

REALIZING THE DREAMS:
Critical Considerations for Developing an
African American Male Collegiate Initiative



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High School Selected Findings

Achievement

- Low academic achievement, high grade level repetition, and overpopulation in special education programs were all factors that were found to impede achievement for African American, Latino, and Native American males.

Persistence

- High dropout rates were found to be a barrier to persistence for young men of color in all race/ethnic groups. Additional barriers exist for African Americans and Native American males including high rates of absenteeism and high numbers of suspensions/expulsions.

Support

- These students lack many educational necessities, including support in schools, teacher expectations or caring teachers, caring counselors or counselor engagement, and positive teacher student relationships.

Higher Education Selected Findings

Access & Participation

- Low academic achievement, high grade repetition, and overpopulation in special education programs were all factors that were found to impede access to and participation in higher education for African American, Latino, and Native American males.

Achievement/ Persistence

- Forced classroom participation, lack of financial support, failure to seek support services and difficulty navigating home and school all served as barriers to persistence for African American males in higher education.

Support

- Across all race/ethnic groups, supportive campus climates are shown to be important for student success.

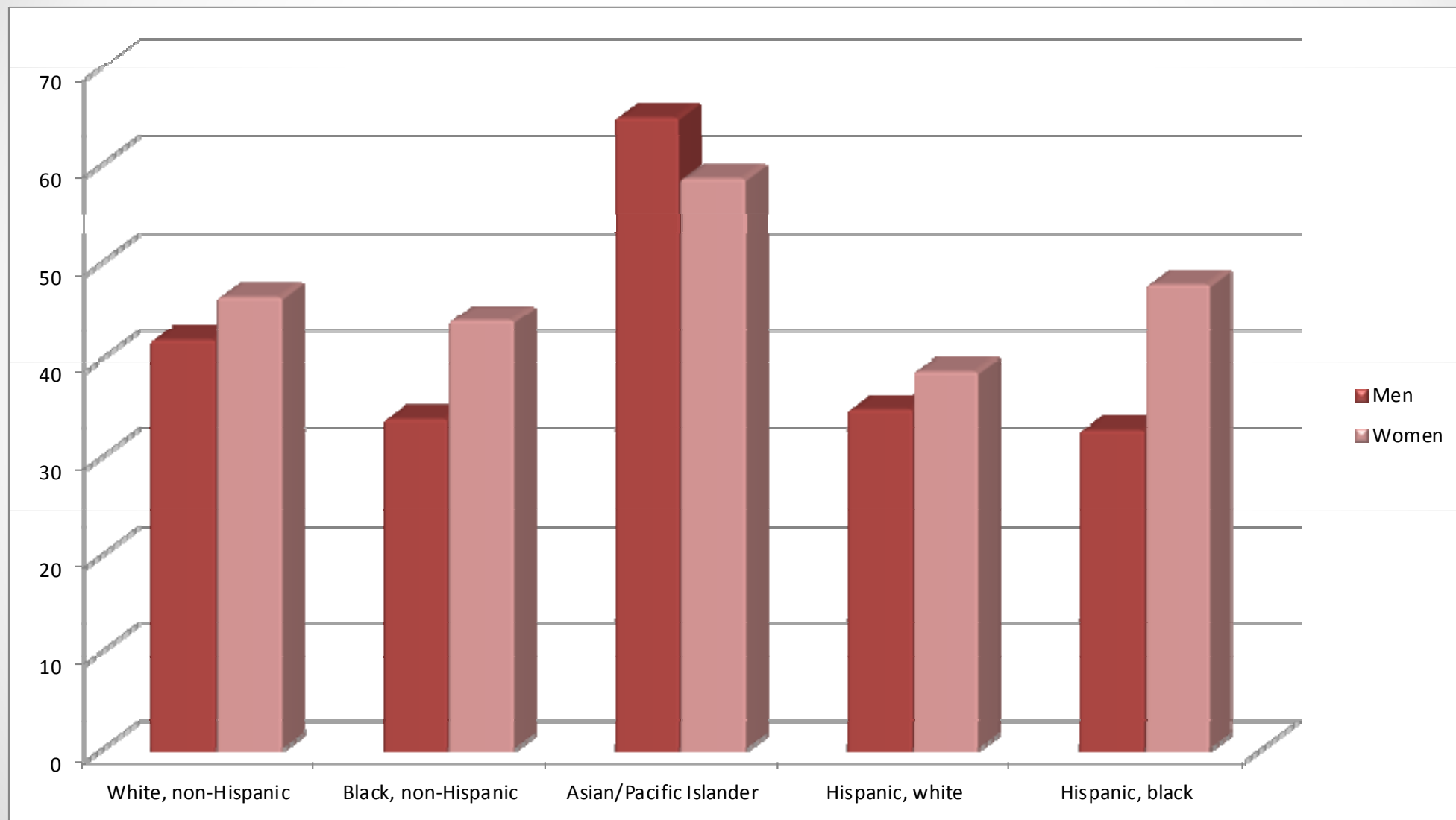
What Do We Know?

- Dismal educational performance among African American males begins before college.
- Less than half (47%) of all African American males in high school complete a diploma on time vs. 78% of White male students.
- In 2002, African American males were 4.3% of all student participants in postsecondary education, the same percentage as 1976.
- African American males often less prepared for the rigors of college-level work than other groups



Sources: Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2010; Penn Center for the Study of Race & Equity in Education, 2011

College Retention Rates among 18-24 Year Olds

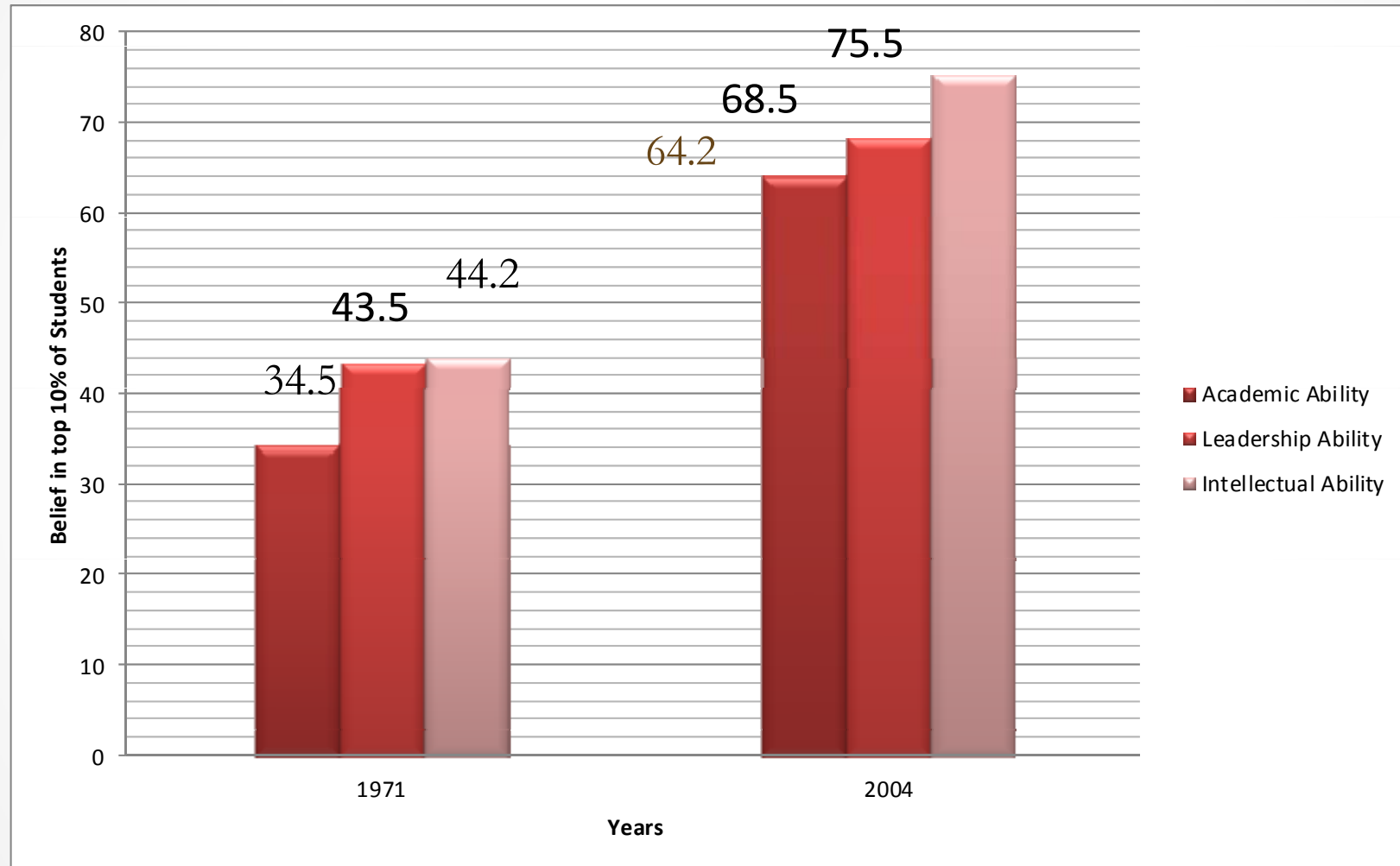


Source: Postsecondary Education Opportunity (NCES, 2009)

Complicating the Collegiate Picture

- Black men are overrepresented on revenue-generating intercollegiate sports teams
- In 2009, they were only 3.6% of undergraduate students, but 55.3% of football and basketball players at public NCAA Division I institutions (Harper, 2012)
- Emerging research suggests African American male self-perceptions do not match college trends

Self-Perceptions of Abilities among African American Male College Freshmen



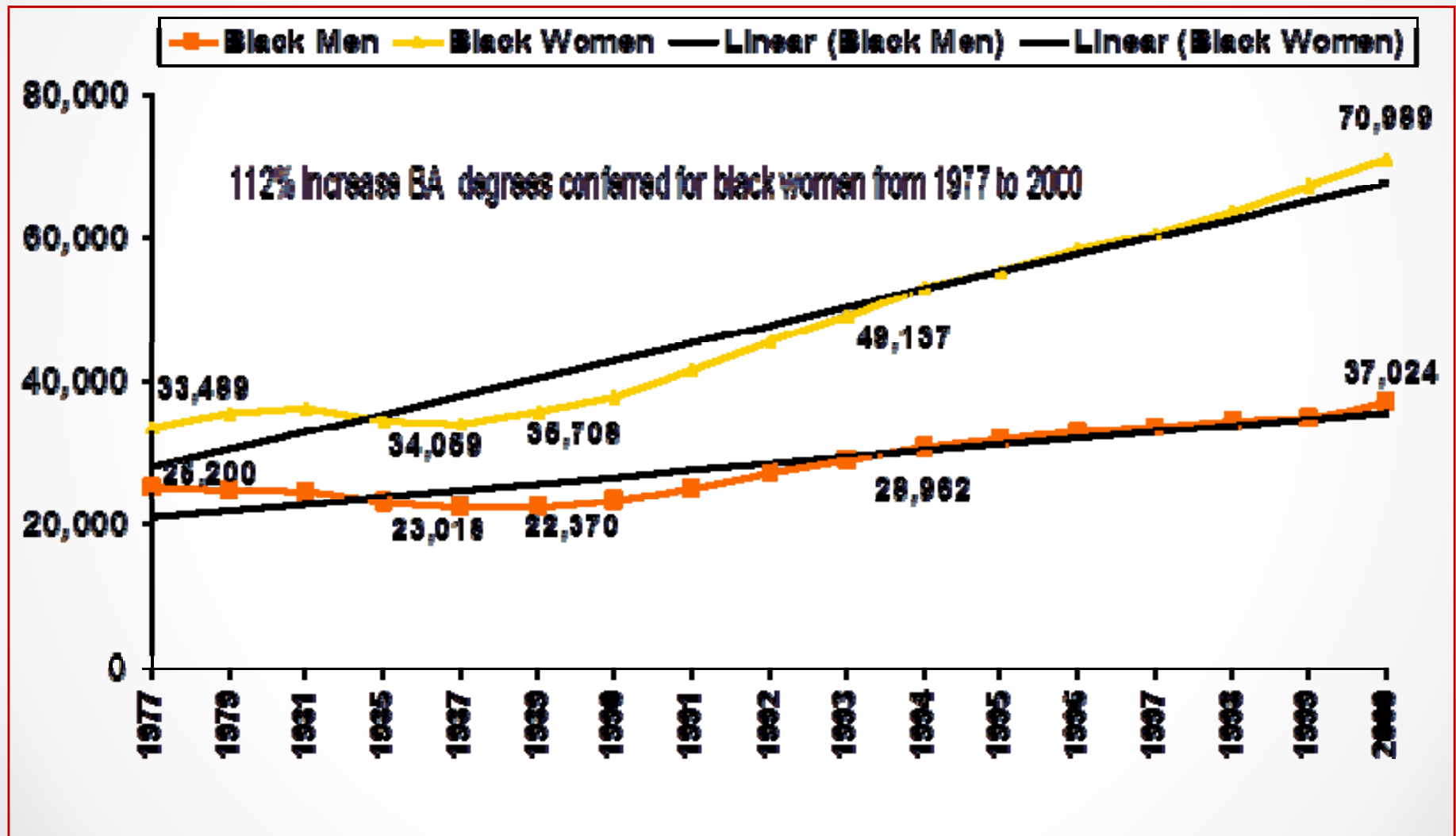
Source: (Allen, Griffin, Jayakumar, Kimura-Walsh, & Wolf, 2007)

Why Should We Care?



- Higher Education Policy Priorities:
 - Federal interest in making the United States the best educated country in the world by 2020
 - Colleges and universities consistently pressured to demonstrate “productivity” through increased enrollment and retention
- African American men’s degree attainment across is alarmingly low, especially in comparison to African American women
- Institutions (un)intentionally mishandle or underserve African American males, compromising national and global interests

Bachelor's Degrees Conferred by Degree-Granting Institutions



Source: UNCF Frederick Patterson Institute, 2000

Trends in Scholarship



- Enrollment/College Choice
 - Guidance counselors found to do more harm than help (Dancy, 2012; Davis & Polite, 1999; Harper, 2012)
 - Families are an important source for encouraging college enrollment & completion (Dancy, 2012; Davis & Polite, 1999; Harper, 2012; Palmer & Dancy, 2009)
- Academic and Social Engagement
 - Achievement and sense of belonging undermined by institutional stereotypes (Cuyjet, 1997; Dancy, 2012; Hopkins, 1997; Harper et. al, 2004)
 - AA males report inequities by faculty, staff, and students, despite available institutional services (Cuyjet, 1997; Dancy & Brown, 2007; Davis, 1994).
 - AA males take fewer notes in class, spend less time writing papers and assignments, participate less frequently in campus activities, hold fewer leadership positions, and report lower grades (Cuyjet, 1997; Harper et. al, 2004).
 - African American males benefit significantly from involvement in college activities, student government, volunteering opportunities, supportive relationships & mentoring (Dancy, 2012; Harper, 2012; Strayhorn, 2010)

A Conceptual Framework for Engagement

- Participating in activities that reflect good institutional practice
- Good institutional practice:
 - Encourages frequent student faculty conduct
 - Encourages cooperation among students
 - Encourages active learning
 - Gives prompt feedback
 - Emphasizes time on task
 - Communicates high expectations
 - Respects diverse talents and different ways of learning



Trends in Scholarship

- HBCU and PWI differences
 - AA males likely to feel less marginalized at HBCUs (Brown & Freeman, 2004; Lamont, 1979; Roebuck & Murty, 1993; Willie & McCord, 1972)
 - Enrollment rate at PWIs steadily increasing (Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991; Davis, 1994)
 - Connecting AA males to programs, activities and services that help them feel centered is linked to positive achievement and retention outcomes (DeSousa & Kuh, 1996; Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1987; Nettles et al., 1986; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1985)

Extant Scholarship

- Men's perceptions of gender norms on campus
(Dancy, 2010; T. L. Davis, 2002, Harper, 2007, Harris, 2010)
- How gender and masculinity influences college engagement and achievement (Dancy, 2011; J. E. Davis, 1994; 1995)
- The men's group and/or fraternity dynamic in both disrupting and influencing manhood and masculinity in college (Dancy, 2012; Jones, 2006; McClure, 2004)

Conceptual Issues

- Male is biological; Man is socially constructed
- Manhood is state of “being”
 - What it means to be a man – ideals about who men are and should be
 - Shaped by multiple identities, positions, and selves
- Masculinity is a state of “doing” - behavior, demonstration, or performative acts associated with men

Institutional Stewardship

- *Student African American Brotherhood (SAAB)*
- Focuses on leadership development among AA high school and collegiate males
- Teams with Habitat for Humanity and Big Brothers and Sisters of America.
- Academic and career counseling.
- Cultural and spiritual enrichment programs and services.
- Black males in college are encouraged to collaborate with and guide younger members.



Institutional Stewardship

- *The Black Men on Campus (BMOC) Project*
- Focuses on mentoring, active learning, dialogue
- A culturally relevant classroom experience fostered through a freshman 101-style course.
- One-on-one mentoring relationship with an African American male faculty or staff member.
- Participation in a weekend rap session related to success in college for African American men.



Policy and Practice Implications

- Re-visit the mission of higher education
 - Socioeconomic, national defense, and global competitiveness
 - Other societal interests in improving human condition as
 - Generator of social equity
 - Self-authorship
- Colleges must continue identifying sources for improving campus climate
 - Sensitive hiring practices
 - Degree programs that inform worldviews (e.g., AA studies) departmental status

Policy and Practice Implications

- Colleges should require cultural awareness workshops among diverse faculty, staff, and students
- Complicate “it takes a [Black] man to mentor a [Black] man”
- Black men’s sessions and initiatives (i.e. panels mentoring) need to diversify and cross-pollinate
- Infuse speakers on a range of issues affecting black men
- Re-envision work with African American males as transferring cultural messages about value

OPEN CONVERSATION