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THE EFFICACY AND LIMITS OF THE COLLEGIATE MEN OF DISTINCTION
MENTORING PROGRAM

D'Angelo S. Taylor

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MA (Western Illinois University) 2015

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THE EFFICACY AND LIMITS OF THE COLLEGIATE MEN OF DISTINCTION
MENTORING PROGRAM

ABSTRACT

Black men collectively have not achieved the same success in graduation or retention as their counterparts in higher education. At the University of Southern Indiana, the four-year graduation rate for Black men sits at 1.5 percent which is more than twenty points lower than the 22 percent national average (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). The purpose of this research was to examine the effectiveness and limitations of the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program. This program was created to combat low persistence rates among the Black male population at the University. In creating the program, young men were given an opportunity to gain a real sense of belongingness, leadership skills, and to utilize university wraparound services.

Two instruments were used in this study. The instruments included an eleven-question interview and a fifteen-question survey. The population was defined as 16 Black students. The sample mean age was 21-24 ($M = 21-24$) and 100% of the sample were male ($n = 16$). Using NVivo 12 Pro, twenty-four nodes were found, six overarching themes were expressed, and six findings were noted. These findings included:

- brotherhood is essential to success,
- leadership is cultivated, not title-driven,
- public speaking is encouraged and developed as skill,
- service is necessary for leadership development,

- the support of the program provides the participants with the proper wraparound resources,
- the implementation of a time management plan paid dividends.

In conclusion, the study of the Collegiate Men of Distinction provided a first-hand insight into how Black young men search for camaraderie, grasp knowledge, and lead within a higher educational setting. From their shared experiences, different upbringings, and outlooks on life, this study encompasses a true variety individuals who continue to persist through the rigors of higher education. This study builds on the foundational knowledge that examines mentoring in educational spaces, more specifically, higher education. Finally, this phenomenological work provides a framework to delve into peer-mentoring and culturally-based mentorship programs.

Future researchers can build upon this study by: Conducting a mixed method study that correlates or shows causal relationships among a financial need, household makeup, and first-generation status as it pertains to the academic success and graduation of Black men; and conducting a multi-site study to compare and contrast peer-led mentoring programs at different colleges and universities in multiple regions of the country.

Key words: *Collegiate Men of Distinction, peer-led mentorship, four-year institution, persistence, college, leadership development, public speaking, time management, retention rate, and wraparound services*

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This dissertation was presented
by

D'Angelo S. Taylor

on

1 April 2019
and approved by:

William Boozang, Ed.D., Lead Advisor
University of New England

Mary Patterson, Ed.D., Secondary Advisor
University of New England

S. Bryan Rush, Ph.D., Affiliated Committee Member
The University of Southern Indiana

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Historically, Black men collectively have not achieved the same success in graduation or retention as their counterparts in higher education. This lack of success highlights the need for mentoring programs geared to underrepresented groups within higher education, especially Black men. Many colleges and universities instituted mentoring programs that supported minority students and encouraged members of minority groups to enroll in college and find success within higher education (Brown, Davis, & McClendon, 1999). With the mentee-mentor relationship, the mentor often serves in multiple roles— a role model, teacher, advisor, guide, and resource (Biaggio, 2001). Minority students who do not have role models may find succeeding in higher education difficult (Blackwell, 1989; Patitu & Terrell, 1997) because they often find it hard to navigate many aspects of being a college student.

At the University of Southern Indiana, the four-year graduation rate for Black men sits at 1.5 percent which is more than twenty points lower than the 22 percent national average (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). With a dramatic decline in numbers, the University of Southern Indiana's Multicultural Center leadership saw a need to raise this staggeringly low rate while creating an increase in the persistence of Black males. While delving into research about admission and retention, the Multicultural Center staff found that:

1. Black male students are often comparatively less prepared than their White counterparts for the rigors of college-level academic work (Bonner II & Bailey, 2006; Lory, 2004; Lundy-Wagner & Gasman, 2011; Palmer, Davis, & Hilton, 2009).
2. In 2002, Black men comprised only 4.3 percent of students enrolled at institutions of higher education, the exact same percentage as in 1976 (Harper, 2006a; Strayhorn, 2010).

3. Only 47 percent of Black male students graduated on time from U.S. high schools in 2008, compared to 78 percent of White male students (Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2010).
4. Black male college completion rates are lowest among both sexes and all racial/ethnic groups in U.S. higher education (Harper, 2006; Strayhorn, 2010).
5. Black undergraduate men, like other racial minority students at predominantly White institutions, routinely encountered racist stereotypes and racial microaggressions that undermine their achievement and sense of belonging (Bonner II, 2010; Harper, 2009; Singer, 2005; Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007; Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2007).

In strategizing on how to create a mentoring program, not only was the aforementioned data considered, but the impact of not having a formal mentoring program could be seen. After analyzing these data points, the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program was created to combat the statistics listed above.

Statement of the Problem

Admissions departments across the country focus particularly on recruiting students from various demographical backgrounds. Black men have often been left out of the equation. For more than a decade, there has been a dramatic decline in the percentage of African American males attending postsecondary institutions (Bailey, 2003). With the decrease in Black men attending institutions of higher education, there is a tendency for them to be overlooked when it comes to the apportionment of resources. With the creation of the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program, the University of Southern Indiana's Multicultural Center sought to create a program in which young Black men could feel a sense of belongingness on campus while gaining the leadership skills they needed for success.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact in which the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program affects its participants. The participants in this study ranged from freshman to senior standing. This range of collegiate experience was chosen for two reasons. First, the seniors could relate to life before the program. As for the underclassmen, this may have been the first type of mentorship program in which they had participated. In addition, the underclassmen members brought a perspective of seeing the program in its infancy stage.

Furthermore, first-year students were a part of this program from the beginning of their collegiate careers. Collecting this qualitative data helped the researcher analyze what the mentees derived from the program and how it impacted their lives. Also, the data helped the researcher understand the benefits and limitations of the program from first-hand responses.

Research Questions

The basic foundation of mentorship is the belief that, by engaging in a mentor/mentee relationship, the mentee will become more equipped to be successful. Mentoring in higher education is paramount to the success of most students, especially Black males. Black male students are often comparatively less prepared than are others for the rigors of college-level academic work (Bonner II & Bailey, 2006; Knippelmeyer & Torraco; 2007). Their research sets the foundation for the following questions on mentorship programs in higher education.

1. What are the benefits of mentoring programs?
2. What are the barriers to developing mentoring programs in higher education? How can they overcome these barriers?
3. How can theory guide the implementation of mentoring in higher education?

After the creation of the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program, narrowing down the main focus of this research became challenging. The limitations of demonstrating how the program created a substantial impact on the persistence and graduation rates were challenging. Also, there was an oversaturation as it pertained to the research of mentoring programs where evidence in support of mentoring programs has been presented in multiple studies. For example, the National Black Male College Achievement Study, 2012 highlighted such programs. Lastly, there was a need to address the potential effectiveness – via the participant experience and success of the Collegiate Men of Distinction members as evidenced by examining the grade point average. With that in mind, this study focused on the following questions:

1. How do members of the CMoD compare to their non-CMoD Black male counterparts as their outcomes pertain to academic performance and persistence at the University of Southern Indiana?
2. What are the potential benefits of the CMoD program as defined by its members?
3. What other specific (if any) resources influence the completion rates of all Black men at USI?

Conceptual Framework

Weaver-Hightower (2014) stated that a conceptual framework illustrates how a study is theorized and presented. In addition, a conceptual framework is a grounded argument about why the topic of study matters to its various and often intersecting fields, why the methodological approach used to explore that topic is valid, and how the research design is appropriate and the methods are rigorous (Ravitch and Riggan, 2016). The conceptual framework is composed of three essential elements. Foremost, personal interest(s) that drives a researcher to conduct a

study. The next is the topical research, which is the empirical literature search focused on the subject of the study. Finally, the theoretical framework is part of the study's conceptual framework, and the theoretical framework contains the specific theories that illuminate the phenomenon under review.

The conceptual model guiding this study is two-pronged. First is Tinto's (1993) theory of *belongingness* which is central to the purposes of the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program. The second prong is rooted in Deil-Amen's Conceptual Model on Persistence (2011). This model is another concept used to guide one of the major premises of this study – persistence through mentorship. Deil-Amen's (2011) research led to a Conceptual Model on Persistence for 4-year colleges and university students and is based upon the early work of Tinto (1993). Though Deil-Amen (2011) pulls from Tinto (1993), Blanchard (2018) highlights the slight divergence from Tinto's assumptions.

Where Deil-Amen (2011) diverges from Tinto (1993) is the theoretical assumption that academic and social integration meet and fuse. According to the theoretical underpinnings for Deil-Amen's work, educational and social integration do not necessarily have to match or blend. One can supersede the other (Deil-Amen, personal communication, 2017). Thus, further theoretical underpinnings include: (a) access to services, (b) use of facilities, (c) a sense of belonging, and (d) commitment (Blanchard, 2018).

Delving further into Deil-Amen's (2011) Conceptual Model on Persistence, key constructs/concepts pertaining to persistence were included in the interviewing tool to understand how students viewed persistence. These concepts included:

1. The use of wraparound services,
2. The use wraparound services as it pertained to on-time graduation,

3. The use of wraparound services to create a sense of well-being (belonging), and
4. A sense of commitment.

Finally, the last concept for this three-pronged framework is that of an increased sense-of-self as a byproduct of mentorship. The lack of comradery or a sense of belongingness seemed to play a significant role in the low graduation and persistence rates amongst Black men. Harper (2012) introduced the term of *onlyness*, which described the uniqueness that only each person can bring to a situation or conversation.

Onlyness engendered a profound sense of pressure being the spokesperson or ambassador for people of color in general and Black men in particular. Being one of few Black men with whom White students and professors interacted led to a set of common experiences that threatened the participants' achievement and sense of belonging. (Harper, 2012)

The sense of onlyness is why mentoring programs are essential. The gained sense of comradery and belonging eliminates the feeling of being alone while establishing a rapport with like-minded individuals. Furthermore, mentoring programs create a shared-space for building those who aim to escape the "Black spokesperson" situations.

This particular study focused on the concepts of mentoring as they relate to creating an environment that fostered an impact and academic success by building a sense of belongingness, brotherhood, and leadership development. In conducting this research study, there was an emphasis placed on helping educators at various post-secondary institutions understand how the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program model can assist the Black men on their campus.

The Collegiate Men of Distinction Mentoring Program

The purpose of the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program is centered on programming and seminars geared toward gaining leadership skills, career exploration, social engagement, scholarly activity, public speaking, time management, graduation and life after graduation. The vision of the Collegiate Men of Distinction encompasses the skills of brotherhood, academic excellence, and leadership to further advance the standing for men of color on USI's campus and in society. The objectives of the Collegiate Men of Distinction are to stimulate the scholarly ambition of young men and to aid them in their pursuit of a degree from an institution of higher education. Upon graduation, these young men will be equipped with the tools and knowledge to pursue either an advanced degree or secure gainful employment. The curriculum the program serves as the catalyst for young collegiate men with a desire to become scholars, role models and leaders on USI's campus and community. In addition, the young collegiate men learn what it takes to be a gentleman and a selfless servant. In doing so, these young men attend a series of meetings geared towards achieving these objectives.

Within this program, the participants are able to take charge of their futures. Members of the program lead the meetings and present at each meeting. This aspect of the program was designed to give the Collegiate Men an opportunity to create an organic dialogue amongst themselves while also allowing them to serve as peer-mentors in addition to gaining the public-speaking experience.

Collegiate Men of Distinction Structure

Defining Success

The thought of being successful can be daunting to any college student, but especially for those who believe it is not attainable. Within the CMoD program, members are asked to look at

past experiences to help them shape their future objectives. For example, at the first meeting of the year members are invited to define success. For many of the members, their definition of success was not present in the past. The absence of apparent success is why members are asked to take a natural look at how history has impacted their lives. This reflection gives the members perspective. Upon finishing the reflection, members of the program are asked to set their goals. In establishing their goals, they are asked to utilize the “three-line” approach. This approach allows the members to understand how they conceptualize their goals. The bottom line is filled with goals that are easily attainable and require little to no effort to complete, for example, going to class or completing homework assignments. After members establish those goals, they proceed to the middle line. This line is filled with goals that are achieved with increased effort. These goals include things like making the dean’s list, becoming president of an organization, giving a speech in front of a crowd, or garnering a scholarship. Finally, the top line represents goals that take time to accomplish. These goals are rooted in both ambition and action. For example, financial stability is one of the main goals that many of the members listed on their third line. This goal takes time to accomplish because their finances are ever-changing. In utilizing this method, the men can chart their futures while examining what has led them to where they are today.

The Sheet

At the beginning of each semester, each member is asked to fill out an information sheet. The information sheet is designed to give the advisors of the program a sense of the backgrounds of those that comprise the group. This is very important because this information allows the advisors to set up the wraparound services needed for the members. The advisors are also able to invite guest speakers to address the members’ interests. The “sheet” as members often refer to it,

is the guiding document of the program – beyond the established curriculum. The information sheet was one of the most important parts of starting the program.

Encouraging Initiative

Each semester since the program's conception, there has been a fear amongst many of the men to participate in the discussions or to present on a specific topic. This fear stems from the members' fear of public speaking. To foster a sense of initiative, at the end of each meeting the members decide the topic for the next meeting. In addition, the presenter for the next meeting is selected by the members who have not presented. There is an official vote to choose the presenter, and the person who is selected is exempt from having to present again until every member has their opportunity. Through this process, the men have almost always taken the initiative without having to utilize the voting method. This type of encouragement opened the doors for a challenge to be acceptable amongst the membership, thus, creating a strong foundation for members to come.

Understanding Leadership

One of the major components of the CMoD program is leadership. But not everyone is fit to lead. To shift the mindset of the members toward embracing leadership, there was a utilization of a guide provided by Burchard (2009). Burchard (2009) describes this guide as The Student Leadership Guide. Within this guide, Burchard (2009) defines leadership as a process of leaders and collaborators coming together through an influence relationship and seeking envisioned changes that reflect their mutual purposes. This definition helped shape how the members of the CMoD program approached leadership, but that was only the first step. In the second step, Burchard (2009) focuses on the path to leadership.

People don't just randomly become leaders or collaborators. And worthwhile purposes are not fulfilled by little and halfhearted efforts...A process occurs wherein leaders and collaborators envision changes and actively seek to accomplish them. (Burchard, 2009)

This particular approach helped members of the program understand that leadership was focused more so on change and action rather than titles. One of the main reasons why the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program does not have titles is to avoid the hierarchy that often hinders leadership. With the absence of a leadership hierarchy, the members are allowed to focus on what Burchard (2009) terms *the leadership framework*. The leadership framework consists of the following steps, or the 6 E's:

1. Envision
2. Enlist
3. Embody
4. Empower
5. Evaluate
6. Encourage

These six steps are placed in a folder for every member of the program so that they are constantly reminded of the leadership framework. This approach is why many of the members have taken the initiative to step up and pursue a change in their university and home communities.

Implementing Service

In creating the CMod program, there was a heavy emphasis placed on professionalism and meeting etiquette, but there was a need to insert a service component to the mentorship program. Each semester, the men were given the opportunity to participate in a service project. This service project was scheduled during one of the meeting times to provide the men with a break from the meetings-only atmosphere. The service component gave the young men an

opportunity to give back to the local Evansville community – which is disconnected from the university.

Academic Success

Academic excellence is one of the pillars for the CMoD program. The challenge to get young men active and engaged in the pursuit of academic achievement is one that Black men face at most predominately White institutions. Within the CMoD program, each member is provided with a progress report located in Appendix G. The story allows for a member to see where he currently stands in a course. While proactive, this method also allows for a member to see how he can utilize his time. This progress report is evaluated by the members of the program and their advisors. In the evaluation of the stories, advisors give critical feedback, tie-in wraparound services, and uplift the members of the program. This three-pronged evaluation engages the member in understanding his goals and aspirations while providing him the resources to do pursue them.

Key Variables

The variables for this research focused on the described experience of Black males at the University of Southern Indiana and the impact of the Collegiate Men of Distinction (CMoD) on that experience. Also, there was a strong focus on the academic success of those who were involved with the CMoD program. Finally, the examination of the evaluations of the members of the CMoD gave insight into what the CMoD program had to offer and where the program could grow.

Assumptions

Due to the low completion rate of Black males at this university, an assumption was made that the Collegiate Men of Distinction (CMoD) mentoring program would have a positive

impact on the Black men that it served. Bridge programs are often researched and implemented at universities to combat low completion rates for students from underrepresented groups. These populations often include Black male students. These programs allow for universities to immerse students from those groups in the rigors of college before their peers arrive. These programs give students the opportunity to eliminate their deficiencies before the school year starts. To proceed past the bridge program, many students have to pass mandatory classes or show progress in the coursework. Their successes are based partly on their ability to utilize the wraparound resources that are provided. Also, mentorship in the program is critical. For one example, Lavant, Anderson, & Tiggs (1997) highlight The Bridge program at Georgia State University. Georgia State University initiated a program called The Bridge in the mid-1980s with the express purpose of providing a jump start at the freshman level and enrichment of experience for African American students. Mentoring is a significant aspect of the program, which offers an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to engage in one-on-one relationships. This program also provides an avenue to foster relationships with African American male program participants. Many of the faculty and staff are White and serve as mentors and instructors in the program. The developers of the program report that the relationships make the students feel accepted, respected, and supported, and that it has greatly influenced and enhanced their chances for persistence and graduation. The Bridge is now in place on four other Georgia campuses and has helped to shape the experience, and aid in the matriculation and graduation, of African American students on these predominantly White campuses (Lavant, Anderson, & Tiggs, 1997).

On the other hand, the presence of the CMoD program influences a small sampling of the total Black male population at the University of Southern Indiana. This research study used data from that small sample size, generating the anecdotal stories derived from the participants.

Definition of Terms

Cohort – A cohort is a specific group, such as first-time and degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolling at an institution in a given fall enrollment period (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997).

CMoD – Collegiate Men of Distinction – A Black male mentoring program at the University of Southern Indiana under the auspices of the Multicultural Center.

First Generation College Student – Any student who is from a family in which no parent has completed a baccalaureate degree (Billson & Terry, 1982).

Peer-Led Mentorship – Mentorship programs that are operated by the members of the program.

Persistence – Persistence refers to the act of continuing towards an educational goal (e.g., earning a bachelor's degree) National Center for Education Statistics, 1997.

Retention Rate – A statistic that tracks how many students a college or university retains after each semester passes. Typically, colleges and universities measure this statistic on a four or five-year graduation mark.

Significance

The significance of this research is rooted in the lived experiences of those who participate in the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program. Also, this particular study allowed the researcher to look past the mundane academic performance while focused on the extraordinary importance of mentorship for Black men in higher education. Finally, this study allowed the researcher to gain a better sense of the impact that the mentor-mentee relationship, wraparound resources, leadership, and other components have on persistence and graduation rates.

Conclusion

A 1.5 percent graduation rate is a number that can deter any Black male from taking the initiative to create their success, but the University of Southern Indiana's Multicultural Center staff decided to take a proactive approach to improve this rate. In creating the Collegiate Men of Distinction program, Black men have been able to find a space in which they can grow not only academically, but professionally. Taking a problem and finding a practical way to address it is difficult to do, but in the end, that action plan can change the outcomes for many students. In essence, it is why practitioners do what they do in the field of education. Describing this problem of practice gives the reader an insight into why the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program was created. In addition, the reader will gain an understanding of why Black male graduation and retention rates are so important within the system of higher education. Lastly, this problem of practice showed the true meaning of how academic and other campus resources impact the successes of Black males in academia.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, a multitude of studies (Expanding College Opportunity by Advancing Diversity and Inclusion, November 2016) analyzed the retention and graduation rates for students of color, particularly Black men. Furthermore, this research showed a significant increase in the number of Black men attending institutions of higher education over the last three decades (U.S. Department of Education, Digest of Education Statistics, 2011; Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). With these data in mind, retention efforts, such as mentorship programs, have been a focal point for Black males. With the emergence of formal mentorship in higher education, this literature review delves into the benefits of mentorship for Black males and the onset of peer-led mentoring in higher education.

Theoretical Framework

The main points of this literature review examine the limitations and anticipated impact of mentoring programs. These points explain the potential benefits of said mentoring programs. While focusing on implications of mentoring, scholars have published an array of articles and comprehensive studies, including the 2012 National Black Male College Achievement Study published in Harper (2012) which targeted increasing the retention and graduation rates of Black men in higher education. More specifically, researchers examined the relationship between the feeling of belongingness gained from mentoring programs and academic persistence of Black men in higher education. Mentoring programs have been instituted at many colleges and universities to support minority students and encouraged members of various minority groups to enroll in college and find success within higher education (Brown, Davis, & McClendon, 1999; Hicks, 2005; Santos, Reigadas & Scott, 2000; Santos & Reigadas, 2004; Welch 1997). In some of the mentoring programs, one finds a sense of self while bonding with others over a common

goal which is graduation. In addition, quite a few mentoring programs were successful in recruiting and retaining minority students (e.g., California Community Colleges, 1993; Campbell & Campbell, 1997; Canton and James, 1997; Salinitri, 2005). The leading theoretical foundation for this dissertation stems from Tinto's retention theory (1987). Despite the gains in enrollment, minority students continue to face significant challenges in higher education, and without adequate support, many drop out of college (Astin, 1993; Tinto, 1993). Two dimensions of commitment advanced by Tinto (1975) were an institutional commitment (the degree the student is motivated to graduate from the chosen college or university) and goal commitment (the student's commitment to earning a college degree in general) (Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). While one can examine each dollar spent on every student, that would not give the field a real understanding of the plight that many Black males face at predominantly White institutions. This framework is focused more on the number of initiatives gained from solving the problem of low graduation and persistence among Black males at the University of Southern Indiana. Also, this framework dives into the student commitment to graduation which one can argue is tied directly to a sense of belongingness for the student at this institution. This dive started with describing the assimilation or integration of Black males into their environment which are difficult for them to accomplish. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) described integration as the extent to which an individual shares the normative attitudes and values of peers and professors and joins the college community. Interactions that are satisfying and rewarding within the formal and informal academic and social systems of the institution lead to greater integration and persistence (Strayhorn and Terrell, 2007).

Research Questions

1. How do members of the CMoD compare to their non-CMoD Black male counterparts as their outcomes pertain to academic performance and persistence at the University of Southern Indiana?
2. What are the potential benefits of the CMoD program?
3. What other specific resources influence the completion rates of Black men at USI?

Black Male Enrollment in Higher Education

Black men's dismal college enrollment, disengagement, underachievement, and low rates of baccalaureate degree completion are among the most pressing and complex issues in American higher education (Harper, 2012). Currently, institutions of higher education have made it a point of emphasis to specifically target the recruitment of Black men for diversity and inclusion. The focus has enlightened the plight of the Black male, specifically at predominantly White institutions (PWI's). The failure and dropout rates of Black men at PWI's has continuously been overlooked, but with more state higher education systems pressured by performance-based funding, this issue has been magnified. Harper (2012) analyzed trends of Black male success at forty-two universities in this comprehensive study. This breakdown highlights the enrollment and completion rates of Black men.

Retention and Graduation Rates of Black Males within Higher Education

When looking at retention and graduation rates of Black men in higher education, there is a propensity to forget the financial hardship as a cause. Harper (2012) conducted a study focused on Black male achievement, but he also focused on the financial component:

One problem that has been well documented in the *Journal of College Student Retention*, the *Journal of Student Financial Aid*, and other publications is that many students drop

out of college because they cannot afford to pay tuition and other educational expenses.

Across all six institution types, men in the national study attributed much of their success to being able to pursue their bachelor's degrees without the burden of financial stress.

(Harper, 2012, p. 14).

This comprehensive study focused more on the quantitative data. Facts and figures were provided by each of the participating universities. Harper (2012) also focused on the transition to college in which many students felt as if they were on the path to success because of their great start. In addition, others took a different route by entering bridge programs before the start of the regular school year. Bridge programs allow for students who may not be ready to immerse themselves into collegiate studies to approach each subject carefully in smaller classrooms and more individualized attention. With this model, students became more comfortable with their settings and the schools began to see higher retention numbers. Harper (2012) goes beyond the case-point explanation for mentoring, as their study delves into the use of bridge programs.

As highlighted in the previous section, mentoring programs have become an important step in creating better retention and graduation rates for Black men within higher education. Thayer (2000) highlighted findings that the structure of a mentoring program is usually the catalyst for a successful mentoring program. In essence, no structure, no success. Thayer (2000) specifically looked at four institutions (Colorado State University, Drexel University, Michigan State University, and Skagit Valley College) and their retention efforts through mentoring. While this research does not focus solely on Black males, it does focus on the first-generation student experience pertinent to retention amongst those groups. Though Thayer's (2000) study is dated, the concepts of structured mentoring remain relevant in modern-day higher education especially as they correlate with a successful retention rate.

One of the focal points of this literature review is the retention of Black males in higher education. Seidman (2005) constructed a guide that delves into the retention rates for all minority groups. As a guide, this publication highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of retention efforts and programs as they pertain to people of color at institutions of higher education. Seidman (2005) further explained that, even though more resources are provided to support the task of raising persistence and graduation rates, in most cases, there have not been favorable returns. Those findings led to the hypothesis that, for retention programs to be successful, they must be early, intensive and continuous.

Lederman (2012) gave insight into the failures of Black male retention at Predominantly White Institutions (PWI's), citing the eight standards put forth by Harper (2012). Lederman also referenced many of the essential studies within the realm of mentorship. As with any particular facet of higher education, research is mandatory. Studies like the National Black Male College Achievement Study (2017) are conducted to analyze the needs of Black men within higher education. The study presented facts that highlighted the gaps in success by Black men who came from a two-parent household. Furthermore, the study concluded that young men who interacted with other high-achieving students did better than those who did not. Overall, this article provided solutions for increasing the achievement of Black males in higher education through a mixed-methods standards-based approach.

The Sense of Belonging

Baumeister and Leary (1995) used a metatheoretical approach to critically evaluate the belongingness hypothesis in empirical social and personality psychology research. Baumeister and Leary (1995) concluded that any emotional connection which led to motivational thoughts must:

(a) produce effects readily under all but adverse conditions, (b) have affective (emotional) consequences, (c) direct cognitive processing, (d) lead to ill effects (such as on health or adjustment) when thwarted, (e) elicit goal-oriented behavior designed to satisfy it (subject to motivational patterns such as object substitutability and satiation), (f) be universal in the sense of applying to all people, (g) not be derivative of other motives, (h) affect a broad variety of behaviors, and (i) have implications that go beyond immediate psychological functioning. (p. 498)

This particular article laid the groundwork for framing belongingness through a psychological lens. With that understanding of the sense of belonging, Harper (2012) also examined how student engagement can increase retention and graduation rates:

The achievers attributed much of their college success to their engagement experiences. Out-of-class experiences had spillover effects on academic performance for almost all the students interviewed. That is, the men believed they earned higher grades because they had less time to waste, interacted frequently with academically-driven others, and had reputations to uphold. This analysis also looks at how race in the classroom affects retention and graduation, “Onlyness engendered a profound sense of pressure to be the spokesperson or ambassador for people of color in general and Black men in particular.” Being one of few Black men with whom White students and professors interacted led to a set of common experiences that threatened the participants’ achievement and sense of belonging. (Harper, 2012)

Within this passage, Harper (2012) delves into the perils of inclusion with placing the focus on classroom interactions. More specifically, the type of interaction that lends itself to spotlighting a Black student which in turn leads to that sense of onlyness.

Mentoring Students of Color in Higher Education: A Peer-Led Approach

Mentoring in higher education is paramount to the success of most students, especially Black males. Black male students are often comparatively less prepared than are others for the rigors of college-level academic work (Bonner II & Bailey, 2006; Loury, 2004; Lundy-Wagner & Gasman, 2011; Palmer, Davis, & Hilton, 2009). Programs like the Collegiate Men of Distinction (CMOD) at the University of Southern Indiana (USI) are structured to help students persist until graduation, but this requires buy-in from the students being served. With that in mind, the CMoD program is structured with a focus on peer-led mentorship and leadership. The setting and timing of interaction between peer mentors and participants affect the degree of their involvement in leadership (Tingson-Gatuz, 2009). So far, this form of mentorship has produced higher academic success and retention rates for Black males, yet it has been neglected in the mentorship research. For these reasons, an in-depth study of peer-mentorship has value within higher education.

The Need for Mentorship

Rawlings (2002) delves into the importance of mentorship in higher education. In explaining the importance of mentorship, the researcher expanded upon the importance of mentoring and the individual responsibility of a prospective protégé: “Mentors are the most important resource for success on the job. Finding them can be a task; positioning yourself to be selected as a mentee is another” (p. 81). Rawlings (2002) made his case by highlighting the way mentoring is intertwined between different university departments and focuses. This type of intertwining allows for the students to gain proper access to mentors who may not be from their walk of life, but who understand the college experience.

The Different Forms of Mentorship

As one examines the concept of mentorship, there is research on many types of mentorship. Knippelmeyer and Torracco (2007) state that mentoring has been considered more of an informal relationship between senior individuals (mentor) who are paired with younger individuals (protégés) in an organization. Within many mentorship programs, there are times in which the mentors can mentor the mentees outside of a structured environment. Knippelmeyer and Torracco's (2007) research also focused on the following questions:

1. What are the benefits of mentoring programs?
2. What are the barriers to developing mentoring programs in higher education? How can they be overcome?
3. How can theory guide the implementation of mentoring in higher education? (p. 1)

In addressing these questions, the authors expounded upon the importance of these programs within higher education. The significance of this literature made it possible for such programs to be "justified" before they were created. Galbraith (2001) also asserted, "informal mentoring is a relationship that occurs that is unplanned, and, in most cases, not expected. A certain 'chemistry' emerges drawing two individuals together for professional, personal, and psychological growth and development" (p. 32). This study provides a connection between why mentoring programs are needed and the processes of implementation within a higher education setting.

Jackson, Sealey-Ruiz & Watson (2014) conducted a study focused on the impact of emotion-based mentoring. This particular mentoring philosophy allows the mentors to connect with the mentee on a more caring level.

We can educate all children if we truly want to. To do so, we must first stop attempting to

determine their capacity. We must be convinced of their inherent intellectual capability, humanity, and spiritual character . . . Finally, we must learn who our children are—their lived culture, their interests, and their intellectual, political, and historical legacies. (p. 20).

In the end, they found that many of the young men adapted to that style and became more successful because of reciprocal love. Love led these young men to accept mentorship more readily than if they did not feel as if they were loved.

For each style of mentoring, there needs to be a connecting point with the mentee. Gasman (1997) focused on culturally-based mentoring within higher education. In addition, the article recognized the barrier of racism and injustice in mentoring as it pertains to higher education. Gasman, a doctoral student at the time, gave insight into the challenges of collaboration in mentoring as well. One of those challenges is the dedication of the mentors. Mentors will often sign up for mentorship opportunities because it is deemed to be “part-time,” but Gasman explained that this is not the case. With this finding in mind, Gasman (1997) also acknowledged that culturally-based mentorship programs often see a higher level of scrutiny.

Gasman, Castellanos, Besson, and Harvey (2016) later examined the ‘cultural fit’ to gain a better understanding of how mentoring impacted racial and ethnic (REM) students. In doing so, this article considered the students’ perceptions of the university and its cultural congruency. Their study enhanced the topic of mentorship by focusing on the students’ cultural and ethnic fit along with the mentoring component. These two focal points allow for a researcher or a practitioner to garner the knowledge essential for creating and maintaining a successful mentoring program. In addition, using a psycho-sociocultural approach in which the person-environment interplay influences the dimensions of the psychological, social, and cultural

(Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000), the study's guiding purpose was to explore the differences in mentorship and relationships of cultural fit within the university, and perception of mentorship on college and life satisfaction for racial and ethnic minority undergraduates. Overall, this article provided an understanding of how involving and interacting with a student's culture can increase their participation in their academics.

Sealey-Ruiz and Greene (2011) gave insight on connecting with students from urban areas. This article defined urban youth culture as

A generic term for Hip-Hop culture which over the course of the last 36 years, this culture has evolved from creative urban expressions such as rapping, dj-ing, break dancing (b-boying and b-girling), and graffiti art, to a cultural movement which encompasses music, art, dance, poetry, fashion, as well as a Black and urban consciousness. (Sealey-Ruiz and Greene, 2011)

Sealey-Ruiz and Greene (2011) also highlighted the disconnect between educators and the students,

A striking example of a teacher's unintentional disregard for the cultural history, understanding, experiences, and voice of a student occurred when my oldest son struggled to meet the requirements of a national essay contest entitled, "What it means to be an American." One of the contest's restrictions was that students could not mention the concept of race. In the article, Sealey-Ruiz and Greene captured the emotions of a mother who stated "My son thought this was an unfair and impossible task to complete since his African American identity is synonymous with his being American (2011, p. 32).

In most cases, the hip-hop culture is the way to opening the mind of a mentee from an urban area. All of the men involved with the CMoD program are from urban areas so understanding the impact of music on their lives was very important. This article also provided insight into how students adapt to professionals who approach them in unfamiliar ways. One example is the usage of a student's familiarity with hip-hop culture to bridge the learning gap while creating a sense of belonging through cultural means. This CMoD mentoring program is led by its mission to help Black men at the University of Southern Indiana persist and graduate. In many cases, engagement is done through programming with a cultural lens.

Peer-Led Mentoring Programs

To date, there is not much literature on peer-led mentoring programs. With the scarcity of literature, extensive research was conducted to find any programs that existed within other institutions of higher education. This section outlined the information and literature (on peer-led mentoring) on those programs.

Mentoring programs are considered for implementation because of the positive effect they can have on the protégés involved. Protégés in mentoring relationships often experience a multitude of benefits: improved self-confidence; an increased availability of advice and relevant information; an opportunity for encouraged reflection on practice; additional personal support; improved effectiveness; an awareness of culture, politics, and philosophy of the organization; and, access to a confidant for concerns or ideas (Rawlings, 2002). Within the University of Southern Indiana, Black men graduate at a rate of 1.5 percent in four years – based on the 2010 cohort. Four members of CMoD are a part of this entering cohort.

The aim of creating the Collegiate Men of Distinction was to increase both retention and graduation amongst Black males. In crafting the desirable outcomes for the mentees, the peer-led

approach fits best because of peer-accountability. This approach included accountability partners with the mentees. Furthermore, this approach allowed for the mentees to craft the meeting agendas and set their goals for the semester.

Black Male Mentorship in Higher Education

There are many mentoring programs across the country that are tailored to Black male achievement within higher education. Over the years, the programs have started to grow due to the low retention and graduation rates for Black males. Jackson, Sealey-Ruiz & Watson (2014) conducted a phenomenological study which highlighted the voices of a mentor and 14 Black and Latino males who were part of the Umoja Network for Young Men (UMOJA), an all-male, in-school mentoring program at an alternative high school that serves over-age, under-credited students. Within this study, the authors highlighted the emotional aspects of mentoring while focusing on the college-preparedness aspect of pre-secondary mentoring.

Strayhorn & Terrell (2007) highlight mentoring programs that are successful within the realm of higher education. In addition, Strayhorn & Terrell (2007) focus on the mentor/protégé relationship with reference to Carter (1994). The mentor/protege relationship provides "not only an added dimension to the learning experience with 'real world' perspectives but also a starting point for students to identify their career and academic directions" (Carter, 1994, p. 52). Furthermore, Strayhorn & Terrell (2007) conducted a secondary analysis of the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ). By doing so, Strayhorn & Terrell (2007) shed light on the low retention rate of Black males, as opposed to their male counterparts at predominantly White institutions, due to the lack of mentorship. An understanding the importance of the Strayhorn & Terrell (2007) study on mentorship is informed by their reference to how the mentor/protégé relationship works. In essence, what can be derived from Strayhorn & Terrell (2007) is that

understanding the mentor/protégé relationship is the foundation to effective mentoring. Without this foundation, the mentorship program will not yield results.

Reddick (2011) employed an intersectional analysis on the experiences of Black faculty at an elite U.S. university that mentors Black undergraduates and focuses on faculty's meaning-making of their connection to their mentees, and the challenges they face in these relationships. In addition, Reddick (2011) highlighted the success of Black students who are mentored by Black faculty. Reddick (2011) used a mixed-methods approach for his research. This approach included survey questions, academic performance and coupling the university professors into groups for analysis. The mixed-methods approach was used to garner data that went beyond solely quantitative or qualitative data. In doing so, Reddick (2011) was able to yield a substantial amount of information from both students and faculty.

Schwartz (2012) shared the findings of a two-year study that examined the nature of effective faculty/student undergraduate research (STEM) relationships in this report. The study site was a large urban public college where three-fourths of all incoming freshmen receive need-based aid; and although not a historically Black college or university (HBCU), 85 percent are students of color (Schwartz, 2012). The study focused on four paired faculty and student relationships; chemistry and physics were the disciplinary focus of the study. These relationships were faculty/student one-on-one and face-to-face tutorials in a laboratory setting, conducted with research practices commensurate with chemistry or physics protocols. The initial UR mentoring agreement was a minimum 3-month commitment with the faculty serving as supervisor, facilitator, and mentor to the student researcher. In addition, this article gave insight into the structure of implementing mentoring programs at schools that have a high population of diversity within the STEM fields.

Graduation

While many studies have yielded results concluding the importance of mentorship in for Black students, Nichols (2016) completed a study that yielded these results about Black students and graduation rates.

1. In the last 10 years, graduation rates for black students at these institutions improved 4.4 percentage points compared with 5.6 points for White students.
2. Moreover, because graduation rates for black students have shown less progress, the gap in completion between White and black students has grown. Graduation rates for black students must increase at a much faster pace if the long-standing gap between black students and their White peers is to close.
3. Nearly 70 percent of institutions in our sample increased graduation rates for black students and almost half of those (47.2 percent) decreased gaps between black and White students. (p. 1)

This study is particularly important because it gives a holistic picture of what Black students face in higher education as it relates to completion.

Conclusion

In concluding this literature review, much of the literature covered some of the most-pressing questions within higher education as it pertains to Black male college students. What is being done to retain and graduate more Black males? Why is mentoring important? Who is responsible for creating an inclusive and prosperous atmosphere? Is mentorship the answer? If so, is peer-led mentoring a valid form of mentoring? Are the young men involved in the mentorship programs getting everything they need? What tangible skills are being gained in

these mentoring programs? And hopefully, the reader will gain a stronger understanding of the most pressing issue in higher education; retaining and graduating Black men through mentorship.

In the end, there is a need for mentorship, but there are also a varying amount of mentorship approaches and programs. Looking at the institutions and the people who are served by these programs are paramount going forward. Furthermore, being able to justify the implementation or funding of such programs should be of the utmost importance. Finally, understanding how to collect data on a particular program is essential as well. Without the data, how can anyone tell their story?

CHAPTER 3: METHEDODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy and limits of the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program at the University of Southern Indiana. The search for an impact point (via surveys and interviews) guided this research. To study the effectiveness or limitations of the program, this study employed a qualitative approach to gathering data. This approach allowed the research to take on a phenomenological form.

Research Questions

The main focus of this research was to document Black males' academic and personal development experiences as members of the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program. There were limitations to demonstrating how the program was creating a substantial impact on the matriculation and graduation rates. In addition, there was a sense of repetition as it pertained to research that focused on the effectiveness of mentoring programs when evident in multiple studies. The Strayhorn & Terrell (2007) secondary analysis of the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) was one such study. Lastly, there was a need to address the potential efficacy and limits of the Collegiate Men of Distinction program. With those limitations in mind, this study focused on the following questions:

1. How do members of the CMoD compare to their non-CMoD Black male counterparts as their outcomes pertain to academic performance, and persistence at the University of Southern Indiana?
2. What are the potential benefits of the CMoD program?
3. What other specific resources influence the completion rates of Black men at USI?

Problem Statement

The premise of this research centers on one main question. Are mentoring programs for Black men effective in raising retention and graduate rates? When a university's admissions teams disperse in the fall, they are looking for students to enhance their academic profile as well as their university appeal. Over the past few years, many universities sought to attract a more diverse body of students, with a strong emphasis on Black men. During the last decade of the 20th century, the enrollment rate of racial minority students in higher education continued to increase; however, these students remain underrepresented compared to White students in higher education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). In that same period, there was a dramatic decline in the percentage of African American males attending postsecondary institutions (Bailey, 2003). However, the 2012 National Black Male College Achievement Study showed an increase in the number of Black males enrolling in four-year institutions.

At the University of Southern Indiana, the matriculation and graduation rates of Black men are below the national average as highlighted in the 2012 National Black Male College Achievement Study. Focusing on the 2010 cohort, Black men have a four-year graduation rate of 1.5 percent with the fifth and sixth years hovering in the teens. In short, graduating young Black men from the University of Southern Indiana remains an ever-present challenge. To combat the low graduation rates in the future, the effectiveness and limitations of one Black male mentoring program was studied.

Setting

The site for this research was the University of Southern Indiana, more specifically the Multicultural Center. The University of Southern Indiana's website states:

Founded in 1965, the University of Southern Indiana enrolls over 10,000 dual credit, undergraduate and graduate students in 80 majors. A public higher education institution, located on a beautiful 1,400-acre campus in Evansville, Indiana, USI offers programs through the College of Liberal Arts, Romain College of Business, College of Nursing and Health Professions, and the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education (U.W. Services, 2016).

USI's Multicultural Center (MCC) was established in 1994 to enhance the personal and academic success of students by preparing them to be responsible citizens in a multicultural society. Opportunities are created to provide cultural interaction between students, the campus and the community at large to provide outreach experiences and to promote cultural awareness and sensitivity. We accomplish this by sponsoring programs, providing services, advising organizations, hosting events and conducting diversity training both on and off campus, as well as assisting in the recruitment of students. The MCC champions collaborative efforts focusing on diversity. We publish an online newsletter, the Multicultural Connection. As a service to the USI community we house a multicultural collection of over 800 books and journals which are cataloged in the David L. Rice library. The goals of the Center are to:

1. Foster and provide a warm, welcoming, supportive and inclusive environment for diverse populations at USI.
2. Encourage, promote and assist the academic and social integration of underrepresented students into the University through programs and services offered by the Center and through partnerships with other campus entities.

3. Create opportunities for cultural interaction between students, the campus and the community at large to promote cultural awareness and sensitivity.
4. Provide outreach opportunities to underrepresented groups and underserved communities to seek higher education. (U.W. Services, 2016)

In 2015, the University of Indiana created its second strategic plan in school history.

The 2016-2020 strategic plan includes three overarching goals:

- Excellence in Learning for the Entire USI Community
- Access and Opportunity by Design
- Purposeful and Sustainable Growth (U.W. Services, 2016)

Within this strategic plan, there is a goal for purposeful and sustainable growth, but the main focus of the Multicultural Center (MCC) centers on the purpose of access and opportunity by design. Persistent and sustainable growth ushered in an increase in funding for the Multicultural Center. The rise in the financing grew the office from three staff members to five. Thus, equipping the MCC with the tools to serve more students. In addition to purposeful and sustainable growth, the MCC has programmed with the goal of access and opportunity by design in mind. With this goal, both the Women Unlocked and College Men of Distinction programs were created. Both programs are aimed at curbing the lows graduation and retention rates for African-American students at USI, and this all begins with both access and opportunity.

Table 3.1: USI at a Glance: Enrollment*: 10,701

Serving students from 90 Indiana counties, 37 other states and 43 other nations.
About 74% of USI's graduates remain in Indiana.

On Campus: 28%	Commuter: 72%
Full-Time: 78%	Part-Time: 22%
Women: 63%	Men: 37%
Non-Traditional: 22%	Minority: 11%
In-State Residents: 85%	Out-of-State Residents: 15%

(U.W. Services, 2016)

The Collegiate Men of Distinction Mentoring Program

The purpose of the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program is to provide programming and seminars geared toward supporting students to gain leadership skills, career exploration, social engagement, scholarly activity, public speaking, time management, graduation and life after graduation. The vision of the Collegiate Men of Distinction encompasses the skills of brotherhood, academic excellence, and leadership to further advance the standing for men of color on USI's campus and in society. The objectives of the Collegiate Men of Distinction are to stimulate the scholarly ambition of young men and to aid them in their pursuit of a degree from an institution of higher education. Upon graduation, these young men will be equipped with the tools and knowledge to pursue either an advanced degree or secure gainful employment.

The program curriculum catalyzes in young collegiate men a desire to become scholars, role models and leaders on USI's campus and community. In addition, the young collegiate men learn what it takes to be a gentleman and a selfless servant. To strengthen such knowledge, these young men attend a series of meetings geared towards achieving these objectives.

Within this program, the participants can take charge of their futures. Members of the program lead the meetings and present at each meeting. This aspect of the program was designed to give the Collegiate Men an opportunity to create an organic dialogue amongst themselves while also allowing them to serve as peer-mentors in addition to gaining the public-speaking experience.

Participants

Each member of the Collegiate Men of Distinction (CMoD) was invited to complete a survey about the impact of the program. In addition, each member of the program was provided with the opportunity to be interviewed for this study so the researcher could garner a qualitative point-of-view of the mentoring program. The purpose of this research approach was to gain qualitative knowledge by documenting what motivates a Black male at a predominantly White institution (PWI) and his perceptions of success. Furthermore, these methods allow members of the Collegiate Men of Distinction to express themselves far beyond the numerical inputs on a survey. In addition to the surveys and interviews, empirical data (grade-point averages) were incorporated into this study to gain more insight into the statistical-effectiveness of the mentoring program. Overall, this research design supported analysis of the graduation rates and the peer-led mentoring program called Collegiate Men of Distinction (CMoD) from a holistic perspective steeped in a qualitative point of view.

Data Collection Methods

An email was sent (Appendix B) with the approval of the University of Southern Indiana's Multicultural Center to the members of the Collegiate Men of Distinction (CMoD). During this phase, participants were asked to respond via email with their consent form if they wanted to participate in the survey. In addition, students responded via email if they were

interested in the interview portion and those interview times were set. All participants who took the survey or participated in the interview were read and given a copy of the consent form. At the beginning of each interview, the consent form was read, and subsequently, the interviews commenced. Each interview was recorded, and the researcher transcribed each interview. The average time of each interview was eleven minutes, and each interview was held on USI's campus.

Instrumentation

In order for these research questions to be answered, two tools were used to gather data from the members of the CMoD. Members of the CMoD were given a few months to respond to a thirteen-question survey administered through Survey Monkey and to respond to a request to be interviewed. At the close of the survey, sixteen of the twenty-one members had responded. Eleven members of the program agreed to be interviewed, and those interviews were transcribed.

The data collection was relatively simple since the focus was on one mentoring program and not multiple programs; thus utilizing purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are exceptionally knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The simplicity of this method of data collection allowed the researcher to garner an 80 percent response rate for the survey and a 52 percent response rate for the interviews. The collection methods were geared to document the stories beyond the statistical data and the inclusion of the first-hand accounts of the CMoD members. The statistical information (grade-point average) was pulled from institutional data generated by the Office of Planning, Research,

and Assessment (OPRA). This report compared the academic performance (grade-point average) of Black men who were a part of the CMoD program versus those who were not.

Member Checking

After the interviews were transcribed, member checking was employed to validate the data. Member checking is also known as informant feedback or respondent validation and is used to improve the accuracy, credibility, and validity of a study (Strickland, Waltz, & Lentz, 2016). Members read the transcript and (a) suggested changes to the transcript, (b) added any additional information they deemed appropriate, and (c) deleted data that was not clear or was incorrect. Also, each member was given five days to respond to the request for revisions. After no alterations were suggested, member checking was closed.

Data Analysis Methods

The transcribed interviews and the artifacts collected were analyzed using the NVivo 12 Pro software analysis system. To analyze the qualitative data, four steps were taken, in order of priority. While using NVivo, it was essential to follow each step carefully because if an action was taken out of order, it might have been difficult to perform the analysis accurately (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). The goal of this analysis with NVivo was to assist the researcher in finding a more comprehensive approach to data analysis and to present these findings in a more story-like manner (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). The four steps in priority order are found below.

Step One

Each member of the CMoD program who participated in the interview portion of this study was assigned a pseudonym that was used throughout, not only in the transcription process but in all reporting of data and publication. This was done to protect the identity of the participant (Waltz, Strickland, & Lentz, 2016). After member checking was completed with each

participant, the transcribed interviews were converted to a PDF and uploaded into NVivo for analysis. Looking for themes was necessary to identify codes and to begin the coding process. A code was stored in NVivo in what is termed a node list. The node list allowed the researcher to see the codes found in the PDF in a more organized fashion (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). A code is an abstract representation of an object or phenomenon (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). According to Bazeley and Jackson (2013), a code can range from purely descriptive clusters of words to labels for topics or themes (more overarching than simple word clusters), to the more interpretive or analytical concepts about given topics (more overarching than labels for topics or themes). In this study, descriptive coding was first undertaken. NVivo can auto-code the nodes. By definition, this means that the researcher had a readily available method to code data into the node list through this method. In other words, the program remembers where an object was seen in the text (either in paragraph form or PDF). It then automatically located and found that passage and auto-coded it (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

Step Two

Because the study had eleven interview questions, each interview question was used as a heading for analysis through a node. Heading levels in NVivo were useful in this study because the researcher needed to divide or separate the data collected based on the interview questions (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). For example, if heading 1 represented interview question 1, auto-coding was used to code all the nodes for heading 1 or interview question 1 (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Auto-coding was described above in Step one. Thus, when the analysis was performed, it was possible to discern what the nodes were for each specific interview question (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

Step Three

After reviewing the word files to determine common or typical themes in the transcripts, a node list (NVivo or quick code) was generated for each interview question. Next, the nodes were further reviewed to lump them into themes (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). The NVivo computer program lumped the themes and this was done to look for overarching themes. Lumping is a term that is used in NVivo (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Thus, with NVivo, what is termed coding in the source was used (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). NVivo gave a confirmation when the node list for coding in the source was completed for each interview question.

Step Four

The data were analyzed to generate overarching themes for each research question. In NVivo, the coding process was deductive as the program operates in what is sometimes termed top down, logical reasoning. Logical reasoning, and what is termed deductive reasoning, suggest that all of the underlying premises and concordances are considered to be true. In addition, because NVivo, like many software products, is only capable of deductive analysis, all of the information placed in the program was assumed to be correct (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

Participant Rights

To protect the rights of this study's participants, the following guidelines were used. The term human subject means a living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or obtains individually identifiable, private information.

Intervention includes both physical procedures (e.g., venipuncture) by which data are gathered and manipulations of the subject (e.g., by deception) or the subject's environment (e.g.,

by introducing extreme heat) that are performed for research purposes. Interaction includes communication or interpersonal contact between investigator and subject.

Private information included information about a subject that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place. It also referred to information that has been provided for specific purposes by an individual with the reasonable expectation that it will not be made public (for example, a medical record). Information is individually identifiable if the identity of the subject is associated with the knowledge or may be readily ascertained by the investigator. Finally, all participants in this study will be protected with confidential names for the respondents, for example, Respondent A, B.

Potential Limitations

One of the potential limitations of this study was time and possible participant participation. With the summer break being the best time for the researcher to conduct the data collection, there was a fear of a low response rate, however, that was not the case. The response rate turned out to be very high. In addition, gathering data for the third research question was difficult because of the hidden resources of some universities as they pertain to supporting minority students due to a lack of advertisement. However, with the help of many departments on campus, this question was readily answered. Overall, this research has provided other researchers with a robust framework to enact change as it pertains to creating mentoring programs for Black men in higher education. This research has given future researchers the framework to examine their mentoring programs in their infancy stages.

Summary

Combining the critical components of mentorship, the demographic makeup of this institution and its resources proved to be a balanced formula for this research. From feelings of

belongingness found amongst the members of the Collegiate Men of Distinction to discerning the linkages between the peer-led mentoring approach and Black male success, this research grew more robust at each step. Furthermore, unpacking the methodological approach to the analysis gives the reader insight into how to utilize this research in the future. And with this unpacking, researchers will gain an appreciation of the phenomenological approach to data collection. This type of approach allowed the story of the CMoD program to be told in multiple ways. The findings can help shape how mentoring programs or initiatives are developed moving forward. In the end, though, this research is just a beginning, with the main focus on measuring success within the CMoD mentoring program at the University of Southern Indiana.

CHAPTER 4: DATA & ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy and limits of the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program at the University of Southern Indiana. This chapter will outline the instrumentation, sample size, and data collection methods used to highlight the major themes in the participant responses. In addition, this chapter will present an analysis focusing on six themes derived from the survey results and interviews. Finally, this chapter will delve into why these results are essential while providing a foundation for the concluding chapter.

Review of Instrumentation and Sample

For the research questions to be answered, two tools were used to gather data from the members of the CMoD. Members of the CMoD were given two months to respond to a thirteen-question survey administered through Survey Monkey and an email request to be interviewed. By the survey close date, sixteen of the twenty-one members responded. In addition, eleven members of the program agreed to be interviewed.

Description of the Sample

The survey population was defined as sixteen ($N = 16$) Black male college students who participated in at least one semester of the CMoD program. The participants ranged between 19 and 25 years of age. In analyzing the demographic data, the sample mean age was 21-24 ($M = 21-24$). Additionally, 100% of the sample were male ($n = 16$) as this mentoring program focuses on Black men. With these demographics, all of the students ($N = 16$) met the criteria for participation, per data collection processes as outlined in chapter three. Prior to beginning the structured interview, the researcher provided each participant with the informed consent form to read and sign. Participants were asked if they had any questions before starting the interview.

The structured interview protocol began with direct pre-interview questions with proper explanation. The participants reviewed the consent form agreements.

15 – Question Survey (Instrument 1). The researcher compiled a set of questions to elicit a response from members of CMoD program as it pertained to gauging the benefits, drawbacks, and improvements of the program. This survey included ranked-response questions, open-ended questions, and the basic demographical questions. Data from this instrument were captured using the Survey Monkey software.

11 – Question Interview (Instrument 2). The researcher developed an interview protocol with questions that allowed the participant to answer in an open-ended format regarding the efficacy and limits of the CMoD program. The objective of these questions was to garner responses concerning previous mentorship involvement and the effectiveness and limits of the CMoD program. Each interview lasted approximately 10-15 minutes.

Articulation, Interpretation, and Analysis of Data

Through careful interviewing and surveying, the members of the CMoD program spoke to the effectiveness to the program. Their experiences were highlighted in the interview portion of this research. Whether it was the brotherhood gained from the program or the nuggets of wisdom for the co-advisors, they men spoke to the benefit of this program. In addition, the survey allowed them to speak about the functionality of the program. The CMoD members were able to provide insight into how to make the program more effective moving forward – through a first-hand lens.

Member Checking

CMoD members were interviewed and their responses were transcribed. From the transcription, the themes and descriptive codes were created from their responses. Members also

participated in the survey process. Each survey participant's identity remained confidential to allow them to speak freely through their answers as well as protecting their identity (Waltz, Strickland, & Lentz, 2016). From their responses, the nodes were created for this analysis.

Each descriptive code began with just a phrase or word that referred to the program. For example, in this descriptive coding sequence, the focus is on brotherhood, and one participant stated:

The CMoD program was more efficient than any of the other programs I've been in. Mainly because I was able to connect with so many guys. And I was able to actually understand what was going on. I felt like I was more empowered to use my resources and actually connect with my brothers as well. I feel that I can get around campus more because I was able to connect with these guys from the program.

Another participant added:

This program was basically just a group of brothers in college whether they're freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, or graduate students. We are a close group that gives you the option to be comfortable around each other and get to know one another.

This example illustrated the importance of brotherhood and belongingness to the members of the program.

In another descriptive coding sequence, participants emphasized *leadership*. One participant noted:

The program helped me grow as a leader. It helped me bring out those characteristics of a leader from within. It showed me what type of leader I could be. And it helped me open up more with public speaking by speaking to people. And so forth.

Another participant noted:

Showing up to the CMoD meetings forced me to step outside of my comfort zone and look at myself from a leadership perspective. I did not know that I had so many leadership qualities.

These examples provided an illustration of how participants viewed the program as it pertained to cultivating their leadership skills. In addition, it gave first-hand insight into how they felt about leadership. This theme also delved into how participants responded to a challenge to lead.

In another coding sequence, the descriptive code time management was noted. In the program, participants felt that they gained some true time management skills. One of the program participants noted:

I think it helped me. A big problem that I had was being on time. We all knew that the meetings were set at a distinct time. He (D'Angelo) always pushes for you to be on time and you know if you're not on time you're late. So, that was one thing that truly helped me that I was struggling with.

Similarly, another participant noted:

Going over it again, the program kind of gave me a sense of structure, especially with my time. Before joining the mentor program, my GPA wasn't too good and I didn't have no sense of direction where I was going because I didn't have a strong base or time management.

In this case, the participants elaborated on how the program help them be successful with their time management. As mentioned earlier, each participant was responsible for creating a time management plan and that impacted some of the participants. The impact of this plan focused on how time and tasks worked. One of the key takeaways from this theme is self-awareness. Many of the participants were able to see the linkages between their proper planning and their

academic success. Moreover, those members who did not take the time management plan process seriously also saw the impact of their improper planning.

Presentation and Organization of Results

In this section, an analysis of the data is offered. The data are organized within the framework of the interview questions. Familiarity with the questions will help frame the responses of the participants and the origin of the nodes expressed by the participants. The researcher noted that the nodes were coded in the program to express the overarching themes with NVivo 12 Pro.

To organize the results, the interview questions posed to the participants are presented below. There were eleven interview questions. Those questions included:

1. Are you a member of the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program?
2. Is this your first time being a member of a mentoring program?
3. Tell me a little bit about your experience in the mentoring program.
4. What are some of the activities you have participated in as part of this program?
5. So, tell me about your mentor in the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program.
6. How do you relate to your mentor?
7. What differences do you and your mentor have?
8. Can you tell me more?
9. How has the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring helped you?
10. Do you feel that the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program could be improved? If so, how so?
11. Do you have anything else that you would like to add about the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program?

Table 4.1 Descriptive Codes

Name	Description	Files	References
Brotherhood	Covers all aspects of the CMoD programming where the members feel a sense of belongingness or comradery.	7	7
Empowerment	Highlights the perceived impact of skills gained to uplift or empower the members of the program.	1	1
Leadership	Any instances where leadership was identified in the program. This could be leadership skills or opportunities that were gained or leadership concepts that were learning.	6	6
Public Speaking	Highlights any instances where members talk about the benefit of public speaking.	4	4
Relatability	Captures the perceived relationships between the mentees and their mentors.	1	1
Service	The members highlight the service projects completed by the members of the group.	3	3
Support	Members speak about the support or support systems that are present in the program.	3	3
Time Management	One of the focal points of the program is time management and it is highlighted here.	3	3

Eleven participants provided a variety of themes that were aimed at giving insight to the Collegiate Men of Distinction program and its perceived benefits. As stated previously, the survey was comprised of eleven interview questions. NVivo 12 Pro was used to garner the nodes from the interviewees. In doing so, the following themes emerged from those nodes. These themes were selected based of the percentage present for each node. Descriptive codes selected had to be present at least twenty-seven percent of the time to be listed below.

1. Brotherhood
2. Leadership

3. Public Speaking
4. Service
5. Support
6. Time Management

Theme 1: Brotherhood

The theme of brotherhood was present in 43 percent of the responses. As the descriptive coding process took shape, it was evident that brotherhood was a major theme of the CMoD program. Five of the eleven participants viewed that component of the program as essential to their success. One participant noted:

The CMoD program was more efficient than any of the other programs I've been in. Mainly because I was able to connect with so many guys. And I was able to actually understand what was going on. I felt like I was more empowered to use my resources and actually connect with my brothers as well. I feel that I can get around campus more because I was able to connect with these guys from the program.

Theme 2: Leadership

The theme of leadership was present in over 37 percent of the responses. As the descriptive coding process shifted to looking for other themes, it was evident that the ability to gain leadership skills from the CMoD program was a true benefit to the participants. Four of the eleven participants viewed the leadership component of the program as essential to their growth. One member stated:

The program helped me grow as a leader. It helped me bring out those characteristics of a leader from within. It showed me what type of leader I could be. And it helped me open up more with public speaking my speaking to people. And so forth.

Theme 3: Public Speaking

The theme of public speaking was present in thirty-six percent of the responses. As more descriptive codes were found, public speaking was highlighted as a major theme of the CMoD program. Four of the eleven participants viewed that component of the program as essential to their success. Many of the participants stated how “public speaking helped me grow” or how it “got me out of my comfort zone”. It was evident that this was an overarching theme amongst the respondents. One member gave this assessment of the public speaking requirement:

Public speaking was not my thing until I became a member of the program. I never liked speaking in front of crowds and to do it in front of people that I didn't know made me nervous as hell. I thought I did badly but my mentor gave me some encouragement. Now I can't stop speaking.

Theme 4: Service

This theme was present in 27 percent of the responses. As the more themes became evident, service was highlighted by three of the members. These members recognized the fact that their ability to grow as a servant-leader was present at multiple time in the program. One member mentioned:

One service activity would be the Tri-State food drive that we were involved in two semesters ago where we went to go pack boxes for the less-fortunate individuals in the community of Evansville. This gave us a greater sense of our privilege.

Theme 5: Support

The theme of support was present in 27 percent of the responses. The theme of support stemmed from the question about their mentors. The members of the program expressed how the mentors in the program gave them a sense of support on campus. Three of the men who spoke

about support talked more-specifically about how their mentors kept them uplifted throughout their tough times. One member of the program described the support from mentor:

My mentor was there for me when it came down to it. If I needed to think I could come to his office. I just was able to connect because I understood that he supported and cared for me. This let me know that he cared. Whenever I was going to his office and I more so wanted to come and talk about my problems. And after leaving his office, things became easier to handle because of his constant support.

Theme 6: Time Management

The theme of time management was present in 27 percent of the responses. Although only three of the participants highlighted the time management component of the program, they were positively affected by that component. One participant noted:

If I did not have the expectation of being on time or managing my time, then I wouldn't be where I am today. I appreciate the fact that the program essentially pushed me to be better at that.

Another student added:

I think it helped me. A big problem that I had was being on time. We all knew that the meetings were set at a distinct time. He (D'Angelo) always pushes for you to be on time and you know if you're not on time you're late. So, that was one thing that truly helped me that I was struggling with.

Survey and Interview Analysis

During the analysis of the survey and interview transcripts, multiple benefits and drawbacks of the program arose. These benefits and drawbacks were derived from multiple questions and respondent feedback. While searching for themes within the survey, there was a

focus on the number of respondents that identified each benefit and addressing drawbacks of the program. However, the criterion for the interviews was slightly different and focused on the benefits drawbacks as elaborated in stories and responses from the members.

Benefits of the Program

One of the first benefits that arose in the survey came from question #6. Question #6 on the survey focused on the benefits of the CMoD program and from that question arose the benefit of social engagement. In Figure 4.1, it shows that the majority of members in the program identified social engagement as the main benefit from the CMoD program. Through social engagement, there could be a strong argument that this type of engagement allows the members of CMoD to utilize the resources offered in the program. Whether its meeting on a weekly basis or just the interaction during the meeting, social engagement was seen as a catalyst for the utilization of wraparound services.

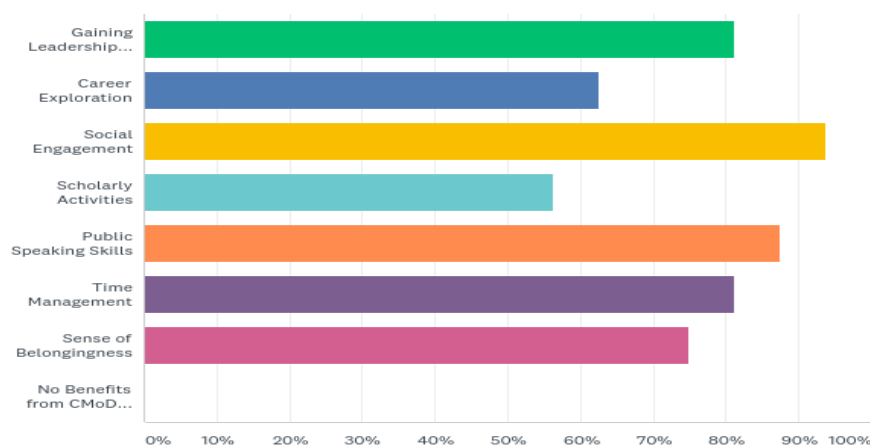


Figure 4.1 – Benefits of CMOD

The second benefit (public speaking) was also indicated on Figure 4.1. One of the key components of the program is building confidence. One of the ways that this goal is accomplished is through allowing each member to lead the meeting. This includes the use of parliamentary procedure and presentations on a common reading. The members select the next

speaker at the end of each meeting and the theme of the next meeting for the speaker. Over the course of the past two years, there was a shift from the young men being afraid to speak to taking pride in being selected. This coincides with the perceived benefit of leadership amongst the members.

The third benefit of time management was expressed by over 88 percent of the respondents. At the beginning of each semester, each member of the program has to fill out a time management plan. This plan is an hour-by-hour schedule of a seven-day work week that encompasses their course schedule, extracurricular activities, and their study hours. In creating their plans, the young men structured their schedules which allowed for them to properly set their goals, both academically and socially. They were able to attain a higher GPA, as a collective, than their counterparts who did not participate in the program. Time management plans were identified by participants as important to their academic success.

Drawbacks of the Program

Within the survey, there was an opportunity for the members to provide feedback on potential improvements. As evident in Figure 4.2, this question focuses on the drawbacks of the program. Operating from the stance that no program is perfect, this question allowed for the members to specifically highlight the needs of the program going forward.

The first of two major drawbacks of the CMoD program was the lack of internship opportunities in the program. Though the focus of the program is to ensure that Black males persist to graduation, it was evident that many of the members felt as if there needed to be a focus on post-graduate opportunities.

The second drawback of the CMoD program focused on the community service opportunities in the program. This points to the perceived benefit of leadership. Many of the

young men enjoy the meetings, but there is a lack of ‘giving back’ that is evident in the survey responses listed below. Many of the young men who participate in the program are from disadvantaged backgrounds, and they have spoken about the impact of the community service projects that they have participated in.

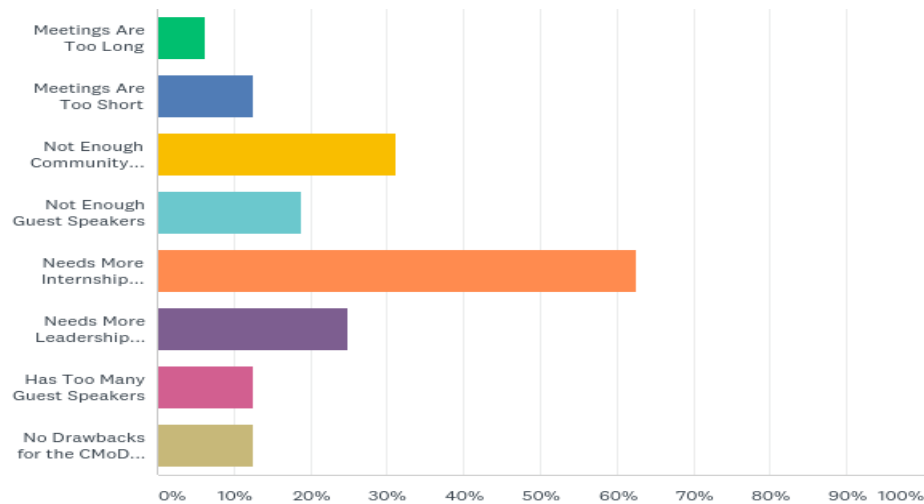


Figure 4.2 – Drawbacks of CMOd

Summary

The purpose of this study was to gather data to effectively examine the Collegiate Men of Distinction (CMoD) mentoring program. This study looked at both the efficacy and limits of the program and utilized both an interview and survey to gather the following themes:

1. Brotherhood
2. Leadership
3. Public Speaking
4. Service
5. Support
6. Time Management

The themes derived from the two data collection methods were all-encompassing while allowing for substantive feedback from the members to be presented. The findings from this study showed that the mentoring program is doing well in providing the brotherhood and sense of belongingness. In addition, the program is equipping the young men with the skills needed to be a leader in society. Furthermore, through service to their communities, support from the mentors, and a shifting focus to time management, the program has been effective.

While there is an effective model in place, there needs to be more opportunities for professional growth after degree completion. In addition, many of the members expressed the need for more community service opportunities. For future research, there should be an emphasis placed on determining the underlying benefits from this type of service and what it means to those who are involved.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

The phenomenological study of the Collegiate Men of Distinction (CMoD) program encompassed the ethnographic experiences of members of the program. This mentoring program was created to increase the persistence and graduation rates at the University of Southern Indiana, and while those numbers can only be measured on a semester basis, the program has been effective. Participants believe the program has positively impacted their GPA (grade point average) of Black males who are a part of the program. In fact, Black men who are members of the CMoD mentoring program have performed at higher levels than those who are not members of the program. Even with these numbers, more research needed to be completed to truly measure impact, persistence/retention rates, and long-term academic performance.

At the completion of the interviews and analysis the survey data, the following conclusions were made.

1. Black men in the CMoD program value the social interaction with peers working toward a common goal. The impact of social interaction directly correlates with their sense of belonging.
2. Members of the CMoD program felt as if they gained leadership skills with their participation in the program. This is important because this feeling led to the increase of thirteen members over a one-year span. Thus, expanding the program and its benefits to members.
3. Resourcefully, the members of the CMoD program overwhelmingly valued the need for internships and post-graduate guidance.

Findings

NVivo 12 Pro was used to lump and aggregate the twenty-four nodes from thirteen interview questions, and when in-source coding was conducted, six themes emerged as major themes. These six themes showcased six findings from the experiences of the members of the Collegiate Men of Distinction Program (CMoD). These six major findings were:

1. Brotherhood is Essential to Success,
2. Leadership is Cultivated; Not Title-Driven,
3. Public Speaking is Encouraged and Developed as a Skill,
4. Service is Necessary for Leadership Development,
5. The Support of the Program Provides the Participants with the Proper Wraparound Resources,
6. The Implementation of a Time Management Plan Paid Dividends.

Finding 1: Brotherhood is Essential to Success

The finding of brotherhood was present in 45 percent of the responses. As the descriptive coding process took shape, it was evident that brotherhood was a major theme of the CMoD program. Five of the eleven participants viewed that component of the program as essential to their success. One participant noted:

That if the brotherhood of the CMoD program was not present, I might not have made it past my first semester. The fact that D'Angelo and Cesar put together this program was truly amazing. They allowed for us to lead, but most of all, they allowed for us to bond together.

Another program participant noted:

I am the only child and I did not have any siblings growing up. This program allowed me to be myself while growing with other young men who faced the same problems as me. I never thought that I could bond with someone in just a semester, but the way the program was set up, it created a sense of brotherhood.

The aspect of brotherhood is important in understanding why mentoring programs can be effective with Black males within higher education. These programs have an impact beyond just the classroom and even the weekly meetings. The notion of brotherhood enabled the men to express their emotions, violating some of the dominant cultural tenets of manhood (Jackson, 2012).

Finding 2: Leadership is Cultivated; Not Title-Driven

The theme of leadership not being title-driven was present in over 36 percent of the responses. It was evident that the ability to gain leadership skills from the CMoD program was a true benefit to the participants. Four of the eleven participants viewed the leadership component of the program as essential to their growth. One member stated:

When I first joined CMoD, I was surprised at how everyone had an equal voice.

Throughout my four years at USI (University of Southern Indiana), every group organization that I was a member of had an executive board. For example, I am the president of the Black Student Union, but none of those positions exist within CMoD.

Though it was different, I felt it helped many of my brothers adjust to another.

Another member noted:

We had a couple of people in the group who proposed that we have officers and whatnot.

For me, I was afraid to have those because I felt like this program was teaching us leadership in a way that went beyond titles. For example, every meeting was run by a

member of the group, but I don't know if that would have been the case with officers running the meeting.

In listening to the members talk about their experiences with leadership in the program, the sense of being equal resonated. Many of the participants had never participated in a program in which the format was constructed without an executive board. This gave them a sense of freedom and equality within the program. The freedom to feel comfortable as an aspiring leader while also understanding that was everyone was on the same playing field. Finally, the members gained an understanding that leaders generate follower trust by clarifying how and why the organization functions, and helping the follower interpret his or her role within a collective and, more generally, the organizational context (Hernandez, 2014).

Finding 3: Public Speaking is Encouraged and Developed as a Skill

The theme of public speaking was present in 36 percent of the responses. As more descriptive codes were found, public speaking was highlighted as a major theme of the CMoD program. Four of the eleven participants viewed that component of the program as essential to their success. Understanding the purposes of studying speaking are to discover the knowledge of speech, the art of speaking well, and to develop the thinking ability of social life and culture (Yee, 2014), many of the participants stated how “public speaking helped me grow” or how it “got me out of my comfort zone”. It was evident that this was an overarching theme amongst the respondents. One member gave this assessment of the public speaking requirement, “Public speaking was not a strength of mine, but the opportunity to develop this skill allowed me to be more confident in front of audiences.”

Finding 4: Service is Necessary for Leadership Development

The fourth finding was focused on service. This finding was present in 27 percent of the responses. Acknowledging servant leadership posits that by first facilitating the development and well-being of followers, long-term organizational goals will be achieved (Hoch, 2018) and members recognized the fact that their ability to grow as a servant-leader was present at multiple times in the program. One member mentioned:

During our service project at this church, we had to set up these computers. There was one problem though...we did not have any directions on how to do so. In order to complete the task, we pulled out our phones to see how to put them together but there was no signal. This forced us to use our brains and one of my brothers took charge of the situation. His leadership was shown during a service project and I think that is what we all hoped to get out of the visit. Well, of course helping the kids as well.

One of the leader mentors stated:

We all wanted to give back in some fashion, but we didn't know how. We decided to set up these projects because we wanted people to see us as leaders in our community. I will admit that I did not care for being in the cold warehouse stacking cans and filling up boxes, but it made me feel better knowing I was helping someone less-fortunate than myself.

As this program was being developed, there was a need to include a community service project to illicit a self-actualization for members. For many of these young men, this was their first time giving back to communities similar to their home communities. In fact, after many of these projects, the young men would get kind of emotional knowing that a few hours of work

were just that, a few hours. Implementing a community service component to a mentoring program is very important because it helps reveal leadership in a subtle yet subconscious way.

Finding 5: The Support of the Program Provides the Participants with the Proper Wraparound Resources

The finding of support as it pertained to wraparound services was present in twenty-seven percent of the responses. This finding showed that a participant's feeling of support stemmed from the question about their mentors. The members of the program expressed how the program mentors gave them a sense of support on campus through the utilization of wraparound services. Many of the young men who spoke about support spoke in-depth about how their mentors kept them uplifted throughout their tough times. One member of the program described the support from his mentor:

Any student can want to be successful, but without the proper resources, that is not possible. Mr. Taylor pushed me to think outside of the box, but before doing that he challenged me to ask questions and utilize the resources offered on campus. I found this out the hard way. Mr. Taylor pushes tough love with all of us so when he directed me to the writer's lab after asking him about a paper, it helped me understand how to take more initiative in building my future.

Another member noted:

The CMoD program opened my eyes to all of the free resources on campus. I have a resume because my mentors in the program pushed me. More specifically, the senior that I was paired up with. He made sure that I had a great cover letter and resume, but that took me heading over to career services to understand why that was so important. Because of him, I am heading to graduate school.

The feeling of support has given many of these young men an opportunity to understand college in a way that was not present at the University of Southern Indiana (USI) prior to the creation of the program. Many of the members expressed their eye-opening experience to “new” resources at USI. Furthermore, the members expressed the importance of taking advantage of those resources and utilizing them in their plans for success.

Finding 6: The Implementation of a Time Management Plan Paid Dividends

The finding of time management was present in twenty-seven percent of the responses. Although only three of the participants highlighted the time management component of the program, they were positively affected by that component. One member stated that:

TMP (time management plan) is something that Mr. Taylor highlighted from Day 1. He wanted us to see where our time was going. Personally, I found that my time wasn't being used correctly. I was wasting my time in rec or at my girl crib. When I began to add study hours into the plan and subtract the distractions, I saw success. My grades increased and on top of that, I understood why Mr. Taylor kept on us about our TMP.

Another participant stated:

If I never had to hear TMP again, then I would be fine. But in all seriousness, working with my mentor on that time management plan is why I am going to graduate school. I didn't know it at the time, but it was shaping me for the future. I used to waste my time trying to balance so many things without putting them on paper. Because of that, my grades suffered. After using the TMP, I saw my grades increase and I have this program to thank for that.

The time-management plan (TMP) was implemented to ensure that the members were successful academically, but what happened next was not expected. After the first semester of its

implementation, many of the members returned after the holiday break with their plans already completed. They began to take ownership of their future and it started with organizing their time in a productive way. Through this ownership, the members started to gain a better understanding of how much of a role the TMP played in their success or failure. Not putting the proper time into creating a successful plan yielded low academic marks for some of the members, but they grew from those setbacks.

Implications

Every study should be well grounded with implications across a broad spectrum based on the findings. The implications should be based on the study and a wide body of the literature if the results are to be used by others to improve program offerings (Blanchard, 2018). Participants in this study valued the wraparound services and they took advantage of said resources as presented. In addition, they were able to garner the brotherhood that kept many of them together. This sense of belongingness pushed each member to hold one another accountable. With this level of accountability, there was an increase in academic performance. The academic success of the members was also tied to the time management emphasis of the program. With the heightened sense of academic success amongst the members, the ability to lead became more evident. Many of the members started to accept the challenge of leading a group project or a meeting because their academic performance removed a barrier of fear or inferiority among their peer groups. Their newfound confidence has allowed many of the members to utilize the public speaking skills garnered through their multitude of leadership experiences. With these components, the CMoD program has had a positive impact on its members at the University of Southern Indiana.

Recommendations for Action

It is always essential to identify who the stakeholders are in any business or entity (Eden & Ackermann, 2013). Anyone that is affected by the entity in question is a stakeholder in that entity. The term stakeholder originates from economics theory. An entity such as a company can be imagined as a pentagon (Eden & Ackermann (2013). The concept of stakeholders is important to a address because it is not possible to make recommendations to stakeholders until they are known. The stakeholders in this case are any college or university leaders looking to increase the academic performance and success of their Black male population. The CMoD program has allowed for many men to thrive in settings beyond their own imagination because of a structured model of peer-led mentorship.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was not able to encompass all of components needed to analyze the program. Some of those components include: financial need, household makeup, and first-generation status. Based on the findings and the associated data-based literature presented in each theme, the following recommendations for further study are offered:

1. Conduct a mixed method study that correlates or shows causal relationships among a financial need, household makeup, and first-generation status as it pertains to the academic success and graduation of Black men. This type of study would fill in the gaps left in this study due to timing limitations.
2. Conduct a multi-site study to compare and contrast peer-led mentoring programs at different colleges and universities in multiple regions of the country. This type of comparative data will create a structure of best practices for mentor program developers.

3. Add transformative learning and leadership to research questions and conduct a correlational study to determine if there is relationship between these concepts and persistence and graduation.

Conclusion

The Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program was developed with the belief that students who historically did not perform well could do so with proper mentorship. With that framework, each component of the mentoring program was geared towards shaping the potential participants. In molding the program, there were a lot of statistics that drove the research, but the main factor was the student and their motivation. If the student was not successful, then what would be the purpose of the program? If the student did not grow in certain areas while realizing their full potential, then why would the program exist? These questions and many others drove the creation and implementation of the program. Moreover, those same concerns ignited this research.

The urge to find a practical solution to an ever-present problem was paramount to examining this program. The low graduation rate of Black men could have easily deterred many of the participants for taking a chance on a program for which they did not know the potential impact. And because those young men stepped out of their comfort zone, the University of Southern Indiana (USI) leaders know what can take place when brotherhood, access to wraparound resources, emphasis on time management, public speaking, and leadership are presented to young Black collegiate men with motivation. USI leaders also understand that, because of the academic performance of these young men, they are now able to tell a different story than ever before. In addition, by these young men taking ownership of their futures while using their motivation to join a new program, they were able to see their hard work and effort

pay dividends. And with the implementation of this program, the Multicultural Center at USI can say that they are a leader in retaining motivated Black men at an institution that has struggled to do so because they have a program and young men motivated to doing so.

In the end, this research showed that with proper planning and implementation, confronting the odds facing these students is possible. Reaching the lowest-performing ethnic group is not just a wish anymore, but a valid practice. This mindset can change thinking about what educational leadership should look like, and there should be an appreciation for it. The Collegiate Men of Distinction is only one of many programs like itself that will be created because of this very research.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH**

Project Title: The Efficacy and Limits of the Collegiate Men of Distinction Mentoring Program

Principal Investigator(s): Mr. D'Angelo Taylor

Introduction:

- Please read this form. You may also request that the form is read to you. The purpose of this form is to give you information about this research study and, if you choose to participate, document that choice.
- You are encouraged to ask any questions that you may have about this study now, during or after the project is complete. You can take as much time as you need to decide whether or not you want to participate. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any point.

Why is this research study being done?

This research is being done to examine the efficacy and limits of the Collegiate Men of Distinction Mentoring Program and the University of Southern Indiana.

Who will be in this study?

Members of the Collegiate Men of Distinction Mentoring Program at the University of Southern Indiana.

What will I be asked to do?

To take a brief survey and be interviewed by the researcher, Mr. D'Angelo Taylor

What are the possible risks of taking part in this study?

There are no associated risks with taking part in this study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

There are no direct benefits from your participation.

What will it cost me?

No cost to participate.

How will my privacy be protected?

Only the researcher (Mr. D'Angelo Taylor), his dissertation committee and the University of New England Institutional Review Board (IRB) will be able to see your information. Once the study is completed, the interview notes and survey information will be disposed.

How will my data be kept confidential?

Only the researcher (Mr. D'Angelo Taylor), his dissertation committee and the University of New England IRB will be able to see your information. Once the study is completed, the interview notes and survey information will be disposed both electronically (for the survey) and physically for any notes taken during interviews. Any recordings of said interviews will be destroyed electronically as well.

What are my rights as a research participant?

- Your participation is voluntary. Your decision to participate will have no impact on your current or future relations with the University.
- Your decision to participate will not affect your relationship with Mr. D'Angelo Taylor.
- You may skip or refuse to answer any question for any reason.
- If you choose not to participate there is no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.
- You are free to withdraw from this research study at any time, for any reason.
 - If you choose to withdraw from the research there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.
- You will be informed of any significant findings developed during the course of the research that may affect your willingness to participate in the research.
- If you sustain an injury while participating in this study, your participation may be ended.

What other options do I have?

- You may choose not to participate.

Whom may I contact with questions?

- The researcher conducting this study is Mr. D'Angelo Taylor
 - For more information regarding this study, please contact Mr. D'Angelo Taylor at 309-318-9742
- If you choose to participate in this research study and believe you may have suffered a research related injury, please contact Mr. D'Angelo Taylor at 309-318-9742
- If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may call Olgun Guvench, M.D. Ph.D., Chair of the UNE Institutional Review Board at (207) 221-4171 or irb@une.edu.

Will I receive a copy of this consent form?

- You will be given a copy of this consent form.
-

Participant's Statement

I understand the above description of this research and the risks and benefits associated with my participation as a research subject. I agree to take part in the research and do so voluntarily.

Participant's signature or
Legally authorized representative

Date

Printed name

Researcher's Statement

The participant named above had sufficient time to consider the information, had an opportunity to ask questions, and voluntarily agreed to be in this study.

Researcher's signature

Date

Printed name

APPENDIX B: EMAIL TO STUDENTS

Good Morning (Name of Member),

My name is D'Angelo Taylor and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership at the University of New England. For my final project, I am examining the efficacy and limits of the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program at the University of Southern Indiana. As a member of the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program, you have been invited to take a brief survey and participate in an interview about the program.

The survey will require five to ten minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, please do not include your name. Copies of the project will only be provided to my dissertation committee, the program coordinator and the University of New England's Institutional Review Board.

If you choose to participate in this project, please read and sign the consent form attached to this email. In addition, please answer all questions as honestly as possible. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you may choose not to participate.

As for the interview, I will follow up with you in the near future to set up a time for you to answer a few questions, if you are interested.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. The data collected will provide useful information regarding the efficacy and limits of the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program.

Use the following link to participate in the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XWRSWHX>

Thanks so much,

D'Angelo S. Taylor, M.A.
(Mobile) 309-318-9742 – dtaylor1@usi.edu

APPENDIX C: INSTRUMENTS

INSTRUMENT ONE – SURVEY QUESTIONS

Survey Questions

1. Which category best describes you?
 - a. Freshman
Sophomore
 - b. Junior
 - c. Senior
2. Age (Fill in the Box)
3. How did you hear about the CMoD mentoring program? Please check all that apply.
 - a. A Student
 - b. A Faculty/Staff Member
 - c. At the Activates Fair
 - d. From Another Mentor
 - e. A Meeting Flyer
4. Are you a member for the Collegiate Men of Distinction (CMoD) mentoring program?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. How many semesters have you been involved with the CMoD program?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
6. What are some benefits of the CMoD program? Please check all that apply.
 - a. Gaining Leadership Skills
 - b. Career Exploration
 - c. Social Engagement
 - d. Scholarly Activities
 - e. Public Speaking Skills
 - f. Time Management
 - g. Sense of Belongingness
 - h. No Benefits from CMoD program
7. What are some drawbacks of the CMoD program? Please check all that apply.
 - a. Meetings Are Too Long
 - b. Meetings Are Too Short
 - c. Not Enough Community Service
 - d. Not Enough Guest Speakers
 - e. Needs More Internship Opportunities
 - f. Needs More Leadership Opportunities
 - g. Has Too Many Guest Speakers
 - h. No Drawbacks for the CMoD program

8. Please Rank Each Category (1 being the least-present and 5 being the most-present in the CMoD Program)
 - a. Leadership
 - b. Career Exploration
 - c. Social Engagement
 - d. Scholarly Activities
 - e. Public Speaking Skills
 - f. Time Management Skills
 - g. Sense of Belongingness
9. Has the CMoD program positively impacted your collegiate career?
 - a. Not At All
 - b. Little Impact
 - c. Somewhat Impacted
 - d. Impacted
 - e. Impacted Greatly
10. Has the CMoD program negatively impacted your collegiate career?
 - a. Not At All
 - b. Little Impact
 - c. Somewhat Impacted
 - d. Impacted
 - e. Impacted Greatly
11. How has the CMoD program effected your academic performance?
 - a. Not At All
 - b. Little Impact
 - c. Somewhat Impacted
 - d. Impacted
 - e. Impacted Greatly
12. How likely are you to participate in the CMoD program next semester?
 - a. Very Unlikely
 - b. Somewhat unlikely
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Somewhat Likely
 - e. Very Likely
13. How likely are you to recommend a friend for the CMoD program next semester?
 - a. Very Unlikely
 - b. Somewhat unlikely
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Somewhat Likely
 - e. Very Likely
14. What were your greatest takeaways or benefits from the CMoD program? (Open-Ended)
15. Do you have any suggestions for improving the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program? (Open-Ended)

INSTRUMENT TWO – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Interview Questions

The Collegiate Men of Distinction is a program designed to provide experiences which contribute to the growth, development, retention, and graduation of African American male students from all backgrounds. The goal of this experience is to empower students to take charge of their own learning experiences and to build community in a meaningful way.

Below, are the following interview questions that will be posed to each participant. In addition, each of interviewees responses will be transcribed for publication in the dissertation. This will be done with the utmost confidentiality.

1. Are you a member of the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program?
2. Is this your first time being a member of a mentoring program?
3. Tell me a little bit about your experience in the mentoring program.
4. What are some of the activities you have participated in as part of this program?
5. So, tell me about your mentor in the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program.
6. How do you relate to your mentor?
7. What differences do you and your mentor have?
8. Can you tell me more?
9. How has the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring helped you?
10. Do you feel that the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program could be improved? If so, how so?
11. Do you have anything else that you would like to add about the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program?

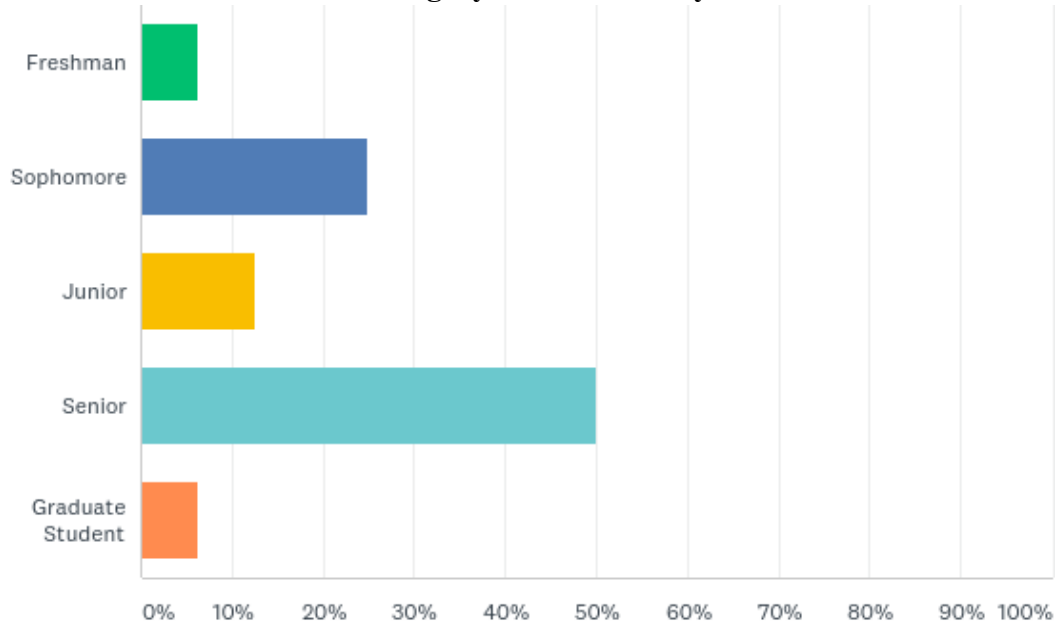
APPENDIX D: GRADE POINT AVERAGE CHART

	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2017	Spring 2018
CMoD	2.65 (14)	2.75 (14)	2.80 (21)	2.73 (21)
Non CMoD	2.64 (175)	2.63 (140)	2.69 (155)	2.67 (142)
Overall	2.65 (189)	2.64 (154)	2.70 (176)	2.68 (163)

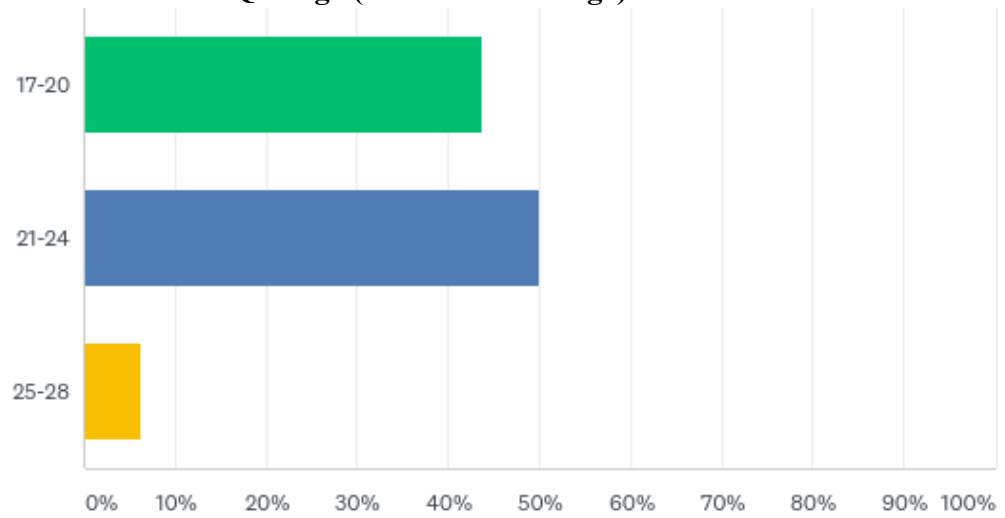
(Source: Office of Sponsored Projects and Research Administration)

APPENDIX E: RESULTS AND CODES

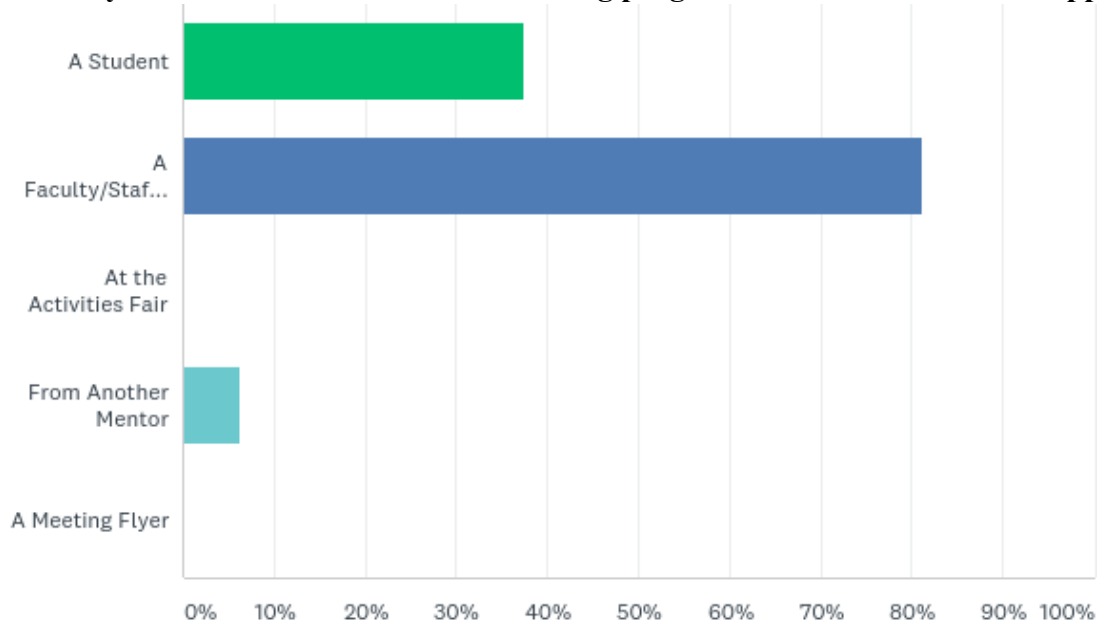
Q1: Which category best describes you?



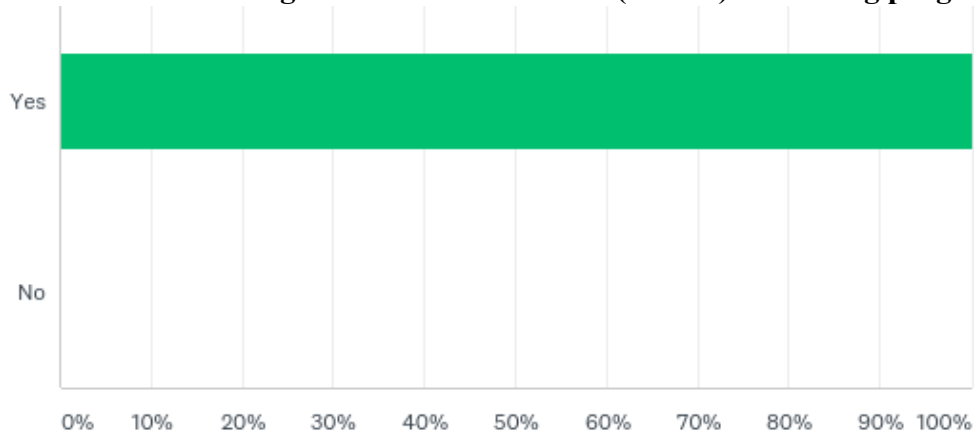
Q2: Age (Select Your Range)



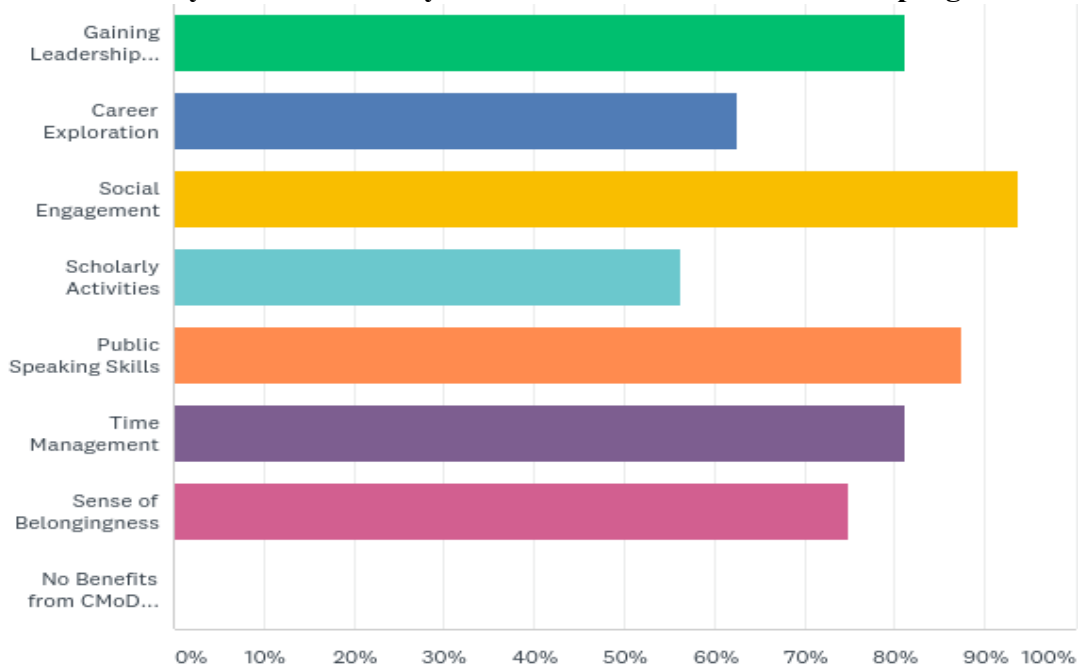
Q3: How did you hear about the CMoD mentoring program? Please check all that apply.



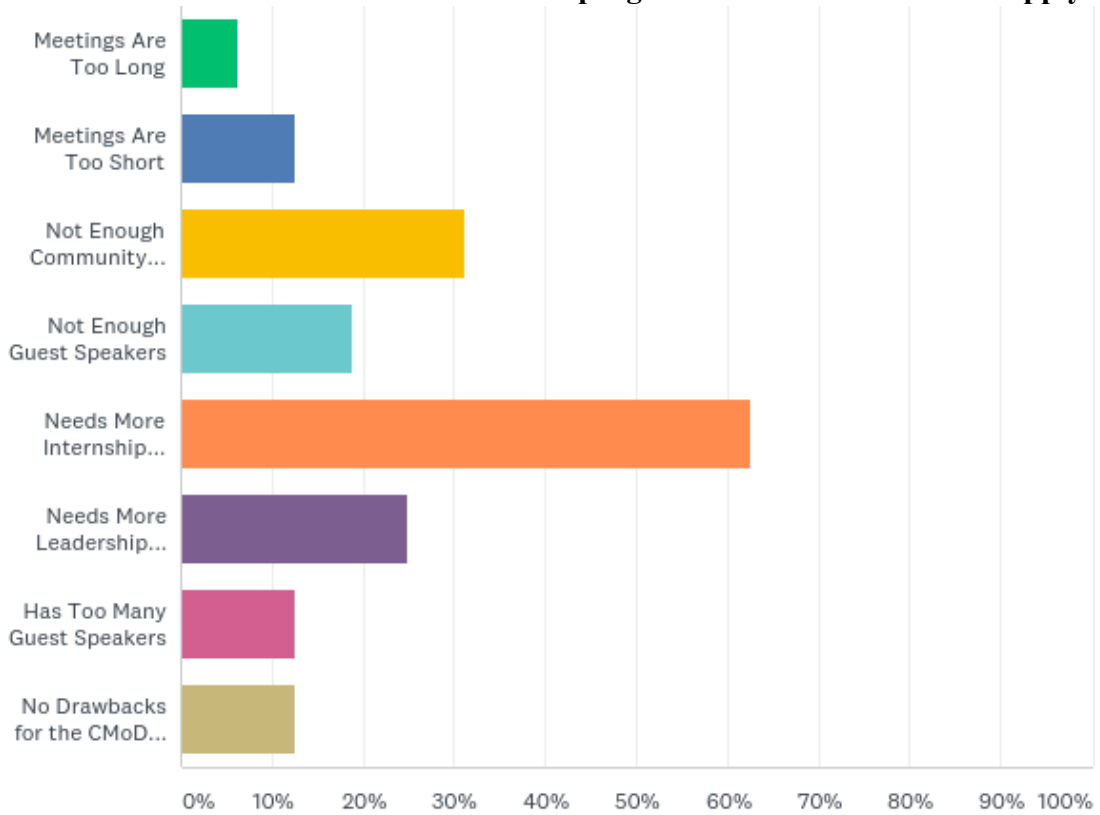
Q4: Are you a member for the Collegiate Men of Distinction (CMoD) mentoring program?



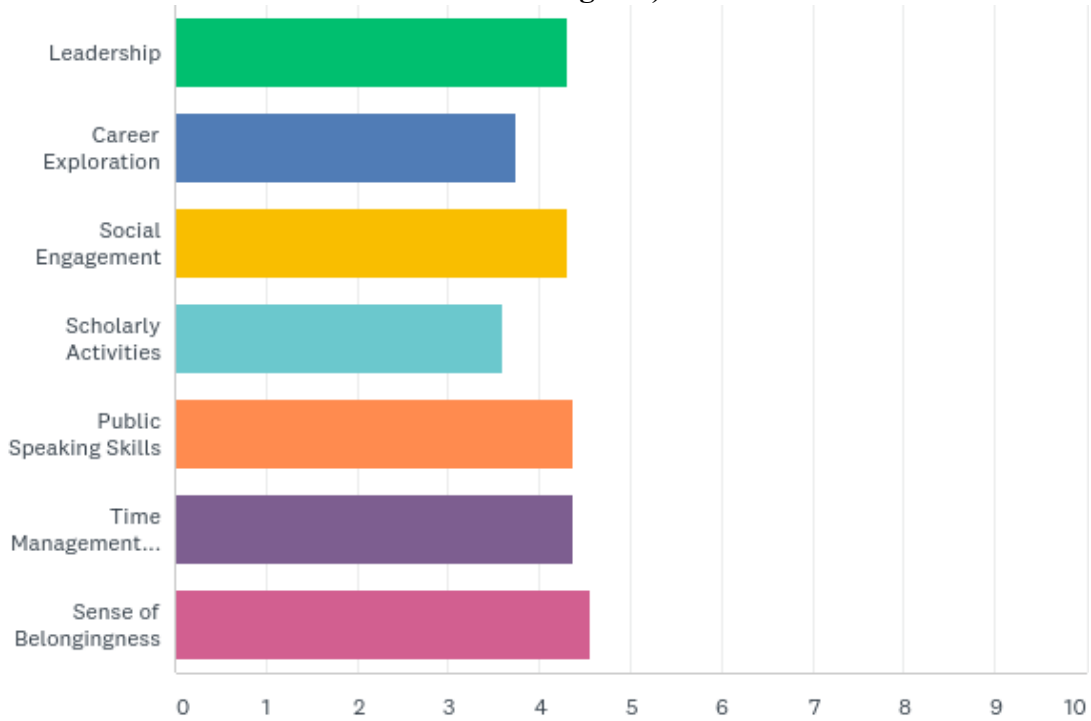
Q5: How many semesters have you been involved with the CMoD program?



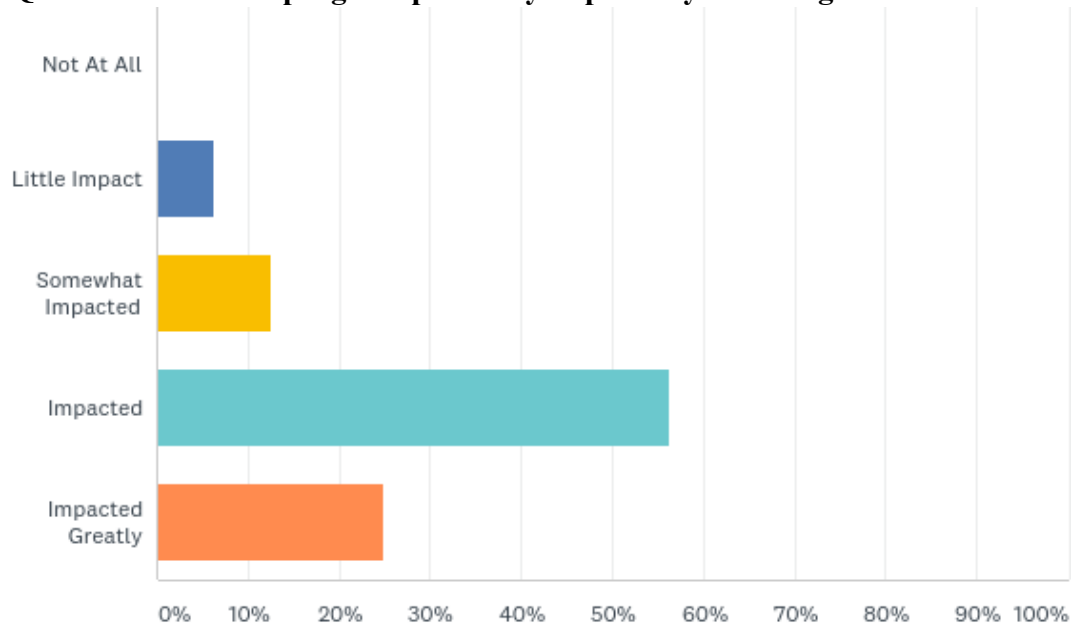
Q7: What are some drawbacks of the CMoD program? Please check all that apply.

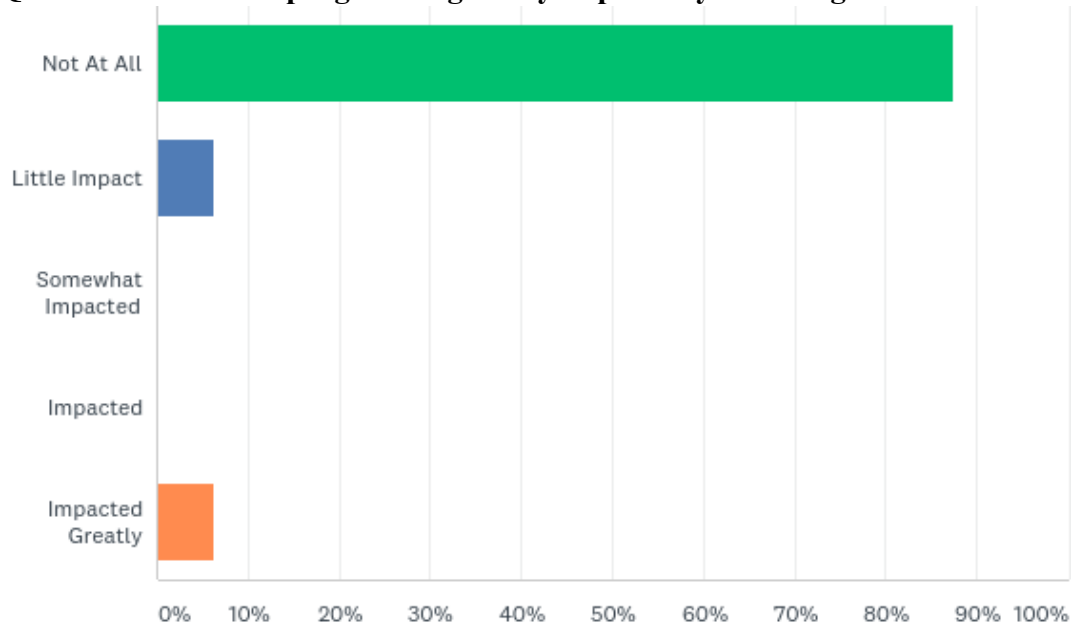
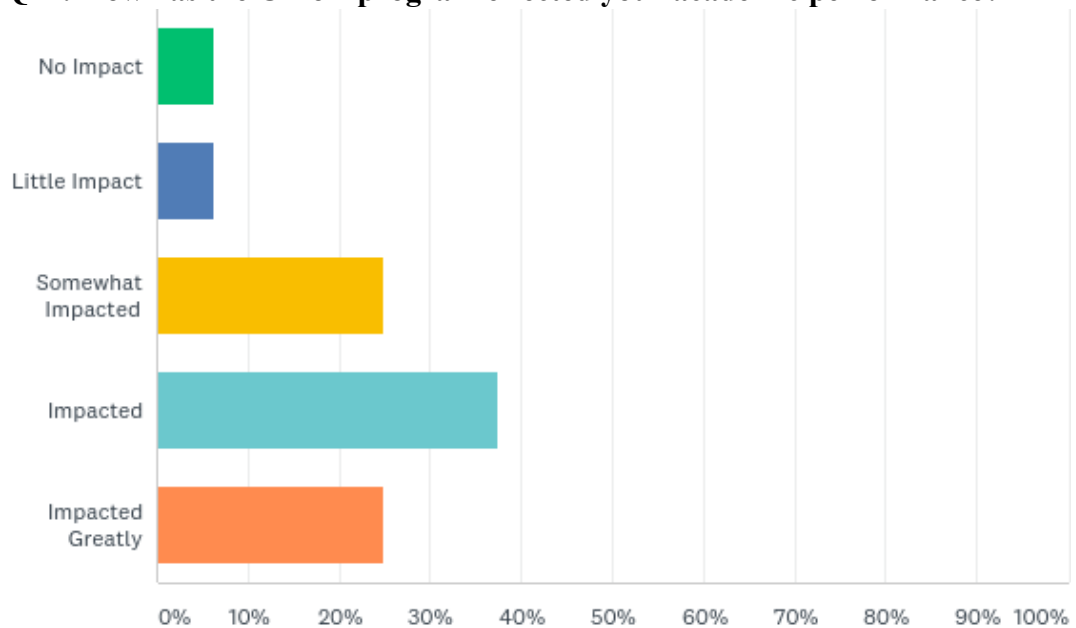


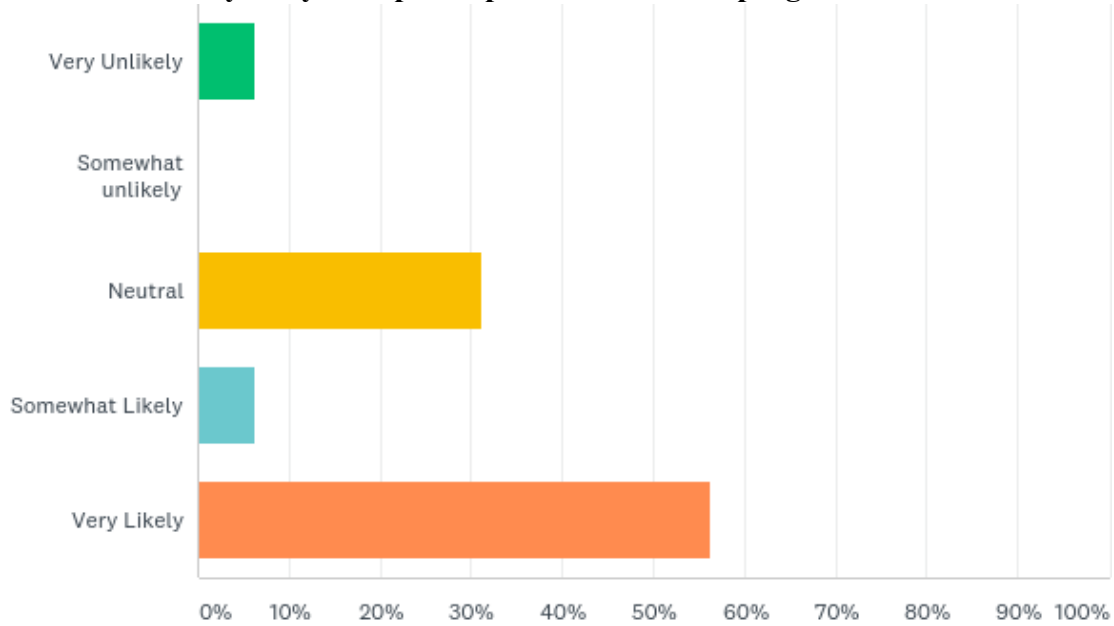
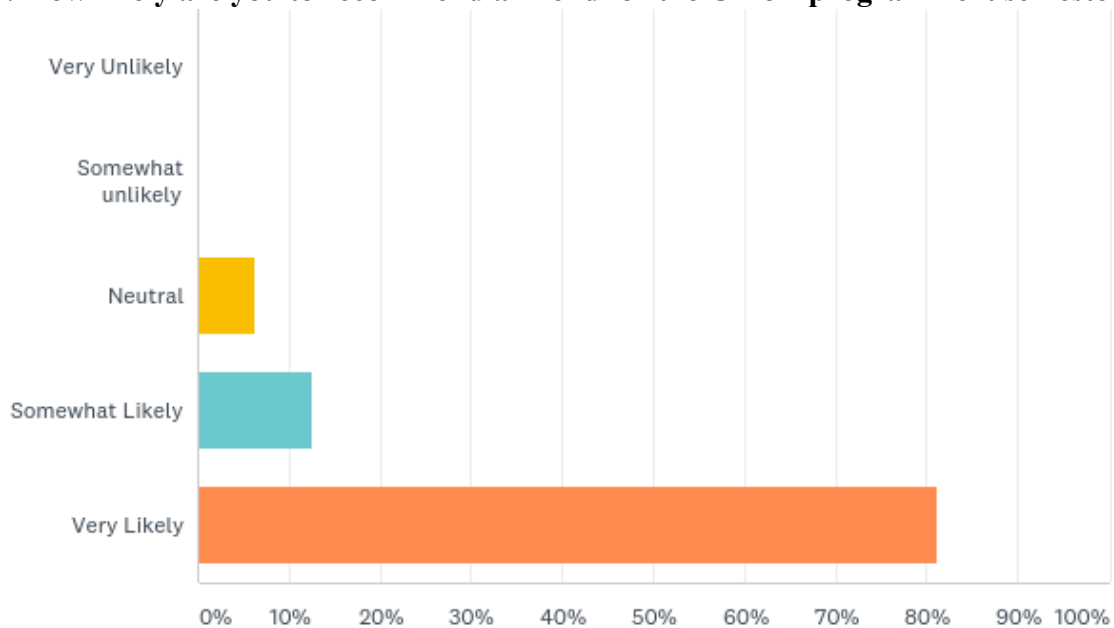
Q8: Please Rank Each Category (1 being the least-present and 5 being the most-present in the CMoD Program)



Q9: Has the CMoD program positively impacted your collegiate career?



Q10: Has the CMoD program negatively impacted your collegiate career?**Q11: How has the CMoD program effected your academic performance?**

Q12: How likely are you to participate in the CMoD program next semester?**Q13: How likely are you to recommend a friend for the CMoD program next semester?****Q14. What were your greatest takeaways or benefits from the CMoD program?**

Answered – 15
Skipped - Skipped

Responses

1. Just heading from the struggles other black students are going through made feel a sense of belonging.
2. Being able to see mentors who have established themselves teach us what they know so that we can better prepare ourselves.
3. Time management
4. Personally, I would say the sense of being in a family like environment is the best feeling I get from CMoD. It's make you feel like you're not alone at a school like USI, and that there are people who care.
5. Learning how to use my time wisely
6. Being presented with the opportunity to network with like-minded professionals
7. Time management
8. CMoD helped better my public speaking and leadership skills
9. Being able to be involved with since a great group of guys who were able to help me grow.
10. Learning from each other.
11. The greatest takeaway from the CMoD program is the feeling of being around others who want to succeed as much as yourself. I like that the program provides everyone with the equal opportunity to be great.
12. Gaining an understanding of what college is all about. Becoming more confident in yourself in what you can accomplish in college.
13. Learning how to carry myself as a minority in the business world.
14. The guest speakers who are successful of color who give me hope.
15. Leadership skills, and learning the Robert Rules of a meeting.

Q15. Do you have any suggestions for improving the Collegiate Men of Distinction mentoring program?

Answered – 15

Skipped – 1

Responses

1. How can we make it more exciting to make people don't want to miss it?
2. More internship opportunities regardless or GPA, because in order to make it in the real world you won't get hired unless you have experience.
3. More students
4. N/A
5. Allow students to run the whole meeting
6. Provide internship opportunities at large to the whole program
7. No
8. More activities and events
9. More bonding time.
10. Have food at every meeting and try to get some excursions to different Universities to connect with other students.
11. Yes, I think the Collegiate Men of Distinction should become an official organization at USI.
12. We can find more ways to serve back to USI or even the community.
13. Providing more event that will have us active in the community.

14. Food at the meetings

15. Keep motivating young males to aspire to be the best they can be everyday!

APPENDIX F - INTERVIEW RESULTS AND NODES

Name	Description	Files	References
Brotherhood	Covers all aspects of the CMoD programming where the members feel a sense of belongingness or comradery.	7	7
Empowerment	Highlights the perceived impact of skills gained to uplift or empower the members of the program.	1	1
Leadership	Any instances where leadership was identified in the program. This could be leadership skills or opportunities that were gained or leadership concepts that were learning.	6	6
Public Speaking	Highlights any instances where members talk about the benefit of public speaking.	4	4
Relatability	Captures the perceived relationships between the menses and their mentors.	1	1
Service	The members highlight the service projects completed by the members of the group.	3	3
Support	Members speak about the support or support systems that are present in the program.	3	3
Time Management	One of the focal points of the program is time management and it is highlighted here.	3	3

APPENDIX G – TIME MANAGEMENT PLAN TEMPLATE

Name:

Time Management Plan

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thu	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:00 am-7:00 am							
8:00 am							
9:00 am							
10:00am							
11:00am							
12:00pm							
1:00 pm							
2:00 pm							
3:00 pm							
4:00 pm							
5:00 pm							
6:30pm - 7:30pm							
11:00pm-6:00 am							