

Black Student Success at Community Colleges: A Best Practice Guide



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Professional Experience in Black Student Retention and Graduation in College

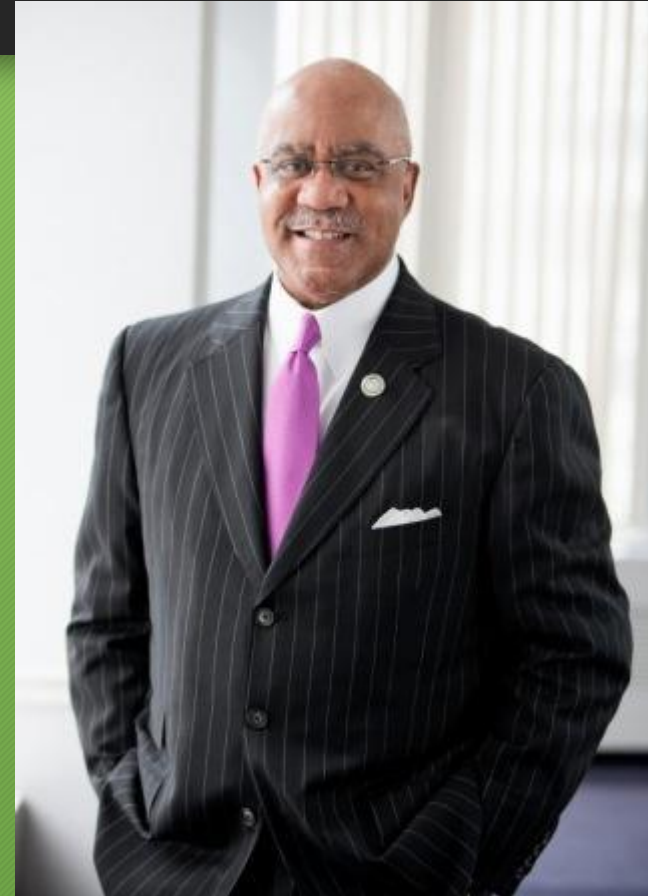


Special Assistant to the President
Equity and Special Programs

- Responsible for successfully creating and enhancing retention, completion and mentoring programs focused on Black and Hispanic Males, which includes elevating the HCC sponsored annual Black, Brown and College Bound National Summit to national prominence.
- Served as Assistant Dean of the Graduate School at The University of South Florida (USF) for Diversity and Student Services.
- 23 year tenure at USF, establishing expertise in creating and directing student retention and scholar programs for disadvantaged and underrepresented students at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Authored eleven federal grants focused on underrepresented student populations, of which nine were funded and valued at over \$11 million.
- Received numerous awards creating and implementing successful programs that produced high retention and completion rates of underrepresented student populations in programs (e.g.) TRIO, USF & NIH funded.

Walter G. Bumphus, President and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC)

“America needs a **highly educated population** to strengthen our place in the world market, grow our economy, and engage in our democracy. But we cannot have an educated workforce and citizenry if our current reality persists.” He further states, “Although this work is difficult, nothing could be more important. Community colleges are grounded in **equity**, and we cannot achieve **equity** until we identify and actively address inequity” (CCCSE, 2014).




AACC Statistical Analysis From February 2016

Demographics of Students Enrolled at Community Colleges by Race/Ethnicity

- Black students make up only 14% of students enrolled for credit at community colleges
- 37% are 21 years of age or younger
- There is a 14% enrollment disparity between female and male students

Demographics of Students Enrolled for Credit

Ethnicity ²	%	Age ¹	%	Gender ²
White	49%	Average	28	
Hispanic	22%	Median	24	
Black	14%	≤21	37%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	6%	22-39	49%	
Native American	1%	40+	14%	
Two or more races	3%			
Other/Unknown	4%			
Nonresident Alien	1%			

Other Student Demographics⁵

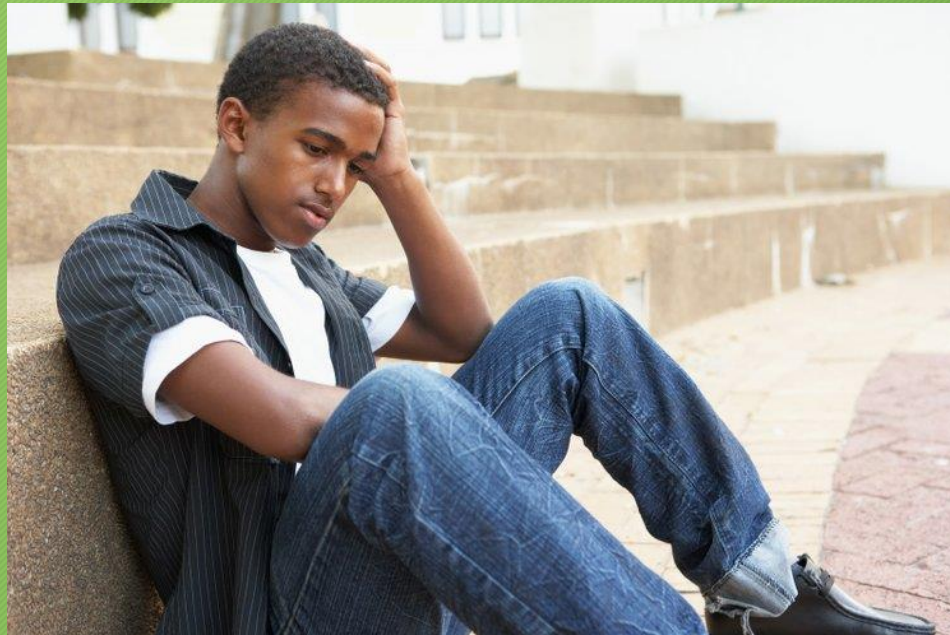
First generation to attend college – 36%
Single parents – 17%
Non-U.S. citizens – 7%
Veterans – 4%
Students with disabilities – 12%

Challenges: Understanding Black Student Enrollment

Amidst demographic studies, national education statistics, and enrollment data, research continues to reveal that **fewer black students are enrolling in college.**

We pose the following questions:

- Are there factors related to success for some populations that might also be associated with success for others?



- Do the lack of resources (e.g., academic advising, financial aid, and tutoring), or the lack of knowledge of how/where to access these resources, negatively impede the academic success of Black students?

Theory of Black Student College Success

- Intrinsic motivation to achieve academically in college is not the initial impetus to motivate the majority of black students from low income and/or first generation backgrounds to be successful.
- Black students need to be convinced that the college experience is a “good fit” for them.
- They are initially motivated extrinsically through the college culture by intangibles, like mutual respect, equal treatment, structured programs, and a “sense of belonging.”



-Dr. Joan Holmes (2016)

The Focus on Black Males in College

- In 2002, Black men comprised only **4.3%** of students enrolled at institutions of higher education, the exact same percentage as in **1976** (Harper, 2006; Strayhorn, 2010)
- Despite some recent progress, only **52% of African American males** and **58% of Latino males** graduate from high school in four years, compared with a rate of **78% for White males** (Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2012)
- Over the past **25 years** Black males have made no progress. They represent only **5%** of all of the undergraduate students, and only **3%** of those in graduate programs. Unfortunately, recent literature review and research about Black men in college reveal that discouragement of Black males to enroll in college begins at the high school level (Ogbu & Wilson 1990; Strayhorn 2008b)
- The goal is to have this population not only become a significant and highly sought-after population, but also to diversify campus communities and further institutional goals.

Four Pillars of Academic Success for Black College Students

Pillar I: Create a Culture of Academic Achievement

Pillar II: Understand Ethnic/Cultural Differences

Pillar III: Expose Students to New Environments and Opportunities

Pillar IV: Provide Adequate Resources, Including Mentoring Experiences



Pillar I: Create a Culture of Academic Achievement

- 1) Affirm Student Potential
- 2) Intentional Academic Planning
- 3) Acknowledge Barriers
- 4) Employ Intrusive Support Programs
- 5) Individualized Academic Follow-up



Pillar II: Understand Ethnic/Cultural Differences



- 1) Focus on the Intake Process
- 2) Host Motivational Forums and Seminars
- 3) Understand Unique Differences
- 4) Establish a College-Wide Diversity Council

Pillar III: Expose Students to New Environments and Opportunities

- A significant number of Black students are enrolled in college, especially in community colleges, from low-income and/or first-generation backgrounds.
- The individual becomes academically and socially linked into the academic and social structures of an institution determines the individual's departure decision.
- The leaving behavior of a student is largely dependent on how he/she integrates into the formal and informal academic and social systems of a college.
- Academic, cultural, or financial factors limit low-income students' educational opportunities.

Pillar IV: Provide Adequate Resources, Including Mentoring Experiences

1. Implement Financial Advising and Mentoring Programs
2. Faculty and Peer Mentoring Programs
3. Establish Cohort Learning Communities



“Best Practices” at Hillsborough Community College: The 4 Pillars in Action

The growth in enrollment of Black students is attributed to HCC college-wide success of targeted recruitment, focus on special student populations, and unique and cutting edge strategies to retain and graduate black students.

Examples are:

- HCC created a partnership with predominantly Black urban high schools, which in turn created a pipeline from high school directly to HCC.
- HCC established a community project called HCC L.I.F.E. (Linking In Fellowship and Education)
- Black, Brown, and College Bound (BBCB) is a national conference which addresses national and local issues of access, retention, and graduation of African American and Latino males.



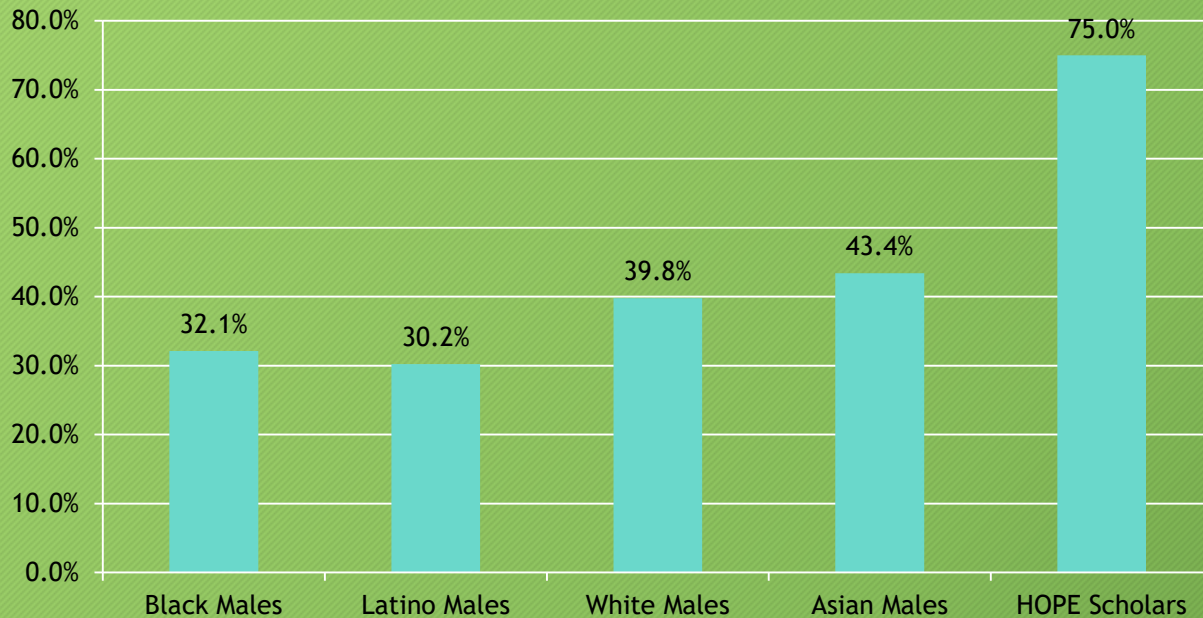
HCC HOPE Scholars Program



- HCC has focused also on the needs of their own minority males by establishing a successful minority male program entitled HOPE (Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally) Scholars Program.
- This program is a college completion and four-year college transfer program targeted to Black and Latino males.
- After four years, **236** males have participated in the program, of which **60%** have completed AA degrees, with an impressive **100%** four-year transfer rate of those who have completed their degrees.

HCC HOPE Scholars Program

Earn a Certificate, Degree, or Transfer to a 4-year Institution within 6 years



- The completion and transfer rates of Black and Latino males in the HOPE Scholars Program far exceed the completion and transfer rates of any other students enrolled at Hillsborough Community College from 2012-2014.
- In addition to the financial support (\$1,000 stipend scholarship per student), academic services, personal support, technology support, college tours, and career guidance contribute to the success of the HOPE Scholars.
- Our dedicated faculty serve as role models, coaches, academic advisors, and big brothers/sisters and are committed to helping the students navigate the path to college completion and beyond.

Conclusion

- Black students in college have unique personal and academic challenges to complete college.
- The Four Pillars have served as foundational threads to help weave the fabric of our institution-wide success.
- Successful initiatives and programs will improve the enrollment, retention, completion and transfer rates of Black students.
- Try to create a local or national platform to include academic professionals, corporate and community leaders to address the crisis to enroll and graduate more black males in colleges

Conclusion

- Create opportunities to promote and report on positive outcomes (statistics, best practices) about successful programs for black students.
- Seek out and engage influential stakeholders, partners, and advocates to strengthen institutional support for the success of black students.
- Establish external pipelines and major forums to surrounding high schools, churches, fraternities/sororities, and other community organizations to recruit black students to your community colleges.

References

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- <http://theatlantavoic.com/news/2013/sep/29/black-men-pain-need-our-help/> (slide 5)
- <http://hbculifestyle.com/class-of-2018-advice/class-of-2018-freshman-success-advice/> (slide 6)
- <https://www.chiefoutsiders.com/blog/bid/94297/The-Four-Basic-Pillars-of-Digital-Economics> (slide 8)
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- <http://www.mcall.com/news/local/easton/mc-easton-shiloh-young-black-talk-20140827-story.html> (slide 10)
- <http://www.betweenclasses.org/black-brown-college-bound/> (slide12)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_4EDEHzXFM (slide 13)