

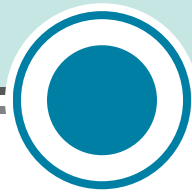
# WHAT WORKS NOW

May 2015

The Campaign for  
College  
Opportunity



LATINOS



BLACKS



ASIAN AMERICANS  
NATIVE HAWAIIANS  
PACIFIC ISLANDERS

## Minority Male Community College Collaborative (M2C3)

*As the Campaign for College Opportunity releases its 2015 State of Higher Education in California: Black Report, we felt it was important to highlight best practices that can support Black student success. This profile is one of two that showcases initiatives that have been proven to help more Black students reach their college dreams.*

The persistent opportunity gap boys of color face throughout their education too often leads them to low success rates as men in college, but two professors at San Diego State University have dedicated their research to reverse this trend. In an ideal world, all students would have equal opportunity to access and success in postsecondary education. However, when Black youth overwhelmingly attend lower performing K-12 schools characterized by an lower than average test scores, inexperienced teachers, lower levels of resources and funding, and insufficient number counselors, a system of unequal access and success exists.<sup>1</sup> In fact, Black students are less likely than students from other major racial/ethnic groups to graduate high school and to do so having completed the A-G coursework that makes them eligible to apply to California's public four-year universities. This is a main reason why 62 percent of all Black students in college in California are enrolled in a California Community College. In 2013-14, only 37 percent of Black community college students were awarded a certificate, degree or transferred within six years compared to 51 percent of White students, a 14-point gap.<sup>2</sup> For Black males, 82 percent of whom enroll at a community

college<sup>3</sup>, successful outcomes closely mirror this gap—36 percent were awarded a certificate, degree or transferred within six years compared to 49 percent of White males.<sup>4</sup>

The Minority Male Community College Collaborative (M2C3) is working to help men of color achieve success rates beyond those of their White counterparts. The Collaborative was created by Dr. Frank Harris III and Dr. J. Luke Wood of San Diego State University and is dedicated to increasing the capacity of community colleges to serve and advance the success of traditionally underrepresented and undeserved men.

M2C3 was formed out of a response to a lack of research focused on men of color in community colleges and was heavily influenced by the work of Dr. Estela Bensimon and the USC Center for Urban Education. Dr. Harris and Wood observed that mounting research on men of color focused on four-year universities, despite the fact that the majority of men of color enroll in a community college, and that strategies for improving the success of men of color at those institutions may not be suitable for community college students. Men of color attending a community college tend to be older, have dependents, are more likely to be married, more likely to work, and have different academic preparation than their peers at four-year institutions. Strategies for improving their success must therefore be tailored to their circumstances.

<sup>1</sup> The Campaign for College Opportunity. (2015). 2015 State of Higher Education in California: Black Report.

<sup>2</sup> California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office 2015 State-wide Student Success Scorecard. Data is for cohort entering in 2008-09.

<sup>3</sup> Harris III, Frank and J. Luke Wood. (2012). Examining the Status of Men of Color in California Community Colleges: Recommendations for State Policymakers. San Diego, CA: Minority Male Community College Collaborative, San Diego State University.

<sup>4</sup> California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Data Mart, Student Success Scorecard Metrics. Data is for cohort entering in 2008-09.

The Collaborative operates with three objectives in mind:

- **Research:** to conduct and disseminate empirical research on the experiences of historically underrepresented and underserved men in community colleges;
- **Professional Development:** to provide professional development for faculty, student services professionals, and administrators that improves practices relevant to men of color in community colleges; and
- **Assessment:** to use assessment and evaluation to facilitate capacity-building within community colleges

"When students aren't successful at an institution, it is the institution's responsibility to do what it takes to find out why they are not successful and to facilitate their success despite any background issues the students may bring to the context."

—Dr. Frank Harris III

### How It Works

Combining Dr. Harris' research on gender and masculinity and Dr. Wood's research on community colleges, practical assessment tools were created to help institutions understand how they can better serve men of color.

The tools are institutional-level assessments that evaluate various factors on a college campus related to the success of men of color. The results act as a starting point for colleges to guide discussion and action around ensuring more men of color reach their college goals.

For example, the Community College Student Success Inventory evaluates an institution's efforts and readiness to facilitate successful outcomes for men of color. According to M2C3, "the inventory comprises overarching categories of institutional action and support: 1) financial aid, 2) student support services, 3) teaching and learning, 4) institutional research, 5) minority male initiatives and programs, and 6) early alert systems. Within each category is a set of

statements or indicators that campuses may find helpful in identifying institutional strengths and areas needing improvement or attention." The tool has been piloted and reviewed by community college faculty, counselors, and administrators and has been published as a valid and reliable tool in the Community College Journal of Research and Practice. It is now one of five that can be used by community colleges, three of which are also free.

Sample questions presented to community college staff:

2. Student Support Services				
Student Support Services: Indicators				
	Not at All	Minimally	Proficiently	Not Applicable
2.1 Summer bridge programming is available at the college for men of color.	○	○	○	○
2.2 Summer bridge or other programs are offered to facilitate students' successful transition to college.	○	○	○	○
2.3 The campus has a mechanism to track the extent to which students use academic support services (e.g., tutoring, computer labs, academic advising, career counseling).	○	○	○	○
2.4 Important academic support services (e.g., math labs, computer labs, writing support) are integrated into remedial and introductory courses.	○	○	○	○
2.5 New student orientation is available.	○	○	○	○
2.6 New student orientation is required.	○	○	○	○
2.7 New student orientation is offered in-person.	○	○	○	○
2.8 Students are required to see an academic advisor/counselor for academic planning.	○	○	○	○

### Connecting Research and Practice

In addition to the creation of the assessment tools, Dr. Harris and Wood work directly with community colleges to improve the success rates of men of color. Essentially, M2C3 is brought to community colleges that are interested in improving their success rates, evaluating existing programs, interventions or other areas of concern regarding men of color. M2C3 creates a proposal that addresses the college's concerns and administers the appropriate assessments to the men of color on campus. For example, the Community College Student Success Inventory contains questions related to a student's sense of belonging, perception of campus culture, efficacy of support services, care from faculty and staff, etc. Focus groups are sometimes used to supplement data collected on student perceptions of the campus as well. While the agreement with the community college can vary, oftentimes Dr. Harris and Wood are asked to analyze the data and create the reports necessary to inform the college's next steps. Next steps can mean additional inquiry or recommended interventions. The reports are broken down by race (Asian American, Black, Latino, Mexican American, Native American, Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian, White) and are made up of three different summaries –information relevant to faculty,

# M2C3 Assessment Tools

- **Community College Survey of Men:**  
an institutional-level needs assessment tool for identifying factors influencing the success of college men of color
- **Community College Student Success Inventory (CCSSI)\*:**  
an institutional self-assessment tool for determining an institution's readiness to facilitate successful outcomes for men of color
- **Male College Program Assessment for College Excellence (M-PACE)\*:**  
an outcomes-based assessment tool for programs and initiatives serving men of color
- **Community College Insights Protocol:**  
a focus group protocol for understanding the perceptions and experiences of students that shape their outcomes in community college settings
- **Community College Instructional Development Inventory\*:**  
an institutional-level inventory form to inform professional development programming for instructional faculty who teach underserved students

\*free tools that can be used by community colleges

information relevant to student services, and information relevant to retention programming.

Each college uses the information differently, but most often it is used to inform professional development among faculty and staff. Effective teaching and learning strategies as well as proactive advising practices are main areas of focus for professional development. Examples include:

- creating assignments that are culturally relevant,
- creating small group assignments where students are required to collaborate,
- performance monitoring to track a student's academic progress toward their goals; and

- creating an early alerts system that would notify the appropriate student services department when a student is not on track to meet their academic goals.

## Success To Date

M2C3:

- has worked with 10 California community college districts over the last 4 years;
- partners with over 65 community colleges in eight states;
- launched the national consortium on College Men of Color earlier this year to support the capacity of community colleges nationwide to enhance outcomes for men of color;
- conducts monthly webinars with over 1,000 participants on a variety of topics in relation to men of color;
- hosts virtual information sharing sessions where colleges involved in the consortium can engage other colleges and share promising practices; and
- facilitates a virtual discussion forum where colleges can ask M2C3 questions or can ask other colleges questions.

## Growing Demand

With President Obama's My Brother's Keeper Initiative, M2C3 has seen a jump in the demand for collaboration. The President's focus on men of color signaled the importance of improving outcomes nationwide. As a result, more colleges are reaching out to work with M2C3, join the consortium, or participate in the free webinars. Additionally, though for years community colleges in California have been required to submit Equity Plans to the Community Colleges Chancellor's Office that ensure historically underrepresented groups in higher education have equal opportunity for access and success, cuts during the recession meant colleges did not have the necessary funding to carry out these plans. This year however, the Governor's state budget allocates money to specifically carry out the activities related to campuses' Equity Plans. This has enabled more institutions to work directly with M2C3.

Most colleges who reach out to work with M2C3 are characterized by a focus on equity at the senior-level (President, Chancellor, Vice President of Student Services, etc.). Given that senior-level leadership play an essential role in setting priorities for their colleges, without their support the work cannot be successful.

## A Final Thought

The work of M2C3 is helping institutions be more targeted and intentional in the interventions they employ to better



serve men of color in their communities, but for the state to see a significant change in outcomes Dr. Harris and Wood suggest creating a statewide initiative focused on boys and men of color. Other states, including Texas, North Carolina, and New York, have already created statewide initiatives. In Texas for example, the Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color ensures partnerships between high schools, community colleges, and universities to support boys and men of color throughout their educational journey. The initiative receives public funding and allows for education systems to learn about the challenges each faces and collaborate in overcoming them.

For more information regarding the Minority Male Community College Collaborative, please contact: Dr. Frank Harris III at [frank.harris@sdsu.edu](mailto:frank.harris@sdsu.edu) or Dr. J. Luke Wood at [luke.wood@sdsu.edu](mailto:luke.wood@sdsu.edu).

“For this work to meet the next stage and for California to change as a whole, working with one institution at a time, while important for that region and for that community, will not have the same kind of impact if it's not done at a state and system level.”  
—Dr. J. Luke Wood



Increasing college graduates to strengthen California

To read our 2015 State of Higher Education in California: The Black Report, please visit our website at [www.collegecampaign.org](http://www.collegecampaign.org).



[www.facebook.com/collegecampaign](http://www.facebook.com/collegecampaign)



[www.twitter.com/CollegeOpp](http://www.twitter.com/CollegeOpp)

714 W. Olympic Boulevard, Suite 745 | Los Angeles, CA 90015 | Tel: 213-744-9434