



African American Student Center, Office of Student Life & Cultural Centers
We Want Student Success and Brotherhood:
Enhancing Support Systems for Black Men on Campus
Assessment Report

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Choose One: Needs Assessment

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Purpose of Assessment

The purpose of this assessment was to explore the support systems for Black men at Cal Poly Pomona. In this assessment, support systems are defined as programs, services, resources, campus spaces, and relationships that contributed to persistence at the university. The data was collected from Black men on campus who participated in the African American Student Center's Brotherhood Luncheon. The goal of the Brotherhood Luncheon was to build community among Black men on campus, recognize students who have excelled academically, and highlight Black male-identified students who stepped up as leaders in the community. We also utilized this inaugural event to jump start our data collection for this assessment by providing dialogue questions and creative instruments to collect survey responses.

Division Learning Outcome Self-Determination

Self Determination - Students who participate in Student Affairs programs and activities will understand the importance of and develop an empowered sense of self and commitment to personal responsibility, integrity, and wellness

Targeted Learning Outcome

SLO 1: Students will be able to discuss their experience as a student on campus.

SLO 2: Students will be able to reflect on the services, resources, and relationships on campus that has contributed to their student success on campus

SLO 3: Students will be able to name and recall at least two Black male-identified faculty, staff, and administrators (who attended the Brotherhood Luncheon)

Assessment Methodology

Interviews, observations, and surveys were utilized to gather data for this assessment. The African American Student Center Coordinator and African American Student Center graduate intern conducted interviews with participants (n=3), observed semi-structured dialogues during the Brotherhood Luncheon, and collected data from survey questions given to the attendees (n=52) of the Brotherhood Luncheon on their systems of support on campus and how faculty, staff, and administrators can better serve and support the Black men on campus.

Interviews. The interviews were semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. Each interview was 30 minutes, audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim using a transcription service. Each participant was contacted via email and presented a consent form for the assessment that provided an overview of the assessment and ensured confidentiality of the participants during data reporting. Once a consent form was received, the researcher reached out to the participants to set up an interview by email. The interviews were held in a private conference room on campus reserved by the researcher, and the protocol consisted of six interview questions. Pseudonyms were utilized for each participant as well.

Observations. The African American Student Center graduate intern observed the semi-structured dialogue at each table between the attendees of the event. The attendees were informed at the beginning of the event that the event organizers would be roaming the room to collect data and was provided a short overview of the assessment.

Informal Surveys. The African American Student Center coordinator and graduate intern distributed a questionnaire through poster paper on the walls of the room to collect data. Attendees were encouraged to use markers on their tables to respond to

the questions throughout the event space during the event. The same questions were administered via email immediately after the event to the attendees to get a better response rate. Students were not asked to disclose their identity for the survey.

Results

Three main themes emerged from the data collected in this assessment. Black men need the appropriate **Space** to connect with one another or individuals who share the same identity as them, culturally relevant **Guidance/Mentoring**, and **Opportunities** to excel academically. The three themes derived from categories of codes in the data collected by the interviews, observations, and surveys.

Space. Participants indicated that the “appropriate” space was needed for Black men to connect on campus. **20 percent** of the participants said they needed community discussions to connect and network. **63 percent** of the participants indicated that they needed “Events like this [Brotherhood Luncheon]” to connect on campus on the survey questionnaire. Other participants indicated that Project Success, R.I.S.E., Brothers Movement student organization, the B.R.I.C. or Basketball Court, Black Student Union student organization, and the African American Student Center were the best spaces for Black men to connect on campus.

Guidance/Mentorship. Participants indicated that guidance and mentorship was essential to the student success of Black men, but it needed to be culturally relevant. **92 percent** of the participants indicated that mentorship was imperative for their student success on campus. **73 percent** of the participants stated that they wanted mentors and relationships with men who they can relate to and are aware of the current climate of Black men on campus.

Opportunities. **100 percent** of the participants indicated that faculty, staff, administrators, departments, and services needed to increase visibility of services to Black men on campus because several Black men were not aware of important services, resources, and policies. One participant shared that he felt information that can aid his success appeared to exclusive because he had to “figure out a way” to get it while his White and Asian counterparts were aware of the information all alone. The participant acknowledged that his identity as a first-generation college student also attributed this challenge, but he continued to state that he knew about many Black men who had experienced the same challenge through their college career who were not first-generation college students.

Conclusion

Black men are an “at risk” population in higher education and continued research and assessment is needed to better support Black men during college toward graduation and matriculation into their careers post-graduation. The African American Student Center conducted this need assessment to improve services, programs, and policies within the student center and on campus to enhance the support systems that already exist for Black men on campus. This assessment will be presented to stakeholders to bring attention to the need and to revamp practice.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this assessment provide an outline of how administrators, faculty, and staff/practitioners can enhance support systems for Black men on campus.

- **Research-** Continued research and assessment in this area is essential. Best practices should be shared as well
- **Policy-** The university should revamp policies and better communicate them to Black men entering the university, while they are enrolled, and toward graduation. Objectivity can be harmful, so special attention should be given to Black men to eliminate the current structural barriers
- **Practice-** Meet students where they are! This is a culturally relevant practice that can increase student success the population of Black men on campus. This assessment provided several spaces on campus to engage with Black men and strategies on how to engage with Black men

Closing the Loop

Again, this assessment will be presented to stakeholders on campus and utilized to revamp practice how we serve Black men on campus. Our initial plans include:

- Present data to stakeholders through Stories of Successful Learning assessment showcase
- Work with campus leaders on how we can better engage with Black men on campus. Engagement will be intentional.
- More collaboration with programs and organizations who directly serve Black men such as Project Success, Brothers Movement, Fraternities, and Residential Intensive Summer Education (R.I.S.E.) program
- Host culturally relevant programs such as the Brotherhood Luncheon to increase visibility and provide space for Black men to connect and network
- Research effective mentoring strategies to increase peer mentoring and faculty/staff mentoring among Black men on campus