Reach Higher to Support Our Men of Color

California State University, Fullerton
Fall 2016
From Chancellor’s Office

Collaboration across campus

Office of Assessment & Educational Effectiveness

Office of Institutional Research & Analytical Studies

Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs

Office of the Provost
Men of Color Study

• The goal is to understand the complex factors that contribute to men-of-color persistence.

• This presentation focuses on the Black male student experience.
Overview

- Context and Data
- Methodology
- Themes
  - Environment
    - Where I come from
    - First impression of CSUF
  - Barriers
    - What I face
  - Strategies
    - How I persist
    - Support I need
- Reflection

Action-Oriented Mindset
It has never been more important to ensure discussions on inclusive excellence, social justice and equity are taking place so that all Titans have a voice at the table and a vested interest in having it heard.

-Mildred García, President
California State University, Fullerton
Assuming greater **institutional responsibility** for the successes of (our) students is a requisite first step that entails bringing together stakeholders from all corners and levels of the institutions…to study these problems in systematic ways, collaboratively develop plans of action that include classroom and out-of-classroom interventions, and devise **assessment** and **accountability mechanisms** to ensure the **institution** is **reaching** its **students success goals**.

- Shaun Harper, Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania
  Men of color in Higher Education (2014)
National Picture: 4-Year Public Univ.

6-Year Graduation Rates by Freshmen Cohort & Gender

Source: NCES IPEDS accessed on August 31st, 2016
Cal State Fullerton: 6-Year Graduation Rates by Freshmen Cohort and Gender

Source: NCES IPEDS accessed on August 31st, 2016
Context & Data

Fall 2016

40,235 students
846 Black students
306 Black male students
Participants AY 15-16

32 Black male students

3 rounds of focus groups
2 in fall 2015
1 in spring 2016
Research Questions

Environment  Barriers  Strategies
Themes

- Environment
  - Where I come from
  - First impression of CSUF
- Barriers
  - What I face
- Strategies
  - How I persist
  - Support I need

Reach higher to support our men of color.
“I was living in the ghetto…”

“I’ve grown up in a lot of different places…”

“My parents immigrated from Africa…”

“I’ve always lived in White communities or Latino communities.”

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Environment:
First Impression of CSUF

Welcoming
Overwhelming
Lack of Black students

Reach higher to support our men of color.
Welcoming & Overwhelming

“It felt overwhelming… not because of the size of campus, but just because of that overall feeling of just going to college…”

“Wow, this is amazing, this is college, this is everything.”

“It was very stressful. I was never really introduced to such a large community…”

“It was welcoming for me.”
Lack of Black Students

“I was just kind of surprised about how not diverse it was.”

“They advertise a lot that they’re the most diverse Cal State and things, but when you get here it’s like ‘Uh, I don't really feel that way.’”

“Where are all the Black people at? Ah oh. I’m the only one.”
“I think it does something to you. Now here you’re trying to learn but sometimes in the back of your head there’s other noise going on about you’re the only Black dude in the class…”
Reflection: Environment

Revisit a time you felt isolated and helpless in a supposedly welcoming space.
Barriers: What I face

Stereotypes
Pressure to fit in
Discrimination

Reach higher to support our men of color.
"You shouldn't even say nothing. You shouldn't even be here. That's how I'm feeling..."
Stereotypes

“We definitely get that stereotype of you’re an angry Black person.”

“He's going to try to put me in a box…”

“...you’re either White washed or you’re a hood Black guy...There’s no medium, there’s no perception of people seeing you as just who you are…”

Barriers: What I face
Pressure to fit in

“Are you about to be the ghetto Black guy or are you going to come off as a smart, intelligent one?”

“I got affiliated with AARC… I wonder if this right here going to make me seem like that I only want to do Black things.”

“Sometimes you want to be yourself, but sometimes you try and do whatever it takes to fit in.”

“Whenever I step into the classroom, I used to think, man I need to perform. I have to out-perform.”
Discrimination

“He was saying I was a gang member.”

“…I could look at the micro-aggressions in their face…”

“What factors led you to believe that I had somebody else write my paper…”

“I felt like I was being discredited, not because of what I was saying, but probably because of what I look like and who I was.”
Reflection: Barriers

Visualize what barriers might exist in your area/department for Black male students.

Barriers: What I face
Strategies: How I persist

Focus
Perseverance
Balance
Resources
Engagement

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Focus

“When I’m in school I don't let it bother me because the only thing I’m there to do is learn…”

“… you need to let go of those kinds of things and just focus on what is going to keep you here…”

“You have to perform. You have to pass. You have to make the grades.”
Perseverance

“Failing doesn't mean that you’re going to fail forever. It just means you have to keep trying at it.”

“Either you get through it or you just don't come back.”

“We got to go on our achievements so that others can follow. We got to lead by example.”
"I was blessed to have the Guardian Scholarship Program here…"

"We have an academic advisor. I see her every day."

"All the resources in the library… it’s open and available to anybody."

"You have to have a network."
“It’s just time management.”

“How is my grade going to be affected? I have to look at the do’s and don’ts.”

“…either I prepare ahead of time, or I just don’t go to that event.”
Engagement

“APARC was my support group. The Black community was my support group.”

“I was just looking for a community…”

“It made me feel more involved... that’s something I did not do before because I was excluding myself from whatever activities there were.”
Strategies:
Support I need

Academic
Social
Career
Visibility
Culture

Reach higher to support our men of color.
…she goes around each table and she interacts with us.
That right there is what I need, interaction."
“…the instructor was not so transparent… I had no clue about my standing throughout the entire course.”

“They know their information but they don't know how to teach.”

“…a lot of the professors in that department didn't know anything about Black film.”

“…supplemental learning has to come in play if you want to save the millennial student…”
“It’s not just the academics that are important, but it’s that social part too, they don't have people from their background that they can instantly connect to.”

“I would have loved to be a part of a really good Black fraternity…”
“It would be cool if I had somebody to look up to that kind of looked like me.”

“…mentorship and advisors and counselors are a great way to help men of color stay in colleges…”

“I feel people want someone that’s a mentor that they could see somewhat of themselves in.”

“If there was a designated internship or connections for people of color… that would be great.”
<table>
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<th>Visibility</th>
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<td><strong>“There’s a lot of people who don't know what’s going on, on campus.””</strong></td>
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<td><strong>“Nothing is really promoted that well.””</strong></td>
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“These kinds of discussions have encouraged me a lot and they opened up my mind…”

“You’re a culture on campus, you deserve your own voice.”

“…more cultural classes…people have to know about other cultures…”
Call to Action

How do we help our Black male students overcome the barriers at CSUF?

Reach higher to support our men of color.
“If we believe higher education is the preeminent path to upward mobility, then California State University, Fullerton is far more than an academically excellent institution where culturally engaged students become globally engaged leaders; it is a conduit to social justice and a bridge to the American Dream.”

-Mildred García, President
California State University, Fullerton