USC Rossier
Pullias Center for Higher Education

Empowering Men of Color in Higher Education:

A Focus on Psychological, Social, and Cultural Factors

Executive Summary

Black, Latino, Native American, Southeast Asian American, and Pacific Islander men, hereafter referred to as men of color, graduate from higher education institutions at lower rates than their same-aged peers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). In 2019, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) identified two major challenges that men of color face on their journey to—and through—higher education: 1) barriers to college enrollment and 2) layered structures that impact degree attainment. To understand the factors that contribute to these two challenges, we conducted a literature review of 70 articles related to the experiences of men of color in higher education. We then used the Psychosociocultural (PSC) Framework (Gloria & Castellanos, 2003; Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000) to capture individual, institutional, and cultural factors that shape students' college experiences, which affords a multi-layered approach to crafting interventions to empower men of color in higher education. The PSC Model builds and adds on previous models of student persistence where historically the responsibility of adapting and assimilation to the university was placed on students. Appropriately, the PSC framework points to a shift of responsibility where institutional agents create and implement policies that help students persist and graduate by holistically attending to their complex needs and experiences. Through this analysis, we categorize major themes from the literature review as addressing either psychological, social, or cultural factors, or a combination of these factors. These themes are then used to provide student affairs practitioners with suggested practices to address these emerging findings related to men of color in the educational pipeline. This report aims to provide practitioners with tangible strategies to holistically attend to the needs of men of color in higher education.

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Introduction

Despite growing enrollment trends in U.S. higher education systems for all students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020), Black, Latino, Native American, Southeast Asian American, and Pacific Islander men are not matriculating or graduating from college at similar rates as their women counterparts[1] (Pérez Huber et al., 2015; NCES, 2020). Colleges and universities have responded to the pressing national challenges of low persistence, and low degree attainment, for men of color by creating gender and ethnic-specific retention programs (Brooms, 2018). However, there is still concern from researchers, policymakers, and practitioners over whether higher education institutions nationwide are intentionally promoting strategies and implementing the best practices to address and support the multifaceted needs of men of color in postsecondary education (Brooms, 2018; Brooms et al., 2018; Clark et al., 2013). While colleges and universities have begun to respond to these challenges, both the current global pandemic and egregious systemic racism have further exposed that men of color experience inequities in higher education, encounter increased surveillance, and face hostile police interactions. Public and private leaders in all sectors, including higher education, have intentionally engaged in critical discussions around institutional inequities and interpersonal factors. The overarching goal is to highlight unhealthy exclusionary practices, and brainstorm remedies to combat white supremacy embedded in different systems and structures.

Problem Statement

Nationally, fewer than 20% of men of color possessed a four-year college degree in 2012 (Pérez Huber et al., 2015). These numbers have not improved in close to 10 years (NCES, 2020) and have drawn national concern—prompting responses from philanthropy, postsecondary institutions, and policymakers that address how college climates have diminished retention and persistence (Museus et al., 2017). Many colleges and universities are not fully aware of men of color's intersectional needs and have yet to develop appropriate institutional responses to address these students' depressed retention and graduation rates (Clark et al., 2013). Many college campuses also have not considered how the college environment and institutional factors contribute to students' lack of connection with faculty, staff, and administration (Museus et al., 2017; Huerta, 2020; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Rendon, 1994). The disconnection leads to perceptions that individual student failure is outside the scope of professional and moral responsibility and that students "should know" how to navigate a "hidden curriculum." This sends forth the message that students **should** be successful, through the promotion of **grit** and **growth mindset**, in higher education with limited intentional actions and systematic support from the college administration.

Within intentionally supportive college environments (Huerta, 2020; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Rendon, 1994), institutional agents should understand the interconnectedness of psychological, social, and cultural factors and how they inform men of color programming, whereby positively impacting enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates (Gloria & Castellanos, 2003; Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000).

Fewer than 20% of men of color possessed a four-year college degree in 2012.

These numbers have not improved in close to 10 years.

1 We as scholars and practitioners acknowledge that gender is a social construct (Connell, 2005; Thorn, 1993). To date, state and federal data collection measures do not fully capture the gender experiences outside of the male and female categorization.

National Review of Selected Men of Color Literature

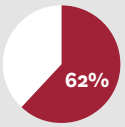
In order to address diminished rates of college attainment, our team conducted a literature review of 70 articles focused on the college experiences of men of color. This review highlights several key factors inhibiting enrollment and degree attainment for men of color in higher education. The key findings were categorized and framed to address the psychological, social, or cultural factors, or a combination of these, using the Psychosociocultural (PSC) framework (see Gloria & Castellanos, 2003; Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000). Through the PSC framework, we provide recommendations for addressing the key findings that attend to the intersectional needs of men of color. The value and utility of the PSC framework is grounded in an asset-based and holistic lens that centers the complex experiences of men on color in higher education, the role of the overall college environment, and the **undeniable function that institutional agents play** in increasing persistence for this student population.

Major Topics Arising from the Literature:

Enrollment. Over half (62%) of men of color college students began their higher education pathway directly at two-year institutions. Black (42%), Latino (52%), Native American (57%), and Pacific Islander (39%) men have the highest overall rates of community college enrollment, respectively (NCES, 2020). There is a growing body of literature on men of color in community colleges (Briscoe et al., 2020; Burmicky et al., 2019; Harris & Wood, 2013; Huerta & Fishman, 2014; Keflezighi et al., 2016; Wood et al., 2015).

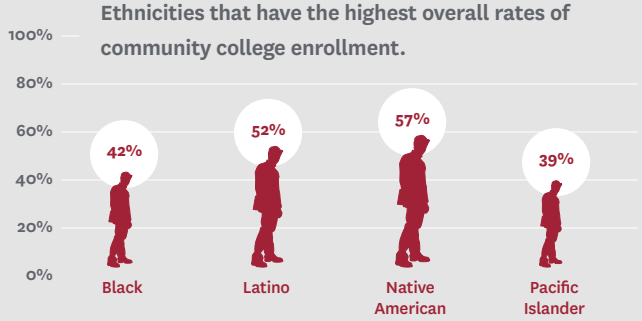
In addition to placing greater attention to the systemic state funding sources of community colleges and their influence on students of color (Nix et al., 2020), more research should explore the specific programming provided at community colleges and how institutions respond to men of color's social and academic needs.

As some men of color aim to transfer from a two-year college to a four-year institution, others desire either a credential or to enhance vocational skills for non-degree programs (Rodriguez et al., 2016). However, there remain gaps in research about the best practices to support men of color in community colleges, as the focus is on individual or single case study findings, often leaving practitioners to draw inspiration from scholarship focused on boys and men of color in high schools and four-year settings (Huerta et al., 2020; Brooms, 2019; Harper, 2009, 2012; Harper & Kuykendall, 2012; Sáenz, et al., 2018; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005).



Over half of men of color college students began their higher education pathway directly at community colleges.

Ethnicities that have the highest overall rates of community college enrollment.



Degree Attainment. The social and academic factors that impeded degree attainment for men of color clearly indicate how college environments (e.g., connections to mentors, faculty, and support services), coupled with high cost of attendance, matter in determining semester-to-semester persistence (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Huerta & Fishman, 2014; Pérez & Sáenz, 2017). In 2018-2019, men of color across multiple racial and ethnic groups earned fewer bachelor's degrees compared to their women counterparts (NCES, 2019). Our literature analysis demonstrates the urgency for researchers and practitioners to intentionally learn about the specific needs of

Institutions should not favor only one or two specific groups at the expense of the third or fourth populations with the assumption that some groups do not need support or services.

men of color contextually, geographically, and ethnically, all of which can inform policies and programming to move these students from two-year to four-year institutions. For example, if a given university serves 40% Black students, 20% Latino students, and 4% Native American students, respectively, then it is essential to intentionally center the diverse and multifaceted needs of all three racial and ethnic groups.

Qualitative Designs. Our analysis highlights that nearly half of the 70 research studies used qualitative research designs. Thirty-five qualitative articles collectively found that support systems facilitate persistence for men of color in community colleges and four-year universities. Our analysis of these studies further supported that students of color demonstrate a reluctance to seek out support systems related to academics, mental health, or even friendships due to societal and cultural expectations of masculinity and an overall lack of intentionality in college-based program design to address these needs. Findings underscored the importance of men-of-color-specific programming, ethnic organizations and fraternities, and mentorship programs in all sectors of education systems to address the stigma surrounding help-seeking behaviors. Empirical literature also recommends creating a student-based curriculum that attends to the intersectional dimensions of identity (race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.) that are often siloed in higher education programming by one race, gender, or ethnicity.

The insights generated from qualitative research provide an adequate foundation upon which to develop measures and research designs that quantitatively assess the effectiveness of interventions and men of color student success.

Through our review, we found few quantitative studies exclusively focused on the experiences of men of color. Of the quantitative designs, the sample sizes were too small to generalize.

Ethnic and Racial Focus. Our literature review analysis found that an overwhelming majority of scholarship on men of color concentrated on Black and Latino men; only six articles focused on Southeast Asian American and Pacific Islander men. In addition, we found only one study focused on the specific needs of Native American men in higher education.

The absence of such focus leads us to believe that there is a gap in a shared understanding of the social and academic needs of Southeast Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and biracial men in higher education and men of color programs.

Given the continued demographic changes in higher education, it is critical to document how non-Black and Latino men navigate and experience college and sources of support to reach graduation. Further research on these populations would provide a fuller understanding of the issues and potential solutions for men of color, thereby promoting racial equity overall. Moreover, research on these populations aligns with the realities of changing demographics and the need for better data collection tools used by institutions and the government at multiple levels.

Institutional Context. Our analysis found that a majority of the literature we reviewed focused on four-year public and private institutions while few centered on the community college experience. The importance of concentrating on four-year institutions is grounded in the conclusions in multiple studies that enrollment and persistence in four-year institutions lead to an increased likelihood for social mobility for college graduates (Brooms, 2018; Brooms et al., 2018; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Luedke, 2017, 2018). Collectively, we found three themes on the scholarship on men of color in four-year colleges: (1) campus environment experiences play a greater role than student backgrounds in predicting a higher sense of belonging, (2) social integration at a four-year institution differs than at a two-year college partly due to different familial obligations, degree objectives, and resources available to support men of color, and (3) connecting college men to a culturally enriching environment where the validation of humanizing practices between institutional agents and students contributes to an improved sense of belonging and increased persistence. These three themes—pertaining to campus environment, social integration, and humanizing practices—reveal

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that in an effort to address the overall treatment of men of color across two- and four-colleges and universities, the complex college environments should be an area of focus for student affairs personnel and faculty. Future research should investigate high school and two-year campus settings to uncover data that better informs practitioners on the investment of more resources and gender-ethnic-specific programming in these locations. This will improve the experiences of men of color when they transition to new academic environments.

Notably, Dr. Victor Sáenz spearheads **Project MALES at the University of Texas-Austin**, a mentoring program actively advancing a shared understanding of Black and Latino men's experiences in the educational pipeline in Texas. This model bridges the interconnectedness of the K-16 model to show how higher education and K-12 need to work in partnership to solve college access challenges for boys and men of color.

Challenges in the Higher Education Journey

With the overlapping geopolitical crisis tied to COVID-19, increasing economic instability, and racial violence towards people of color, higher education institutions must be proactive in creating structures to prepare college graduates to become civically engaged in multiethnic communities. These efforts are needed to advance men of color to participate in and complete college degrees and credentials. The unfortunate reality is that men of color maintain significantly lower completion rates than their women counterparts (NCES, 2020). The demands and tensions that lead to decreased college credential and degree attainment for men of color have remained persistent. The collective impact of socialization, expectations, and interactions for boys and men of color in the educational pipeline frames how, why, and when they engage and matriculate to different stages of the educational system. The gendered pathways through education for boys and men of color influence if they develop meaningful relationships with educators and other trusted figures. For example, college men, who are struggling academically or emotionally, are less likely to seek support from peers, family members, or institutional agents who support and advocate for students (Huerta, 2020; Sáenz et al., 2015). A driving force for these decisions is that college men do not fully trust that others will be openly willing to help and support them during their crises. Men are taught to be resilient, cavalier, and independent in constructing and locating solutions; hence, they may choose to cope on their own (Rodriguez et al., 2016).

In 2018-2019, men of color across multiple racial and ethnic groups earned fewer bachelor's degrees compared to their women counterparts.

Psychological, Social, and Cultural Factors Contributing to Enrollment and Degree Attainment for Men of Color

To address issues of enrollment and degree attainment for men of color, we draw on the Psychosociocultural Framework to categorize major themes from the literature review as addressing either psychological, social, or cultural factors, or a combination of these factors. The PSC model is an empirically proven tool for staff and faculty to gain a deeper understanding of the unique and nuanced factors that may hinder or facilitate persistence for college students of color. As noted through previous research on student persistence where the task was placed on the student to persist, assimilate, and overcome, the PSC model allows us, as institutional agents, to recognize the multiple dimensions and complex college experiences of men of color. Lastly, the PSC model allows us to factor in cultural values and think through actionable steps to change campus culture and address challenges of enrollment and degree attainment for men of color. Although forty-three articles focused primarily on psychological, social, or cultural factors, we would like to note that twenty-seven articles focused on a combination of two factors or all three factors—further demonstrating the interconnectedness of these factors in student persistence.

Psychological Factors

Castellanos and Gloria (2007) define psychological factors as self-esteem, motivation, and self-efficacy. Psychological factors affect racial and ethnic minoritized students' personal adjustment to college campus environments and contribute to their persistence in the college setting. While our analysis found that only four of the 70 studies concentrated solely on psychological factors leading to men of color's persistence, it should be noted that further studies are needed to address these factors and how programming can be developed to support the personal adjustment of men of color. Some highlights from the literature review, supported with additional sources outside of the 70 studies, include:

- **Aspirations to earn graduate-level degrees are associated with higher persistence rates in undergraduate education for Black and Latino men.** Therefore, it is important to create support networks of individuals who encourage Black and Latino men to set high expectations for themselves in higher education (Strayhorn, 2008; Huerta & Fishman, 2014, 2019).
- **Media portrayals heavily perpetuate negative stereotypes of Black and Latino boys and young men as unintelligent and underachieving** (Howard, 2014; Rios, 2011). This representation ultimately impacts how men of color view themselves and others from their communities (Howard et al., 2019).
- **Perceptions of academic unpreparedness for young Black and Latino men will likely have a negative impact on their ability to handle college academic rigor** (Ballysingh, 2019; Carey, 2019; Huerta, 2016). These expectations can influence men of color's sense of self-efficacy and future educational outcomes (Papageorge et al., 2020). Therefore, college educators must consider how potential racial biases can affect subjective grading in classrooms (Malouff & Thorsteinsson, 2016).
- **The mitigation of feelings of shame after academic failures is crucial to increasing feelings of self-efficacy related to academic tasks in college, which in turn helps with motivation and persistence** (Sáenz, et al., 2015; Schwab & Dupuis, 2020). These efforts need to center and affirm growth opportunities for students—and deconstruct false notions that men of color do not need support while in college.
- **The integration of social control practices in schools and communities has amplified the deficit perceptions of Black and Latino boys.** The deficit amplification plays into the perceptions that Black and Latino boys and young men are threats to police and the local community. (Huerta & Rios-Aguilar, 2018; Johnson et al., 2018; Rios, 2011; Rios et al., 2020). Jenkins et al. (2020) highlight Black men's experiences of being treated as outsiders

Q. What are my internalized beliefs about men of color and their abilities? How can I work to fight against deficit-beliefs I may hold?

A.

Q. What concrete strategies can I take to empower men of color to challenge negative beliefs they may hold about themselves?

A.

instead of students when confronted by campus police. This adverse treatment causes Black college men to feel unwelcome on university campuses (Jenkins et al., 2020). Colleges and universities must have critical conversations about how to effectively utilize campus police departments and retool training to confront biases and the targeting of people of color on college campuses as there is a growing call to protect students from police and campus violence perpetuated by college police officers (Davis & Dizon, 2020).

Our report urges higher education institutions to provide men of color with more holistic support systems. Findings also show the need to address campus policing and any reported mistreatment in classrooms and the broader academic and social environments. Necessary reforms will help men of color cope and navigate with the evolving and national tension in relation to the deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Andrés Guardado, and countless other people of color at the hands of police officers. With these findings in mind, we encourage practitioners to pause and reflect on the following questions:

- What are my internalized beliefs about men of color and their abilities? How can I work to fight against deficit-beliefs I may hold?
- What concrete strategies can I take to empower men of color to challenge negative beliefs they may hold about themselves?

Social Factors

Building on the psychological factors outlined above, Castellanos and Gloria (2007; 2003) focused on the social factors that students experience in college environments. Social support systems can come from various sources, ranging from family, or on- and off-campus mentors, peers, faculty, and other institutional agents (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Huerta & Fishman, 2014; Pérez & Sáenz, 2017). In our literature review, 15 of the 70 studies examined how social factors influenced college-aged men of color. Institutions should not underestimate how social factors contribute to students' individualized succes, as college educators often assume all students know how to navigate higher education if they choose to enroll (Jack, 2016). Some highlights from the literature review include:

- **Mentorship plays a crucial role in student persistence** (Brooms et al., 2018; Huerta & Fishman, 2014; Luedke, 2017; Sáenz, et al., 2015; Keflezighi et al., 2016; Gibson, 2014). Mentorships matched for similar racial and ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and gender tend to have the greatest success. In addition, conversations about nonacademic topics were shown to be important in mentoring relationships, as they foster authenticity and vulnerability between mentor and mentee.
- **Pairing college men of color with institutional agents, including staff and faculty, may help increase a sense of belonging** (Brooms, 2018; Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Colleges and universities can offer "introduction to college success" courses focused on building relationships between college men of color and faculty members with whom they can identify. Torrens et al. (2017) argue for university leaders to play an active role in strategically planning and setting aside a budget for mentorship initiatives. Faculty members of color are often overburdened with mentoring and service; they should therefore be compensated for their time and energy - or at the very least have course releases as they mentor men of color on their campuses. Previous research on mentoring signals a large pay off for the individual students, but also institutionally, socially, and economically in increased retention and completion rates (Burt, 2015), as well as the potential impact of alumni returning to campus to mentor students in a virtuous circle (Priest & Donley, 2014; Garza, 2020).

Q. How can I be intentional in creating networks of support for men of color through my work?

A.

These findings provide further evidence that institutional agents play a key role in increasing persistence for men of color in higher education—particularly, through intentional mentor matching. It is imperative that programs are strategic and intentional in creating mentorship programs to match mentees with faculty or staff mentors who directly reflect their identities.

We encourage practitioners to pause and reflect on the following questions:

- How can I be intentional in creating networks of support for men of color through my work?
- How can I pair and support men of color with mentors whose identities reflect theirs?

Cultural Factors

Lastly, Castellanos and Gloria (2003; 2007) examined cultural factors (e.g., ethnic identity, university context, and cultural congruity) and how they contribute to students' persistence in higher education. In our literature review, 24 of the 70 studies focused solely on the cultural factors men of color experience in higher education. It is key for college personnel to address the intersection of individual and environmental cultural factors for college men of color in order to examine how their campuses are working to support or hinder student success. Some highlights from the literature review include:

- **Financial aid directors and officers must reevaluate how they use professional discretion to provide supplemental financial aid for men of color on their campuses.** Researchers have found that Latino men face the pressure to provide financially for their families due to machismo (exaggerated masculinity) and familismo (dedication and commitment to family) (Salinas & Hidrowoh, 2017). Since community colleges serve a high number of Latino college men, they must be mindful of cultural factors, such as machismo and familismo, that may affect these students' willingness to take out loans to finance their education. We encourage financial aid staff to use developmental approaches, instead of punitive efforts to shame students for asking for help or pressuring men of color to seek full-time employment or additional financial aid resources. It is essential for financial aid offices to be culturally sensitive and establish more trusting relationships with men of color.
- **College men of color may be reluctant to form peer-networks with other men of color.** This stems from the fear of adopting traits deemed as "feminine" such as emotional intimacy and vulnerability. Multiple studies have documented that men of color feel internal and external pressures to be self-reliant. The pressures men of color feel in academic settings revolve around a cultural stigma of help-seeking behavior, which leads to an avoidance of help-seeking from campus services as well as staff and faculty.

We encourage campus leaders and practitioners to pause and reflect on the following:

- How do expectations based on race and ethnicity hinder help-seeking for men of color? How can I facilitate conversations regarding expectations of gender and masculinity?
- What is the state of my campus culture? What role do I play in that culture? How can I change the campus culture to better support men of color?

Q. What is my campus culture currently like? How can I change the campus culture to better support men of color?

A.

Implications for Practitioners on Persistence and Attainment for Men of Color

This report provides examples of key findings related to psychological, social, and cultural factors contributing to enrollment and degree attainment issues for men of color in higher education. It also encourages practitioners to pause and reflect on internal beliefs around men of color, as well as how to best develop programming structures to support their success. In this final section, we share additional implications for how higher education practitioners can further develop programming that is intentional and holistic in an effort to address the complex needs of men of color.

☐ **Provide exposure to careers, internships, and graduate school.**

Colleges and universities need to be intentional about early exposure to careers and graduate school education. If men of color are aware of the value and practical utility of career-related internships, these opportunities can support future placement and increase professional networks (Hora et al., 2019). Additionally, there are strong relationships between higher retention and persistence rates for undergraduate students of color and early exposure to graduate school (Luedke et al., 2019; Ramirez, 2011, 2013).

☐ **Identify strengths and utilize asset-based rather than deficit-based approaches when working with men of color. Practitioners should be mindful of internal stereotypes and deficit-perspectives held about men of color.**

They should explore reading clubs to examine how individual racism and color-blind ideologies impact interactions with men of color. It is important to recognize the multiple racial and ethnic populations being served by the university, and their historical experiences in the U.S. through enslavement, colonization, and oppressive systems of social control.

☐ **Challenge and redefine traditional ideas of masculinity.**

Throughout this report, we highlight how pre-college and college environments contribute to gender and masculinity performance. Repeated exposure to racial profiling and police brutality weighs heavy on the mental health of Black and Latino men (Bor et al., 2018; Howard, 2014; Huerta, 2018; Fergus et al., 2014; Lee & Robinson, 2019; Rios, 2011; Rios et al., 2020). Two- and four-year colleges could explore the design and implementation of healing circles within their men of color programming in an effort to explore and deconstruct gender and gender norms for this population. Discussions of individual therapy or counseling benefits can encourage more students to recognize when they require help or motivation to seek support within and outside higher education.

☐ **Create culturally engaging campuses.**

Men of color thrive more when campuses are culturally engaging. The creation of ethnic studies courses and the deliberate training of faculty to revise curricula to be more diverse or culturally relevant regarding issues of race, gender, or class provides significant educational opportunities. In addition, there should be a deliberate conversation around financial support and encouragement to increase ethnic student organization which can enhance the benefits of peer-led social support for students of color.

☐ **Cultivate and build men-of-color-specific spaces.**

Institutions should create programming with safe spaces where men of color can be surrounded by other men of color to discuss culturally relevant topics related to manhood and masculinity. Though men of color programs cannot solve all retention and persistence problems for men of color, they can serve as a catalyst for strategic conversations about the needs that men of color face in two- and four-year institutions. Additionally, high schools should develop spaces for boys of color to build college-going identities and behaviors.

☐ **Use social media as a tool for education and fostering inclusive communities.**

Social media impacts students' psychosociocultural identity; it is constantly present and can either encourage or discourage students in their academic pursuits. Yao (2018) found that social media provides a new way of teaching antiracist pedagogy as well as making it accessible to the public. Campuses should consider using social media for counter stories – those highlighting academic, social, and historical accomplishments of students of color.

☐ **Implement allyship training.**

Allyship training can help faculty and staff support and work with men of color. In doing so, faculty and staff will be equipped to deconstruct the power dynamic between students and faculty/staff. Allyship training must start with courageous and intentional conversations that support all men of color and their experiences on campus. College men of color need campus-based advocates to prompt institutional change and provide support systems that increase persistence.

☐ **Institute mentorship programs with institutional agents and peer-advising.**

The intentional development of academic and peer mentorship programs focused on building relationships between advanced undergraduate students, graduate students, or faculty members and men of color is found to be supportive and can help increase persistence (Gardenhire et al., 2016; Huerta, 2020; Huerta & Fishman, 2014, 2019). Opportunities for peer and professional mentoring and advising can foster a new sense of community and connection to programs and services that can support men of color. Campuses should focus on intentionally developing such relationships to socially support and academically guide men of color through hidden curriculum such as faculty office hours, campus tutoring services, requests for deadline extensions, and self-advocacy for resources, services, or mentoring (Calarco, 2018; Jack, 2019). As noted in the literature, college men are less likely to openly communicate their feelings of academic struggles (Schwab & Dupuis, 2020).

☐ **Acknowledge the importance of family and integrate cultural values into conversations on academics.**

For example, practitioners working with Latino men need to be aware of the importance of family, as failure to do so may negatively impact staff and student relationships (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000). Colleges and universities must work to build opportunities to welcome families beyond orientation, homecoming, and graduation celebrations.

☐ **Go beyond one-size-fit-all demographic boxes.**

It is important for practitioners to empirically document through either qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method research designs the successes and challenges to support men of color on their local college campus. These practitioner efforts are important to contribute to the scholarly conversations on what works and how they work to promote persistence and retention of men of color in various higher education ecosystems. We also strongly recommend participation in higher education and student affairs regional and national conferences.

Conclusion

In this report, our literature review was framed using the Psychosocialcultural framework (Gloria & Castellanos, 2003; Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000), and our analysis recognized that men of color face specific and nuanced obstacles on their journey to and through higher education. The intersection of race and gender raises issues pertaining to culture and masculinity that must be addressed to bring forth the untapped potential of men of color that is often overlooked due to negative media portrayals and stereotypes that may be reinforced by authority figures. With these issues in mind, practitioners, campus leaders, and faculty must take responsibility in creating and implementing programs and policies to empower men of color. They must also draw from the practical implications highlighted above to attend to the psychological, social, and cultural needs of their men of color students. Finally, the needs of men of color in community colleges and four-year universities require more attention, especially in terms of how faculty, staff, and administration create receptive or hostile cultures for this student population. It is imperative that institutions work with an equity and holistic perspective to address students' needs from the moment they enroll through the day they graduate.

Guiding Questions for Institutional Agents

Psychological Factors:

- ☐ What are my internalized beliefs about men of color and their abilities? How can I work to fight against deficit-beliefs I may hold?
- ☐ What concrete strategies can I take to empower men of color to challenge negative beliefs they may hold about themselves?

Social Factors:

- ☐ How can I be intentional in creating networks of support for men of color through my work? How can I pair and support men of color with mentors whose identities reflect theirs?

Cultural Factors:

- ☐ How do expectations based on race and ethnicity hinder help-seeking for men of color?
- ☐ How can I facilitate conversations regarding expectations of gender and masculinity?
- ☐ What is my campus culture currently like? How can I change the campus culture to better support men of color?

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Since 1995, the mission of the Pullias Center for Higher Education is to bring a multidisciplinary perspective to complex social, political, and economic issues in higher education. Our work is devoted to the key issues of college access, retention, and accountability for underserved students—and the effectiveness of the colleges and universities that serve them. Both directly and through our research, we engage with institutional leaders, policymakers and the community at large to address the major challenges in educational equity today. For more information, please visit: **https://pullias.usc.edu**

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