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Introduction

The Center for Community College Student Engagement received funding from [The Kresge Foundation](#) to deepen its work on [improving outcomes for men of color in community colleges](#). The primary goals of the initiative were to advance the understanding within the community college field regarding the assets and challenges that men of color brought to college with them; to lift up the student voice as central to the work; to identify institutional factors that inhibited or enhanced community college progress and success for Black males and Latinos; and to assist community colleges in serving these groups.

The project focused on data from the Center's student engagement surveys: the [Community College Survey of Student Engagement \(CCSSE\)](#), [Survey of Entering Student Engagement \(SENSE\)](#), [Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement](#)

(CCFSSE), and [Community College Institutional Survey \(CCIS\)](#). Accompanying the survey work was a series of focus groups conducted with students and with faculty and staff, providing authentic voices and video documentation that helped enrich understanding of the quantitative data.

This manual was originally designed as part of the initiative to conduct focus group sessions at six participating colleges and has been adapted for wider use. An [Appendix](#) contains all of the materials necessary to successfully plan, schedule, and facilitate focus groups with students, faculty, and staff.

These structured discussions will help the college better understand students' experiences, as well as uncover possible strategies to consider for improvement. They will provide qualitative information to enhance other data. To complement the findings from the focus group discussions, student participants should be asked to fill out student profile sheets, which collect demographic and other information.

In addition to gathering information from students, it is recommended that the college also conduct focus groups with both full- and part-time faculty and staff who serve these students to learn their perspectives on factors that support or hinder the success of students.

The qualitative report that the college prepares based on the findings of the focus groups should complement its CCSSE, SENSE, CCFSSE, and CCIS data to provide the college a more complete picture of student experiences on campus, specifically male students of color.

Planning Focus Groups

Preparation and planning for conducting effective focus groups consists of four key components: proper scheduling of focus groups; targeted recruitment of student, faculty, and staff participants; effective communication with these participant groups; and attention to the logistics of each focus group session. The college should identify a campus employee to serve as the Focus Group Coordinator.

Step 1: Schedule Focus Group Sessions

Identify the number of focus groups you would like to conduct. The Center suggests a total of six focus group sessions. This would allow for the target population, a control group, as well as for faculty and staff (breakdown is provided in Step 2). Each focus group session generally lasts approximately 75–90 minutes. A cushion time of no less than 30 minutes between sessions will be necessary so that participants can comfortably arrive before and leave after other scheduled groups and have a few minutes to enjoy the refreshments that have been provided for them. Additionally, the college should anticipate a minimum of one hour to set up the AV equipment before the first focus group session, if the college chooses to videotape or audiotape the focus groups.

Student Focus Groups

The scheduling of the student focus group sessions should reflect the times that are best for students. In order to attract a representative cross-section of students, the college may want to consider conducting one of the student focus groups in the evening. If the college does not expect evening registration to yield a different mix of students from daytime registration, the focus groups can be scheduled during the day only.

Faculty and Staff Focus Groups

The college should also consider conducting at least one focus group with faculty and staff who teach or work with the target student population.

Step 2: Recruit Focus Group Participants

Student Focus Groups

The Center recommends that each focus group involve no more than seven to ten students.

► Student Participant Specifications

During the initiative, the Center used the following guidelines in identifying student focus group participants. The college may use other criteria; however, this is a suggested model.

- To the extent possible, students should reflect the diversity of the college's student population by enrollment status (full-time/less than full-time), major or program of study, first-generation/not first-generation status, and socioeconomic status (as determined by eligibility for financial aid or students' self-reporting about need for financial assistance).
- Two student focus groups should comprise solely Black males. One of these groups should be composed of students who are on academic probation, while the other should be composed of students who have completed 30 or more credit hours.
- Two student focus groups should comprise solely Latinos. One of these groups will comprise students who are on academic probation, while the other will comprise students who have completed 30 or more credit hours.
- One student focus group should be composed of White males that have completed 30 or more credit hours.

► Student Recruitment

Recruitment should begin at least two to three weeks in advance of the focus group, based on the outlined student participant specifications. A sample [Invitation E-mail to Students](#) is provided in the [Appendix](#) section of this manual. If the college is able to utilize other technology like posting a message on the college's website, texting students, or using Facebook, these methods have also proven effective recruitment strategies. One week prior to the scheduled focus group, the Focus Group Coordinator should finalize the participant details in spreadsheet form.

Faculty and Staff Focus Groups

The Center recommends that each focus group involve no more than seven to ten faculty and staff.

► Faculty and Staff Participant Specifications

In considering who to include, the Center recommends the following participants: full- and part-time faculty, academic advisors, tutors, financial aid administrators and/or frontline staff, men of color/diversity staff, and academic and workforce staff.

► Faculty and Staff Recruitment

The Focus Group Coordinator should invite both faculty and staff to participate several weeks prior to the scheduled focus group. As with student participants, one week prior to the scheduled focus group, the Focus Group Coordinator should finalize the participant details in spreadsheet form.

The Focus Group Coordinator should prepare a spreadsheet for each focus group containing the following information.

Student Participant Details: name, e-mail address, phone number, and major

Faculty Participant Details: name, e-mail address, phone number, course(s) taught, and employment status (full-time/ part-time)

Staff Participant Details: name, e-mail address, phone number, title, and department

Step 3: Communicate With Focus Group Participants

Communicating With Students

Following up with students in focus groups to encourage participation is the most important thing to do in order to ensure students feel a commitment to the focus group and show up for scheduled focus groups. The Focus Group Coordinator will be responsible for communicating with recruited students prior to each focus group.

Prior to the focus group, the Coordinator should

- send an e-mail and/or make a phone call to each participant following the initial recruitment and one week before the focus group;
- have the college president's office e-mail or phone each participant prior to the focus group, thanking them for agreeing to participate, emphasizing the purpose of the focus group and its importance in helping the college provide the best experience and support for students; and
- call or text each student that agreed to participate the day before the focus group, reminding him or her of the session, providing directions to the location, and confirming attendance.

Communicating With Faculty and Staff

The Focus Group Coordinator is responsible for communicating with recruited faculty and staff prior to each focus group.

Prior to the focus group, the Coordinator should

- send an e-mail and/or make a phone call to each participant following the initial recruitment and one week before the focus group;
- have the college president's office e-mail or phone each participant prior to the focus group, thanking them for agreeing to participate, emphasizing the purpose of the focus group and its importance in helping the college provide the best experience and support for students; and

- call each faculty and staff member who agreed to participate the day before the focus group, reminding him or her of the session, providing directions to the location, and confirming attendance.

Step 4: Focus Group Logistics

The Focus Group Coordinator is responsible for the following logistical arrangements:

- arrange for and set up the meeting room as outlined in the [Room Set-Up for Video](#) diagram;
- provide refreshments/snacks that will be attractive to participants and reflect genuine hospitality and appreciation (e.g., boxed lunches, pizza and soft drinks, brownies/cookies and soft drinks, etc.); and
- be available throughout each focus group session to make sure everything is in place, and to text and/or make phone calls to participants as necessary.

The Center traditionally videotapes all focus groups for research and reports, and to share with its stakeholders. The institution will need to decide if this something it wants to do. If so, the Focus Group Coordinator will oversee this.

Additional Coordinator Responsibilities:

The Focus Group Coordinator is responsible for providing and/or arranging the following: all technical equipment, including the digital audio tape recorder, video camera, table microphone(s), and boom microphone(s); participant name cards; and all necessary participant materials, including consent forms, pens, and profile sheets. The Focus Group Coordinator will also identify a note-taker and will provide the note-taker with necessary materials.

Finally, the Coordinator is responsible for facilitating the six focus group sessions. During each session, the Coordinator will follow the outline below (see protocols in the [Appendix](#)):

1. Meeting overview
2. Consent forms
3. Participant introductions
4. Questionnaires (e.g., demographics forms/survey items, etc.)
5. Discussion
6. Summary
7. Thanks (and stipends, if used as incentives)

Appendix

The Appendix that follows contains materials to assist the Focus Group Coordinator in scheduling focus groups, recruiting participants, communicating with participants, and preparing focus group logistics.

These templates were designed to help Coordinators facilitate the focus groups and may be modified to best meet the needs of the institution.

- a. Invitation E-mail to Students
- b. Student Consent Form
- c. Student Participant Profile Sheet
- d. Student Focus Group Protocol
- e. Faculty and Staff Consent Form
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a. Invitation E-mail to Students

Invitation E-mail to Students

[Tailor e-mail to meet your student target population.]

To: [Student e-mail address]

Cc: [If applicable]

Subject: Student Focus Group Discussion at [Name of Institution]

Dear [Student Name]:

Your success as a student at [Name of Institution] is very important to us. We know that many students face significant challenges in their efforts to achieve their educational goals. Therefore, our faculty and staff are very interested in learning what we can do to help students stay enrolled in school and have a successful and satisfying experience.

To help us determine what programs and services the college already has in place that are particularly helpful to you, and also to help us identify ways to improve programs and services, we need to hear from you. To learn about your experiences at [Name of Institution] and hear your opinions, we invite you to participate in a 90-minute videotaped group discussion with up to nine other students. As a token of our appreciation, you will receive [insert amount or type of stipend].

Details on the group discussion are as follows.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Place: _____

Directions: _____

Refreshments will be provided!

Since we are talking with a limited number of students, the success and quality of our discussion will depend on the full participation of the students who attend. Please contact [Name] at [phone number] or [e-mail address] to confirm your attendance.

We look forward to seeing you on [date].

Sincerely,
[Focus Group Coordinator Name]

b. Student Consent Form

[Name of Institution] Student Consent Form

[Name of Institution] is conducting focus groups and interviews with students in order to gain insights into students' experiences at this college. Information gathered through focus groups and interviews is used alongside other data to help college leaders identify institutional policies and practices that will help community college students succeed.

Your participation in this focus group is entirely voluntary. You can choose not to participate at any time, and your refusal will not influence current or future relationships with [Name of Institution].

Students who volunteer will essentially participate in a group conversation and will receive a small stipend for their participation. By signing this consent form, you agree to participate in one 90-minute videotaped and audiotaped focus group.

This focus group will be audio recorded and videotaped, and excerpts from focus groups may be used in workshops or national conference presentations and may be posted on the college's website and YouTube channel.

I, _____, a student at [Name of Institution], have read and understand
Name (please print)

this consent form and agree to voluntarily participate in this project.

Signature

Date

c. Student Participant Profile Sheet

[Name of Institution] Student Participant Profile Sheet

ALL RESPONSES WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL

1. What is your gender?
 Male Female
2. How old are you?
 Under 18 18–19 20–21 22–24 25–29
 30–39 40–49 50–64 65+
3. Did you enroll in college immediately after graduating from high school?
 Yes No
4. Is this the first college you have attended or did you begin college elsewhere?
 Started here Started elsewhere
5. Is this your first academic term at this college?
 Yes No
6. What is the highest academic credential you have earned?
 None Vocational/Technical
 High School Diploma Bachelor's Degree
 GED Master's/Doctoral/Professional Degree
 Associate Degree
7. Who in your family has attended at least some college? (Check all that apply.)
 Mother Spouse/Partner
 Father Legal Guardian
 Brother/Sister None of the Above
8. What is your enrollment status?
 Full-time Less than full-time

c. Student Participant Profile Sheet

9. Are you eligible for financial assistance?

- Yes No Don't know

10. If you **are eligible** for financial assistance, please indicate which of the following describes your current situation?

- I have received financial assistance
 I applied, but have not received it
 I have not applied for financial assistance

11. Are you married?

- Yes No

12. Are you employed?

- Yes No

13. If yes, how many hours do you work each week?

- 1–5 hours 6–10 hours 11–20 hours
 21–30 hours More than 30 hours

14. Do you have children or other dependents living at home with you?

- Yes No

15. If you have children living with you, which of the following best describes your child care situation?

- My children are enrolled in a child care center at this college.
 I currently have child care arrangements for my children outside of this college.
 Finding child care is a major issue for me.
 My children do not require child care.

16. What is your racial identification?

- American Indian or Native American White, Non-Hispanic
 Asian, Asian-American, or Pacific Islander Hispanic, Latino
 Native Hawaiian Other (Please specify) _____
 Black or African-American

17. Are you an international or foreign national student?

- Yes No

d. Student Focus Group Protocol

[Name of Institution] Student Focus Group Protocol

Possible Target Population/Groups

- Black male and Latino students who are on academic probation
- Comparison group (White males who are on academic probation)
- Black male and Latino students who have completed 30 credit hours at the college
- Comparison group (White males who have completed 30 credit hours at the college)

Focus Group Purpose

[Name of Institution] is conducting a series of focus groups with students and employees on our campus(es). Our objective is to build understanding of the kinds of experiences that [Latinos/Black men/White men] *perceive* are critical to their success in the community college, as well as the kinds of challenges they face. What we learn can be very helpful as [Name of Institution] works to serve its students more effectively.

Focus Group Outcomes

Outcome 1: Understand how students who are men of color (Black/Latino) define their educational aspirations and determine how to pursue them, as compared with one another and with White male students.

Outcome 2: Understand what experiences/events/relationships men of color (Black/Latino) perceive as critical to their success in the community college, as compared with one another and with White male students.

Outcome 3: Understand challenges that may be unique to students who are men of color (Black/Latino) in community colleges, how they address those challenges, and how they perceive their college as helping or hindering, as compared with White male students.

Focus Group Outline

Each focus group will comprise the following activities:

Meeting overview
Consent forms
Participant introductions
Questionnaires (e.g., demographics forms/survey items, etc.)
Discussion
Summary
Thanks (and Stipends, if used as incentives)

Approximate total time 75-90 minutes

d. Student Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Prompts (Pre-Discussion)

1. **Introduce facilitator:** Hello, my name is [Name of Facilitator]. I work for [Name of Institution].
2. **Explain purpose of focus group:** [Name of Institution] is conducting a series of focus groups on our campus(es). Our objective is to build understanding of the kinds of experiences that [Latinos/Black men/White men] *perceive* are critical to their success in the community college, as well as the kinds of challenges they face. What we learn from you can be very helpful as [Name of Institution] works to serve its students more effectively.
3. **Explain desired outcomes and how gathered information will be used:** [Name of Institution] will prepare a report that captures your voices and major themes of this conversation. *Your voice counts!* However, you will not be identified by name.

NOTE: *At this time, the facilitator can read aloud the outcomes provided in this protocol.*

4. **Explain consent form and request signatures:** Because we will be recording (and videotaping, if applicable) the focus group conversation, we are required to ask that you sign a form that stipulates your consent. Participation is absolutely voluntary.
5. **Audio taping/videotaping/note-taking:**
 - a. Video and audio recording is for the purposes of gathering information to complement [Name of Institution]'s work on supporting men of color, using video clips for presentations at conferences and workshops, and posting to the [Name of Institution] website and YouTube channel.
 - b. No names will be used in the report or in the video. (If you are wearing a name tag, or any college identifiers, please remove them.)
6. **Describe facilitator role:** My role as facilitator is to ask questions and keep the group on track. We will be moving through the material fairly quickly, so I may have to cut conversations short even when there is much to say about a topic.
7. **Describe participants' role:** Each participant is expected to do the following:
 - a. share experiences and opinions, both positive and negative
 - b. understand that there are no right or wrong answers
 - c. respect the request that everyone is to participate in discussion and fill out all paperwork.
8. **Logistics:**
 - a. 90 minutes maximum
 - b. Arrangements for water and restroom break
 - c. Other?
9. **Ground rules:**
 - a. One person speaks at a time; no side conversations.
 - b. No one person dominates; everyone will have a chance to be heard.
 - c. There are no right or wrong answers; the discussion is about your experiences at this college and what we learn will help the college improve upon its work with students.
10. **Questions:** Now, are there any questions before we get started?
11. **Introduction of participants:** As we go around the room, I want each participant to state their name; number of credit hours earned; course of study, if determined; primary academic goal; and organizational affiliations, if any.

d. Student Focus Group Protocol

NOTE: *If someone does not fully meet the criteria or does not fit the target group for participation in the focus group, the facilitator should explain why he cannot participate, thank him for his time, and courteously escort him from the room. If the person meets participation requirements but fits the profile for another scheduled focus group, he should be instructed to return at the appropriate time.*

- 12. Questionnaires:** Administer surveys, questionnaires, or participant profile documents for collecting quantitative data on participants.

Focus Group Discussion Questions

Outcome 1: Understand how students who are men of color (Black/Latino) define their educational aspirations and determine how to pursue them, as compared with one another and with White male students.

Q1: Identify a role model you respect and tell us why you chose that person. When you think of a successful Black/Latino/White person, who comes to mind and why? What are the characteristics about that role model that you admire?

Prompt: *Think back to previous times when you were in school—elementary, middle school, high school. What conversations or experiences did you have about anticipating your future? Put yourself into those earlier times and see what you remember.*

Q2: In what ways, if any, do you think your race, ethnicity, or cultural background is important in influencing/defining your experiences in school?

Q3: When you were thinking about what you would do after finishing high school, did you consider options other than college? If yes, what were they? Why did you consider those options?

Did you or your friends ever think about joining the military?

If you joined the military before going to college, why did you decide to go that route?

If you considered it and decided against it, why did you make that choice?

Q4: What key individuals made a difference for you in deciding to attend college? Family members? Friends? Were there teachers, counselors, coaches, other students, anyone else who influenced your thinking about whether or not to go to college? What specifically did these people you are mentioning say or do that made a difference for you?

Q5: Tell us about your best/worst high school experiences. What was it like? What kind of expectations do you think teachers had of you in high school? As an individual? Black male/Latino/White male? Do you think expectations were any different for other groups of students? For men versus women? For Black men vs. other men? For Latinos vs. other men? For White men vs. other men? For other groups of students?

Q6: When you consider the time before you started college, were there times when you saw yourself as particularly successful? When was that? Before high school? During high school? What was it that made you feel successful at that time?

d. Student Focus Group Protocol

Q7: In the end, what were your reasons for choosing to go to college? Describe your goals for your time at this college. What are your goals for after you complete your time at this college? Where do you see yourself in five years?

Outcome 2: Understand what experiences/events/relationships men of color (Black/Latino) perceive as critical to their success in the community college, as compared with one another and with White male students.

Prompt: *Now think about your experiences in college from the moment you entered college and up to now.*

Q1: Think about the first time you came to this college. What were you thinking? What were your first impressions when you came to the campus? Do you remember the first person you met? Who was the person? A college staff member? An instructor? Another student? Other? What were those first interactions with college staff and students like? *Did you feel welcomed?*

Q2: What kind of expectations do you think teachers have of you at this college? As an individual? As a Black male/Latino/White male? Do these expectations of you seem any different from expectations for other groups of students? Men vs. women? Men of color vs. White men? Other groups?

Q3: What are the characteristics of a successful college student? How do you see yourself in relation to this model student? During your time in college, when have you felt most successful as a college student? What was/is happening that made you feel successful?

Q4: Are there any groups or organizations on campus that have helped you personally? With your course work? Describe.

Q5: Are there places on campus where you feel most comfortable? Safe? How would you describe them? What makes them appealing to you? Are there places where men are more likely to gather together? Latinos? Black men? White men? What makes those places appealing to them?

Q6: Are there particular individuals here on campus who have made, or are currently making, a positive difference for you? What specifically are they saying or doing that is making a difference?

Do other students at this college have an impact on you in any way? If so, what are they doing that has an impact on you—either positive or negative? Any students who you would say are helping you? If so, how?

Q7: Have you established new relationships with other students at this college? *[If response is “no” or equivocal, follow up: “Could you tell us more about that?” If response is yes, follow up: “Are those relationships primarily for socializing/hanging out, for academic purposes (like studying together), or something else?]* Does the college do anything in particular to help you meet and interact with other students?

Academic/Classroom Experiences

Prompt: *Now let's talk about your experiences with your classes and your instructors.*

d. Student Focus Group Protocol

Q8: Think about a class that is what you would call a “good class”—one that works for you and the way you learn. What was/is happening in that class? What was/is the instructor doing? What were/are you doing? Is the topic or content of the class part of what makes it work for you? If so, in what way?

Q9: What are the characteristics of an instructor who you would say is the best type of instructor for you?

Do you think it makes a difference for you if instructors are Black, Latino, White, male or female? Why or why not?

Do you know your instructors’ names? Do they know yours? How easy or difficult is it for you to talk with your instructors? Why?

How often do you talk with instructors? What do you talk to them about?

When you do talk with an instructor, what leads to that conversation? Do they come to you? Do you go to them?

What is different about the instructors who talk to you and those who do not?

Prompt: *Think about how you spend your time outside of class preparing for class—doing assignments, reading, studying for quizzes or exams, working with other students on projects or assignments.*

Q10: First, for those of you who are full-time students, how much time in an average day would you say you spend studying or preparing for **EACH** class you are taking? For those of you who are part-time students, how much time in an average day would you say you spend studying or preparing for **EACH** class you are taking?

Do you think that you’re getting the most out of the time you spend studying? Why or why not?

How would you assess your study skills? Note taking skills? Reading and reviewing materials? Test preparation? Working in study groups? Explain your answer.

Prompt if needed and appropriate: *Most of you indicated that you have poor study skills...*

How well did your high school experience prepare you with study skills necessary for being successful in college?

Are there any specific steps *you think you could take* that would help you improve your study skills? If you do not think your study skills are as good as you would like them to be, what, if anything, do you think *the college could do* to help you improve your study skills?

Since you have been a student at this college, has the way you study or prepare for class changed at all? If yes, in what ways? If there has been a change, what do you think caused that change?

When you spend time outside of class on your coursework, are you working by yourself or with other students?

d. Student Focus Group Protocol

If you study with other students, why? Were you assigned to do that by your instructor? Or was it your own choice to study/work on assignments with other students?

Q11: When you have problems with your course work, where do you go? Whom do you seek out? Do you seek out any instructors? Counselors? Other staff? Other students in your classes? How about outside of college? Community or family members?

Was it important to you that you be able to seek help from a [Black/Latino/White/Male/Female] person? If so, were such people available to assist you?

If you did not seek help, why not?

If you did seek help, what was the result? Did it help you? If so, in what ways?

Did your instructor or someone else at the college notice that you were having difficulty? Did someone at the college initiate an effort to get you the help you needed? How did that work? Was it a good experience?

(If this has not yet come up in the conversation, ask the following) Have you ever gone to the math or writing lab at this college? Have you ever gone to a tutor at the college? If so (to any of these options), was it required by one or more of your instructors? Did you choose to use one of these services on your own? If so, why? If not, why not? Describe your experience. Helpful or not helpful?

Outcome 3: Understand challenges that may be unique to students who are men of color (Black/Latino) in community colleges, how they address those challenges, and how they perceive their college as helping or hindering, as compared with White male students.

Prompt: *Now, please think about where your support for your college experience comes from in three areas—within the family, within your community, and within your college.*

Q1: When you think about your family, your community (including your friends outside the college), and your college (including friends you have made at the college), from which of those people have you gotten the most and least support in regard to your college experience?

Prompt: *Now I would like for you to think about challenges that you may have faced while at the college and how you have worked to overcome them.*

Q2: Thinking about your college experiences, what, if anything, causes you the most worry, frustration, or stress? In your life at the college? In your life outside of college? What specific challenges, if any, did you face *when you first arrived* at the college? What about now *that you are further into the experience*? Have you done anything to deal with those challenges? If so, what? What has been the result?

Q3: Are there challenges in being a student here that you think are likely to be more challenging for men? Are there challenges in being a (Latino/Black/White) student that are unique—that other groups of students on campus do not face?

d. Student Focus Group Protocol

Q4: Did anyone at the college ever talk with you about challenges you might face outside of college that might have an impact on your success as a student? If so, describe that conversation.

Did you seek out any instructors or staff to help you deal with those challenges? If so, to whom did you go? Was the individual helpful? If so, in what ways was s/he helpful? If not, why was it not helpful to you?

Prompt: *Now, I would like for you to think for a minute about how you believe people see you at this college and how you see others at the college.*

Q5: How do you think your instructors would describe you? Do you think they listen to you? Respect you? How about staff? Other students? Explain your answer.

Q6: Overall, what is it like to be a man of your race or ethnic group on this campus? Tell me about your experiences as a man of your particular race/ethnicity at this college.

Q7: Do you think you are being heard? By people who work at the college? By other students? Why or why not? Tell us more about that.

Do you think you are respected? By people who work at the college? By other students? Why or why not? Tell us more about that.

Do you feel that you belong here at this college? Why or why not? If your answer is no, can you think of anything that the college or anyone at the college could do to help you feel that you belong here? Anything you could do to help you feel that you belong here?

Summary & Close:

Q1: What advice would you give to a new student who is a [Black male/Latino/ White male] entering this college? If you were to choose the most important piece of advice that you believe would benefit a new student who is like you in terms of race/ethnicity and gender, what would it be?

Q2: What advice would you give to the college? What steps can instructors and staff here at your college take to help students/males/men of color be successful at the college?

Q3: At this time, what is the single most important factor that keeps you on track to achieve your goals at this college?

Thank you. Hand out stipends and collect completed forms.

e. Faculty and Staff Consent Form

[Name of Institution] Faculty and Staff Consent Form

[Name of Institution] is conducting focus groups and interviews with faculty and staff in order to gain insights into students' experiences at this college. Information gathered through focus groups and interviews is used alongside other data to help college leaders identify institutional policies and practices that will help community college students succeed.

Your participation in this focus group is entirely voluntary. You can choose not to participate at any time, and your refusal will not influence current or future relationships with [Name of Institution].

Faculty and staff who volunteer will essentially participate in a group conversation. By signing this consent form, you agree to participate in one 90-minute videotaped and audiotaped focus group.

This focus group will be audio recorded and videotaped, and excerpts from focus groups may be used in workshops or national conference presentations and may be posted on the college's website and YouTube channel.

I, _____, an employee at [Name of Institution], have read and understand this
Name (please print)

consent form and agree to voluntarily participate in this project.

Signature

Date

f. Faculty Participant Profile Sheet

**[Name of Institution]
Faculty Participant Profile Sheet**

ALL RESPONSES WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL

1. What is your gender?

- Male Female

2. For how many years have you taught at the college level (full- or part-time, any college)?

- Less than 1 year 10–19 years
 1–4 years 20+ years
 5–9 years

3. Please indicate your teaching field: _____

4. What is your employment status at this college?

- Full-time faculty Adjunct faculty

5. At this college, what is your teaching load this term (not counting overload)?

- 1–3 credits 13–15 credits
 4–6 credits 16+ credits
 7–9 credits

6. At this college, what classes are you currently teaching?

g. Staff Participant Profile Sheet

[Name of Institution] Staff Participant Profile Sheet

ALL RESPONSES WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL

1. What is your gender?

- Male Female

2. For how many years have you worked in college student services (any college)?

- Less than 1 year 10–19 years
 1–4 years 20+ years
 5–9 years

3. Please indicate your area of responsibility (mark all that apply):

- Academic Advising and Planning Admissions and/or Registration
 Financial Aid Counseling
 Student Activities Academic Support
 College Orientation or Student Success Course
 Other (please describe) _____

4. What is your employment status at this college?

- Full-time Part-time

5. What technologies is the college currently using to communicate with and disseminate information to your students (mark all that apply)?

- College website Text message
 E-mail Instant messaging
 YouTube Podcast
 Facebook or other social network
 Other (please list) _____

h. Faculty and Staff Focus Group Protocol

[Name of Institution] Faculty and Staff Focus Group Protocol

Possible Target Population/Groups

- Full-time and part-time faculty representatives
- Academic advisors
- Financial aid advisors
- Academic tutors
- Diversity initiative staff persons (if any)
- Men of color program staff persons (if any)
- Academic and workforce deans

Focus Group Purpose

[Name of Institution] is conducting a series of focus groups with students and employees on our campus(es). Our objective is to build understanding of the kinds of experiences that [Latinos/Black men/White men] *perceive* are critical to their success in the community college, as well as the kinds of challenges they face. What we learn can be very helpful as [Name of Institution] works to serve its students more effectively.

Focus Group Outcomes

Outcome 1: Understand faculty and staff perceptions of the experiences of men of color (Black/Latino) on campus.

Outcome 2: Understand faculty and staff perceptions of the institutional strategies, policies, practices, and resources that impact the experiences of men of color (Black/Latino) on campus.

Outcome 3: Understand the unique challenges college personnel experience in their efforts to serve men of color (Black/Latino) effectively.

Focus Group Outline

Each focus group will comprise the following activities:

Meeting overview
Consent forms
Participant introductions
Questionnaires (e.g., demographics forms/survey items, etc.)
Discussion
Summary
Thanks

Approximate total time

75-90 minutes

h. Faculty and Staff Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Prompts (Pre-Discussion)

1. **Introduce facilitator:** Hello, my name is [Name of Facilitator]. I work for [Name of Institution].
2. **Explain purpose of focus group:** [Name of Institution] is conducting a series of focus groups on our campus(es). Our objective is to build understanding of the kinds of experiences that [Latinos/Black men/White men] *perceive* are critical to their success in the community college, as well as the kinds of challenges they face. What we learn from you can be very helpful as [Name of Institution] works to serve its students more effectively. We also are conducting [#] focus groups with students—[#] with Black males and [#] with Latinos, as well as [#] with White males.
3. **Explain desired outcomes and how gathered information will be used:** [Name of Institution] will prepare a report that captures your voices and major themes of this conversation. *Your voice counts!* However, you will not be identified by name.

NOTE: *At this time, the facilitator can read aloud the outcomes provided in this protocol.*

4. **Explain consent form and request signatures:** Because we will be recording (and videotaping, if applicable) the focus group conversation, we are required to ask that you sign a form that stipulates your consent. Participation is absolutely voluntary.
5. **Audio taping/videotaping/note-taking**
 - a. Video and audio recording is for the purposes of gathering information to complement [Name of Institution]'s work on supporting men of color, using video clips for presentations at conferences and workshops, and posting to the [Name of Institution] website and YouTube channel.
 - b. No names will be used in the report or in the video. (If you are wearing a name tag, or any college identifiers, please remove them.)
6. **Describe facilitator role:** My role as facilitator is to ask questions and keep the group on track. We will be moving through the material fairly quickly, so I may have to cut conversations short even when there is much to say about a topic.
7. **Describe participants' role:** Each participant is expected to do the following:
 - a. share experiences and opinions, both positive and negative
 - b. understand that there are no right or wrong answers
 - c. respect the request that everyone is to participate in discussion and fill out all paperwork
8. **Logistics:**
 - a. 90 minutes maximum
 - b. Arrangements for water and restroom break
 - c. Other?
9. **Ground rules:**
 - a. One person speaks at a time; no side conversations.
 - b. No one person dominates; everyone will have a chance to be heard.
 - c. There are no right or wrong answers; the discussion is about your experiences at this college and what we learn will help the college improve upon its work with students.
10. **Questions:** Now are there any questions before get started?
11. **Introduction of participants:** As we go around the room, I want each participant to state their name, title, academic department or program, and years employed at the college.

h. Faculty and Staff Focus Group Protocol

12. Questionnaires: Administer surveys, questionnaires, or participant profile documents for collecting quantitative data on participants.

Focus Group Discussion Questions

NOTE: We suggest that the focus group facilitator provide additional context here about the college's initiative (its goals and objectives) before starting with interview questions.

Outcome 1: Understand faculty and staff perceptions of the experiences of men of color (Black/Latino) on campus.

NOTE: We suggest seeking information about programs that go beyond retention strategies—like those that increase academic performance, completion, and graduation, etc.

Q1: From your perspective and in your role at the college, how successful would you say men of color are at this college?

In terms of social interactions? In terms of academic performance? Academic progress? Completion? How do you know? (What leads you to and/or confirms those perceptions?)

Do you see differences between men of color and White men on these dimensions?

Q2: Do you see evidence of particular challenges encountered by men of color at this college that arise from their prior experience, whether in or out of school? If so, what are they?

Outcome 2: Understand institutional strategies, policies, practices, and resources that impact the experiences of men of color (Black/Latino) on campus, as compared with White men, on their campuses.

NOTE: We are seeking information about programs that go beyond social engagement strategies—like those that aim to improve academic performance, increase completion, graduation, etc.

Q1: In general, do administrators, faculty, and staff at the college currently look at/discuss the academic progress students are making—in their courses, in different programs, in terms of successful course persistence, completion, etc.? If so, what information/data do you look at? How and in what settings do those conversations take place?

Do administrators, faculty, and staff at the college currently look at how Black males and Latinos progress at the college relative to other groups?

If so, what information/data do you look at? Students' rates of course completion, persistence from term to term, graduation and transfer? If so, what stories do your data tell about the success of these groups relative to other groups? Do you currently have discussions about these data? If so, who is included in those discussions? What has been the outcome of those discussions?

Q2: At this time, are you aware of your institution taking specific steps to support the success of Black/Latino male students? Have you decided to establish any specific approaches/programs that target Black/Latino males?

h. Faculty and Staff Focus Group Protocol

If yes: Please describe any specific approaches/programs that target Black/Latino males. What evidence led you to choose those particular strategies? What are the components of these programs/services/approaches? What areas do they focus on—admission, retention, making connections, mentoring, academic success, etc.? How many students do these programs serve (i.e., what percentage of the Black/Latino male student population at the college)?

If no: If you have not chosen the strategy of designing approaches/programs specially for men of color, do you have an alternate approach to improve the success rates of Black/Latino males in your college? (If yes) Please describe that approach. What evidence led you to choose those particular strategies?

Q3: From your perspective, how effective are the college's current efforts in supporting Black male and Latino success? What data do you use to evaluate the impact of college initiatives? What do those data tell you? **NOTE:** *What they learn from the data might be narrower than what they see from their own perspective—observations, experience, etc. It would be useful to address both their perspective and the data, and if you see differences between the two, ask about those differences.*

Q4: Are you aware of policies/programs/practices that address all students at the college or that target specific groups of students? Does the college do both or has the college made an intentional choice not to establish policies/programs/practices that specifically target these groups?

Q5: By contrast with programs targeting particular student groups, has the college community discussed changes the institution might need to make in order to serve these students more effectively? What steps, if any, does your institution take to assist in removing barriers to success and otherwise helping Black/Latino male students to succeed? What steps more specifically in terms of policy changes? Professional development? Hiring? Promoting cultural competence? Diversifying faculty and staff? Developing faculty and student skills for dealing with differences in the classroom? Dealing with differences in the way student of color are connected with support services?

Q6: What role do staff/faculty have in any conversations about changes in practices and policies that may be needed to more effectively serve men of color? What approaches have you used to encourage and support these sometimes difficult conversations? How would you describe the consequences, whether positive or negative? Have any changes in policy and/or practice been implemented as a result of these conversations? How would you describe the progress made?

Outcome 3: Understand the unique challenges college personnel experience in their efforts to serve men of color (Black/Latino) effectively.

Q1: What could your community college do to promote the academic success of Black/Latino males in high school, college, and beyond? If there has been no discussion beyond the college so far, what role should your college have in this discussion?

Summary and Close:

NOTE: *You may want to do an Advice/Design Exercise here that asks participants to give advice to their college or have them do a brief design exercise. Have them break out into small groups, then have them list the key elements and explain why they included those elements.*

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Prompt: *If you were asked to put some policies and practices in place at your college that you believe would help more Black/Latino males succeed at the college, what would you do? What would be the components of your approach? Policies? Practices? What is the evidence you could marshal to support those recommendations?*

Thank you. Collect completed forms.

i. Room Set-Up for Video

Room Set-Up for Video

Characteristics of a Suitable Focus Group Space:

Large space	The space must be large enough to accommodate the focus group, the video camera, lights, and video crew, with a separate small table for the note-taker.
Quiet	Noise cannot be heard through the walls from other rooms or the outside.
Equipped with controllable window light	If there are windows, they should have shades. Sun pouring in presents a problem.
Devoid of identifiers	The video from the focus groups should protect identities as much as possible.

Table Set-Up:

Approximately three classroom style tables in a U-shape is the best arrangement, allowing focus group participants to face the moderator and the camera and also to see each other. The long rectangular classroom tables, end to end, but somewhat wrapped into a semi-circle, make it easiest for the moderating team to reach the participants with a boom microphone from the front. Set-ups using a big conference table with everyone sitting around it obstructs audio and camera angles. The note-taker's table must be near an electrical outlet.

