

Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:FS 2015

Department:Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Degree:PhD

Title:CAMPUS EN-COUNTER: COUNTER NARRATIVES OF THE PERSISTENCE OF BLACK MALES AT A PWI

Given the low retention and completion rates, research on Black men typically focuses on the problems or barriers they face, even when successful. Rather than focusing on the problems Black men are experiencing, it is important that scholars give attention to those Black men who are succeeding to create a counter narrative to the stereotypical misandry of Black men in our society. These counter narratives remind us that Black men can and do succeed, which is a truth not often heard. The current research identifies concepts in this literature that serve as hermeneutics to examine counter narratives of student departure. The theoretical frameworks used throughout this study are theories of masculinity and Tinto's (1993) theory of student departure, which were used to examine the experiences of Black, male, third and fourth year undergraduate students who entered college without declaring a major and have persisted at a large, public, predominately White institution in the Midwest (The University of Missouri or Mizzou). Seven students were recruited through purposeful sampling and participated in a three interview sequence model (Seidman, 1998). From this, five overarching themes developed. (1) Peer pressure, external influences, and institutional support; (2) Finding an academic path; (3) Black Mizzou; and (4) Establishing identity. Within the context of the study, a conclusion, recommendations for research, and implications for practice were discussed.