

# CONNECTED24

## Building a Sense of Belonging for Black and Latino Men

Research Presentation



# Meet the Research Team and Introduction



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1

## Is There a Crisis of Men in Higher Education?

2

3 Critical Relationships for Black and Latino Men's Success

# Male Enrollment Dip Sets Off Alarm Bells

## Widespread Reports Warn of a 'Crisis of Men' in Higher Education



'Male College Crisis:' Male High School Graduates Going to College at Much Lower Rates than Women



Men in College: Another Casualty of the COVID 19 Pandemic



The Male College Crisis is not Just Enrollment but Completion



What's Going on Here, Guys?



The Crisis of Men Continues to Worsen



A Generation of American Men Give Up on College: 'I Just Feel Lost'



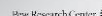
Colleges Have a Guy Problem



The Pandemic is Speeding Up the Mass Disappearance of Men from College



The Male Enrollment Crisis

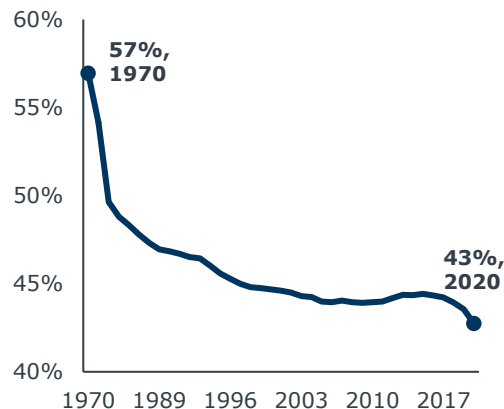


What's Behind the Growing Gap Between Men and Women in College Completion?

# Less of an Obvious Crisis than We Thought

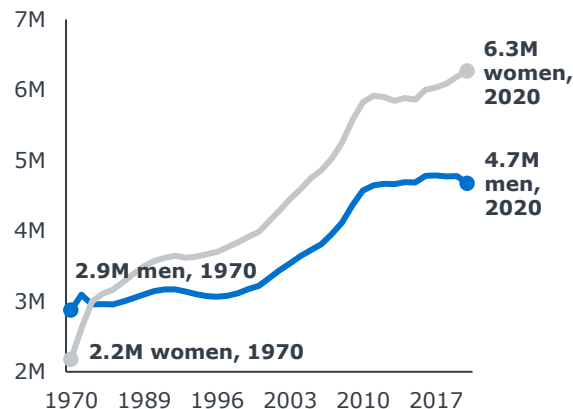
## Men Constitute Lowest Share of College Enrollments in History...

*Men as Percentage of Total Enrollments, US 4-Year Universities*



## ...But Real Numbers Show More of a Plateau than a Plummet

*Total Enrollments by Gender, US 4-Year Universities*



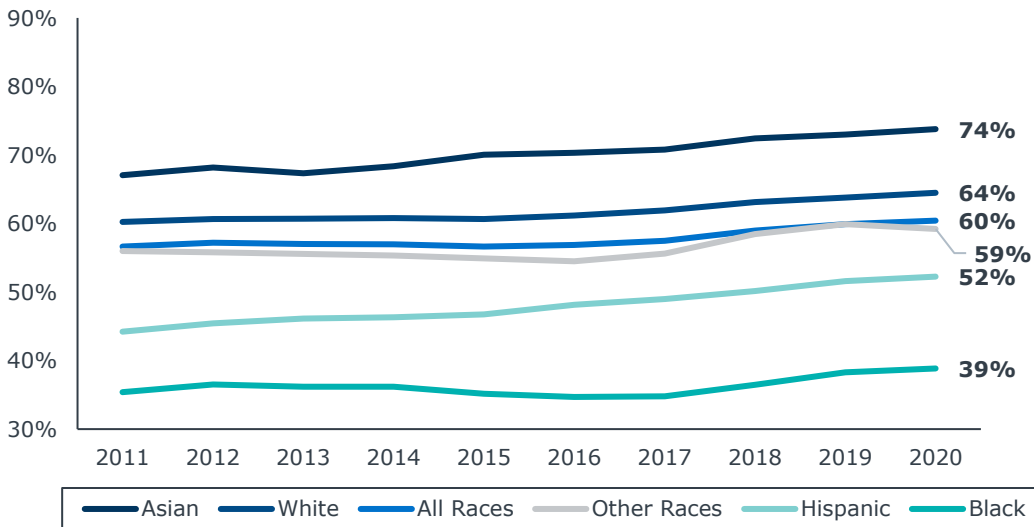
"The growing gap between men and women is not because men are enrolling less **but because women are enrolling more**. That's not a crisis."

*-Carine M. Feyten, Chancellor and President, Texas Women's University*

# One Crisis We Can Be Certain About

## Despite Moderate Growth, Black and Latino Male Graduation Rates Lag Peers'

Average Six-Year, Bachelor's Degree Graduation Rates for Men by Race, 2011-2020



8%

Percentage-point gap between Hispanic/Latino men and men overall

21%

Percentage-point gap between Black men and men overall

# No Shortage of Effort on Two Fronts

Student Success Investments Raised Grad Rates but Didn't Close Gaps

## Institutions Focused on Both Success and Equity...

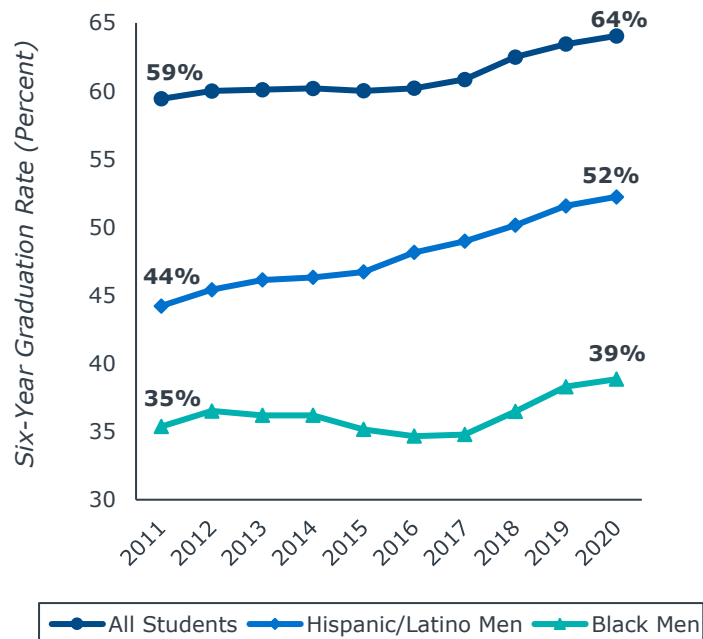
### Investments in Student Success Overall

- Professionalized advising
- First-year seminars
- Counseling centers
- Meta-majors
- Living-learning communities

### Investments in Black and Latino Men


- Summer bridge programs
- Cultural centers
- Identity-based student organizations

## ...Yet Graduation Rate Disparities Remain



## What's Missing?

You've invested in bridge programs, cultural centers, and other identity-based programs... Why might there still be a gap in graduation rates? What conversation or need is missing?





# The Missing Piece: Sense of Belonging

## Black and Latino Men Struggle to Connect to Campus Community

### Leaders Stress Importance of Belongingness for Black and Latino Men

**Some of the biggest issues [for Black and Latino men] are still connections and helping the students make connections, [both] how they are treated in the classroom and outside the classroom."**

*Edwin Mayes, Director of First-Year Experience,  
Case Western Reserve University*

Sometimes belongingness gets over-used as a buzzword, but if we don't get belongingness right as foundational to a student's success, then we may create a barrier or a hole early on in the student's experience that is hard to climb out of. **What we see with Black and Latino men is that when the belongingness hole happens early, it makes it hard to come back....[B]eing connected, comfortable and valued in the community strengthens the trajectory for success."**

*Connie Carson, Vice President of Student Life,  
Furman University*

### Research Finds Sense of Belonging Is...



**Lower for male students** than for female students<sup>1</sup>



**Lower for first-gen and minority students** than for white students<sup>2</sup>



**Critical to improving Black/Latino male college completion gaps**<sup>3</sup>

1) Bonner, 2018.  
2) Gopalan & Brady, 2020.  
3) Lee et al., 2011.

Source: Bonner, Kenyon Robert, "Making Sense of Belonging for Black Undergraduate Men on a Predominantly White Campus" (2018), *Dissertations available from ProQuest*, AA110841138; Gopalan, M. and Brady, S. T. (2020). "College Students' Sense of Belonging: A National Perspective," *Educational Researcher*, 49(2), 134-137; John Michael Lee, Jr. et al., "The Educational Experience of Young Men of Color," College Board, 2011; EAB interviews and analysis.

# What Does It Mean to Belong?

## EAB's Three Components of Belongingness for Black and Latino Men

### Social Connection

"I belong at this institution."

1



- Meaningful friendships
- Support network
- Relationships where it is safe to express your authentic self

### Representation

"Others like me belong here too."

2



- Visible in-group role models and peers
- Feeling like you can relate to others in the campus community

### Academic Efficacy

"I can succeed in college."

3

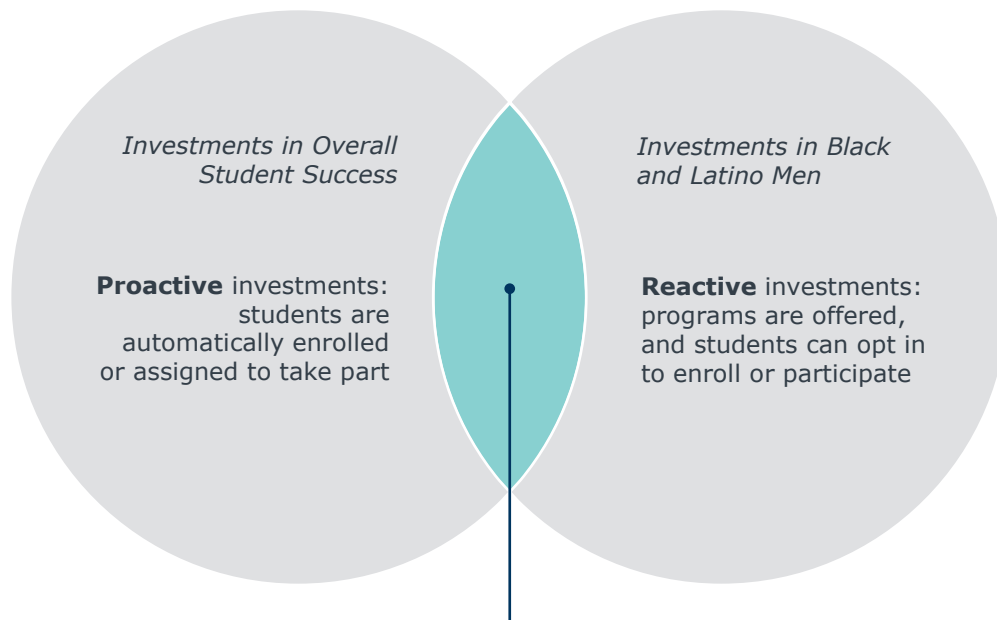


- In-classroom engagement
- Sense of purpose, long-term goals for college education
- Resilience to overcome academic setbacks

# A Needed Mindset Shift



## Thinking Beyond Opt-In Models of Black and Latino Men's Involvement



What opportunities can colleges **proactively** offer that contribute to Black and Latino men's retention, graduation, and belongingness?

# Building a Sense of Belonging for Black and Latino Men

*Three Existing Relationships to Maximize for Student Success*



Relationships with **peers**



Relationships with **families**



Relationships with **mentors**



1

Is There a Crisis of Men In Higher Education?

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**Three Critical Relationships for Black and Latino Men's Success**

# Building a Sense of Belonging for Black and Latino Men

*Three Existing Relationships to Maximize for Student Success*



1

Relationships with **peers**



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Relationships with **families**



3

Relationships with **mentors**

# Peer Connections Critical but Stop Too Soon

## Opportunities for Same-Group Social Connections Dry Up After First Year

### The Importance of Peers for Black Men and Latino Men

- 1. Latino males who feel supported by peers have **stronger aspirations for succeeding** in college<sup>1</sup>
- 2. Social engagement and peer associations are critical to Black and Latino male **academic performance**<sup>2</sup>
- 3. Peer-to-peer bonding between Black men enhances and supports **persistence in college**<sup>3</sup>

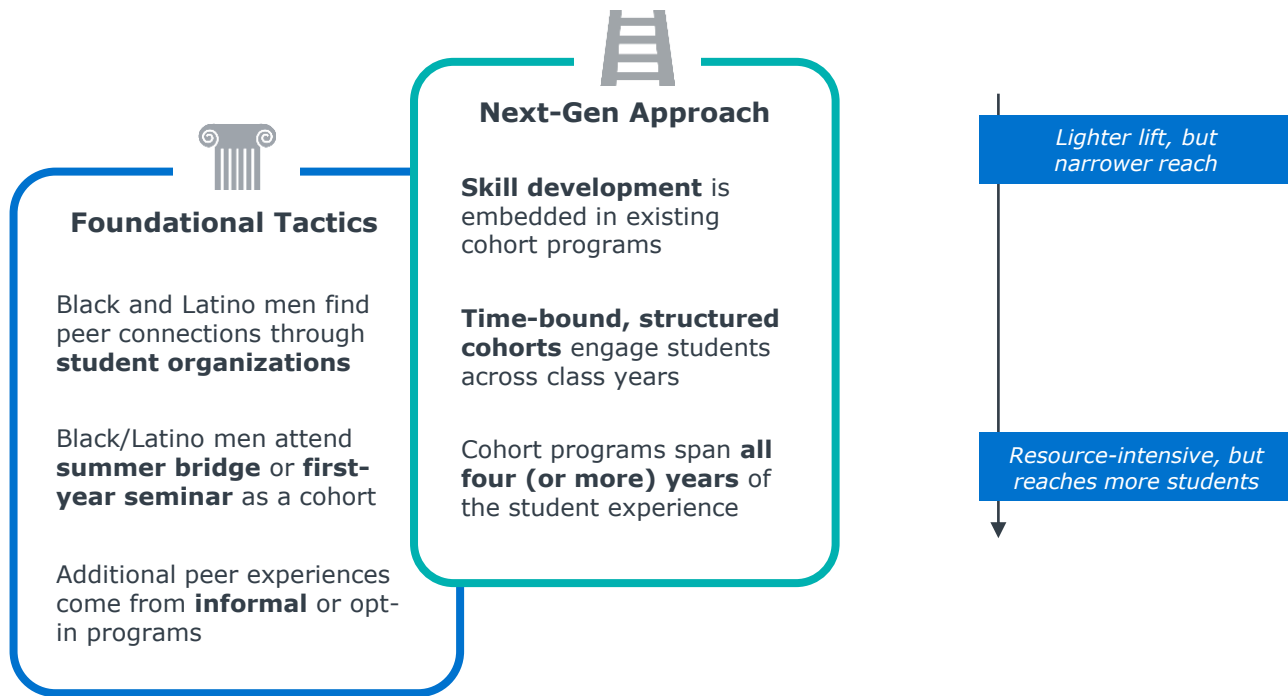
### Why Stop at the First Year?

"We have a summer bridge program for underrepresented students, and on the last day I always talk to them about preparing for the shock when everyone else gets to campus. The compositional diversity that we have in the bridge program? **Our students may never see that again in four years of college.**"

*Dean of the College  
Private Liberal Arts College*

1) Saenz & Ponjuán, 2012.  
2) Brooms, Clark, and Smith, 2017.  
3) Brooms & Davis, 2017.

Source: Saenz, Victor B. and Ponjuán, Lewis, "Latino Males: Improving College Access and Degree Completion--A New National Imperative," *PERSPECTIVAS: Issues in Higher Education Policy and Practice* 1: Spring 2012; Brooms, Derrick R., Clark, Jelisa, and Smith, Matthew, "Being and Becoming Men of Character: Exploring Latino and Black Males' Brotherhood and Masculinity Through Leadership in College," *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 2017; Brooms, Derrick R. and Davis, Arthur R., "Staying Focused on the Goal: Peer Bonding and Faculty Mentors Supporting Black Males' Persistence in College," *Journal of Black Studies* 48(3): 305-236, 2017; EAB interviews and analysis.



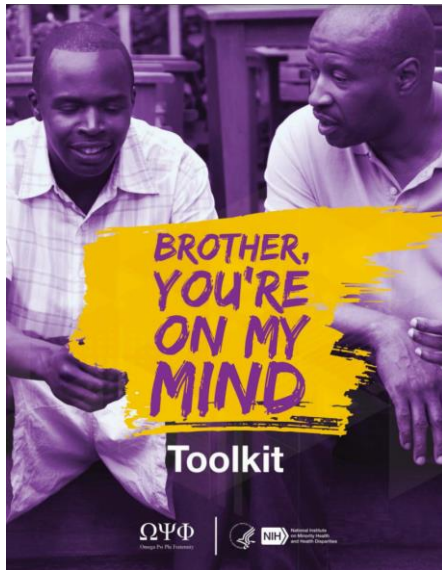




# Leveraging Peer Support for Mental Health

## Omega Psi Phi Toolkit Equips Members to Start Tough Conversations

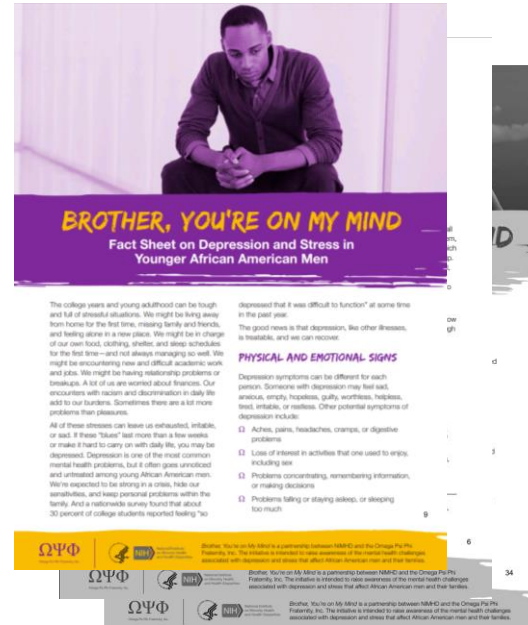
### Toolkit Educates Black Fraternity Brothers on Impacts of Depression and Stress



**Fact sheets** on how depression can impact Black men

**Conversation guides** for discussing mental health with peers

**Group activities** to practice conversation and empathy skills



# An HBCU's Take on Four-Year Cohorts

## Fostering Brotherhood Through the Men's Achievement Center



**NC Central**  
UNIVERSITY

### About the African American Male Initiative (AAMI)



NC Central University - African American Male Initiative



Four-year cohort program run out of the Men's Achievement Center



Individual meetings, social programming, and career preparation

### Key Components of the Program



#### Proactive Invitations for Black Men

Applications begin in the late spring/summer for incoming freshmen



#### Peer Cohort Model

40 students are accepted into each cohort



#### Living-Learning Community

Shared living space creates opportunities for peer support and interaction

### Supporting Young Men at NCCU

“Every day we get new young men coming [to the Men's Achievement Center] looking for guidance. This is the place where [they] can get it and get back on track.”

*Dr. Roderick Heath*

*Director of the Men's Achievement Center, North Carolina Central University*

# Engaging Black Men over Four Years

## Yearly Themes Create Cohesion Around Cohort Activities



1

*Freshman Year:*  
**Introduction**



- Acclimating to campus and getting acquainted with the institution
- Ensuring students join clubs and are active participants in the community

2

*Sophomore Year:* **Goal Setting**



- One-on-one meetings
- Social events
- Academic goal-setting and assessments

3

*Junior Year:*  
**Major Focused**



- Facilitating smooth transition from prerequisites to major coursework
- Verifying that students are comfortable with major and course selection

4

*Senior Year:*  
**Career Readiness**



- Updating resumes and LinkedIn pages
- Graduate school application support
- Graduation ceremony includes a blazer and ring conference

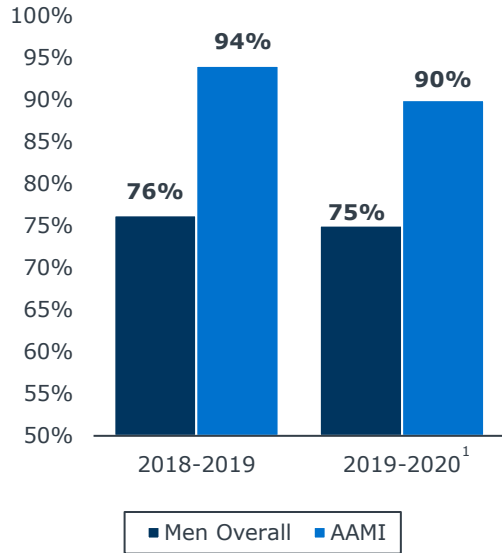
# Outperforming Institutional Expectations

## AAMI Boosts Male Retention and Graduation



### AAMI Outperforms Male Student Average

First-Year Retention Rates, NC Central U



600

Black men who participated in AAMI graduated from NCCU

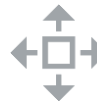
30%

Higher graduation rate for AAMI students than overall campus

4,000+

Sign-ins to the Men's Achievement Center

### Expanding to Serve More Men

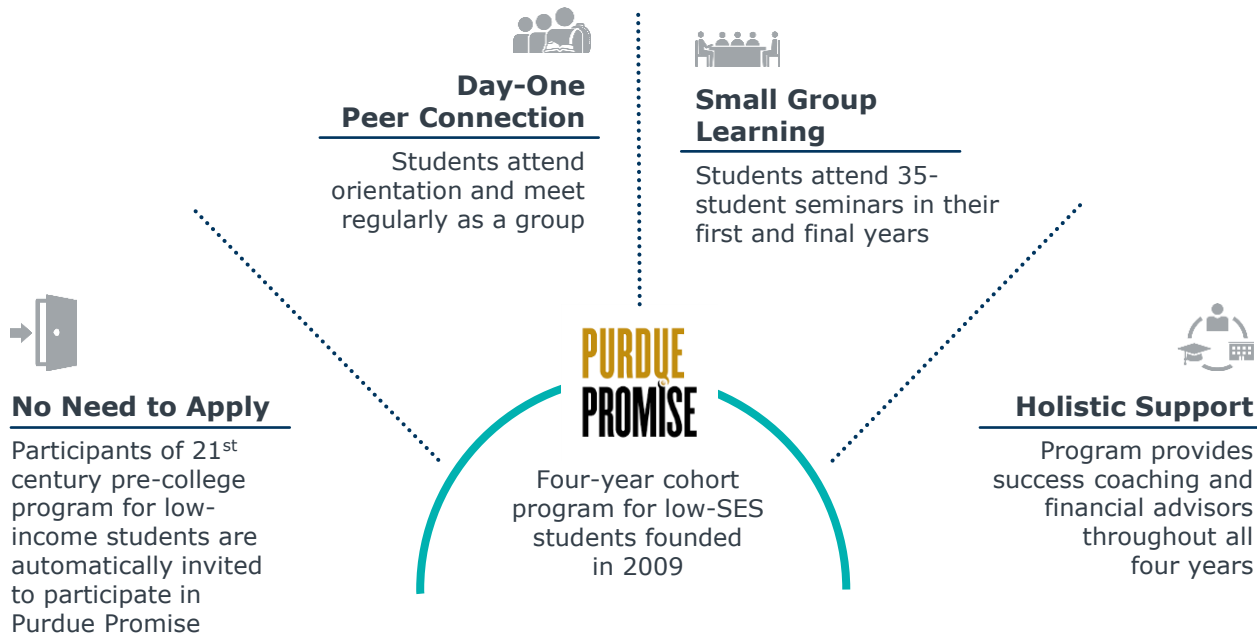


NCCU is developing a Latino Male Initiative and a cohort program for international male students from Africa

1) Retention rates impacted by Covid-19.

# A Tried-and-True Four-Year Cohort Program

Purdue's Promise Program Provides Full-Lifecycle Student Support

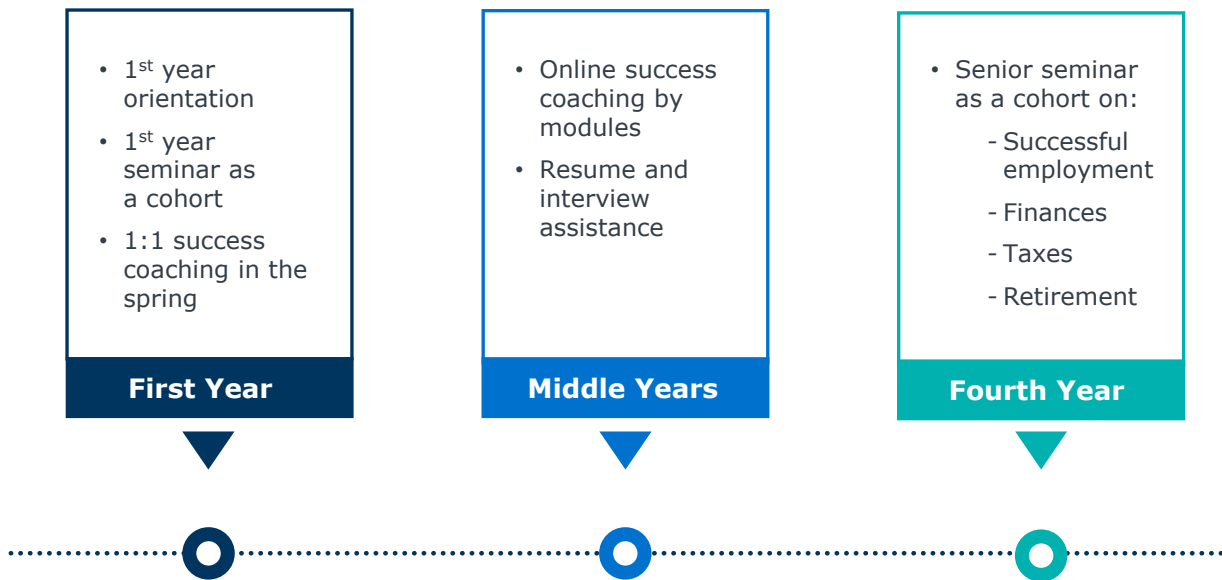


# A Year-by-Year Approach to Support

Unique Programming for Each Student Lifecycle Phase



## Purdue Promise's Four-Year Curriculum



# Taking the Cohort Model Online

## YBMen Project Provides a Private Virtual Setting for Cross-Year Cohorts



### About the Young Black Men (YBMen) Project

- Run by independent organization housed in University of Michigan<sup>1</sup>
- Program staff recruit cohort of 20 Black men across class years to participate
- Participants join a private Facebook group for 2-12 weeks
- Discussion facilitated by YBMen staff follows a **structured curriculum** focused on masculinity and health

### Example YBMen Curriculum

- Week 1: Introduction
- Week 2: Black Masculinity
- Week 3: Mental Health Education
- Week 4: Health and Well-Being
- Week 5: Plans for the Future

## Three Reasons YBMen's Model Is Effective

### Minimal Cost to Adopt

YBMen staff responsible for outreach and logistics

### Relevant to Black Men


Prompts based on current events and pop culture

### Moderated Discussions

Trained staff select prompts and keep comments on track

1) Currently available only in Michigan and Ohio but expansion is planned.

## Two Degrees of Separation

- Have Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. already on your campus ?
  - A colleague/peer at NCCU (or Fayetteville State) or Purdue?
  - A DEI or Strategic Plan that has a goal of graduation rates improving (YBMen Virtual)
- 



# Building a Sense of Belonging for Black and Latino Men

*Three Existing Relationships to Maximize for Student Success*



Relationships with **peers**




Relationships with **families**

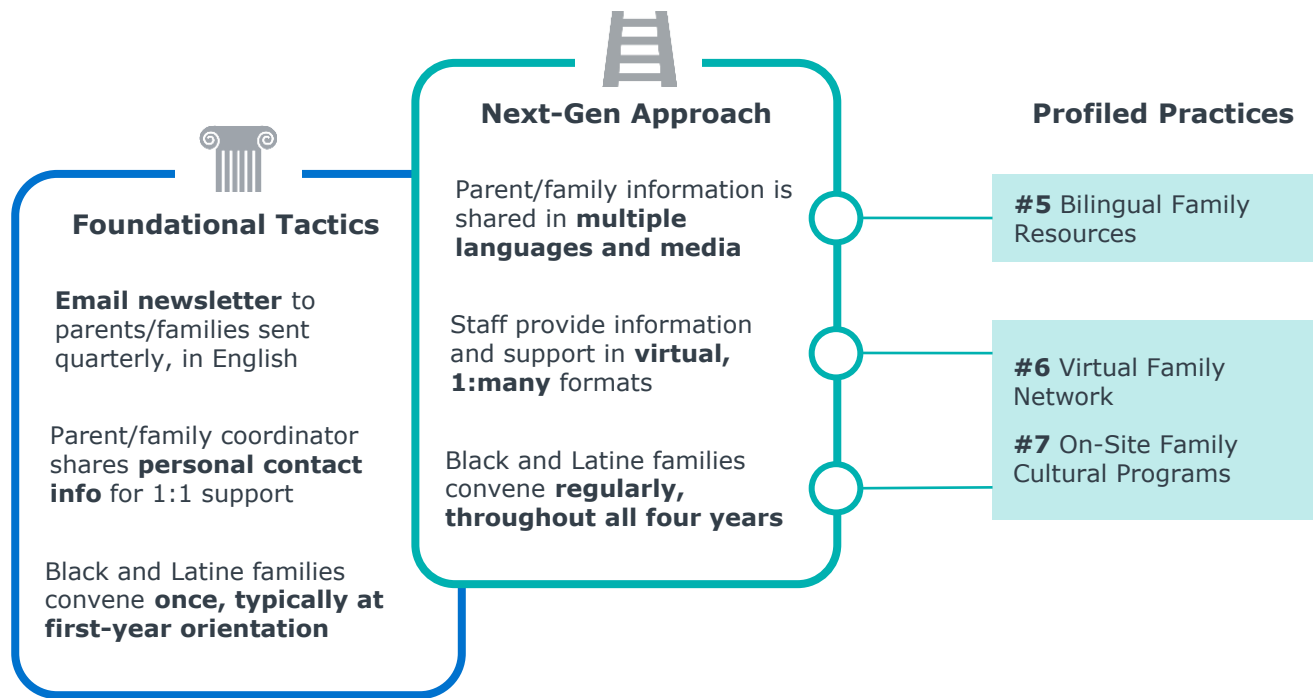


Relationships with **mentors**

## Parent Questions or Challenges

What are some of the most common challenges parents of students of color have during the enrollment and orientation process?





# A Clear Need for Spanish Resources

## Few Institutional Websites Have Family Resources in Spanish

UC Berkeley's family resource guide



Of **U.S. News top 50 institutions** have family resources in Spanish

Williams' family website



Of **U.S. News top 50 liberal arts institutions** have family resources in Spanish

# Breaking Down the Language Barrier

## Two Family Info Sources You Should Be Translating for Latine Families

### Campus Events

1



**UT Austin** offers on-site Spanish interpretation at campus events for families

- ✓ Easier for Spanish-speaking families to participate
- ✓ Sends message that speaking Spanish is normal at UT

### Family Newsletter

2



**Texas A&M** mails postcard version of family newsletter with one side in Spanish

- ✓ Information can reach Spanish-speaking families
- ✓ Print format accessible for homes without computers

- Does your campus offer this information in Spanish already?
- What other information sources could you translate into Spanish?



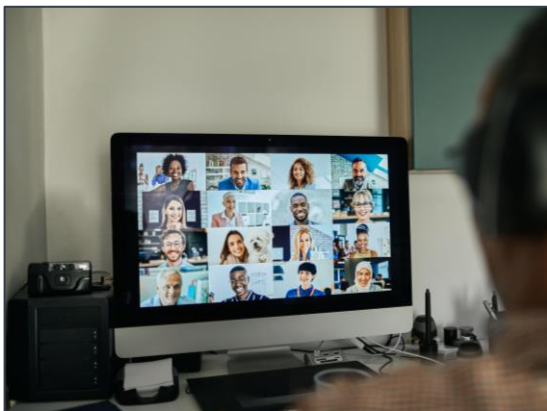
# Connecting Families Virtually



Video Chat Provides an Accessible Way to Socialize and Learn



## University of Alabama's Black UA Family Affinity Group Video Meetings



One-hour video chat meetings held 1-2 times per semester



Afternoon/evening timing is convenient for most time zones and schedules



Mix of casual chat and guest speakers (e.g., Black Faculty/Staff Association)



Meetings use Zoom so families can access by computer or phone

60+

Family members joined Black UA's most recent Zoom meeting



# Building a Sense of Belonging for Black and Latino Men

*Three Existing Relationships to Maximize for Student Success*



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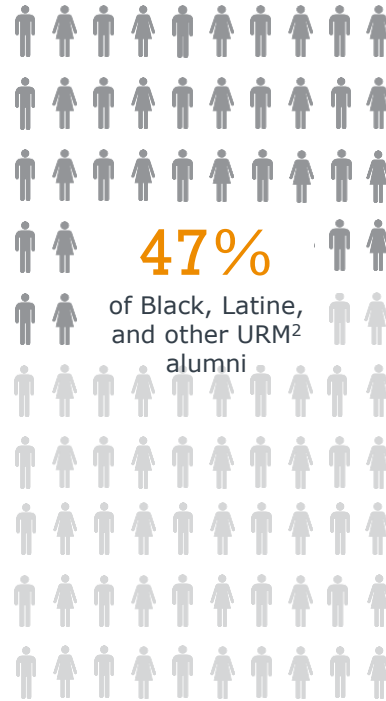
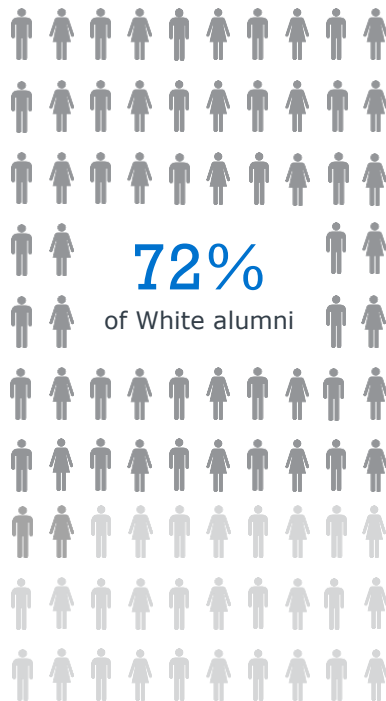


Relationships with **mentors**

# The Haves and Have-Nots

## Significant Mentorship Gap Faced by Students of Color

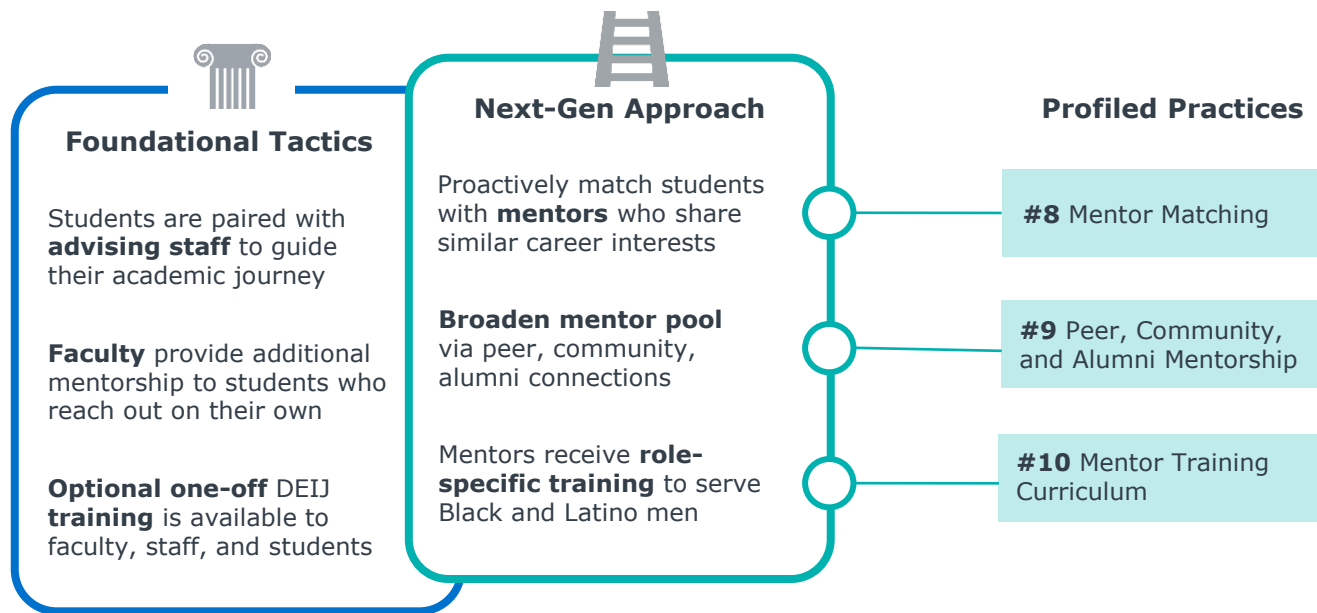
Share of Recent Graduates Who Had a Mentor in College, Strada-Gallup Survey<sup>1</sup>:



1) n = 5,100 students who graduated in the last four to nine years, surveyed in 2018.

2) Underrepresented minority.





# Mentorship for Us by Us

## Latino Males Cohort Program Pairs First-Year Students with Peer Mentors



### The Evolution from Mentee to Mentor in Texas A&M's Latino Males United (LMU)

#### Proactive Mentor Placement



- **Every LMU first-year member is assigned** an upper-level student as a peer mentor



#### Identity-Based Mentorship



- Mentors and mentees discuss **masculinity, sexuality, and ethnicity**
- Peer mentors **meet** with mentees in **1:1** and **whole group sessions**



#### Mentees Become Mentors



- **Program alums return as peer mentors** equipped with LMU and TAMU campus knowledge

### Mentees Don't Leave the LMU Family

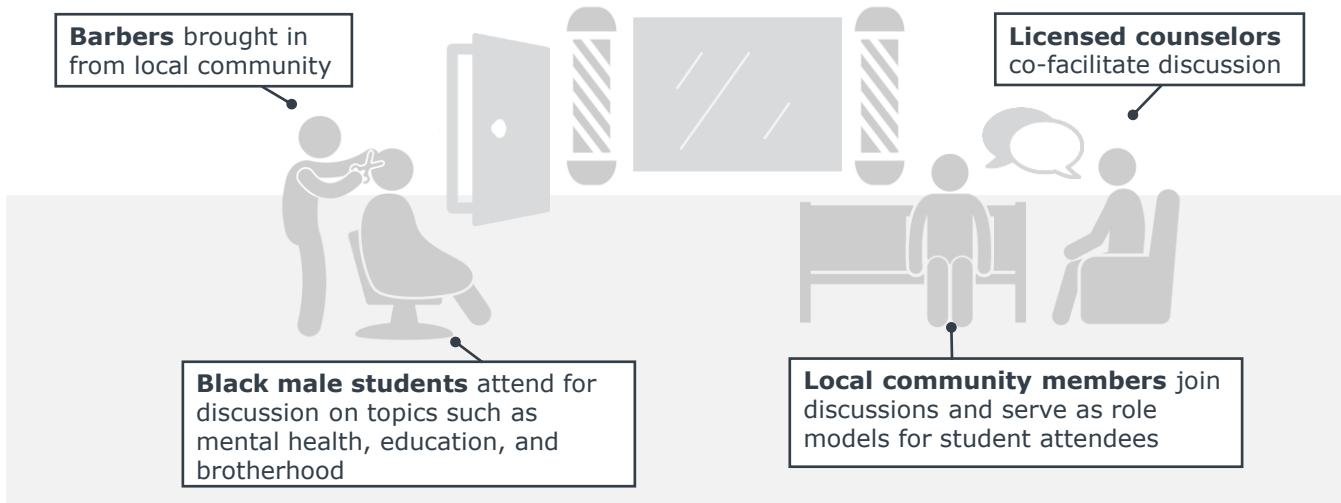


After completing Latino Male United, sophomores and juniors come back as peer mentors, and some come back as leaders to oversee certain areas....**[O]nce they're connected, they are always connected.**"

*Cruz Ríos | Texas A&M University  
LMU Founder & Associate Director, Department of Multicultural Services*

# Bringing Mentorship to a Black Male Space

## Barbershop Discussions Provide Intentional Opportunity to Connect



### Familiar Spaces as a Safe Platform to Explore Black Masculinity



The barbershop talk uses the cultural space of the barbershop to engage Black male students in very candid conversations on topics from family dynamics and relationships to building their communities via their academic achievements and success.”

*Patrick Wallace, Assistant Director of the Student Success Center, Virginia Tech*

# Transitioning from College to Career

## Maryland Black Alumni Mentors Provide Career Advice for Black Students

### University of Maryland's Black Alumni Network Mentorship Program

- Black alumni provide **professional advice** to upper-division Black students
- Alumni and students **apply on an online platform** to receive a best-fit match
- Program lasts for a period of **six weeks**

### Role of Black Student Mentees

- Be open to feedback and demonstrate willingness to learn
- Develop personal and professional goals
- Be proactive and schedule meetings with mentors



### Role of Black Alumni Mentors

- Present career opportunities for students such as informational interviews and job shadowing
- Give constructive feedback to help mentee achieve career goals
- Share professional highs and lows to prepare mentee for career

# In the Company of Three

Case Western Connects Students with a Peer, Alumni, and Faculty/Staff Mentor

## Líderes Avanzando Cohort Program

- Provides **academic** and **professional development seminars**
- Connects students with **three different mentors** during their academic lifecycle
- Offers a space for Latine students to **explore cultural heritage and identity**



## Each Student Assigned Three Mentors



# Every Mentor Trained

## Specialized Training Prepares Mentors to Meet Needs of Black, Latino Men



### Two Types of Required Training for Mentors<sup>1</sup>

#### 1 Intercultural Development Inventory

- Understand your relationship to cultures different from your own
- Learn how to adapt behavior and shift perspective in different cultural contexts

#### 2 QPR<sup>2</sup> Mental Health Training

- Recognize the warning signs of suicide
- Learn how to compassionately communicate support
- Learn how to refer to the appropriate health care practitioner

### What Else Should Be in the Mentor Training Curriculum?

#### One VP, Student Affairs' Mentor Training Wishlist:

- Cultural humility
- Mental Health First Aid
- Implicit bias
- Difficult conversations



What types of training might you add?

1) Success coaches serve as mentors in Purdue Promise, Purdue's cohort program for low-income students.

2) Question, Persuade, Refer.

# Open Dialogue

What is the biggest gap or challenge related to Black and Latino men's sense of belonging at your institution?

What is one idea you heard today or a program you already have that could be adapted to address that gap or challenge?



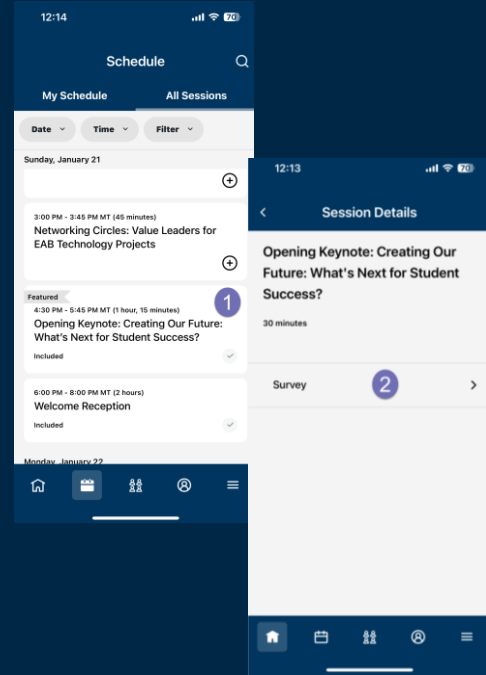
# Complete Session Evaluations

Your feedback is important to us, please take a few moments to **tell us about your CONNECTED experience.**

Evaluations are available in the event app by clicking on a session and then clicking **Survey**.

**Need help with the app?**

Stop by the **information desk!**



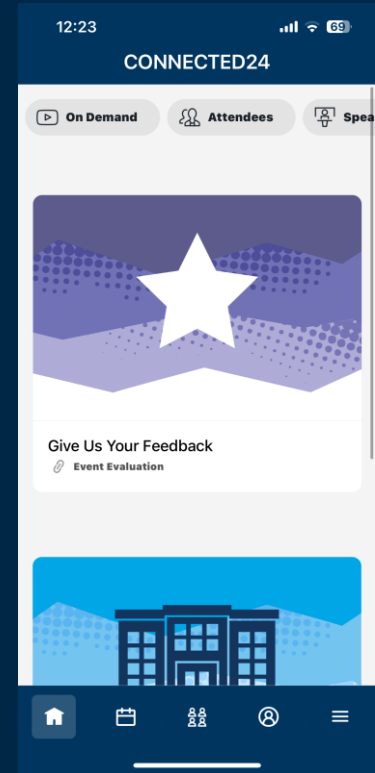


# Complete the Event Feedback Survey

From the front page of the app, click the Give Us Your Feedback box.

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