisition of leadership skills. The program is a continued support system for Black males on campus. It holds programs throughout the year ranging from educational to networking opportunities. However, the center is not just for Ohio State students. It serves a much larger purpose of improving success for
Black males. Two key strategies are early preparation for college and an in-depth mentorship system once students get to campus.

During this research mentoring has been often mentioned as an effective way to engage success in Black males in higher education. As offered in the Negro Educational Review by Strayhorn and Terrell (2007), mentoring experiences with faculty contribute to adjustment issues and are a critical factor in student retention and persistence. Mentoring programs have been instituted at many colleges and universities to support minority students and to engage members of minority groups to enter college and find success in higher education. Therefore, mentoring relationships and programs can be a dynamic way to help Black males adjust and have success in college, particularly at predominately White institutions.

Implications of Mentoring

Programs and institutions that are designed to help at-risk youth, roles models and mentors are identified as an integral and effective method of intervention. Dryfoos (1991) found that many of these types of programs involved utilizing a “caring adult” to direct one or more children by providing support and acting as an advocate. In the Haddad, Greensberg, and Chen (2011) study on the influence of the “very important” person on behavior and mood of the adolescent found “adolescents’ perceptions of key attributes of their important non-parental adult were consequential for behaviors and mood even after similar attributers of family members and peers had been taken into account” (p.339). The text Mentoring young men of color: meeting the needs of African American and Latino students (Hall, 2006), describes mentoring as a relationship usually taking place over a fixed period of time. However long the connection last, this form of
social interaction embodies a reciprocal nature that enables both parties to contribute and learn from each other. The overall objective is to serve as a professional helper or role model, providing the mentee with the necessary information and skills needed for successful living.

Supplementary research from Wilson (2000) indicated “institutionalizing mentoring is a valuable first step in reversing the trend of questionable futures for the Black males’ persistence in higher education. Regardless of whether or not African Americans are identified as “high risk”, the presence of a caring mentor can have positive influence on the development and achievements of African Americans. Given the current conditions facing young African American men it is important something be done to ensure a successful future. In an earlier study Parker and Lord (1993) surveyed Black professional men on their opinions about what makes a good mentor for you Black males. The results indicated three principal components attributes were described for a model, which included: (1) social profile (i.e., visibility and educational level), (2) role vales (i.e., level of responsibility to the adolescent and important of rapport), and (3) motivations (i.e., their reasons for acting as a role model and level of commitment). Thus, an understanding of the types of mentors African American men are currently using for support and guidance and the effects those role models have on them.

This information will help to understand the effects of mentoring. The justification for examining mentors is based on the findings about the effectiveness of the use of mentors in programs such as The Ohio State University designed to help Black males in higher education.
Implementing Retention Programs

In an in-depth study conducted by Swail, Redd, and Perna (2003) the development of any retention program requires a multifaceted process incorporating all individuals involved. In terms of an institution-wide project the entire institution must take part. From an institutional point of view, many things must happen on campus to ensure that positive change can take place. The researchers also comprised a comprehensive list of important factors for establishing a student retention program. They are as follows:

1. **Rely on proven research.** Given the resources and effort that must go into a campus-wide retention program, the final plan must be based on solid, proven evidence of success. It is a long way to travel with no idea of the outcome. If such an effort fails, the task of putting the pieces back together would be daunting, to say the least. Spend time looking at what works, and borrow from the best.

2. **Suit the particular needs of the campus.** Not all campuses are equal. No “boxed” retention program works the same on any two campuses. All efforts must be shaped to meet the specific needs of each campus.

3. **Institutionalize and become a regular part of campus service.** Any program at the beginning is usually a special project supported by outside funds. In the end, however, any successful effort must be institutionalized with respect to funding, policy, and practice. Outside funding does not last forever, and stated policy ensures that any interventions can become a mainstay in campus-based practices.

4. **Involve all campus departments and all campus personnel.** Everyone must be
involved at some level. The most successful practices engage the entire campus, while the least successful strategies are very compartmentalized. Institutions that had a broad outreach among faculty and staff, with clearly stated policy and practical objectives tend to be successful.

5. *Take into consideration the dynamics of the change process and provide extensive and appropriate retraining of staff.* Change is difficult and uncomfortable. Do not underestimate the impact of change on one’s ability to push through policy changes on campus. Team members must be brought along and be given all opportunities to learn about the interventions and develop appropriate skills as necessary.

6. *Focus on students.* Although this statement sounds like a given, many programs end up making the effort about themselves and not the clients. Everything should point to how it affects students and persistence on campus. This mind-set is a good one for all institutional practice that often gets lost in the “career” mind-set of board members, administrators, faculty members, and staff. Students are central to all operations on a campus.

The development of a Black Male Resource center that focuses on retention programs requires supportive leadership, the willingness to evoke change on campus, and careful planning.

**Summary of literature Review**

In summary, the literature suggests Black males are entering institutions of higher education unprepared to handle the academic rigor set by the institution. With the lowest retention and graduation rates from any race and sex, it is important these students are
given the additional assistance they need to become successfully college educated. By providing mentoring and resources to Black males as they enter college they will have a greater chance of being retained from year to year and completing degree requirements.

Chapter Three provided a detailed description of this creative project.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this creative project was to design an African American/Black Male Resource Center that fosters positive experiences for African American males at institutions of higher education that may lead to higher retention and graduation rates. The program designed will provide flexibility for use at various institutions of higher education and could be customized to fit the individual circumstances of various campus sizes, populations, and budgetary means.

Methodology

This creative project was developed utilizing a variety of resources. A review of the literature on Black males and their success in higher education was conducted. While the resource center at The Ohio State University was the primary focus of the research, additional material was collected from the University System of Georgia and The Center for African American Males: Research, Success, and Leadership. The research provided suggested topics and activities for Black males that guided the development of this creative project. Finally, the documentation for The Black Male Resource Center was gathered to obtain activities, programming performed, and college preparation models.

Program Objectives

Five program objectives were identified that guided the design of this project.

Although the program will focus heavily on the transition from high school into higher
learning and the freshman year, the intent is to remain a resource center for those students throughout their academic maturation. The objectives are as follows:

- To serve as a mentor to Black males.
- To assist first year participants in their transition from high school to college.
- To enhance the overall academic experience.
- To provide leadership opportunities.
- To prepare Black males to transition from undergraduate students into continuing education or a career.

**Limitations of the Project**

The limitation of this project is that the programming model will not be specific to any one institution. No matter where it is implemented, it will need to be adjusted and altered to fit the specific needs of the student population, as well as the campus environment. Such factors as campus size, location, resources, and size of the Black male population, and the culture of the campus and students will dictate what can be realistically implemented and in what capacity it can be done.

Chapter Four provided a programming model, and program design for this creative project.
Summary of the Project

This project developed an educational programming model to aid in the success of Black males at institutions of higher education. An educational programming model, that outlines specific programs and events that could be implemented and adapted for all types of institutions, will be proposed and outlined. The model will include educational programming and events that are centered on creating a resource center to aid in the success Black males in higher education. Based on reviewed literature, the following model features core programming along with supporting programs.

Program Design

The creative project consisted of a resource center that will provide both traditional academic and student affairs services to Black males. The center could be used as an outlet for unity, programming, academic activities, and general resources for males. These resources and activities consist of helpful hints for utilizing preexisting campus resources as well. The intent of this project was to provide a useful instrument for Black undergraduate males to be able to participate in a four-year, comprehensive development program. All programs and actives should support the mission and vision (see Appendix A) of the Black Male Resource Center.

The Black Male Resource Center (BMRC) will consist of two professional staff, a Director and one Assistant director. The Director will be in charge of the daily
operations and priority programming of the Center. Moreover, she/he shall be able to create a sense of community and connectedness for Black males at the institution to ensure their success in college and beyond. The role of the Assistant Director shall be to assist the Director and identify and create best practices on Black males in higher education. Job descriptions are in Appendix B.

**Educational Programming Model for Black Males**

*Summer Arrival Program*

This program allows for Black males to get a head start on their experiences in higher education as undergraduate student. Students will learn of the resources on campus designed to help with academic success, they will meet other Black males, build confidence, and learn leadership skills. In addition, students will have the pleasure of meeting with faculty, staff, and alumni who are committed to their success. Throughout the program there will be a variety of activities including community service projects, leadership workshops, symposiums, and social activities. Individual sessions can be co-sponsored with other offices or student services such as: Career Services, Counseling Services, the Study Skills Center, Student Actives, and Athletic Departments. The program will occur the weekend before the start of classes so students will have the opportunity to move into their residence halls early. The early arrival program will allow students to become comfortable in their new environment. Program agenda is located in Appendix C.
Lecture Series

Providing lecturers to speak campus provides insight on education, and society. This series can also provide as a fundraiser opportunity with large keynote speakers and entertainment. Also, this gives students the opportunity to develop or discover other areas that may interest them. Each lecture will have a corresponding theme with it speakers. Lecture Series speakers are in Appendix D.

Black Male Retreat

Providing a retreat for Black males will promote self-awareness, unity, and academic motivation within the students. Themes can be used to set the context of the information being shared to students. Additionally, themes can be used to invite possible presenters and speakers to provide supplemental resources. During the retreat, breakout sessions can be utilized to create a more holistic learning experience based on specific needs of the students. This time also serves as a time students are able to come together and discuss relevant topics specific to their experiences at the institution. The retreat will provide networking time for students with professionals in subject areas, duration of the retreat can be from one day- three days. Program agenda for the Black Male Retreat located in Appendix E.

Food for Thought

Lunch discussions can be spread throughout the academic year to generate dialogue with students. Topics can range from campus issues, to local, or national issues. Institutional faculty and staff members can provide as facilitators or experts on topical areas. Students will be able to participate in learning outside of the classroom that will
challenge them to explore and grow their personal, leadership, and professional
development. The Black Male Resource Center can allocate funding to provide lunch to
participants. Food for Thought discussion topics are in Appendix F.

*Awards Banquet*

The Awards Banquet serves as a time when the Center can provide recognition to
Black males who are academically on task and a positive image for the Center and
institution alike. In addition, students, faculty, and staff members are commended for
their leadership and service to Black male population. Awards will be presented based
on the recommendations for each category and selected campus constituent will serve as
committee members and select winners.

Samples of award are provided:

- **Most Outstanding Freshmen Award**
  Presented to a Black male freshmen who is actively involved, and making a positive
  impact on his peers and in the campus community

- **Most Outstanding Senior Award**
  Presented to a graduating Black male who was actively involved in leaving a positive
  impact on his peers and in the community. This individual serves as a role model to other
  Black males

- **Supporter of the Year Award**
  Presented to a faculty or staff member who has made extraordinary efforts in supporting
  the endeavors of the students as well as the center
• Servant-Leader Award

Presented to a Black male who achieves results for their organization by giving priority to the needs of their colleagues and those they serve.

Along with the core programs, smaller campus-based programs can be held throughout the academic year. According to Coles (1999), campus-based programs should include educational and cultural activities. These activities develop the academic skills, self-determination, and self-confidence of students. Educational and cultural activities allow the students to step away from the structured setting of the daily classes and still have a positive learning experience. Possible options include resume workshops, dressing for success, networking possibilities, health and wellness issues, and programs that support ending violence against women. Extracurricular activities provide the students opportunities for team building, social interaction, and exploration. A great deal of these events should occur in the evening to not interfere with class schedules. In order to provide these services to students an annual budget (see Appendix G) should be submitted to either the Student or Academic Affairs Office.

The program shall remain voluntary for students to participate. However, upon each student self-identification as a Black male and acceptance into the institution they will receive a welcome packet from BMRC (see Appendix H). Included in the packet will be a letter from the BMRC highlighting what it is the center does. Included with the letter students will receive a description and application for the Summer Earlier Arrival program.

The Black Male Resource Center will begin every year with the Summer Arrival Program and end with an Awards Banquet in the spring semester. All programs
sponsored by the Center should be followed up with an evaluation from both staff members and students.

**Conclusion**

This programming model emphasized the important relationship that institutions have with Black males and their success in higher education. The Black Male Resource Center staff and along with other campus relationships will expose students to a college environment while teaching them successful college skills. Through this programming the participating students will have educational and cultural experiences that motivate and support them to complete a college degree. Students have access to different resources and learning important skills that assist them in their journey in higher education. The program could increase the students’ level of knowledge and skills needed to achieve success in college, in their professional careers as well as their personal lives after graduation. This resource center was designed to fulfill these objectives.
References


*Black Issues in Higher Education, 17*, 175. Retrieved from

APPENDIX A

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS
Vision:
Become an impactful recruitment contributor of Black males attending the institution.

Mission:
The mission of the Black Male Resource Center is to create a mentoring and fostering environment where Black males can succeed in higher education. The Center will also research and address crucial issues in society that impact the success of Black males.
APPENDIX B

JOB DESCRIPTIONS
Position Title: Director of Black Male Resource Center
Category: Multicultural Affairs
Salary Range: $50,000
Additional Compensation: Professional development funds and full university benefits
Starting Date: July 1, 2011
Application Deadline: N/A

**Position Description**
The Director of the Black Male Resource Center serves in a full time, 12 month position and reports to the Vice President Of Student Affairs. This individual provides vision and leadership for the by supporting historically underrepresented students in order for them to become successful and fully engaged in all aspects of their educational experiences at the institution. The Director is responsible for creating an environment in the Center which provides a welcoming space for students to connect with each other and nurtures a sense of belonging for students from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, the Director encourages students to participate actively in their curricular and co-curricular learning through the coordination of leadership opportunities, transition programs, and intercultural experiences designed to engage and support students’ holistic development and retention through graduation.

Provide vision and leadership for the Center including establishing annual goals and overseeing all programs and services provided by the Center. Direct and supervise the staff of the Center including a Assistant Director and Graduate Assistant. Assess the needs, learning outcomes and satisfaction of students served by the Center. Establish and maintain collaborative working relationships with various offices on campus including the Enrollment Division, Academic Vice President’s Office, Campus Safety Services, the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, Career Services, Alumni Relations and the Office of Residence Life to develop and implement the programs and services of the Center. Establish and support peer mentoring opportunities for Black male students. Work to establish connections with community organizations and alumni who are interested in supporting the goals of the Center. Manage office operations including developing and monitoring budgets, assessment and evaluation activities, developing and maintaining database systems, and ensuring excellent customer service with all constituents. Oversee the development and maintenance of web page, online and print communications and technology. Serve on various University committees. Work with Student Affairs departments to promote and enhance diversity and inclusion programming. Undertake additional responsibilities as assigned by the Vice President of Student Affairs.

**Job Requirements**
Master’s Degree in Student Personnel Administration, Higher Education Administration or related field is required. At least five years of progressively responsible experience in higher education with significant experience supervising staff and directing a program or service area. Experience in the administration of multicultural student services is strongly preferred. Candidates should possess a thorough knowledge and understanding of student
development and cultural identity theories; strong oral and written communication, training, presentation and computer skills; and values compatible with and supportive of the mission of the institution. Availability to work some nights and weekends when needed in order to ensure a quality student experience is an expectation for this position. Please attach your cover letter and three (3) references.

**Qualifications**

Education:
- Masters Required

Years of Full-Time Experience (In Student Affairs):
- 4-6 years

**Institutional Contact Person**

First Name:  Jane  
Last Name:  Doe  
Title:  Dean of Students  
Address 1:  1000 University Drive  
City:  Any  
State/Country:  USA  
Zip Code:  10100  
E-mail: Doej.edu  
Phone:  555-555-5555  
Fax:  555-655-5555
Position Title: Assistant Director, Black Male Resource Center  
Category: Multicultural Affairs  
Salary: $40,000  
Additional Compensation: Professional development funds and full university benefits  
Starting Date: July 1, 2011  
Application Deadline: N/A  
Starting Date: July 1, 2011  
Application Deadline: Open until filled

Position Description
The Assistant Director of the Black Male Resource Center serves in a full time, 12 month position and reports to the Director of the Black Male Resource Center. Duties and responsibilities include but are not limited to: • Assisting the Director in day-to-day operations of the Black Male Resource Center. • Designing and facilitating of core programs such as Summer Arrival Programs, Lecture Series, Brown Bag Lunch Discussions, and the Awards Banquet • Working extensively with graduate assistant, acting as first contact for questions. • Providing advising for Black males. • Performing other duties and special projects as assigned or directed.

Job Requirements
Bachelor’s degree required plus a minimum of one (1) to three (3) years of experience working with diversity, inclusion and social justice issues. Successful candidate must have excellent interpersonal and organizational skills and excellent written and oral communication skills. A demonstrated ability to work with male students on a variety of issues. Must be able to work independently, handle multiple tasks and responsibilities simultaneously. A demonstrated ability to mentor and counsel underrepresented and first generation students is required. Candidates should possess a thorough knowledge and understanding of student development and cultural identity theories; strong oral and written communication, training, presentation and computer skills; and values compatible with and supportive of the mission of the institution. Availability to work some nights and weekends when needed in order to ensure a quality student experience is an expectation for this position. Please attach your cover letter and three (3) references.

Qualifications
Education:
• Masters Required
Years of Full-Time Experience (In Student Affairs):
• 1-3 years

Institutional Contact Person
First Name: Jane  
Last Name: Doe  
Title: Dean of Students  
Address 1: 1000 University Drive  
City: Any State/Country: USA Zip Code: 10100  
E-mail: Doej.edu  
Phone: 555-555-5555 Fax: 555-655-5555
APPENDIX C

PROGRAM AGENDA (EARLY ARRIVAL PROGRAM)
1. **Breakfast -- Warm Up Activity**

This is the time of day when you want to focus on a sense of appreciation and opening the lines of communication. Use simple activities that they can do around the table while they enjoy your morning goodies. An example might be, "For each member of our team finish this sentence, _____ has helped me this week by __________," or "What I appreciate most about _____ is ____________.

2. **Team Building Time**

Focus on activities that meet the specific needs of your team (learning to communicate more clearly, learning to trust each other, using active listening skills, etc.) Frequently these are physical activities that will get people moving, interacting, and talking. A different activity should be used every morning of the program.

3. **Produce something visual**

Pick a project/activity that will produce a visible product. At your first retreat an excellent project would be to create a group mission statement. Once you've met a few times you may want to create a team Wall of Wonder. A mission statement is a 10-word phrase or sentence that captures what your team is all about and what your purpose is. A wall of wonder is created by listing all of the team accomplishments over a period of time (3 months, 6 months, 1 year) on a large poster, which can then be displayed.

4. **Skill Building**

Incorporate study skill from the writing and math labs on campus. Also, library basics can be covered in this time. Just make sure to find ways to keep students engaged and interactive.

5. **Planning and goal setting**

As the day winds down, this is a good time to talk about where students would like to be in a year or four years. Try to get students to provide details as they talk. The more details they provide the better-equipped leaders will be to mentor them.

6. **Service Learning**

Community involvement and service should be introduced to students early in their academic career. Providing a half-day of service for a local agency will help students represent the institution by giving back.
APPENDIX D

SAMPLE LECTURE SERIES SPEAKERS
Lecture Series

The following are examples of possible speaker who have made great contributions to American Society. They have all advanced civil rights or made major impacts in science, government, sports, or entertainment.

Oprah Winfrey, American television host, actress, producer, and philanthropist

Hank Aaron, major league baseball's leading home run hitter, with a career total of 755 home runs from 1954 to 1976. He also broke ground for the participation of African Americans in professional sports.

Dr. Maya Angelou, poet, memoirist, novelist, educator, dramatist, producer, actress, historian, filmmaker, and civil rights activist

Bill Cosby, actor, author, television producer, educator, musician and activist

Spike Lee, film director, producer, writer, and actor

Denzel Washington, actor, screenwriter, director and film producer

Clarence Thomas, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States; the second African American to serve on the Court
APPENDIX E

PROGRAM AGENDA (BLACK MALE RETREAT)
Friday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9am</td>
<td>Introduction/ Energizers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30am</td>
<td>Welcome/ Announcements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pass out nametags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expectations for the weekend: “what this will be, what this will not be.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review manual/schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basic Assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• You are expected to be a vocal leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• You came here to go home and work to ensure the best possible solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Everyone is expected to give his best…Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ground Rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Individuals can expect to gain from this experience in direct proportion to what they are willing to put into it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• We do not have agree on everything…we do need to understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• We work together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• We talk straight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Problems will be solved with solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11am</td>
<td>True Color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-12:45</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pm</td>
<td>Values and Action Congruence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pm</td>
<td>Goals for the Retreat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4pm</td>
<td>Settle into rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5pm</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6pm</td>
<td>Hopes and Fears Activity</td>
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Saturday

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30am</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:15am</td>
<td>Energizer</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30</td>
<td>Strategic Plan</td>
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<td>Create a active plan for college and professional goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00am</td>
<td>Strategic Planning-Break out groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30pm</td>
<td>Keynote speaker</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Address specific topics of retreat</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15pm</td>
<td>Small Workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Bigger Picture Concept (Life after college)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Effective Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Community Education (Giving back)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5pm</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
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<tr>
<td>7pm</td>
<td>Depart</td>
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APPENDIX F

FOOD FOR THOUGHT DISCUSSIONS
Topics of Food for Thought lunches

**Fall semester**

September

- Study Skills/ Internet Resources

October

- Personal Image
  - Appearance
  - Language
  - Self-esteem
  - Social etiquette

November

- Other relevant events that impact higher education or society

**Spring semester**

January

- Martin Luther King Day discussion
  - How much of the dream have we achieved

February

- Black History Month

March

- Career Development and Exploration

April

- Finance Management
APPENDIX G

BUDGET
# Black Male Resource Center

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<th>Estimated Quantity</th>
<th>Estimated Cost per Unit</th>
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2 Subtotal is total salary plus benefits
3 Memberships include 1 professional organization for each employee
4 Includes printed and online journal subscriptions
APPENDIX H

WELCOME PACKET
Dear Prospective Student,

Thank you so much for expressing interest in our institution. We are excited that your future plans include pursuing a degree from our wonderful institution. We understand what an important decision this is for you and all the members of your family.

There is not a doubt that you have seen or heard news programs and articles cite the diminishing numbers of Black males attending college and those who attend not finishing their degree. While the emphasis of the discussion is on primary and secondary schools, we are making it our priority to graduate all Black males who enter our institution.

As the director of the Black Male Resource we strive to be a place of belonging as you make the transition from high school to higher education. We like to consider ourselves a task force out to provide you with the best that this institution has to offer. The institution has committed to making our first-year mentoring program a success and we have a staff that is committed to your growth. This program will bring you to campus a few days before the fall semester starts and get you acquainted to the campus culture.

We encourage you to take advantage of the wonderful services offered at the Black Male Resource Center. The Center will be committed to your education. This is an ongoing process, one that will require your active involvement we hope that you will take on this challenge. We look forward to meeting you and working with you these next four years.

Sincerely,

Director
BLACK MALE RESOURCE CENTER

Application for Summer Arrival Program

Name
Street Address
City State/ ZIP Code
Home Phone
Work Phone
E-Mail Address
Major
Describe your educational/ career goals.
The BLACK MALE RESOURCE CENTER
OPEN Monday-Friday 8am-8pm

Programs
Early Arrival Program
Lecture Series
Black Male Retreat
Food for Thought

For more information contact the Director at BMRC@institution.edu

A place for learning and development