

Boosting College Success Among Men of Color

Promising Approaches and Next Steps

By Alissa Gardenhire and Oscar Cerna, with Anna Marie Ivery

Imagine three 5-year-old boys playing together in a park on a sunny day. These boys rough and tumble, yell, play, and hurt with equal amounts of enthusiasm, energy, and feeling. They have big aspirations for life; they dream of becoming lawyers, scientists, or even future presidents of the United States. In this moment, their potential is equal and limitless. Any differences lie only on the surface — one is Latino, one is African-American, and one is Native American. As they grow and age, these boys and others similar to them will have experiences — inside and outside the classroom — that negatively affect their educational engagement and achievement through primary and secondary school and into their postsecondary education, if they get that far.¹ The likelihood of attaining a college degree for these boys is not the same as it is for their white peers.² The primary goal of this brief is to catalogue program strategies commonly employed to increase engagement, persistence, and college graduation rates for men of color, and to chart the way forward with a vision for future evaluative work.

Despite having college and career aspirations equal to those of their white counterparts, many boys of color face significant barriers to attaining these academic and professional goals.³ Young African-American and Latino male students are more likely to attend underresourced schools with poor academic outcomes than white male students.⁴ Along with Native American male students, they are overrepresented in special education programs and school discipline and juvenile justice systems and are underrepresented in gifted or college preparatory classes.⁵ As a result of these and other barriers, boys

of color have the lowest school attendance rates and, perhaps most important, the lowest levels of personal stability and support, relative to other groups. These factors in turn decrease their overall college readiness and chances for success in postsecondary education, as well as contribute to the well-established academic achievement gap between them and their white peers.⁶

Researchers have explored how such structural barriers inhibit academic success among Native American, African-American, and Latino male students, relative to white students, and lead to gaps in academic performance and degree attainment.⁷ Colleges across the United States have responded to the needs of male students of color through targeted programming and support services, yet few of these efforts have been evaluated. To learn more about these efforts, MDRC has conducted a scan of 82 such programs at postsecondary institutions around the country.

EXISTING RESEARCH ON PROGRAMS FOR MEN OF COLOR

A review of the research literature suggests that three broad drivers inhibit the attainment of both two- and four-year college degrees among male students of color: low levels of college preparation and academic achievement before and during college; barriers to persistence such as a lack of financial support or working full time while enrolled; and inadequate social, emotional, or academic support.⁸ The University of Texas at Austin's Project MALES (Mentoring to Achieve Latino Educational Success) and San Diego State University's Minority Male

Community College Collaborative (M2C3) — among others — are working with a large network of colleges to discover best practices to improve outcomes among men of color in community colleges. Many colleges have also begun to tailor campus programs to provide academic and cultural supports that are specific to the interests and needs of male students of color. An important next step to better understanding the unique impact of these programs on student success in college is to conduct further research comparing the experiences of active participants in these programs with the experiences of male students of color who experience college outside of these programs. This research would help illuminate how well these programs improve student outcomes above and beyond what occurs in their absence.

Over the past three decades, MDRC has conducted numerous studies on interventions aimed at improving outcomes for people from low-income communities, including young men of color.⁹ In several of these studies, MDRC researchers not only measured impacts for the overall samples, but disaggregated the results by race, gender, and ethnicity in order to determine how programs affect different populations within the samples. A number of these studies focused on college interventions, and the findings indicate that programs with tightly integrated components and services can improve outcomes for all college students, including male students of color. For example, MDRC found that a performance-based scholarship program for Latino males — in which scholarship payments were contingent on students' meeting academic benchmarks throughout the semester and participating in support services (advising, tutoring, and workshops) — led to an increase in full-time enrollment in the students' second semester and an overall increase in the number of credits that students earned, as well as a modest increase in graduation rates.¹⁰ Similarly, MDRC's evaluation of the City University of New York's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) produced rigorous evidence in support of the program's effectiveness.¹¹ The study sample primarily consisted

of students of color, and plans to conduct long-term follow-up and subgroup analysis to determine whether outcomes varied by gender are under way.¹² Findings from an in-depth qualitative study of 87 men of color attending community college as part of the Achieving the Dream initiative were also published. The study examined how their experiences as men of color in their schools and communities influenced the decisions they made to attend and to engage and persist in college. This research provides potentially useful insights to colleges on delivering support services to increase engagement, persistence, and graduation rates among men of color.¹³

PROMISING PROGRAM STRATEGIES

In recent years, programs to help men of color succeed in college have proliferated. These programs deliver a range of academic and emotional and social supports to students that seek to remedy the three drivers inhibiting postsecondary success. (Box 1 describes one such program.) MDRC has conducted a scan of 82 programs that specifically serve men of color at two- and four-year postsecondary educational institutions across the country to better understand the types of service components implemented to address the barriers to student success.¹⁴ The scan includes universities, community colleges, and technical colleges in 30 U.S. states and spans a range of urban and rural settings in the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. The research team conducted the scan using a combination of online research, referrals, and e-mail and telephone contact with program staff around the country. The scan occurred in two stages. In 2015, researchers conducted an initial scan of 42 programs, which formed the basis of the component categorization. In 2016, the research team contacted these 42 programs, along with an additional 60 programs (not all of which were included in the final scan), in order to identify changes in the available student services and to diversify the geographic representation of the included initiatives. Table 1 (see page 7) lists each of the

program's components, as well as the host institution, location, and target demographic.

Programs targeting African-American men are the most common in the scan, relative to programs targeting minority men more generally. Few of the programs set benchmarks for *active* participation. Although this flexible approach to counting participants maximizes the potential for inclusivity, it has implications for a possible evaluation of a program's efficacy in terms of sampling and how much of the provided services researchers can expect a student to receive.

MDRC categorized five of the most common components across the scan's 82 programs. They are the following:

- *Academic advising and counseling* includes help from professional advisers and counselors to create course-specific, sequenced pathways for earning a degree or certificate; navigate academic and social hurdles; and access available campus resources to support student success.
- *Academic and study skills training* primarily includes tutoring and study halls.
- *Leadership training* encompasses opportunities for students to demonstrate leadership in planning events and activities, community service, and managing or coordinating group meetings.
- *Mentoring* includes both peer-to-peer and adult-to-peer mentoring relationships that foster a sense of inclusion, support students, and provide them with advice or guidance on how to resolve academic or personal issues.
- *Special events or workshops* encompass guest speakers, special presentations, conferences, and meetings on topics related to identity and student success.

These five categories are not the only types of components that these or other programs use to serve men of color, but rather the most commonly identified in the scan.¹⁵

BOX 1. THE NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM'S MINORITY MALE SUCCESS INITIATIVE

The North Carolina Community College System's (NCCCS) Minority Male Success Initiative, formerly the Minority Male Mentoring Program (3MP), is a student program designed to support the academic and professional aspirations of male students of color enrolled in North Carolina community colleges. Its goals are to increase persistence, graduation, and transfer rates by encouraging student engagement. Colleges participating in the initiative provide the following:

- *Mentorship*: building relationships between minority male students and campus "coaches" or mentors and sponsoring university campus visits
- *Academic skills training*: offering study skills development
- *Academic advising*: providing academic planning and facilitating college transfer workshops
- *Service learning*: requiring students to participate in service learning projects each semester

Forty-six of the state's 58 community colleges received 3MP grants through 2014. For the 2015-2016 academic year, the program served over 1,200 students (an average of 26 students per college), representing approximately 4 percent of the system's minority male population.

While this cohort-based model appears successful at the individual student level, the NCCCS is seeking to significantly improve student success outcomes for men of color. For the 2016-2017 academic year and beyond, the NCCCS redesigned 3MP to more closely align with other student success initiatives throughout the state and is encouraging colleges to make a three-year commitment to assess and enhance the student success outcomes of minority male students.

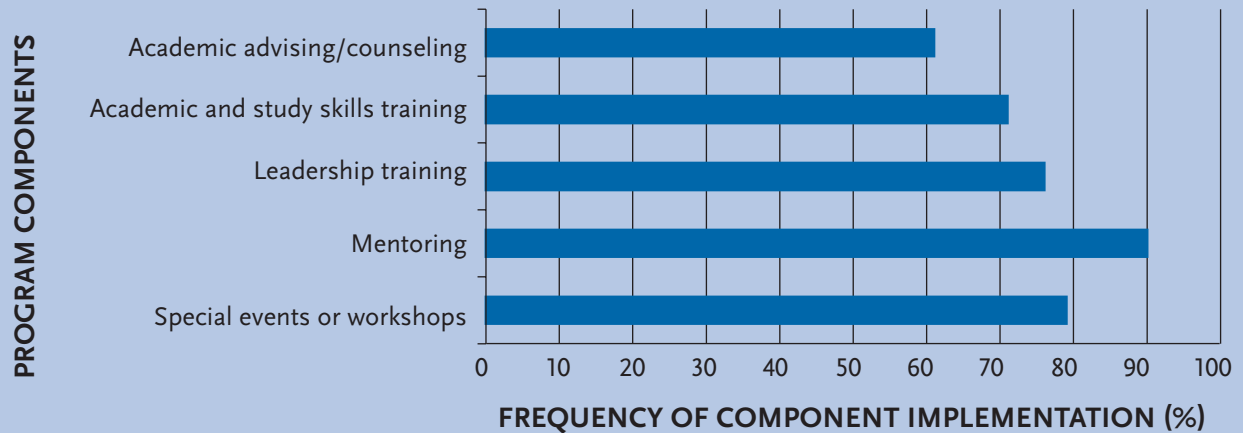
FIGURE 1. PROGRAM COMPONENT USE

Figure 1 presents the number of programs that use each of these common program components. More than half of the programs in the scan include all five component types. (Box 2 describes one of these programs.) Among the programs reviewed, the most common program component is mentoring, with 90 percent of all initiatives incorporating some form of mentoring. In contrast, academic advising or counseling represents the least common component, though more than half of the programs offer these services to participants.

These components may support male college students of color in two ways: first, by preparing them academically to make the transition to and perform well in postsecondary educational institutions; and second, by increasing their social engagement and sense of inclusion in campus life. It is important to note that some programs in this scan provide services that the research team could not easily categorize. For example, one institution simply allots time and space for its Latino male students to meet once a month and discuss topics that they put forward. A small number of initiatives also provide active participants with additional financial aid or free or low-cost laptop rentals for the academic year. With the exception of a few services such as these, most program components fall under one of the five categories.

THE MENTORING CHALLENGE

The most common program component in MDRC's scan, mentoring has been emphasized by higher education researchers as a source of meaningful relationships and personal support that engages male college students of color.¹⁶ Mentoring has the potential to provide students with the consistent support and guidance necessary to successfully navigate college, yet it is not necessarily easy for colleges to deliver these services. Factors identified in the research literature as critical to delivering effective mentoring include a strong match between mentor and mentee, proper training of mentors, and continuity of contact or perceived mentor reliability.¹⁷ College students (and mentors) must juggle school, work, family, and personal obligations that may reduce the time available for mentors and mentees to connect. Behavioral factors related to identity can also interfere with the development of a mentoring relationship; for example, qualitative interviews with male community college students of color that MDRC conducted in 2010 revealed that norms relating to male identity, such as self-reliance, prevented them from both seeking help and making interpersonal connections with their peers and college staff.¹⁸

MDRC's research indicates that mentoring alone is unlikely to produce significant impacts on academic performance and graduation rates. For example, a randomized controlled trial (RCT) it conducted found that the

BOX 2. CHABOT COLLEGE'S STRIVING BLACK BROTHERS COALITION

The Striving Black Brothers Coalition (SBBC) at Chabot College in Hayward, California, includes all five of the common components that MDRC found in its nationwide scan of college programs serving men of color. Created in 2006, SBBC describes itself as an “on-campus voluntary support group dedicated to increasing the retention, persistence, and transfer rate among Chabot’s African-American males.” It stresses that African-American men face the greatest challenges achieving academic success at the college of any demographic group. SBCC’s program includes the following components:

- Academic advising: requiring use of student support services such as academic counseling, transfer preparation workshops, and tutoring
- Academic skills training: providing summer math and English reassessment workshops and a first-year experience program with an African-American-focused curriculum
- Leadership training: offering community service and mentoring opportunities with local high school and elementary school students
- Mentorship: facilitating weekly one-on-one faculty mentoring and group peer mentoring meetings
- Special events: organizing the monthly “Brother To Brother” speaker series with local African-American male educators and community organizations

SBBC has served 275 students over the course of its existence and has received numerous awards, including the National Council on Black American Affairs 2015 Vanguard Student Success Program Award and the Western Regional Council on Black American Affairs 2015 Award.

Beacon mentoring program at South Texas College in McAllen, Texas, increased the number of students using campus resources such as tutoring and academic support services. The mentoring program benefited part-time students (who were less likely to withdraw from and more likely to pass the target math class) and developmental students (who were less likely to withdraw from the math class and earned more credits in their non-math classes). However, the program did not improve the math class pass rates or persistence in college overall.¹⁹ Future research should empirically explore the degree to which mentoring alone and mentoring combined with other services affect outcomes for subgroups of students based on gender, economic class, and race or ethnicity.

TURNING THEORY INTO EVIDENCE

With funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Duke Endowment, MDRC brought together more than

20 college leaders, higher education experts, and funders — all with an affinity for improving postsecondary educational outcomes among men of color — for a daylong series of roundtable discussions focused on research and program evaluation. The event took place at the Johnson C. Smith University campus in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 2016.

The roundtable comprised several sessions dedicated to promising practices and policies that aim to guide and support men of color as they navigate through college, comparing and contrasting them with respect to targeted groups, services offered, and program size. The expert panel did not declare any one model to be ideal, as much of the discussion focused on colleges’ varying levels of time constraints, diversity of student needs, and limited budgets and staffing capacities. The panel also made suggestions for rigorous evaluations of program models, generally calling for more research of various types to address questions of efficacy.

To that end, the University System of Georgia's African-American Male Initiative (AAMI) and MDRC together are developing a large-scale evaluation that will apply lessons learned from the men of color program scan, the roundtable discussion, and existing descriptive research to assess program efficacy. Launched in 2002, AAMI is one of the most expansive efforts within a college system to address the disproportionately low rates of college matriculation and graduation among African-American men. AAMI was implemented across many of Georgia's institutions of higher education before similar programs began appearing on college campuses elsewhere in the United States, and before national efforts such as the White House's My Brother's Keeper initiative gained momentum. The goal of AAMI is to improve persistence in school and increase degree or certificate completion rates among African-American men through four key program elements: academic skills enrichment, student support services, adult or peer mentoring, and leadership development. Similar to the programs included in MDRC's scan, AAMI addresses the three aforementioned drivers that inhibit persistence and degree or certificate completion among men of color.²⁰

Funding from the Institute of Education Sciences in January 2016, as part of the College Completion Network grant competition, has made the evaluation possible. The College Completion Network aims to assess the impacts and determine the costs of strategies designed to help increase degree or certificate attainment among students attending open- and broad-access postsecondary educational institutions. The evaluation will thus estimate the effects of the AAMI programs operating at five open- and broad-access Georgia colleges. As part of the study, the research team will use an RCT to measure differences in academic and social outcomes between male students of color who are offered AAMI program services and those who have access to services that are generally available to all students. The evaluation's primary research questions are the following:

- Does AAMI operate as programmers intend?
- Do the program's features create a substantially different experience for the participants who use them relative to the status quo?
- What are the impacts of the programs on short-term outcomes, such as persistence in school and grade point average, and longer-term outcomes, such as progress to graduation and degree or certificate completion or transfer?
- What are the costs of operating AAMI?

The evaluation will apply a mixed-methods approach, incorporating implementation research, an RCT, and a benefit-cost study to explore the effects of AAMI at the five study colleges.

Using early findings from this evaluation and current literature, the research team will also engage other institutions and programs as partners in a future demonstration to develop and test intervention models aimed at improving postsecondary education outcomes for men of color. By using rigorous research and evaluation practices to study exemplary programs serving this population, the demonstration will seek to expand the knowledge base of what works for men of color. In turn, the evidence-based findings can inform future institutional practices and the development of program components and activities for male college students of color, as well as identify exemplary models that might be scaled widely across two- and four-year postsecondary educational institutions.

Many young men of color aspire to attend and succeed in college. However, postsecondary educational institutions around the country continue to struggle with how best to help these students enroll, persist with their studies, and graduate. The need for evidence-based approaches that support men of color throughout the educational pipeline is evident, especially at the postsecondary level, where so many male students of color are close to reaching their goals and fulfilling their potential as college graduates.

TABLE 1: MEN OF COLOR PROGRAMS ACROSS SELECT POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Institution	Location	Program Name	Target Demographic	Program Components				
				Academic Advising/ Counseling	Academic and Study Skills Training	Leadership Training	Mentoring	Special Events and/or Workshops
Anne Arundel Community College	Baltimore, MD	Black Male Initiative	African-American males		✓	✓	✓	✓
Alamo Community College District: Northeast Lakeview	Universal City, TX	Help Own Male Education	Minority males			✓		✓
Arizona State University	Tempe, AZ	African-American Men of Arizona State University	African-American males		✓	✓	✓	✓
Atlanta Technical College	Atlanta, GA	Institute for Males	Minority males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baltimore City Community College	Baltimore, MD	Academic Acceleration for African-American Males	African-American males	✓	✓		✓	✓
Bowie State University	Bowie, MD	Male Initiative ^a	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Broward College	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Brother to Brother Student Advocate Program	African-American males	✓	✓		✓	
Capital Community College	Hartford, CT	Black and Latino Male Resource Center Holistic Summer Learning Academy	Minority males	✓	✓		✓	✓
Chabot College	Hayward, CA	Striving Black Brothers Coalition	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cheyney University	Nationwide	Call Me MISTER (Mentors Instructing Students Towards Effective Role Models)	African-American males		✓	✓	✓	✓
Community College of Philadelphia	Philadelphia, PA	Center for Male Engagement	African-American males	✓	✓	✓		✓
Central Piedmont Community College	Charlotte, NC	MAN UP	Minority males		✓	✓	✓	✓
Cincinnati State Technical and Community College	Cincinnati, OH	Black Male Initiative	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	
California State University, Dominguez Hills	Dominguez Hills, CA	Male Success Alliance ^a	Minority males	✓		✓	✓	✓
City University of New York	New York, NY	Black Male Initiative	African-American males	✓			✓	✓
Community College of Denver	Denver, CO	Urban Male Initiative ^a	Minority males	✓		✓	✓	✓
Cuyahoga Community College	Highland Hills, OH	Minority Male Leadership Academy ^b	Minority males		✓	✓	✓	✓
Cuyahoga Community College	Highland Hills, OH	Black Scholars Academy ^b	First-year African-American males		✓	✓	✓	✓
Dallas County Community College District	Dallas, TX	MALES ^a	Minority males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Delgado Community College	New Orleans, LA	African-American Male Initiative	African-American males		✓	✓	✓	✓
Durham Technical and Community College	Durham, NC	Visions Leadership Initiative	Minority males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
East Arkansas Community College	Forest City, AR	Minority Male Assistance Program	Minority males		✓	✓	✓	
Eastern Michigan University	Ypsilanti, MI	BrotherHOOD (Helping Others Obtain Degrees) Initiative	Minority males	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Fayetteville State University	Fayetteville, NC	Bronco Male Initiative on Leadership and Excellence	African-American males		✓	✓		✓
Fayetteville State University	Fayetteville, NC	Boosting Bronco Brothers ^b	First-year African-American males		✓		✓	✓
Florida State College at Jacksonville	Jacksonville, FL	Minority Male Success Initiative	Minority males					✓
Forsyth Technical College	Winston-Salem, NC	James A. Rousseau II Minority Male Mentoring Program	Minority males	✓			✓	

TABLE 1 (CONTINUED)

Institution	Location	Program Name	Target Demographic	Program Components				
				Academic Advising/ Counseling	Academic and Study Skills Training	Leadership Training	Mentoring	Special Events and/or Workshops
Goodwin College	East Hartford, CT	Men of Visions in Education	Low-income, first-generation minority males		✓	✓		✓
Halifax Community College	Weldon, NC	PRIDE of Halifax (PReparing men for Intellectual, acaDemic, and Educational success) Male Mentoring Program	Low-income, first-generation, or disabled; first-year minority males	✓	✓		✓	✓
Harvard University	Cambridge, MA	Black Males Forum ^a	African-American males			✓	✓	✓
Highline College	Des Moines, WA	Heritage Leadership Camp	Minority males			✓	✓	✓
Housatonic Community College	Bridgeport, CT	You Can Do It	Minority males		✓		✓	✓
Howard Community College	Columbia, MD	Howard PRIDE (Purpose. Respect. Initiative. Determination. Excellence.) ^a	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Illinois Central College	East Peoria, IL	Harvesting Dreams	African-American males	✓	✓		✓	✓
Indian River State College	Fort Pierce, FL	African-American Males Leadership Institute	First year African-American males	✓	✓		✓	
Indiana University	Bloomington, IN	African-American Male Initiative ^a	African-American males	✓		✓	✓	✓
Indiana University	Bloomington, IN	Hombre IU-Latino Male Initiative ^a	Latino males				✓	✓
Jackson College	Jackson, MI	Men of Merit ^b	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Louisiana State University	Baton Rouge, LA	Black Male Leadership Initiative	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Loyola University Chicago	Chicago, IL	Brothers for Excellence	First-year minority males		✓	✓	✓	
Maricopa Community College System	Tempe, AZ	Male Empowerment Network	Minority males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Massachusetts Bay Community	Wellesley Hills, MA	Young Men of Color (YMOC) Initiative	Minority males	✓	✓		✓	
Mississippi Delta Community College	Moorhead, MS	Pathfinders ^a	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Montgomery College	Montgomery County, MA	Boys to Men Mentoring Program	African-American males	✓			✓	✓
Montgomery County Community College	Blue Bell, PA	Minority Male Mentoring Program	Minority males	✓		✓	✓	
Northeastern Technical College	Cheraw, SC	TRUMPET (Training, Retaining, and Uplifting African-American Males to Produce Educational Triumphs) Program ^a	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Kentucky University	Highland Heights, KY	Black Male Initiative	African-American males			✓	✓	✓
Ouachita Technical College	Malvern, AR	Men on a Mission	African-American males			✓	✓	✓
Ohio University	Athens, OH	African-American Male Initiative ^a	African-American males		✓	✓	✓	✓
Pulaski Technical College	Little Rock, AR	Network for Student Success ^a	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Purdue University	West Lafayette, IN	Black Male Excellence Network	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prince George's Community College	Largo, MD	Diverse Male Student Initiative	Minority males	✓		✓	✓	✓
Queensborough Community College	Bayside, NY	Men Achieving and Leading in Excellence and Success	African-American males	✓		✓	✓	✓
Randolph Community College	Asheboro, NC	Minority Male Mentoring Program	Minority males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Continued on page 9

TABLE 1 (CONTINUED)

Institution	Location	Program Name	Target Demographic	Program Components				
				Academic Advising/ Counseling	Academic and Study Skills Training	Leadership Training	Mentoring	Special Events and/or Workshops
Robeson Community College	Lumberton, NC	Minority Male Achievement Program	Minority males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Roosevelt University	Chicago, IL	Black Male Leadership Academic	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Saint Louis University	Saint Louis, MO	African American Male Scholar Initiative	African American males		✓		✓	✓
Springfield Technical Community College	Springfield, MA	Male Initiative for Leadership and Education Mentoring Program	African-American and Latino males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
St. Louis Community College	St. Louis, MO	African-American Male Initiative	African-American males				✓	✓
St. Philip's College	San Antonio, TX	African-American Male Initiative	African-American males			✓	✓	✓
Southern Illinois University	Carbondale, IL	Black Male Initiative	African-American males		✓	✓	✓	✓
Tarrant County College District	Fort Worth, TX	Men of Color Mentoring Program	Minority males		✓	✓	✓	
Technical College of the Lowcountry	Beaufort, SC	Promoting Integrity, Leadership, Academics, and Cultural Understanding	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trident Technical College	Charleston, SC	African-American Male Leadership Institute	African-American males			✓	✓	
University of Akron	Akron, OH	African-American Male Initiative	African-American males	✓	✓	✓		✓
University of Alabama at Birmingham	Birmingham, AL	Blazer Male Excellence Network	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
University of Arkansas at Little Rock	Little Rock, AR	African-American Male Initiative	African-American males	✓	✓		✓	
University of California, Los Angeles	Los Angeles, CA	Black Male Institute	African-American males					
University of Central Oklahoma	Edmond, OK	Black Male Initiative	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
University of Denver	Denver, CO	Black Male Initiative Summit (BMIS) Scholars Program	African-American males		✓	✓	✓	✓
University of Illinois at Springfield	Springfield, IL	Black Male Initiative	African-American males	✓		✓	✓	
University of Kentucky	Lexington, KY	Black and Latino Male Initiative	African-American and Latino males		✓		✓	✓
University of Louisville	Louisville, KY	African-American Male Initiative	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
University of Missouri	Columbia, MO	Mizzou Black Men's Initiative	African-American males	✓		✓	✓	✓
University of New Mexico	Albuquerque, NM	Men of Color Initiative	Minority males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
University of Texas at Austin	Austin, TX	Project MALES (Mentoring to Achieve Latino Educational Success)	Latino males	✓		✓		
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	Milwaukee, WI	African-American Male Initiative	African-American males		✓	✓	✓	✓
University System of Georgia	Georgia	African-American Male Initiative ^a	African-American males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wake Technical Community College	Raleigh, NC	Minority Male Mentoring Program ^a	Minority males	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wayne Community College	Goldsboro, NC	Minority Male Mentoring Program	Minority males			✓	✓	✓
Westchester Community College	Valhalla, NY	Black and Hispanic Male Initiative	African-American and Latino males	✓	✓		✓	
Wilson Community College	Wilson, NC	Minority Male Mentoring Program	Minority males	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Total programs that use component (%)				50	58	62	74	65

^aResearch team collected data on the use of a benchmark for active participation and found that the program does not use such a benchmark.^bResearch team collected data on the use of a benchmark for active participation and found that the program uses such a benchmark.

NOTES

- ¹ Gardenhire-Crooks et al. (2010); Noguera (2003).
- ² For example, among first-time students who entered college with a full-time course load in 2004, only 34 percent of African-American male and 46 percent of Hispanic male students received their bachelor's degree within six years, compared with 59 percent of white male and 66 percent of Asian-American male students (Ross et al., 2012). Aud, Fox, and KewalRamani (2010).
- ³ Trask-Tate and Cunningham (2010).
- ⁴ Ferguson (2016); Ross et al. (2012).
- ⁵ Moore, Henfield, and Owens (2008); Morris (2002).
- ⁶ Adelman (2004); Attewell, Lavin, Domina, and Levy (2006); Bailey, Jeong, and Cho (2010).
- ⁷ Ogbu (1978); Noguera (2003); McCready (2010).
- ⁸ LaVant, Anderson, and Tiggs (1997); Harper (2012); Sáenz and Ponjuan (2011); Center for Community College Student Engagement (2014); Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education et al. (2014); Wood (2014).
- ⁹ Wimer and Bloom (2014).
- ¹⁰ Mayer, Patel, Rudd, and Ratledge (2015).
- ¹¹ Levin and Garcia (2013); Scrivener and Weiss (2013). CUNY's ASAP program consists of several integrated components, including intensive counseling, required monthly meetings with advisers, full-time attendance, block scheduling, and required courses. Students commit to graduate within three years.
- ¹² Scrivener et al. (2015).
- ¹³ Gardenhire-Crooks et al. (2010).
- ¹⁴ This scan does not feature many large-scale college initiatives, such as Umoja and the Puente Project, because they do not solely target male students. Student-led clubs, such as La Raza Unida, the Asian-American Student Association, and the Black Student Union, were also not included in this scan. The research team may not have identified all college programs specifically serving men of color operating at the time of this scan.
- ¹⁵ Other types of support, such as "targeted aid" or "common bonding experience," may be important ways that programs support male college students of color and should be considered when designing programs or program evaluations in the future. Scholars have explored common bonding experience in their work on supports for men of color in college (Palmer and Wood, 2012; Palmer, Maramba, and Dancy, 2013). MDRC researchers found at least one example of common bonding experience in a study of the performance-based scholarship program at Pima Community College, in which Latino men in the program attended monthly "pláticas," or meetings in which they could discuss issues related to identity and personal experience in a safe space.
- ¹⁶ Strayhorn (2008).
- ¹⁷ Rhodes and DuBois (2008).
- ¹⁸ Gardenhire-Crooks et al. (2010).
- ¹⁹ Visher, Butcher, and Cerna (2010).
- ²⁰ The University System of Georgia (2012).

REFERENCES

Adelman, Clifford. 2004. *Principal Indicators of Student Academic Histories in Postsecondary Education, 1972-2000*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.

Attewell, Paul, David Lavin, Thurston Domina, and Tania Levy. 2006. "New Evidence on College Remediation." *Journal of Higher Education* 77, 5: 886-924.

Aud, Susan, Mary Ann Fox, and Angelina KewalRamani. 2010. *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*. NCES 2010-015. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.

Bailey, Thomas, Dong Wook Jeong, and Sung-Woo Cho. 2010. "Referral, Enrollment, and Completion in Developmental Education Sequences in Community Colleges." *Economics of Education Review* 29, 2: 255-270.

Center for Community College Student Engagement. 2014. *A Matter of Degrees: Practices to Pathways: High Impact Practices for Community College Student Success*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Program in Higher Education Leadership.

Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education, Minority Male Community Collaborative, Morehouse Research Institute, Project MALES and the Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color, Black Male Institute, and Wisconsin's Equity and Inclusion Laboratory. 2014. *Advancing the Success of Boys and Men of Color in Education: Recommendations for Policymakers*.

Ferguson, Robert F. 2016. *Aiming Higher Together. Strategizing Better Educational Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

Gardenhire-Crooks, Alissa, Herbert Collado, Kasey Martin, Alma Castro, Thomas Brock, and Genevieve Orr. 2010. *Terms of Engagement: Men of Color Discuss Their Experiences in Community College*. New York: MDRC.

Harper, Shaun. 2012. *Institutional Efforts to Improve Black Male Achievement: A Standards-based Approach*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education.

Lavant, Bruce D., John L. Anderson, and Joseph W. Tiggs. 1997. "Retaining African American Men Through Mentoring Initiatives." *New Directions for Student Services* 1997, 80:43-53.

Levin, Henry M., and Emma Garcia. 2013. *Benefit-Cost Analysis of Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) of the City University of New York (CUNY)*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Mayer, Alexander K., Reshma Patel, Timothy Rudd, and Alyssa Ratledge. 2015. *Designing Scholarships to Improve College Success: Final Report on the Performance-Based Scholarship Demonstration*. New York: MDRC.

McCready, Lance T. 2010. *Making Space for Diverse Masculinities: Difference, Intersectionality, and Engagement in an Urban High School*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Moore, James L. III, Malik S. Henfield, and Delila Owens. 2008. "African American Males in Special Education: Their Attitudes and Perceptions Toward High School Counselors and School Counseling Services." *American Behavioral Scientist* 51, 7: 907-927.

Morris, J. E. 2002. "African American Students and Gifted Education: The Politics of Race and Culture." *Roeper Review* 24: 59-62.

Noguera, Pedro. A. 2003. "The Trouble with Black Boys: The Role and Influence of Environmental and Cultural Factors on the Academic Performance of African American Males." *Urban Education* 38, 4: 431-459.

Ogbu, John. 1978. *Minority Education and Caste: The American System in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. New York: Academic Press.

- Palmer, Robert T., Dina C. Maramba, and T. Elon Dancy. 2013. "The Magnificent 'MILE': Impacting Black Male Retention and Persistence at an HBCU." *Journal of College Student Retention* 15, 1: 65-72.
- Palmer, Robert T., and J. Luke Wood. 2012. "Innovative Initiatives and Recommendations for Practice and Future Research: Enhancing the Status of Black Men at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Beyond." Pages 176-197 in Robert T. Palmer and J. Luke Wood (eds.), *Black Men in College: Implications for HBCUs and Beyond*. New York: Routledge.
- Rhodes, Jean E., and David L. DuBois. 2008. "Mentoring Relationships and Programs for Youth." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 17, 4: 254-258.
- Ross, Terris, Grace Kena, Amy Rathbun, Angelina KewalRamani, Jijun Zhang, Paul Kristapovich, and Eileen Manning. 2012. *Higher Education: Gaps in Access and Persistence Study*. Statistical Analysis Report NCES 2012-046. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
- Sáenz, Victor B., and Luis Ponjuan. 2011. *Men of Color: Ensuring the Academic Success of Latino Males in Higher Education*. Washington, DC: The Institute for Higher Education Policy.
- Scrivener, Susan, and Michael J. Weiss. 2013. *More Graduates: Two-Year Results from an Evaluation of Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) for Developmental Education Students*. New York: MDRC.
- Scrivener, Susan, Michael J. Weiss, Alyssa Ratledge, Timothy Rudd, Colleen Sommo, and Hannah Fresques. 2015. *Doubling Graduation Rates: Three-Year Effects of CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) for Developmental Education Students*. New York: MDRC.
- Strayhorn, Terrell L. 2008. "The Role of Supportive Relationships in Facilitating African American Males' Success in College." *NAPSA Journal* 45, 1: 26-48.
- Trask-Tate, Angelique J., and Michael Cunningham. 2010. "Planning Ahead: The Relationship Among School Support, Parental Involvement, and Future Academic Expectations in African American Adolescents." *Journal of Negro Education* 79, 2: 137-150.
- The University System of Georgia. 2012. *The University System of Georgia's African-American Male Initiative: A Model for Increasing Higher Education Attainment (September 2012)*. Atlanta, GA: Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.
- Visher, Mary G., Kristin F. Butcher, and Oscar S. Cerna. 2010. *Guiding Developmental Math Students to Campus Services: An Impact Evaluation of the Beacon Program at South Texas College*. New York: MDRC.
- Wimer, Christopher, and Dan Bloom. 2014. *Boosting the Life Chances of Young Men of Color: Evidence from Promising Programs*. New York: MDRC.
- Wood, J. Luke. 2014. "Examining Academic Variables Affecting the Persistence and Attainment of Black Male Collegians: A Focus on Academic Performance and Integration in the Two-Year College." *Race Ethnicity and Education* 17, 5: 601-622.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors thank the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for its generous support in funding this brief. The authors also thank our two expert reviewers, Dr. Robert T. Palmer and Dr. Antonio Henley, and our MDRC colleagues Alice Tufel, John Hutchins, Lashawn Richburg-Hayes, Margaret Bald, Mike Weiss, Rashida Welbeck, and Robert Ivry for their careful reading of draft materials and helpful suggestions to improve the document; Amanda Baldiga for coordinating its production; Christopher Boland for editing it; and Ann Kottner for preparing it for publication. Many brilliant minds contributed to discussions during a daylong roundtable entitled, "Measure of Success: A Men of Color College Achievement Research and Evaluation Roundtable," which informed the authors' thinking for this brief, including Antonio Henley, Arlethia Perry-Johnson, Art Barboza, Bryan Patterson, Chera Reid, David Paunesku, Edward Smith-Lewis, Jeremy Medlock, Gordon Berlin, Javier Chiu, John Martinez, Jordan Westbrook, Lacey Leegwater, Lashawn Richburg-Hayes, Mark Callwood, Melvin Herring, Nicholas Hartlep, Rashida Welbeck, Ray A. Ostos, Robert T. Palmer, Ronald L. Carter, Shanice Jones-Cameron, Shaun Harper, Susan McConnell, Terrell Strayhorn, Victor Saenz, Will Jones, William F. L. Moses, and Yvonne Belanger. Lastly, the authors appreciate Johnson C. Smith University and its president, Ronald L. Carter, for hosting the roundtable, and the Duke Endowment for its generous support in making this event possible.

Dissemination of MDRC publications is supported by the following funders that help finance MDRC's public policy outreach

and expanding efforts to communicate the results and implications of our work to policymakers, practitioners, and others: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, Ford Foundation, The George Gund Foundation, Daniel and Corinne Goldman, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc., The JPB Foundation, The Joyce Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Laura and John Arnold Foundation, Sandler Foundation, and The Starr Foundation.

In addition, earnings from the MDRC Endowment help sustain our dissemination efforts. Contributors to the MDRC Endowment include Alcoa Foundation, The Ambrose Monell Foundation, Anheuser-Busch Foundation, Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Ford Foundation, The George Gund Foundation, The Grable Foundation, The Elizabeth and Frank Newman Charitable Foundation, The New York Times Company Foundation, Jan Nicholson, Paul H. O'Neill Charitable Foundation, John S. Reed, Sandler Foundation, and The Stupski Family Fund, as well as other individual contributors.

The findings and conclusions in this report do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of the funders.

For information about MDRC and copies of our publications, see our website: www.mdrc.org.

Copyright © 2016 by MDRC®. All rights reserved.



New York
16 East 34th Street
New York, NY 10016
Tel: 212 532 3200

California
475 14th Street
Oakland, CA 94612
Tel: 510 663 6372

www.mdrc.org

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE
PAID
MERRIFIELD VA
5659

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Boosting College Success Among Men of Color

Promising Approaches and Next Steps

By Alissa Gardenhire and Oscar Cerna, with Anna Marie Ivery

This brief catalogues strategies commonly used in interventions at postsecondary educational institutions aimed at improving outcomes for male students of color and charts the way forward for future evaluative work. While young men of color have college and career aspirations similar to those of their white counterparts, a significant gap persists between the two groups' postsecondary educational attainment. In response, colleges around the country have implemented targeted programs offering male students of color a variety of support services, yet few of these initiatives have been evaluated. MDRC has conducted a scan of 82 such programs and will apply lessons from it and other research to a large-scale evaluation of program efficacy that it is currently developing in collaboration with the University System of Georgia. The need for evidence-based approaches that support men of color throughout the educational pipeline is evident, especially at the postsecondary level, where so many of male students of color are close to reaching their goals and fulfilling their potential as college graduates.