



# We Want Student Success and Brotherhood: Enhancing Support Systems for Black Men on Campus

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## Abstract

The purpose of this **needs assessment** was to explore the support systems of Black men at Cal Poly Pomona. In this assessment, support systems are defined as programs, services, resources, campus spaces, and relationships that contributed to their 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.

## Process/Methodology

### Targeted Learning Outcome

**Student Learning Outcome 1:** Students will be able to discuss their experience as a student on campus.

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

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

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.



Black men in a historically Black Fraternity band together to celebrate their fraternity brother at Pan-African Grad



An upperclassmen pin a first-year Black male-identified student at the Black Bronco Welcome Reception and Pinning Ceremony



A graduate being presented with Nguzo Saba "Outstanding Senior" Award at Pan-African Graduation celebration

## Results

**Three main themes emerged from the data collected in this assessment: Space, Guidance/Mentorship, and Opportunities**

<h3>Space</h3> <p>Participants indicated that the “appropriate” space was needed for Black men to connect on campus</p>	<p>20% of the participants said they needed community discussions to connect and network.</p> <p>63% of the participants indicated that they needed “Events like this [Brotherhood Luncheon]” to connect on campus on the survey questionnaire. Other participants indicated that <b>Project Success, R.I.S.E., Brothers Movement student organization, the B.R.I.C. the Basketball Court, the Black Student Union student organization, and the African American Student Center</b> were the best spaces for Black men to connect on campus.</p>
<h3>Guidance/Mentorship</h3> <p>Participants indicated that guidance and mentorship was essential to the student success of Black men, but it needed to be culturally relevant</p>	<p>92% of the participants indicated that mentorship was imperative for their student success on campus</p> <p>73% 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.</p>
<h3>Opportunities</h3> 	<p>100% 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.</p> <p>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.</p>

## Implications for Practice

Black men are an “at risk” population in higher education. 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 are needed to better support Black men during college toward graduation and matriculation into their careers post-graduation
- **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

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