



## Notes in Brief

It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of community college initiatives serving men of color when there is a lack of understanding of the nature of the programming taking place. The purpose of this study was to understand the funding streams, interventions, and objectives of programs serving men of color in the community college. This study was motivated by the belief that understanding common interventions, outcomes, and goals illuminates practitioners' perspectives of the personal and institutional barriers facing men of color and the strategies that should be employed to address these barriers. The researchers believe that the information presented in this analysis of minority male initiatives will serve as a reference for understanding common approaches taken in the field for serving men of color in community colleges.

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# An Analysis of Programs Serving Men of Color in the Community College: An Examination of Funding Streams, Interventions, and Objectives

**I**n 2010, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) launched a minority male initiative (MMI) database<sup>1</sup> to catalogue programs, interventions, and initiatives designed to enhance the success of men of color in community colleges (Christian, 2010). The database was implemented as a resource for community college personnel due to the proliferation of efforts focused on supporting men of color in community colleges. These efforts to promote success among men of color are a byproduct of dismal academic outcomes experienced by these students. Specifically, recent data indicate that only 17.1% and 15.4% of Black and Latino men, respectively, will earn a certificate, degree, or transfer from a community college to a four-year institution within three years. In contrast, 27% of White men will achieve the same academic goals within the same time frame. Outcome rates for students who are enrolled with a mixture of part-time and full-time intensity indicate that only 15% and 15.2% of Black and Latino men, respectively, will achieve their goals, while 29.7% of White men will do so (Wood, Harris, & Xiong, 2014). These data demonstrate that community colleges struggle to facilitate success for all men, particularly underrepresented men of color.

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While efforts focused on supporting the academic goals of college men of color have expanded, little is known about the nature of the programming taking place and the structured support on college campuses for these efforts. As such, the purpose of this study was to understand the funding streams, interventions, and objectives of programs serving men of color in the community college.

The researchers supposed that information on funding streams could allude to which entities (e.g., associations, colleges) are most concerned about student outcomes. This study

was motivated by the belief that understanding common interventions, outcomes, and goals illuminates practitioners' perspectives of the personal and institutional barriers facing men of color and the strategies that should be employed to address these barriers. It should be noted that a primary limitation of this article is that the findings represent what is occurring in the field currently and may not necessarily represent best practices for student success. Moreover, colleges that may have programs but are not in the AACC database or do not have publically available information are not included in this analysis. The researchers believe that the information presented in this analysis of MMIs will serve as a reference for understanding common approaches taken in the field for serving men of color in community colleges.

## Method and Results

**While efforts focused on supporting the academic goals of college men of color have expanded, little is known about the nature of the programming taking place and the structured support on college campuses for these efforts.**

Data presented in this study were derived from a content analysis of information pertaining to community college MMIs. The researchers began by reviewing documentation featured on the AACC database. Web searches were conducted to identify additional MMIs. Using available contact information from these searches, the researchers requested documentation from MMIs not in the AACC database. A document analysis was performed on the database information, program brochures, websites, grant proposals, and other program documents. Document analysis is a qualitative procedure for reviewing documents, records, reports, and other data to provide contextual insight into a specific phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Data were coded using an ideas-grouping approach, which involves the identification of recurrent statements or ideas, re-reading of documents for additional references to these ideas, and grouping of ideas into themes (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). All data were reviewed, coded, and analyzed with all the researchers present. Data included in this analysis were publically available.

## Location and Funding

A total of 129 campus MMIs were included in this analysis. Given that some MMIs were district-level initiatives, 83 distinct programs were identified. These programs are distributed around the nation, with the highest concentration of MMIs in North Carolina ( $n=46$ ), Texas ( $n=32$ ), and New York ( $n=10$ ). These states were followed by programs in Maryland ( $n=7$ ), Connecticut ( $n=5$ ), and Florida ( $n=5$ ). Interestingly, California— which has the largest community college system in the nation with 112 community colleges— had the same number of identifiable programs ( $n=4$ ) serving men of color as Pennsylvania and South Carolina. This is likely because California already has an existent UMOJA (Black student) and Puente (Latino student) program structure. As such, there was less of a need to establish programs for men of color because there were programs in place for students of color, in general. The size of these programs varied widely, ranging from 9 to 825 students served ( $M=135$ ).

While some campus MMIs were funded through a single source (46%), the majority had multiple funding streams (54%). Commonly, three or more funding sources were levied to support initiative efforts (47% overall). MMI funding sources often came from a variety of areas including student fees, county funds, college funds, donations, and local governments. Commonly, funding for MMIs was derived from the community colleges themselves ( $n=39$ ) and their foundations ( $n=11$ ). Campus funds were typically derived from enrollment services and from the Office of the President. Many initiatives were also funded by private and corporate grants ( $n=14$ ) and ranged greatly in funding size. A sizeable number of initiatives derived funding for efforts from student fee dollars ( $n=10$ ), thereby placing the onus of funding student services that are needed for student success directly on the students. Some colleges, often those institutions with the most resources, derived funding from the Department of Education. Often, this occurred through the Predominantly Black Institution (PBI) grants program. Table 1, provides a detailed breakdown of funding streams.

Table 1.

Source	N
Campus funds	39
Private and corporate gifts	14
College foundation	11
Student fees	10
Unspecified grants	10
Federal grants	6
National foundations	4
City council	4
System or consortium funds	3
County funds	2

## Interventions

The types of interventions employed by MMIs varied greatly. However, the five most common services employed by MMIs were professional skills development, mentoring, college success and survival skills, service-learning, and tutoring. By far, the two most common interventions focused on professional skills development and mentoring; these interventions were employed by 69% and 65% of programs, respectively. Professional development programming was focused primarily on basic conduct training. For example, programs trained students on business etiquette, how to dress (e.g., business attire, formal wear), preparing for job interviews, resume development, and public speaking. Mentoring programs were utilized among MMIs to assist students with socio-cultural and academic transitions to college, and included faculty-to-student mentoring, peer mentoring, and being mentored by professionals in industry and government. Table 2 provides a listing of the most common interventions identified. Many interventions were academic in nature, focused on developing students through advising, tutoring, and literacy. Depending upon the program objectives, other interventions (not listed in Table 2) were employed. For example, some programs offered university tours, health and wellness workshops, financial planning workshops, and internship opportunities.

Table 2

Interventions	Percentage of MMIs that offer intervention
Leadership and professional development	69%
Mentoring	65%
College success/survival skills	48%
Service learning	46%
Tutoring	34%
Academic advising	31%
Cohort study sessions	22%
Counseling	22%
Career planning	22%
Literacy and book clubs	13%

## Goals and Outcomes

In this analysis, the researchers also identified commonly employed goals and outcomes of MMIs. For this study, goals referred to “broad statements that can often be incorporated as part of the strategic plan” and are not measureable (Bresciani, Gardner, & Hickmott, 2010, p. 34). In contrast, outcomes “are very detailed and examine a particular competency that we hope students will accomplish” (Bresciani et al., 2010, p. 34). The analysis interpreted competencies to include knowledge, skills, and dispositions that programs sought to foster among men.

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Five primary program goals were identified across institutions through this analysis, including engagement, leadership and professional growth, socio-cultural adjustment, personal growth, and academic advancement. Many programs had a specific goal focused on fostering student engagement. It is interesting to note that, as opposed to on-campus engagement, much of the focus on *engagement* centered on civic engagement, community involvement, and developing a social justice orientation. Thus, engagement was defined within the context of one's local community. *Leadership and professional growth* were also identified as a cross-institutional goal. This goal focused on students' future careers—their readiness for and awareness of future employment opportunities. *Socio-cultural* adjustment was an identified goal, as programs sought to aid students' transitions into college climates, cultures, and expectations. Many programs had goals of fostering *personal growth*, with an intensive focus on empowerment, spiritual development, and an understanding of self through a cultural lens. As expected, most programs also had goals of fostering *academic advancement* as it related to students' access to and academic adjustments within college.

Within these goals, programs specified numerous outcomes including affective and performance outcomes. Only a handful of programs had outcomes focused on what students should be *learning*. Broadly, these outcomes could be characterized as understanding the meaning of a social justice orientation, learning how to be a collaborative leader, and gaining strategies for a better understanding of self and others. Because so few programs had learning outcomes and these concepts were more often used as affective outcomes, learning outcomes were not addressed in this analysis. Affective outcomes were operationalized as referring to dispositional and emotional growth; while performance outcomes referred to student engagement and student success markers. In total, 13 affective outcomes and 10 performance outcomes were identified. Additionally, the researchers created a curriculum alignment matrix, which linked program interventions with desired outcomes. This matrix, presented in Figure 1, allowed the researchers to further examine specified program outcomes in light of services being offered (Bresciani, 2006). The matrix depicts what services were identified as leading to intended outcomes. After synthesizing the outcomes, the researchers identified seven affective outcomes and six performance outcomes that were (a) recurrent across programs and (b) most clearly linked with service interventions. Affective outcomes commonly targeted by MMIs (and general definitions associated with these outcomes) include:

**The types of interventions employed by MMIs varied greatly. However, the five most common services employed by MMIs were professional skills development, mentoring, college success and survival skills, service-learning, and tutoring.**

- *Academic self-efficacy* – building students' self-confidence in their abilities to perform academic tasks;
- *Sense of belonging* – creating an environment of support, affirmation, and perceived value from faculty and staff;
- *Personal self-confidence* – building students' self-confidence in their abilities to perform life tasks;
- *Resilience* – empowering students to overcome and succeed in the face of barriers;
- *Locus of control* – instilling a sense of control and responsibility over their academic futures;
- *Self-esteem* – inculcating a realization of self-worth and value; and
- *Racial affinity* – developing a positive racial regard and feeling of connection to one's racial/ethnic community.

Overwhelmingly, these affective outcomes were noncognitive in nature. Only *sense of belonging* (campus ethos outcome) and *racial affinity* (identity outcome) were of primary interest to programs.

Two performance outcomes focused on students' campus engagement: engagement with faculty and the use of academic services (e.g., tutoring, advising, and counseling) on campus. Other performance outcomes were related to student success and included student retention (persistence), achievement (as operationalized through student grades), graduation (referring to the attainment of a certificate or degree), and transfer from the community college to a four-year college or university.

With respect to program interventions, goals, and outcomes, this study found several recurrent themes. The majority of programs focused on professional skills development and mentoring. These services were offered as the primary tools to address a wide range of goals, including engagement, leadership and professional development, socio-cultural adjustment, personal growth, and academic advancement. These goals translated into outcomes that were primarily affective and performance-based, with few programs placing an emphasis on learning outcomes. Performance outcomes encompassed a wide array of student success indicators (e.g., persistence, achievement, graduation). In general, the affective outcomes included noncognitive outcomes such as academic self-efficacy, personal self-confidence, resilience, locus of control, and self-esteem; with only one campus ethos outcome (sense of belonging) and identity outcome (racial affinity) being of programmatic focus.

### Recommendations for Next Steps

Guided by the aforementioned findings, we offer two primary recommendations. First, new MMI programs should employ this study as a framework for better understanding program structures, interventions, and outcomes. While this analysis does not claim to represent promising practices in the field, it does present primary interventions and outcomes being employed at this time in higher education. This study may guide, but should not restrict, discussions on needed outcomes and associated interventions. Second, inquiry should be conducted to determine the efficacy of MMI programs in meeting their outcomes. In particular, researchers and evaluators can use the program alignment matrix (Figure 1), to determine whether identified interventions have an effect on the specified program outcomes. This may provide better insight into which interventions have an effect on performance outcomes, as well as provide insight on which performance outcomes are most influenced by targeted interventions. Third, given that little is known about the efficacy of MMI's, scholars should examine the ways (if at all) programs are being assessed. Such research can also use the program alignment matrix to determine how different outcomes are being measured and evaluated. Fourth, this analysis may inform the development of instruments that can be used to measure common program outcomes employed by MMIs. This will aid MMI leaders in articulating the effect (if any) of their programs on the populations they serve. In total, this analysis provided insight into what is taking place in the field now; further work is needed to explore the efficacy of the approaches identified herein.

**Five primary program goals were identified across institutions through this analysis, including engagement, leadership and professional growth, socio-cultural adjustment, personal growth, and academic advancement.**



	Leadership/ Professional Development	Mentoring	College Survival Skills	Service / Community Learning Opportunities	Tutoring	Academic Advising	Cohort Study Sessions	Counseling	Career Planning	Literacy/ Book Club
Affective Outcomes										
Academic self-efficacy	x	x	x		x	x	x			x
Sense of belonging (connection to faculty & staff)		x		x			x	x		x
Personal self-confidence	x	x	x			x	x	x		
Resilience			x	x			x	x		
Internal locus of control		x								
Self-esteem	x									
Racial affinity		x		x		x	x	x		
Performance Outcomes										
Use of academic services			x			x		x	x	
Student-faculty engagement	x	x	x	x					x	
Persistence (retention)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Achievement (GPA)			x		x	x	x			x
Graduation	x	x	x			x		x	x	
Transfer	x		x			x		x	x	

Figure 1. Curriculum Alignment Matrix with Program Interventions and Commonly Targeted Outcomes

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