

## **African American Student Experience of the Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies Program**

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This qualitative study investigates the experience of African American students who completed their bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, a degree completion program designed for adult learners. Interdisciplinary Studies graduated a higher percentage (20.8) of African American students during the five-year period from 2013-2018 compared to the percentage of African American students who graduated from all NEIU programs (8.4) during the same period.

For the five-year period 2013 to 2018, a higher percentage of Interdisciplinary Studies graduates have been African American (20.8) compared to the percent of graduates from all NEIU programs who are African American (8.4). This difference is worthy of our deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to it.

We consider the experience of African Americans who graduated from Interdisciplinary Studies in the context of the intersection of race and age. Effective educational practice requires an understanding of the factors that impact the successful engagement of racially underrepresented minority students. Such an understanding will provide instructive insights that allow for the purposeful design of academic support interventions, program structures, and enrichment activities for NEIU's African American students in other majors and the entire NEIU community.