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How Program Directors Perceive the Factors and Elements Involved in Designing Black Male Initiative Mentoring Programs at Community Colleges

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand program directors' perceptions of the Black Male Initiative (BMI) mentoring programs were designed and structured at the City University of New York (CUNY) community colleges that aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates. A qualitative descriptive design was used to gain insight into how program directors considered the factors involved in designing BMI mentoring programs, how each factor influenced the program design, and the specific design elements that existed in each program. The interview participants included directors who were overseeing the CUNY BMI community college mentoring programs that were identified as exhibiting the best practices in structured mentoring. The findings indicate that the program directors perceived resource availability as the key factor when considering the design of the BMI mentoring programs. The results suggest that the objectives that were considered in the programs' designs contributed to establishing a dynamic network of interdependent variables that would assist in meeting Black male students' personal, academic, cultural, and social needs. Three unique design elements existed within the CUNY community college BMI mentoring programs that emerged as part of a larger set of design elements that shared distinct characteristics and represented a conceptual framework made up of five typologies. Future recommendations for higher education leaders and researchers include strategically rethinking how to better support the BMI program and using the five-typology framework to investigate its influence on Black male retention and graduation.

Document Type

Dissertation

Degree Name

Doctor of Education (EdD)

Department

Executive Leadership

First Supervisor

W. Jeff Wallis

Second Supervisor

Drew D. Allen

Subject Categories

Education

How Program Directors Perceive the Factors and Elements Involved in Designing Black
Male Initiative Mentoring Programs at Community Colleges

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by

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Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education

St. John Fisher College

August 2019

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Dedication

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. I thank God for giving me the faith and courage to take that single step toward completing this life-rewarding journey. This dissertation is dedicated to my beautiful son and daughter, Zaire Noah Robinson and Sierra Renee Roxanne Robinson. Both of my children have shown me unconditional love, patience, and support during my doctoral journey. Without their constant encouragement, I would not have successfully completed the process. This dissertation is in loving memory of my parents, Roxanne Hawkins and William Robinson. Their wisdom, encouragement, and love helped to shape me into the man I am today. I am eternally grateful for the foundation they set.

I thank my committee chair, Dr. W. Jeff Wallis, and my committee member, Dr. Drew D. Andrews. I could not ask for a better, more supportive team. They were instrumental in helping me figure out how to best approach my research topic. Throughout this journey, they challenged me, while still allowing me to own my process, knowing when to let me find my way and when to guide me back on course.

Words alone cannot express my sincere and deep appreciation and gratitude for Ms. Nakesha Holley. I thank Nakesha for always believing in me, for being by my side, and for her love, encouragement, and support from day one. I am forever indebted to her. She is truly one in a million.

Thank you to Shanelle Henry Robinson for her unwavering support during this journey and for recognizing when I was not living up to my potential and reigniting a

dimming fire inside my soul. A simple comment, during a conversation with her, put me back on track. I thank my loving family for supporting me through this journey. A special thank you to my Uncle Roland and Aunt France for taking care of my children when I needed time alone to write, or when I had obligations away from home. Words cannot begin to express the love and gratitude I feel for having Renee Nicol, August Nicol, and Norelle Nicol as my immediate family. I thank them for the conversation at the dinner table when I announced my decision to return to school after 20 years and for their love and support.

Thank you to my fraternity brothers, Carlos Chung and Roger Chung, and my extended Chung family and friends —Lisa Chung, Eddie Chung, Stacy McLeod Vickers, and Antoinette Gordon-Hessing, for checking on me, for inviting me into their homes, and accepting me as family, and for occasionally getting me out the house for a few hours to relax and recharge. One Love!

Thank you to Dr. Michael A. Baston for planting the seed in my mind to pursue this degree. After our first conversation. I knew the St. John Fisher Executive Leadership program was the right program for me. It took a little longer than I anticipated, but God's timing is always the right timing. Dr. Robert Walton, my Executive Mentor, put up with my stubbornness and with me questioning everything. I appreciate him for graciously giving his time to mentor, coach, and pour into me, preparing me to be a true scholar. I thank Dr. Karen Williams for inspiring me, making me think, making me laugh until I nearly cried, and most of all, for speaking my success into existence by always referring to me as "Dr. Robinson."

And finally, I thank New Rochelle Cohort 9 and our angel-in-heaven, Rose Huggett-Green. Our journey was incomparable. We weathered through insurmountable storms and remained strong. I pray our bond will last a lifetime. Thank you for the lifelong memories!

Biographical Sketch

Jerrell W. Robinson is director of the Educational Opportunity Program at the State University of New York College at Old Westbury. Mr. Robinson attended SUNY Oswego from 1990-1996, earning both a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and a Master of Science degree in Counseling and Psychological Services. He began studying for his Education Doctorate (Ed.D.) in Executive Leadership in the summer of 2017. He pursued his research exploring and understanding the perceptions of program directors who structured the Black Male Initiative mentorship programs aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates, which were originally designed at City University of New York community colleges, under the direction of Dr. W. Jeff Wallis and Dr. Drew D. Allen. Mr. Robinson received his Ed.D. degree in the summer of 2019.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand program directors' perceptions of the Black Male Initiative (BMI) mentoring programs were designed and structured at the City University of New York (CUNY) community colleges that aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates. A qualitative descriptive design was used to gain insight into how program directors considered the factors involved in designing BMI mentoring programs, how each factor influenced the program design, and the specific design elements that existed in each program. The interview participants included directors who were overseeing the CUNY BMI community college mentoring programs that were identified as exhibiting the best practices in structured mentoring.

The findings indicate that the program directors perceived resource availability as the key factor when considering the design of the BMI mentoring programs. The results suggest that the objectives that were considered in the programs' designs contributed to establishing a dynamic network of interdependent variables that would assist in meeting Black male students' personal, academic, cultural, and social needs. Three unique design elements existed within the CUNY community college BMI mentoring programs that emerged as part of a larger set of design elements that shared distinct characteristics and represented a conceptual framework made up of five typologies. Future recommendations for higher education leaders and researchers include strategically rethinking how to better support the BMI program and using the five-typology framework to investigate its influence on Black male retention and graduation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The time when high school seniors' transition to college can be stressful as they emerge into adulthood. For many, attending college becomes a challenging, new experience (Brittian, Sy, & Stokes, 2009). According to Sinanan (2016), the college academic environment can be characterized as an unfamiliar place with a different dialect and set of expectations than high school. According to researchers, a large percentage of African American males transitioning into higher education represent the first person in their immediate family to attend college, and they are likely to come from low-income backgrounds (Butler, Evans, Brooks, Williams, & Bailey, 2013; Ray, Carley, & Brown, 2009). Due to low retention and graduation rates, Black males have an increasingly difficult time completing their college degrees (Gibson, 2014). According to Brooks, Jones, and Burt (2013), college campuses are designed and structured to meet the needs of a predominantly White student body, and they do not account for the cultural differences that exist in a heterogeneous student body, resulting in African American males encountering a different set of challenges relating to academic persistence and success than would normally be encountered by traditional college students. These challenges are generally cultural, societal, academic, and lifestyle differences that colleges and universities often attempt to address (Brooks et al., 2013).

Wood and Williams (2013) reported that although many college students attend 4-year colleges and universities, when comparing the overall number of students who attend college annually, research statistics show that students of color, particularly Black

male students (54.9%), seek out postsecondary opportunities at 2-year institutions. Wood and Williams (2013) also made the distinction that most 2-year college attendees (81.9%) will enroll in a public 2-year college, also referred to as *community colleges* or *junior colleges* (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2011). Many Black males, and other minorities attend community colleges because they perceive these institutions as venues that can facilitate their social and economic advancement (Bush, 2004; Bush & Bush, 2005). These perceptions are likely the result of the community college's mission of providing open access to post-secondary opportunities for underserved communities (Nevarez & Wood, 2010). Strayhorn (2012) noted in his study of Black male satisfaction and retention in community colleges, that community colleges are more affordable, compared to 4-year colleges, have less stringent admission criteria than 4-year colleges, and educate large numbers of historically disadvantaged groups. Strayhorn added that community colleges serve a population of students who are less academically prepared for college and who desire to take developmental courses at community colleges prior to enrolling in a 4-year college via the transfer process. However, Wood and Turner (2011) noted the likelihood of success for Black males attending community colleges as low because many institutions continue to struggle with decreasing high departure rates among students. Strayhorn (2012) noted the lack of academic preparation for postsecondary education, the enormous financial burden associated with attending college, and the discrepancy in the inheritance of cultural capital, such as care and a sense of community, as contributing factors intensify high student attrition rates among Black students. These factors are most often the case for Black males who come from urban

communities and who are a part of the low socioeconomic-status ranks, and who may be identified as high-risk (Strayhorn, 2012).

Purpose and Origin of Community Colleges

Community colleges are 2-year higher education institutions that award associate degrees in art, science, or applied science as the highest degree attainable. In addition to associate degrees, community colleges also offer certificates, vocational training, and prepare students to transfer to 4-year colleges and universities (Fong et al., 2017). Ray et al. (2009) reported that, following WWII, community colleges became a continual part of the United States educational plan. Community colleges were established by President Harry S. Truman's Commission on Higher Education as part of a system to offer opportunities to a larger segment of the country's population than were being aided at that time by the more established land-grant colleges and universities; directly resulting in college access being afforded to many more people (Ray et al., 2009). With the new concept of an open admissions policy introduced by community colleges, granting college access to all students with a high school diploma or a General Equivalency Degree (GED), has allowed college degree attainment and the ability to advance up the socioeconomic strata possible for people who would have been excluded from the opportunity to pursue a college degree (Ray et al., 2009).

Researching Black Males Attending Community Colleges

Bailey, Jenkins, and Leinbach (2007), as cited in Crisp (2010), noted that improvement in the success of community college students has gradually become a major concern for educators. Similarly, there has been widespread concern regarding the lack of Black male persistence to degree completion (Ray et al., 2009). Since the late 1990s,

research on men of color, specifically Black males, has primarily studied those attending 4-year colleges (Harris & Wood, 2013). Mason's (1998) research, focusing on Black male persistence at urban community colleges, is recognized as the first empirical study to address persistence and to provide a persistence model for Black males in the context of 2-year colleges. The concern involving student success at the community college level and Black male achievement has resulted in increasing interest and a growing body of research pertaining to the success of Black males enrolled at 2-year institutions (Baber, Fletcher, & Edmund, 2015; Bush & Bush, 2005, 2010; Flowers, 2006; Ingram, Williams, Coaxum, Hilton, & Harrell, 2016; Strayhorn, 2012; Wood, 2012; Wood & Williams, 2013). The interest in Black males enrolled in community colleges can be attributed to their continued low retention and graduation rates, which Gibson (2014) suggested can be classified as a national epidemic.

Challenges Impacting Black Male College Success

Black males have unequal opportunities in educational advancement and a lack of access to enrichment programs in the school systems, resulting in inequities of educational outcomes (Anumba, 2015). Over a century ago, W. E. B. Du Bois (1903) published, *The Souls of Black Folks*, a historical book that includes the experiences of an African American male with aspirations of earning a college degree (Ingram et al., 2016). Du Bois emphasized the pride and support an African American community extended to the young male for his pursuit of higher education. However, Du Bois also referenced that the young man's attempt at earning a college degree was faced with challenges because he lacked academic preparation, was unable to acquire financial support, and did not possess the maturity and confidence to succeed (Ingram et al., 2016). Extant research

suggests the depicted experiences of the young African American male pursuing a college degree in Du Bois's book, written more than 100 years ago, have not improved for Black males today—especially at the community college level (Ingram et al., 2016).

Michael Cuyjet (2006), editor of *African-American Men in College*, was supported by Strayhorn's (2012) assertion of the contributing factors to low retention and graduations rates among Black males. Cuyjet argued that underpreparedness and cultural disincentives are the two most significant factors that initially hinder Black male college enrollment and the subsequent low retention to degree completion (Ray et al., 2009). According to Cuyjet (2006), underpreparedness is connected to the reality that young Black males are not equipped with enough academic preparation, resulting from poor school environments and biased practices, such as disproportionately in tracking them into behavior-disorder classes (Ray et al., 2009). Cuyjet (2006) further explained cultural disincentives as a process by which young Black males do not consider academic success as a goal worth any value and, most times, they consider graduating from high school and attending college as a worthless effort or as unpopular among their peers. The lack of academic preparedness, financial constraints, and cultural deficiencies, as barriers to higher education access and completion, make community colleges a more viable reality for Black males than attending a 4-year college (Strayhorn, 2012). This reality is partially because community colleges are traditionally more culturally and socioeconomically diverse when compared to most 4-year colleges, and community colleges have *open access* policies (Ray et al., 2009).

Butler et al. (2013) referenced research done by Mincy (2006), focusing on the factors relating to the plight Black males experience in the United States. Mincy

highlighted the findings from research done in 2006 by The Urban Institute, regarding the urgency of the crisis being faced by African American men. The research examined the potential challenges some youth experienced transitioning into adulthood and postsecondary institutions. The findings suggest that the disconnect between African American men and mainstream society was widening. Particularly important in the findings were the data suggesting the rate at which young men were being incarcerated was outpacing the rate at which they were completing school (Butler et al., 2013). Similarly, Butler et al. (2013) noted research conducted by Frierson, Pearson, and Wyche (2009) that explored the issues of education, incarceration, stereotypes, economics, and underemployment of Black males. Frierson et al. (2009) found evidence suggesting that the struggles young Black males face typically begin around the third grade and continue into doctoral and advanced professional educational settings.

The importance of obtaining a college degree in the United States and the disparity in overall earning potential between those with a high school diploma and those with either an associate degree or bachelor's degree is becoming increasingly clear (Brittian et al., 2009; Ray et al., 2009). Research findings suggest college completion is directly correlated to employment, income, social mobility, decreased likelihood of incarceration, and increased life expectancy (Gibson, 2014, as cited in Bush & Bush, 2010). African American men who obtain a college degree are leveraged to become higher income earners and, subsequently, a college degree elevates the economic standing of the Black family (Brooks et al., 2013). Recent studies argue that low retention and graduation rates among Black males in community colleges present a problem because academic failure among Black males has an impact on their social

positioning within the larger societal context (Gibson, 2014; Ingram et al., 2016). The substandard rate at which Black males persist and graduate at the community college level is a concern because of the impact educational underachievement among Black males has on society and Black males' social positioning. College completion is clearly linked to the workforce, income, social mobility, decreased likelihood of incarceration, and increase in life expectancy for Black males (Gibson, 2014). In summary, the problems Black males face later in life, such as difficulty finding and maintaining work, lacking skills for certain job performances, susceptibility to crime and drugs, and incarceration, can be attributed to Black males stopping their educational pursuit prior to earning a college degree.

Mentoring as an Intervention

College and university leaders are knowledgeable and understand the financial hardships of student attrition, the personal setbacks to the student, and the negative public relations repercussions of students who fall short of academic success (Cornelius, Wood, & Lai, 2016). The challenges that colleges and universities face in retaining and graduating students of color and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds is not a new issue (Morales, Ambrose-Roman, & Perez-Maldonado, 2016). Many colleges and universities have designed programs to increase diversity, highlight the offering of academic support programs and services, and address students' unique differences to improve retention and graduation rates (Brittian et al., 2009). LaVant, Anderson, and Tiggs (1997) reported that studies show that Black males have a greater likelihood of succeeding in higher education when support systems are available. Baber et al. (2015) noted that special emphasis placed on the need to improve efforts to better prepare Black

males for postsecondary education and degree completion has resulted in an influx of interventions aimed at enhancing performance quality. One such program is the Federal TRIO Program. The Federal TRIO Program, resulting from the Federal Higher Education Act of 1965, supports educational programs that are designed to increase the college enrollment and completion rates of high school students classified as economically disadvantaged and who are from underrepresented ethnic backgrounds (Pitre & Pitre, 2009). The Federal TRIO program initially began with three programs: Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services. The program has expanded, now including nine programs, and it is administered by the Student Services area of the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE), Office of Postsecondary Education (USDOE, 2014).

Numerous college interventions designed to increase student retention and graduation rates provide either a mentoring component, an educational component, a financial component, or a combination of the three services (Rodriguez-Planas, 2012). Oftentimes these programs are designed, administered, and monitored by higher education professionals and supported by a department or office (Barker & Avery, 2012). Bush and Bush (2010) offered a list of proposed recommendations on practices that community colleges could employ to achieve greater success of Black males, including establishing formal mentorship programs between faculty and Black male students, and institutionalizing a peer program, pairing Black male second and third-year students with incoming first-time freshmen. Similarly, Wood and Harris (2015) offered three recommendations for designing *effective* mentoring programs: (a) mentoring programs should be inquiry-driven, (b) mentoring programs should be activity-based, and (c)

mentoring programs should employ an organic approach to matching. Wood and Harris (2015) contended that when properly structured and implemented, mentoring programs can be a useful strategy for facilitating student success.

Mentoring programs designed to support Black males is one approach to address low college enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. Fornari et al. (2014) identified personal and professional growth and development, and mentor/mentee satisfaction as main objectives or goals associated with mentoring programs. They also noted that although most mentoring programs have similar goals, how each program is designed to achieve such goals differs among programs. The differences range from structured to unstructured activities to informal meetings, there are differences in how mentors are selected and trained, there are differences in how mentors and mentees are paired together, and there are differences in the ratio of mentees to mentors. Student growth, development, and satisfaction can be viewed in terms of mentoring programs responding to the personal, academic, cultural, and social needs of students, factors that were identified in the 2005 publication of the *Task Force on the City University of New York Black Male Initiative Final Report to the Chancellor*, hereafter called the *CUNY BMI Task Force Report* (CUNY, 2005).

Research findings from a study conducted by Gibson (2014) support the argument advanced by Ray et al. (2009) that mentoring programs are significant in Black males achieving success at the community college level. Gibson found that mentoring programs at community colleges may have a positive impact on Black male retention and graduation rates, self-esteem levels, the likelihood of transferring to a 4-year college, the ability to strengthen attitudes toward school, academic performance, self-confidence, and

the ability to positively express feelings. Gibson (2014) argued that if mentoring programs for Black males are not successful it may lead to Black males abandoning the higher education system in search of alternative nonproductive ways of earning an income, or Black males may continue to enroll in college but drop out prior to degree completion. Bean and Metzner (1985) described the process of dropping out of college, using an operational definition for attrition as “any student who enrolls at an institution one semester but does not enroll the next semester and has not completed his or her formally declared program of study” (p. 489).

Harper (2012) brought national attention to the study of Black male achievement. Harper’s (2012) report from the National Black Male College Achievement Study is the largest ever qualitative research study pertaining to Black undergraduate males at 4-year institutions (Harper, 2012). The purpose of the study was to understand the factors influencing success for high-achieving Black undergraduate males. Harper noted in the findings that, of the 219 students who participated, none attributed any credit for their college success to the participation in a structured mentoring program. This finding challenges most research, suggesting that Black male success can be attributed to structured mentoring. However, students noted that informal relationships with faculty and high-level administrators, academic-related experiences, and availability and access to institutional resources had a positive impact on their success.

Keflezighi, Sebahari, and Wood (2016) noted that while the work of supporting the educational aspirations of college men of color has increased in scope, little is known about the type of programming taking place and the formal support existing on college campuses for these efforts. Past and present research literature, when fully considered,

suggests there may be benefits from appropriate interventions and additional scholarly inquiry, as both relate to improving the rate of success and retention of Black male students in higher education (Flowers, 2006). According to Pope (2002), “The success of these students depends, in many cases, on their integration into the college environment. One of the more common efforts at community colleges to achieve such integration is through the mentoring program” (p. 31). Gibson (2014) posited that mentoring programs designed for Black males in community colleges have the potential to positively impact retention and graduation rates.

Origins, Definitions, and Significance of Mentoring

Much of the mentoring literature suggests the practice of mentoring traces its roots to ancient Greek mythology and the relationship between the characters, Odysseus and Mentor, in Homer’s epic, the *Odyssey* (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991; LaVant et al., 1997; Ragins, 2016). In the *Odyssey*, Mentor serves as Odysseus’s friend and confidant. Odysseus trusts Mentor to serve as his advisor and to guide Odysseus’s development (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). Theological literature suggests the practice of mentoring is rooted in biblical chapter and verse. Research conducted by Chiroma and Cloete (2015) focused on the use of mentoring as a supportive pedagogy in theological training. Chiroma and Cloete (2015) reference Thomas P. Moore’s book, *Care of the Soul*, to illustrate inferences of mentoring in the Bible. Chiroma and Cloete (2015) wrote:

While ‘mentoring’ is not found in English translations of the Bible, one can find many examples of the words that correspond with the meaning of mentoring as understood in this study. For example, the Greek term *meno* [enduring

relationship] is found in the New Testament 118 times – 33 times in the Gospel of John alone (Moore 2007:155). In his farewell messages, Jesus repeatedly used the term to express the ‘steadfast relationship’ he enjoyed with his disciples (Carruthers 1993; Köstenberger 2004, as cited in Beisterling 2006:77-92). (p. 2)

However, there also exists an alternative historical argument to the literary and biblical origins of mentoring as a practice. The alternative argument posits that mentoring originated in the traditions of ancient Africa. Sinanan (2016) noted that in ancient African societies, mentoring was highly regarded as a ritualistic practice and process. The combination of broad kinship systems and ceremonial rites of passage initiations assisted in guiding the youth in acquiring knowledge of learning and behaving within the customs of the culture (Sinanan, 2016). Rites of passage programs implemented in many African American communities have their origins in traditional African societies where young men and women engaged in separate processes to gain life skills in preparation for a series of rituals. These rituals served as part of the initiation of young men and women into adulthood (Butler et al., 2013).

Jacobi (1991) noted that early efforts, providing a foundation for most of the research on mentoring, date back to the mid-1970s, and they primarily focused on the fields of management, psychology, and education. Blackwell (1987) and Jacobi (1991) identified at least 15 different meanings of mentoring in their research studies that reviewed mentoring literature. More recent research on mentoring suggests at least 50 different definitions of the term mentoring (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). These diverse meanings mainly exist within the fields of higher education, management/organizational behavior, and psychology (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). There is consensus across disciplines of

two types of mentoring: formal mentoring and informal mentoring. Formal mentoring programs involve a structured process (Sinanan, 2016) where formal training is provided, and formal objectives and program activities are intentionally established as part of the program (Zhang, Qian, Wu, Wen, & Zhang, 2016). Informal mentoring is less structured than formal mentoring, is more casual in nature, and is usually the result of self-selection between mentors and mentees, resulting in an organic and more authentic relationship (Sinanan, 2016). In addition to formal and informal mentoring types, mentoring can be facilitated in various forms, such as one-on-one mentoring, group mentoring, e-mentoring, or peer mentoring (Karcher, Kuperminc, Portwood, Sipe, & Taylor, 2006).

Traditionally, mentoring has been linked to the apprentice model of graduate education, however, in the past 40 years, it has been more often viewed as an approach to address retention and academic enrichment for undergraduate education (Jacobi, 1991). Some of the early researchers of mentoring in higher education include Astin (1977), Pascarella, Terenzini, and Hibel (1978), and Wilson, Gaff, Dienst, Wood, and Barry (1975). According to Strayhorn and Terrell (2007), mentoring related to higher education has been described as a process whereby a student or protégé (mentee) is positively socialized by a faculty member or mentor into the institution of the profession. Crisp and Cruz (2009) referenced that mentoring in business literature was defined as “a formalized process whereby a more knowledgeable and experienced person actuates a supportive role of overseeing and encouraging reflection and learning within a less experienced and knowledgeable person, so as to facilitate that person’s career and personal development” (Roberts, 2000, as cited in Crisp & Cruz, 2009, p. 539).

The importance of mentoring in American societal cultures is equally important in both the historical and philosophical foundations of African Americans and higher education (Sinanan, 2016). Mentoring was defined by LaVant et al. (1997) as the act of teaching, advising, or guiding someone who is less experienced. Most (academic) college mentoring programs serve to assist students in adjusting, transitioning, and integrating into the academic and social culture of the college (Smith, 2007). Sinanan (2016) reported that mentoring studies conducted over the last two decades suggest that a measurable positive correlation exists between academic success and persistence in degree completion among students participating in mentoring programs, indicating improved retention rates for students. Mentoring programs provide an organized support system that is capable of empowering Black males to succeed academically and ultimately increase their rate of retention and degree completion (Gibson, 2014). Effective mentoring programs inclusive of positive and creative strategies, with the goal of supporting Black males to successfully pursue a college degree, suggest and illustrate the nature of their importance (LaVant et al., 1997).

The City University of New York Black Male Initiative

CUNY is the largest urban university in the United States, comprising 11 senior colleges, seven community colleges, and six graduate, honors, and professional schools throughout New York City's five boroughs. CUNY enrolls over 226,000 students in degreed credit courses, and it enrolls more than 250,000 students in adult and continuing education courses (CUNY, 2019a). CUNY traces its roots and mission back to 1847. In 1847, CUNY founder, Townsend Harris, challenged New York City to establish a public

academy of higher education to “educate the whole people” (CUNY, 2019c). According to the CUNY website:

CUNY has a legislatively mandated mission to be “of vital importance as a vehicle for the upward mobility of the disadvantaged in the City of New York . . . [to] remain responsive to the needs of its urban setting . . . [while ensuring] equal access and opportunity” to students, faculty and staff “from all ethnic and racial groups” and without regard to gender. (CUNY, 2019a, para. 3)

In responding to consistently low retention and graduation rates among Black males in higher education, many colleges and universities have established the BMI programs to support these students (Barker & Avery, 2012; Brooks et al., 2013; Brooms, 2018; Heaven, 2015). Programs specifically designed to positively impact low retention and graduation rates of Black males in college provide Black male students with the space to discuss issues in a group setting; with opportunities to participate in academic support service activities, such as tutoring and career planning; and it gives them direct exposure to other positive Black male role models (Brooks et al., 2013). In 2004, the CUNY Board of Trustees approved a 5-year master plan including the Chancellor’s Initiative on the Black Male in Education (CUNY, 2005). Resulting from the CUNY Chancellor’s Initiative, the CUNY BMI was proposed and accepted by the New York City Council and established in 2005. The accepted proposal to the City Council, included as an appendix to the CUNY BMI Task Force Report (CUNY, 2005), a University-wide graduation initiative allowing selected colleges to use grant funding “to support at least one full-time staff member on each campus, to employ successful students as peer mentors, and to organize appropriate special events” (p. 1). This

graduation initiative was proposed, in part, based on the CUNY BMI Higher Education Working Group's recommendation to establish a Black Male Initiative Program (BMI) on every CUNY campus (CUNY, 2005).

The mission of the CUNY BMI states, "As a CUNY-wide initiative, CUNY BMI's mission is to increase, encourage, and support the inclusion and educational success of students from groups that are severely underrepresented in higher education, in particular African, African American/Black, Caribbean and Latino/Hispanic males" (Wright, Best, & Ortiz, 2016). The CUNY BMI vision seeks to create model projects throughout the University, which are intended to offer increased layers of educational support, both academic and social, for students from severely underrepresented populations in higher education, particularly African, African American/Black, Caribbean and Latino/Hispanic males (Wright et al., 2016). Through a grant from the New York City Council, CUNY BMI is able to provide funding to student development projects throughout the CUNY system that are focused on six program areas: (a) diversity recruitment, (b) structured mentorship programs and academic learning communities, (c) targeted GED programs, (d) graduate and professional school opportunities, (e) supporting reentry programs assisting formerly incarcerated individuals, and (f) encouraging CUNY students, particularly African, African American/Black, Caribbean and Latino/Hispanic males, to pursue careers as New York City public school teachers (Wright et al., 2016).

Problem Statement

Based on national higher education statistics, Black male graduation rates from community colleges declined between 2000 and 2012 (National Center for Education

Statistics [NCES], 2016). The national percentage of all students graduating with an associate degree within 150% of the normal time decreased by 1.4%, from 30.5% to 29.1%, between 2000 and 2012. During the same period, the graduation rate for Black males decreased 4.2% from 23.1% to 18.9% (NCES, 2016). This decrease in Black male graduation rates is 3 times greater than the national average for community colleges. As stated by Ingram et al. (2016), “considering the dismal graduation rate of African American men there is a need to improve the amount of African American men attaining an associate degree from community colleges” (p. 2).

Barker and Avery (2012) indicated in their study that research exposes the lack of progress in higher education attainment among African American males over the past 25 years, although the number of African American students enrolled in college during the same period has increased (Strayhorn, 2012). Studies on men of color’s success in higher education suggest African American men “rank at or near the bottom on most indicators of student success, including enrollment, persistence, achievement, engagement, and attainment” (Harris & Wood, 2013, p. 174). The growing disparity between females and males (of all races) graduating from college has been expanding since the 1970s and continues to be reflected on college campuses today (Brooks et al., 2013). Wood (2012) noted, “Black males have the highest dropout rate among every racial/ethnic and gender subgroup” (p. 31). In his presentation, “Not By Accident: Sustaining Black Male Success In Higher Education, Davis (2014) presented data obtained from the 2012 U.S. Census Population Survey showing that Black females, ages 18-24, were enrolled in college at 50.46%. To illustrate the enrollment gap more clearly, research reported by Garibaldi (2014), President of the University of Detroit Mercy, stated the following:

A significantly higher number of African American women were enrolled in college in 2002 and 2012. Between 2002 and 2012, the growth in the number of African American females exceeded those of African American males. Nearly two million (1,882,700) African American women were enrolled in college in 2012 compared with slightly more than one million (1,079,400) African American men. That difference of 803,300 is 43 percent higher than the gap of 561,700 more African American women than men who were enrolled in college in 2002. (pp. 373-374)

Research also finds completion gaps exist between African American males and African American females. According to statistical data from the USDOE (2016) the national college graduation rate for African American males is 33.1% compared with 44.8% for African American females.

Mentoring in higher education, both as a process and as a relationship between a mentor and a mentee, has been widely researched (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Dawson, 2014; Jacobi, 1991). Although the mentoring literature has consistently grown in the field of higher education, the literature has not kept pace with program development and implementation (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). Research related to mentoring programs primarily focuses on the value of mentoring, the nature of relationships formed through mentoring, and mentor/mentee matching based on race and/or gender (Putsche, Storrs, Lewis, & Haylett, 2008). Extant research makes the argument that one way to better address the challenge of defining or conceptualizing mentoring and determining its effectiveness is by examining mentoring program design elements, frameworks, and subsequent models (Dawson, 2014; Karcher et al., 2006; Redmond, 1990). A growing body of research

exists that focuses on mentoring. A growing body of research also exists focusing on Black undergraduate students. However, few studies exist that address mentoring Black male undergraduate students (Brown, 2009; Bush et al., 2009; Gibson, 2014; Kelly & Dixon, 2014; LaVant et al., 1997; Ray et al., 2009). Studies focusing specifically on mentoring Black males attending community colleges is even scarcer, illuminating a gap in the research (Gibson, 2014; Ray et al., 2009). Redmond (1990) argued that special attention should be given to the planning and designing of mentoring programs that are purposed with supplementing efforts toward increased retention and timely graduation, such as those developed specifically for Black males in higher education. To strengthen Redmond's (1990) argument, in support of focused attention on planning and designing mentoring programs for Black males in higher education, Gibson (2014) identified that additional research would assist in addressing hindrances of mentoring programs for Black male community college students. This research could include weak mentor-mentee relationships; costly programming; amount of time needed to implement, assess, and monitor programs; and low percentages of students who benefit from mentoring programs (Gibson, 2014). To further strengthen this argument, Dawson (2014) explained that providing an operational definition of mentoring based on a conceptual framework will allow for the advancement of common terminology for specifying mentoring models, the advancement of identifying specific typologies associated with mentoring, and the advancement of rigorous studies being used more broadly by researchers and practitioners in exploring mentoring as a defined phenomenon. Similarly, Karcher et al. (2006) argued that answering the question of program effectiveness is dependent, in part,

on specifying the type of program, the context, and the type of activities and goals guiding how programs are organized.

As noted earlier, research has not provided much information about the nature of programming occurring in higher education and the existing structured support at the undergraduate level to support the educational goals of men of color (Keflezighi et al., 2016). There is a great deal of variety in the program structure and arrangements, but collectively, the programs have shown promise in terms of increasing retention and promoting inclusion of Black males on campus (Brown, 2009). However, Brooks et al. (2013) noted that while institutions of higher education take different approaches to address student retention, most institutional approaches have not been successful in maintaining retention rates over a long-term period. Due to restricted financial resources to support the design and implementation of mentoring programs at the postsecondary level, colleges, administrators, and faculty are dependent upon research to provide insight into mentoring practices on their campuses (Nora & Crisp, 2007). Although there is increased support for mentoring initiatives, including related policy and program initiatives at the local, state, and national levels, Karcher et al. (2006) suggested that the lack of available funding serves as an obstacle in supporting the critical examination of mentoring. The researchers hypothesized that the inability to ensure adequate resources being allocated to research may be attributed to the prevailing general acceptance of mentoring as an effective intervention.

Conceptual Framework

Mentoring literature in higher education has consistently found that neither a common nor operationally agreed-upon definition of mentoring exists (Crisp & Cruz,

2009; Gershenfeld, 2014, Jacobi, 1991). Additional studies by Dawson (2014), Karcher et al., (2006), and Redmond, (1990), arguing in support of using a framework highlighting mentoring design elements as a method of better explaining mentoring, supports the findings of the mentoring literature in higher education. Dawson (2014) proposed one way of advancing beyond a definition of mentoring is moving toward a common framework for specifying mentoring models.

Based on a review of mentoring literature and by testing through specifications of two different mentoring models from higher education contexts, Dawson (2014) identified 16 mentoring design elements. In addition to identifying the 16 mentoring design elements, Dawson also provided a definition for the terms *design element*, *framework*, and *mentoring model*, providing clarity of communication about mentoring. Dawson (2014) made the claim that every mentoring model or intervention addresses each of the 16 elements, either directly or indirectly, and that the use of the framework can clarify communication about mentoring for researchers and practitioners. Dawson (2014) further argued that the model can reveal implicit assumptions or omissions in the design of mentoring models. However, Dawson (2014) also noted that if a mentoring model does not use the whole set of 16 design elements, specificity is still achieved from using selected elements. Table 1.1 identifies each of the 16 design elements and the corresponding description of each design element.

Table 1.1

Dawson's Framework

Design Elements	Description
Objectives	The aims or intentions of the mentoring model
Roles	A statement of who is involved and their function
Cardinality	The number of each sort of role involved in a mentoring relationship
Tie Strength	The intended closeness of the mentoring relationship
Relative Seniority	The comparative experience, expertise, or status of the participants
Time	The length of a mentoring relationship, regularity of contact, and quantity of contact
Selection	How mentors and mentees are chosen
Matching	How mentoring relationships are composed
Activities	Actions that mentors and mentees can perform during their relationship
Resources and Tools	Technological or other artifacts available to assist mentors and mentees
Roles of Technology	The relative importance of technology to the relationship
Training	How necessary understandings and skills for mentoring will be developed in the participants
Reward	What participants will receive to compensate for their efforts
Policy	A set of rules and guidelines on issues such as privacy or the use of technology
Monitoring	What oversight will be performed, what actions will be taken under what circumstances, and by whom
Termination	How relationships are ended

This study used Dawson's (2014) framework to (a) determine if the 16 elements exist among the BMI mentoring programs studied, (b) determine if each element was explicitly addressed in the design of each program; and (c) possibly specify the diversity of mentoring between each program, based on choices that were determined for specific elements that might assist concise and accurate specifications of models.

Theoretical Framework

One approach to understanding factors relating to low retention of Black males in community colleges is focusing on variables related to student drop out (attrition). Understanding the variables that impact the decision of Black males to drop out of college may assist community college practitioners in developing mentoring programs and other interventions that are designed to increase retention and graduation rates. Justification can be made for attrition theory and Bean and Metzner's (1985) conceptual model of nontraditional undergraduate student attrition, serving as the theoretical underpinning to support the exploration and understanding of how BMI structured mentoring programs are designed at CUNY community college that are aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates.

Bean and Metzner (1985) presented a conceptual model outlining the dropout process for nontraditional undergraduate students. A nontraditional student was defined by Bean and Metzner (1985) as being:

Older than 24, or does not live in a campus residence (e.g., is a commuter), or is a part-time student, or some combination of these three factors; is not greatly influenced by the social environment of the institution; and is chiefly concerned with the institution's academic offerings (especially courses, certifications, and degrees). (p. 89)

The structure of Bean and Metzner's (1985) model of nontraditional undergraduate student attrition is influenced by previous models of traditional student attrition and behavioral theories. Bean and Metzner (1985) conducted background research reviewing literature examining models of the dropout process associated with traditional student

attrition theory (Bean, 1985; Pascarella, 1980; Spady, 1970; Tinto, 1975). The four models examined by Bean and Metzner (1985) served as influencers in the development of their proposed nontraditional undergraduate student attrition model. The connected elements of the model of nontraditional student undergraduate student attrition were determined by an extensive review of nontraditional student literature identifying age, enrollment status, and residence as the defining variables. Each model examined contained background variables, a longitudinal process associated with attrition, and academic variables as the major elements. Each model also ascribed a high level of value to social integration as a primary variable. However, additional background research, comparing traditional and nontraditional students, and comparing 2- and 4-year institutions overwhelmingly suggests that social integration is rarely an important factor in attrition decisions, and the evidence does not suggest a positive or significant relation to the persistence of nontraditional students. Therefore, social integration was not included as a variable in the Bean and Metzner model.

The model of nontraditional student undergraduate student attrition (Bean & Metzner, 1985) suggests that students' decisions to drop out of college will be mainly determined by four sets of variables, based on a literature review of prior studies identifying each variable as an important predictor of nontraditional student attrition. The four sets of variables included in the model are (a) academic variables, (b) intent to leave, (c) background and defining variables, and (d) environmental variables. The model also identifies the indirect effects of prominence, resulting from each variable, providing deeper insight into the interrelationship between the variables included in the model.

Based on a literature review discussing the effects of specific variables on the attrition of college students and their proposed attrition model, Bean and Metzner (1985) made the following claim: social integration variables should have minimal effect on retention, partly due to how nontraditional students are defined and partly because social variables from the outside environment expect to be more important than social integration variables; the model should offer a framework for understanding previous studies; the model should serve as a guide for conducting future studies; the model could be used to identify variables for study at individual institutions; and specifications to relationships must be given among those variables. Bean and Metzner also concluded that the longitudinal process associated with students dropping out of college is likely to be similar for nontraditional students—regardless of where the student attends college or the student subgroup affiliation of the student.

Research has suggested that Black male college retention and graduation rates, particularly at the community college level are impacted by numerous variables (Bush & Bush, 2010; Harris & Wood, 2013; Ingram et al., 2013; Mason, 1998; Wood & Turner, 2011; Wood & Williams, 2013), many that were previously identified by Bean and Metzner (1985) as factors contributing to nontraditional students dropping out of college. Black males attending a commuter community college, by definition, are considered nontraditional students. As noted earlier, mentoring has shown promise in decreasing the dropout rate among Black males in community colleges (Brown, 2009), however, colleges have not shown evidence of sustaining low dropout rates over an extended period. For example, research has focused on designing mentoring programs that are purposed with supplementing efforts toward increased retention and timely graduation,

and which are developed specifically for Black males in higher education (Redmond, 1990). This study may provide findings leading to new insight and interpretations of how specific elements of a mentoring program may impact variables associated with Black males dropping out of college.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore and understand program directors' perceptions regarding how BMI structured mentoring programs that are aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates are designed at CUNY community colleges.

Research Questions

This qualitative descriptive study is intended to contribute and add to the paucity of research providing insight into how mentoring programs are designed to support increased retention and graduation rates for Black males attending community colleges. To achieve the purpose of this study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What factors are considered in designing BMI structured mentorship programs at CUNY community colleges?
2. How does each factor influence the design of BMI structured mentorship programs at CUNY community colleges?
3. What specific design elements exist within each BMI structured mentorship program at CUNY community colleges?

Potential Significance of the Study

This study will complement and advance the current body of research focused on designing mentoring programs by adding empirical research exploring program directors'

perceptions of how BMI mentoring programs that are aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates in community colleges are designed. This study will have significance for higher education professionals, mentoring program leaders, researchers, nonprofit organizations, foundations and educational funders, and policymakers. As noted by Jacobi (1991) and Crisp and Cruz (2009), the existing literature has not yet provided standard components and goals of mentoring programs nor has the existing literature provided a valid external theoretical or conceptual framework for mentoring.

Additionally, there are very few studies that focus on mentoring programs that are designed for Black males attending community colleges. This research and subsequent findings may provide higher education practitioners with an external and valid framework to develop, strengthen, and support the need for additional funding of already existing or newly created mentoring models focused on Black males. For higher education practitioners who are responsible for designing mentoring programs that are addressing Black male retention and graduation rates, the ability to explicitly address individual mentoring program design elements can assist in identifying important decision points, rather than basing decisions on assumptions of a common understanding of mentoring. For example, although maintaining increased retention and graduation rates over a long term has not been successful, the findings from this study may offer insight into how to address challenges associated with mentoring programs focusing on Black male academic success, such as the strength of mentor/mentee relationships, the high costs associated with operating mentoring programs, the low percentage of students who benefit from the mentoring program, and acknowledging that institutions use various approaches to design mentoring programs that show promise in increasing retention and

graduation rates. Perhaps the findings from this study can identify specific common elements within the various programs being studied and identify their best practices in structured mentoring.

Definitions of Terms

Attrition – the process of dropping out of college, defined as any student who enrolls at an institution in one semester but does not enroll the next semester and has not completed his or her formally declared program of study (Bean & Metzner, 1985).

Black Male – any male of African, African American, or Caribbean ethnicity and African ancestry.

Black Male Initiative – the City University of New York University-wide student development initiative with more than 30 projects that are focused on increasing matriculation, retention, and graduation rates of underrepresented students, particularly men of color (Wright et al., 2016).

The City University of New York – the largest urban educational institution in the United States, comprising 11 senior colleges, seven community colleges, and six graduate, honors, and professional schools throughout New York City’s five boroughs (CUNY, 2019a.).

Community College – 2-year higher education institutions that award associate degrees in art, science, or applied science, as the highest degree attainable. In addition to associate degrees, community colleges also offer certificates, vocational training, and prepare students to transfer to 4-year colleges and universities (Fong et al., 2017).

Mentoring – a relationship between a guide/tutor and protégé whereby the guide/tutor provides guidance through a reciprocal relationship involving listening and

reflection, usually to encourage growth, development, and satisfaction (Fornari et al., 2014).

Chapter Summary

LaVant et al. (1997) described mentoring as a close relationship between an inexperienced mentee and an experienced mentor where essential knowledge and wisdom is passed down to the mentee by the mentor. Studies have examined mentoring and other factors that may impact retention and graduation rates (Bush & Bush, 2010; Crisp, 2010; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Gibson, 2014; Pope, 2002; Strayhorn, 2012; Wood, 2012; Wood & Williams, 2013), and mentoring has proven to be a contributor to increased retention and to have a positive impact on student success (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Gibson, 2014). It is generally reported and agreed upon by researchers that mentoring has value in undergraduate education. The value of mentoring is not reserved to one academic discipline, one type of program, or one type of institution.

Although the number of African American students enrolled in college has increased, the rate at which African American students earn a college degree has not changed significantly in over two decades (Barker & Avery, 2012; Strayhorn, 2012). The approach that higher education institutions take in addressing student retention varies, however, many institutions fail in their efforts to sustain strong retention rates (Brooks et al., 2013). Student enrollment at community colleges increased significantly during the 1960s and 1970s, resulting from the new (at the time) open admissions policy, however colleges did not provide students with the necessary support services to promote success (Wood, 2012). A community college's institutional approach to offering a supportive climate for Black males has the potential to provide holistic development and long-term

success (Baber et al., 2015), improve enrollment and graduation rates (Gibson, 2014), and serve as the catalyst in developing a mentoring program (Ray et al., 2009). While mentoring programs differ in how they address student success, evidence suggests mentoring programs can lower attrition rates among African American students (Brittian et al. 2009).

Researchers have documented that a clear definition of mentoring has not been established (Crisp, 2010; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Dawson, 2014; Gershenfeld, 2014; Harris, 2012; Jacobi, 1991; Karcher et al., 2006). The total lack of a “consistent definition of mentoring has been repeatedly recognized” (Crisp, 2010, p. 527) as a limitation of research because it has not attempted to relate mentoring to outcomes. Karcher et al. (2006) argued that the diversity of mentoring programs has typically led to program developers arbitrarily ascribing whatever name seemed to best label the mentoring approach being used, resulting in various forms of mentoring being plagued by haphazard and inconsistent definitions. Jacobi (1991) expressed that until a standard definition, along with standard components and goals of mentoring programs are developed, empirical research will be challenged to provide convergent findings. However, Dawson (2014) offered an alternative approach to address the challenge of defining mentoring, suggesting, rather than providing another definition to find the homogeneity in mentoring, a design framework should be developed for specifying the heterogeneity of mentoring models that can assist in better understanding mentoring as a phenomenon. Dawson (2014) concluded that this alternative approach to understanding mentoring may advance research beyond generically defining mentoring and toward concisely specifying the meaning of mentoring.

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 introduced the research and provided the context of this study through providing background information, a statement of the problem, the research questions to guide this study, the theoretical framework through which this study was processed, and the significance of this study. Chapter 1 also contains the key terms used throughout this study. Chapter 2 shares an overview of the literature regarding mentoring. Chapter 3 describes the researcher's methodology utilized for this study, including the research design, sample and sample procedures, instrumentation, and data collection strategies. Chapter 4 shares the findings and the researcher's analysis of the findings, and the chapter continues with an empirical investigation designed to answer the research questions. Chapter 5 consists of a summary of the findings and corresponding conclusions, which is followed by recommendations for higher education leaders and researchers.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This qualitative descriptive study sought to explore and understand program directors' perceptions of how BMI structured mentoring programs are designed, which are aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates. More specifically, this study focused on understanding what factors were considered in designing each program, how each factor influenced the design of the programs, and the specific elements included in the design of each program. This review provides a summary, analysis, and synthesis of the empirical research. This literature review investigated the research supporting the justification for studying the design of community-college mentoring programs that were aimed at increasing Black male retention and graduation, and this literature review also highlights and connects the research that supports further exploration and understanding of how mentoring can address retention, graduation, and the overall academic success challenges faced by Black males in higher education.

Differing Traits Among Black Males at 2-Year and 4-Year Colleges

Wood (2013) noted that Black males enrolled in college share similarities in terms of race/ethnicity and gender affiliation; however, much is unknown about the differences between Black males enrolled in college. Understanding the differences between Black males enrolled in college will help higher education administrators develop strategic plans, programs, activities, and policies designed to address the unique needs of Black males. Wood (2013) examined the background characteristics among Black males enrolled at 2- and 4-year public colleges. The purpose of the study was to determine

whether significant differences existed among Black males by institutional type. The study was led with the primary research question asking, *Are there differences in background characteristics between Black males in public 2-year colleges and those in 4-year colleges?* The study relied on data from the 2004-06 *Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) Longitudinal Study*, to answer the research question. The BPS longitudinal study is a national dataset that collects student data over a period of six years, in three separate phases, and examines issues facing students in postsecondary education (Wood, 2013).

This study included data from the 2003-2004 academic year, indicating the initial survey phase. Data were collected during the initial phase because the study was designed to focus on precollegiate background factors rather than actual college experience during the initial phase. The data consisted of BPS longitudinal study responses representing the background differences of 533 Black males who enrolled in 2- and 4-year public colleges during the second half of the 2003-2004 academic year (Wood, 2013). Wood (2013) used a quantitative research design, employing a two-stage logit analysis to analyze the data. In the first stage, individual logistic regressions were conducted with 18 variables. In the second stage, significant variables from the first stage were analyzed using the appropriate controls.

The findings from the research discovered significant differences in background variables between Black males attending 2-year and 4-year colleges. For example, Black males attending 2-year colleges were more likely to be (a) older, (b) independent as opposed to dependent, (c) married, (d) have children or other dependents, and (e) have delayed enrollment before beginning their postsecondary education. Black males

attending 2-year colleges were also found to be less likely to (a) have a grade point average (GPA) above a 3.0 in high school, (b) have a parent who earned a college degree beyond the baccalaureate level, (c) expected to earn a degree higher than a bachelor's, and (d) have earned college credits during high school. The study examined other background factors between Black males and attending 2- and 4-year colleges but found no significant differences. When domestic, college-related, and high school academic performance factors were examined using controls for age, income, or high school GPA, the findings revealed a significant statistical difference in the variables except for marital status, delayed enrollment, and advanced years of science in high school.

Similarities were found between Wood's (2013) study and Flowers's (2006) earlier study on Black males attending community colleges, examining a BPS longitudinal study (1996/1997) dataset. Wood (2013) and Flowers (2006) found a significant difference between the educational aspirations of 2- and 4-year students. Wood (2013) asserted that most of the literature on Black males in higher education does not account for the experiential differences while in college, and research has not uncovered data about the differences in background characteristics between Black males enrolled in 2- and 4-year colleges. The findings from the Wood (2013) study indicate that significant differences were found when comparing Black males from 2- and 4-year colleges (Wood, 2013). For example, 2-year collegians more likely are older, independent with dependents, have a spouse, and have delayed enrollment into college.

The findings from Wood's (2013) study may give credence to new studies and subsequent literature departing from the traditional *one way* of viewing Black males and their experience in higher education (Wood, 2013). The findings from Wood's (2013)

study benefits community college leaders who have insight into the demographic attributes of 2-year college students. The findings may also assist community college leaders in enhancing strategic planning, assessment and evaluation, and guiding the development of new policies to address student needs.

Academic Success of Black Males at 2-Year Colleges

Wood (2011) suggested that the factors that are psychological in nature tend to have the greatest effect on the academic success of Black males. Psychological factors affecting Black male success result from obstacles, negative messages, and stressors that exist inside and outside of the college environment and impact students' motivation, ability to concentrate on academic endeavors, and academic confidence (Wood, 2011). Ingram et al. (2016) pointed to the fact that the majority of research on Black males in higher education has concentrated on their undergraduate experiences at predominantly White institutions (PWIs), historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and other 4-year colleges; meanwhile scarce research exists examining the experiences of Black males enrolled at 2-year colleges.

Mason's (1998) study serves as the foundation of research and is the first published work that focused exclusively on Black males in community colleges (Harris & Wood, 2013). Mason (1998) reported findings from an empirical study designed to develop a model of persistence for African American male urban community college students. The study sought to strengthen previous research on student persistence from Kennedy-King College, by analyses of additional data. The study consisted of a literature review, consideration of the variables identified from a previous review, which were believed to impact student persistence, and collecting and analyzing African

American male student quantitative and qualitative data. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study employed a casual/comparative design that included a cross-sequential sampling of the data and structured interviews of 93 Black male students.

Results from the Mason (1998) study show evidence that variables, including educational goals, outside encouragement, utility, and the helplessness/hopelessness factors, had a significant influence on student persistence. Additionally, Mason (1998) found interrelationships between variables, outcomes, intent to leave behavior, and persistence of African American male students. Based on the findings, Mason (1998) proposed a modified persistence model that was designed to show and explain the connection and impact between and among three sets of specific variables (academic, background, and environmental), two sets of outcomes (academic and psychological), student behavior associated with intent to leave college, and the persistence of Black male students.

Flowers's (2006) study of first-year Black males attending community colleges explored how attending a 2-year college versus a 4-year college impacted academic and social integration. The impact of academic and social integration was determined by the amount, magnitude, and extent of student/student interaction, student/faculty interaction, and student/campus interaction that suggested, in general, a positive influence on persistence and retention of college students. Flowers (2006) conducted descriptive and multivariate analyses of data from the BPS longitudinal study (1996-1998) using a representative sample of "approximately 12,000 beginning postsecondary students from 832 institutions" (Kojaku, Nunez, & Malizio, 1998, p. 1).

Results from the Flower's (2006) study indicate that African American males enrolled at 4-year colleges were more likely to report significantly greater levels of academic and social integration when compared to their counterparts at 2-year colleges. Flowers (2006) noted that although an argument exists supporting the idea that student effort and academic motivation may impact academic and social integration, an argument exists supporting the ideas that the academic and social culture of the institutional environments at 2- and 4-year institutions may also play a prominent role.

Wood and Turner's (2010) qualitative study set out to examine the experiences of Black males in the community college to identify factors that affect their academic success. The objective of this phenomenological study was to use the findings to highlight students' perspectives on what affects their personal success in college. Using a convenience and maximum-variation sampling, 28 Black male students were selected to participate in semi-structured individual interviews and unstructured concept mapping. This research method was chosen to gain insight into the socialization and dynamics at work between Black male students and faculty.

The findings of the Wood and Turner (2010) study reveal that four elements of faculty-student engagement were viewed as important to students when discussing the role of faculty in affecting students' academic success. Students viewed personal attention as important when engaging with faculty; specifically, faculty displaying a friendly demeanor, checking in on student progress, listening to students' concerns, and encouraging success were highlighted (Wood, 2012; Wood & Turner, 2010).

The literature review pertaining to studies investigating the academic success of Black males attending 2-year colleges is important to this current study, by focusing on

the design of Black male mentoring programs. Investigating factors that may impact the academic success, and ultimately the outcome of Black males attending 2-year colleges, has the potential to inform researchers and practitioners on considerations when designing mentoring programs that are focused on increasing retention and graduation rates.

Mentoring Literature in Higher Education

Since 1991, there have been three major reviews and meta-analyses of literature relating to mentoring and undergraduate students. The first was Jacobi's (1991) review of the mentoring literature, which was focused on the connection between mentoring and undergraduate student success. Jacobi's review is widely recognized among researchers in higher education as the first empirical study to provide a critical review of the mentoring literature in the context of undergraduate student academic success. In 2009, Crisp and Cruz conducted a second review of undergraduate student mentoring literature between 1990 and 2007. Crisp and Cruz's (2009) review of mentoring literature pertaining to undergraduate students provided an update to Jacobi's (1991) initial review. The purpose of Crisp and Cruz review was to reframe and update the definition and characteristics of mentoring provided by Jacobi (1991). More recently, Gershenfeld (2014) summarized 20 additional empirical undergraduate mentoring research studies that were not included in Jacobi (1991) and Crisp and Cruz's (2009) reviews on undergraduate mentoring programs. The studies, included in Gershenfeld's (2014) review, were published between 2008 and 2012.

Jacobi's (1991) literature review on mentoring undergraduate students and academic success resulted from searches for references within the ERIC database using

the keyword *mentor* to identify scholarly work on the topic. The literature review also noted that during the decade prior to the review publications included in the ERIC database containing *mentor* as a keyword, results showed a significant increase from 10 references in 1978 to 492 references in 1989. Research relevant to undergraduate success and including a theoretical foundation, or methodological approach was the focus for inclusion in Jacobi's (1991) literature review. Based on an analysis of the literature reviewed, two areas of concern were identified that were connected to the concept of mentoring. The first concern was the nonexistence of a widely agreed-upon operational definition of mentoring. The second concern identified was the relationship between mentoring and academic success (Jacobi, 1991).

As noted earlier, Jacobi's (1991) literature review on mentoring undergraduate students and academic success is unique, because it is recognized as the first study to review mentoring literature in the context of higher education and student success. Jacobi (1991) suggested that due to the various and conflicting existing definitions of mentoring in the research, a consensus cannot be established about a single type of interpersonal relationship identified within the mentoring literature. Jacobi (1991) also questioned if mentoring contributed to student success in higher education. And if so, how? Jacobi's questions resulted from a gap in the research that fails to provide adequate theoretical and empirical answers to both questions.

Following Jacobi's (1991) literature review of research on mentoring and undergraduate academic success, Crisp and Cruz (2009) published an updated literature review on mentoring college students. The Crisp and Cruz (2009) literature review included findings from a theoretical review of 52 essays and studies on mentoring in

education, business, and psychology, and the findings from an empirical review of 42 published studies including journal articles and national conference papers that examined the impact of mentoring on college student success. The empirical studies reviewed by Crisp and Cruz (2009) focused on various types of students, including women, students of color, and first-generation students (Gershenfeld, 2014), who were not included in Jacobi's (1991) review. Like Jacobi's (1991) study, the Crisp and Cruz study revealed inconsistencies in the definitions of the term mentoring. In addition to a lack of consistency in definitions of mentoring, the Crisp and Cruz (2009) study revealed a lack of consistency in how mentoring is defined—as an activity or as a process.

While Jacobi's (1991) review concentrated on undergraduate students in the United States, the Crisp and Cruz (2009) review concentrated on the undergraduate and graduate student populations in the United States and abroad. Crisp and Cruz (2009) noted that a review of mentoring research had not provided an externally and theoretically valid model of mentoring. The lack of an externally and valid model of mentoring has led to improper examinations of the proposed theories associated with mentoring. Crisp and Cruz (2009) suggested gaining insight into what mentoring truly is and how students experience mentoring. Gaining insight into mentoring and how students experience mentoring requires a theoretically valid concept of mentoring (Crisp & Cruz, 2009).

To gain additional insight into the impact of mentoring on undergraduate students, Gershenfeld (2014) expanded on earlier published research conducted by Crisp and Cruz (2009) and Jacobi (1991). Gershenfeld's (2014) research focused on studies that included empirical data about programs with undergraduate students as mentors or

mentees and studies that included of a definition of mentoring as a theoretical framework and as a methodology. The absence of a definition, a theoretical framework, and a methodological procedure regarding were the limitations identified in the studies published by Jacobi (1991) and Crisp and Cruz (2009). From multiple databases, Gershenfeld (2014) identified a total of 1,445 studies on college mentoring. The studies were identified by searching the keywords, *mentoring AND (university or college)*. Because two previous reviews on mentoring were identified through Gershenfeld's search, only studies published after January 2008 and studies that focused on undergraduate students as mentees or as mentors were included in the review (Gershenfeld, 2014). A final sample of 20 studies was included in Gershenfeld's review. Of the 20 studies, six of were international studies. Distinct from the two earlier reviews on mentoring undergraduate students, Gershenfeld (2014) incorporated the levels of evidence-based intervention effectiveness (LEBIE), a procedure to determine the level of rigor in the methodological approach and design of the studies included in the literature review. The LEBIE was originally designed to determine the level of rigor in the methodological approach and design of social service interventions, but it was modified to assess undergraduate mentoring programs that were included in the review. Gershenfeld (2014) highlighted key findings from the review, which included progress in the use of theory or conceptual frameworks in recent studies on mentoring. In reviewing the 20 empirical studies identified after January 2008, Gershenfeld (2014) noted that none of the studies resulted in high levels of methodological rigor when classified using the LEBIE. The lack of high levels of methodological rigor associated with the procedure suggests a need for additional rigorous research designs in studies of

mentoring programs (Gershenfeld, 2014). The addition of classifying studies using the LEBIE to determine studies' methodological rigor found that most studies showing mentoring programs had an impact on the intended outcomes.

According to Gershenfeld (2014), examining the role of a mentor in each study, using a multidimensional framework of mentoring functions, allowed for a different approach from previous literature review studies. Gershenfeld (2014) argued that challenges in the literature associated with not having a consistent and agreed-upon definition of mentoring can be addressed by providing details about the function of the mentoring role. This argument suggests the development of college mentoring programs has not been guided by empirical evidence. Gershenfeld (2014) recommended that identifying the main operational features of mentoring programs, and considering examination of the social validity of mentoring programs, should be included in future mentoring studies. In addition to extending the literature, Gershenfeld (2014) defended the idea that reexamining issues of defining mentoring; identifying a theoretical framework; and creating methodological procedures, as highlighted in the prior reviews of Crisp and Cruz (2009) and Jacobi (1991); and using a classification system to assess the methodological rigor of each study reviewed adds value to the study.

One of the major contributions resulting from the literature review on mentoring and undergraduate student academic success is the proliferation of the research following Jacobi's (1991) literature review and subsequent literature reviews of Crisp and Cruz (2009) and Gershenfeld (2014). To provide a common and operational definition of mentoring and to find commonalities in mentoring, research has focused on the effectiveness of mentoring on student academic success (Brittian et al., 2009; Brown,

2009; Bush, Bush, & Wilcoxson et al., 2009; Harris, 2012; Morales et al., 2016; Sinanan, 2016; Smith, 2007), peer mentoring programs (Colvin & Ashman, 2010; Hall & Jaugietis, 2011; Leidenfrost, Strassnig, Schutz, Carbon, & Schabmann, 2014; Tremblay & Rodger, 2003), and mentoring program design and implementation (Fornari et al., 2014; Putsche et al., 2008). Collectively, this research has assisted and will continue to guide researchers in conducting studies of a theoretical or conceptual framework regarding mentoring (Gershenfeld, 2014).

Consensus exists within the mentoring literature and among researchers that a clear and concise common or operational definition of mentoring has not been established (Dawson, 2014; Gershenfeld, 2014). However, mentoring is typically described as a relationship between a mentor and mentee or protégé whereby the mentor provides guidance through a reciprocal relationship involving listening and reflection, usually to encourage growth, development, and satisfaction (Fornari et al., 2014). It has also been concluded and widely agreed upon that most research relating to mentoring, in general, and specific to higher education, lacks rigor in assessment and is methodologically weak or flawed (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Gershenfeld, 2014; Jacobi, 1991; Tremblay & Rodger, 2003).

Mentoring Program Designs

Few studies in higher education have examined mentoring program-design components. Research investigating structured mentoring program design components as key factors of successful mentoring relationships is inconclusive (Cornelius et al., 2016). This may be due, in part, to the lack of a common definition of mentoring or a common framework to specify how mentoring is defined (Dawson, 2014). Gershenfeld (2014)

asserted the need for future research to specifically identify the main operational features of mentoring programs and recommended college administrators develop collaborative partnerships with researchers to understand the goals of the mentoring program, the utility of the mentors, the measures that would be used, and to gather baseline and continuous data in assessing if a program's objectives were being achieved. Dawson (2014) inferred that applying rigorous research designs to mentoring, without a precise operational definition of what mentoring means in practice, will yield results of very little use. Dawson (2014) further suggested a common framework to specify the meaning of mentoring that might avoid the continuation of rigorous studies being of limited use to researchers and practitioners due to the studies attempting to explore an unexplained phenomenon. The basis for Dawson's (2014) position is consistent with the thinking of earlier researchers (Karcher et al., 2006) who posited that mentoring programs traditionally have been randomly named based on the best label for that particular approach. This has resulted in several forms of mentoring that have been plagued by vague and inconsistent definitions.

Cornelius et al. (2016) examined the design features of a formal mentoring program for first-year undergraduate students participating in the First STEP (Striving Towards Excellence Program) and attending a metropolitan university in Australia during 2012. The key aspects the researchers focused on were (a) the matching process, (b) training and orientation, and (c) interaction frequency. The research question that ultimately guided this mixed-methods study sought to find out to what extent mentoring program design features affect student engagement and transition.

The results, based on quantitative and qualitative data collected from interview responses, implied that students who completed the mentoring program had a positive transition experience and became more acclimated to the institution. Cornelius et al. (2016) reported *helpfulness* and *strong relationships* as the two themes that emerged from the mentor and mentee responses. The researchers also noted that the findings suggested the frequency of interaction between mentees and mentors supported the development of high levels of trust and rapport, positive mentoring relationships, valuable support through the exchange of feedback, and a sense of belonging of mentees toward the institution. The benefits associated with participating in the mentoring program, as identified by the mentees and mentors, were grouped into four main areas and included meeting people, acclimating to a new environment, gaining a better understanding of the institution, and learning how to study.

Cornelius et al. (2016) contributes to the research by providing new information to the existing body of mentoring literature in higher education. The existing research suggests that the matching process is a critical component of a formal mentoring program; however, Cornelius et al. advanced by suggesting that mentees should have the discretion to determine who their mentors will be and it was viewed favorably by the mentees and enhanced the mentee/mentor relationship.

The purpose of Dawson's (2014) study was to propose a framework to design and specify the different mentoring models in lieu of providing an additional definition to uncover the uniformity in mentoring. Dawson's (2014) methodology in developing the framework was a 5-year process that included a continuous nonsystematic examination of mentoring literature to provide an understanding of the diversity of mentoring, focusing

on review studies about mentoring, mentoring taxonomies, or typologies; to develop a preliminary framework of 20 elements that were used in designing a mentoring model in 2008, in consultation with mentoring professionals; and by repeatedly refining the framework based on feedback from multiple sources. In part, the focus of Dawson's (2014) study was on the clarity of communication about mentoring, requiring the terms *design element*, *framework*, and *mentoring model* to be defined. The definitions that Dawson (2014) gave:

A *design element* of mentoring represents a variable or an opportunity for a choice in the design of a mentoring model, for example: the choice of one-to-one rather than group mentoring (the cardinality element); the criteria that are used to choose mentors (the selection element); or the triggers for and consequences of ending a mentoring relationship (the termination element). The *framework* proposed in this article is the combination of all of the design elements. A *mentoring model* is a set of choices made against the elements in the framework.

(p. 137)

The findings from Dawson's (2014) research suggests the existence of 16 mentoring design elements, that is, objectives, roles, cardinality, tie strength, relative seniority, time, selection, matching, activities, resources and tools, the role of technology, training, reward, policy, monitoring, and termination. Dawson (2014) suggested that the 16 design elements provide an alternative to the ongoing challenge of defining mentoring, as highlighted by previous researchers, most notably Jacobi (1991) and Crisp and Cruz (2009). Additionally, Dawson (2014) argued that the advancement of a

framework that includes the 16 mentoring design elements specifies the diversity of the mentoring instead of providing another definition or standard of mentoring.

The following review reports on a quantitative study that used survey data collected from administrators from 14 U.S. medical schools that examined the structure and implementation of the schools' mentoring programs. The purpose of the study was to assess the design, implementation, and similarities of mentoring programs when establishing medical education programs in the United States (Fornari et al., 2014). The study also sought evidence of existing best practices. The findings revealed how new medical schools, established since 2006, have designed mentoring programs in concert with the school's developed curricula.

Fornari et al. (2014) found more than half of the new medical school's mentoring programs differed in structure and implementation. While each medical school acknowledged the value of the mentoring program, collectively, the schools noted challenges in developing and in implementing the programs, with respect to time constraints for faculty and students, and lack of financial and professional incentives for faculty. The findings from the survey data were inconclusive in demonstrating one best practice for designing and implementing a mentoring program at a medical school; however, the findings indicated commonality in mentoring roles, such as career counseling, facilitating student-faculty connections, and encouraging and monitoring professionalism (Fornari et al., 2014).

The findings of the Fornari et al. (2014) study strongly support the similar research findings of Dawson (2014), suggesting mentoring programs are structured with a great deal of variety. As noted earlier, no standard framework exists for designing

mentoring programs in higher education. Fornari et al. (2014) also acknowledged that similar roles for mentors at new medical schools emerged from the findings of the study.

Putsche et al. (2008) reported on a multipurpose study, conducted in 2005. The qualitative study explored a formal mentoring program based on feminist and networking models at a mid-sized university of 11,000 students. The university was located in a rural section of the Northwest United States. Putsche et al. (2008) noted that the program was established to enhance the college environment for undergraduate women attending the university. Specifically, the study aimed to address mentoring program development and implementation, including how to position the mentoring program within the college's programmatic infrastructure, effective recruitment and retention strategies, approaches to establish and sustain rapport between mentors and mentees, appropriate interventions and monitoring, and how to ensure the program met mentees' needs (Putsche et al., 2008). The collaborative and participatory nature of the study, as noted by Putsche et al. (2008), used integrated research methodologies, including participant observation, structured and unstructured interviews, reflective exercises for participants, and formal surveys. Of the many volunteers, 23 mentees provided written consent, agreeing to participate in the research and subsequently completed a preprogram survey.

The overall Putsche et al. (2009) research uncovered data that illustrated a formal mentoring program for undergraduate women can yield success within a short period of time, and that success is dependent primarily upon appropriate mentor/mentee matching and staff who are committed and enthusiastic about the program (Putsche et al., 2008). More specifically, Putsche et al. (2008) identified six specific factors that were most important for successful development and implementation of a formal mentoring program

for undergraduate women: (a) a full-time, dedicated, and enthusiastic administrator to organize and coordinate the program; (b) institutionalizing the program to cultivate support within the college or university; (c) creativity in building collaborative relationships with existing programs to ensure sustainability when funds are limited; (d) written procedures and processes to successfully transition from year to year and to institutionalize the program; (e) a plan to recruit existing and prospective participants beginning toward the end of the academic year, and (f) appropriate matching of mentors and mentees to ensure mentees' needs are met.

Research by Karcher et al. (2006) summarized the existing knowledge about various approaches to mentoring, and they proposed a framework identifying both the common and specific elements among different youth mentoring approaches. Karcher et al. (2006) suggested more closely examining the context, structure, and goals of programs, as well as three critical program elements: content, infrastructure, and dosage, as an alternative to focusing only on the participants and contexts of mentoring programs (i.e., peer- or school-based mentoring) as key elements of differentiating the programs. Karcher et al. (2006) posited that a closer examination would result in more fruitful program development and research. The researchers further suggested that will result in a better understanding of how and under what circumstances mentoring is effective can be accomplished if the program developers and researchers test hypotheses about the influences of the program's elements, based on theory-driven expectations about how proximal, enabling, and distal outcomes of mentoring programs are related,

Based on their research, Karcher et al. (2006) identified mentoring program contexts as either field based, or site based. Field-based mentoring programs are defined

as those having a sponsoring agency to coordinate and support the mentor/mentee matches; however, mentors and mentees usually interact at agreed-upon, convenient times and locations. Conversely, site-based mentoring programs are defined as programs in which the mentors and mentees engage mainly in one of the many specific mentoring sites. The site may be a school, community agency, youth development center, workplace, hospital, clinic, or within houses of worship.

Karcher et al. (2006) distinguished between what four types of structural mentoring relationship programs are designed to establish. The four structural types are cross-age peer mentoring, group mentoring, e-mentoring, and intergenerational mentoring. To provide a more accurate and less confusing definition of cross-age peer mentoring, Karcher et al. (2006) proposed the definition should highlight that an older and wiser youth is the mentor and the relationship is less task-oriented than relationally oriented. In addition, cross-aged mentoring should focus on establishing rapport more so than achieving academic and behavioral goals and it should seek to give attention to developmental achievements including social skills, connectedness to school, and self-esteem. Karcher et al. (2006) referenced previous research in which the authors noted “mentoring groups most commonly consist of 6-10 youth who meet together over time with one mentor or a team of mentors” (p. 713). E-mentoring, also referred to as e-mail mentoring, online mentoring, telementoring, and virtual mentoring, is a form of mentoring that uses technology—primarily the Internet (Karcher, et al., 2006). Often, short-term approaches are referred to as telementoring, and they have a specific learning-related or career-related purpose. Long-term approaches, commonly referred to as e-mentoring, are usually less structured, and they primarily aim to foster friendships.

Finally, intergenerational mentoring, a newer approach to mentoring, involves processes where youth are mentored by older adults who are usually 55 years of age and older.

Advancing previous work in examining youth mentoring, Karcher et al. (2006) recommend mentoring be viewed as having two categories of activities for determining the nature of the primary goals to be achieved. The first category is developmental mentoring. Developmental mentoring mainly focuses on facilitating the relationship between the mentor and mentee to promote the youth's development, and it reflects the assumption that mentoring impacts the youth's social, emotional, and academic development through newly developed supportive relationships. The second category is instrumental mentoring. Instrumental mentoring mainly focuses on the learning of skills or the achievement of specific goals. The developmental and instrumental mentoring approaches indicate how mentoring takes place across various structures and contexts of mentoring, and it typically illustrates the desired outcomes of the mentor or the program.

Another distinction identified by Karcher et al. (2006) is among the program elements. Specifically, a distinction was made between the specific and common features of programs. Resulting from their research on different types of youth mentoring programs, Karcher et al. (2006) identified infrastructure and dosage as the two critical common features influencing program outcomes. Infrastructure refers to practices relating to the screening, matching, training, and continuous support of mentors. The degree of infrastructure reflects how many, and in what way, mentoring practices are provided to support the match. The dosage has to do with the amount, intensity, and duration of the mentoring taking place, or put another way, it is the quality of the mentoring received. The frequency, in terms of total hours of mentor-mentee contact; the

depth of the mentoring interaction; and the total length of the mentoring relationship, when considered collectively, may be interdependent upon each person, and it may have an influence on both people. The framework proposed by Karcher et al. (2006), resulting from their research, suggests that mentoring programs should first be identified at three levels: context, structure, and content. The researchers further suggested, when comparing programs or conducting a full assessment of how one or more programmatic approaches impact a program, the influence of infrastructure and dosage must be considered.

Karcher et al. (2006) contributes to the existing mentoring literature in higher education and mentoring program designs and implementation, by providing more in-depth information relating to the structure and methods used for developing an effective program. Karcher et al. also provides various frameworks to further inform mentoring program design, which may provide higher education practitioners with additional insights into how mentoring programs can be designed and developed to address low retention and graduation rates among Black males in community colleges. Finally, Karcher et al. (2006) outlined specific outcomes and suggestions for future investigation and practice.

Black Male College Mentoring and Success Initiatives

The ongoing departure of Black males from college prior to graduation is a major concern for many in higher education (Simmons, 2013). Higher education professionals continue to implement different student success programs and support services to aid students in overcoming challenges of persistence, degree completion, and transferring (Crisp & Taggart, 2013). Although these interventions exist, Black males continue to

engage and persevere in the college environment at a lower rate than the general student population (Brooks et al., 2013). To enhance the college experience for Black male students, Brooms, Goodman, and Clark (2015) suggested that postsecondary institutions must continue to develop strategies that concurrently address academic and social engagement, as both are critical to the retention and graduation of Black males.

Keflezighi et al. (2016) analyzed 129 minority male initiative programs (MMIs) in seven states, to gain an understanding of the program funding streams, interventions, and objectives. The seven states with the highest concentration of MMIs were North Carolina, Texas, New York, Maryland, Connecticut, Florida, and California. Most programs analyzed in the Keflezighi et al. study employed interventions that were focused on professional skills development and mentoring. Professional skills development and mentoring were primarily used to address a wide range of goals, which designed to produce outcomes that were mainly affective, and performance based. Only a few programs emphasized learning outcomes that were connected to the program goals. The data presented was gathered from a content analysis of information that was specific to community college MMIs. Employing a qualitative research method design, Keflezighi et al. (2016) reviewed documents that were featured on the American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC) database, and the researchers identified additional MMIs by conducting web searches.

The results of the Keflezighi et al. (2016) study concluded that some programs were financed by a single source, while the majority had multiple funding sources; however, funds to support MMIs usually originated directly from the community colleges and their foundations. The researchers also discovered that the programming efforts

commonly had three or more funding sources, and the sources often originated from a variety of areas including student fees, county funds, institutional funds, donations, and municipal governments. Interventions structured into the programs were found by Keflezighi et al. (2016) to vary among institutions and programs. The most commonly used programs were professional skills development, mentoring, college success and survival skills, service-learning, and tutoring, with professional skills development and mentoring most commonly being used (Keflezighi et al., 2016). Commonality was also found among the goals and objectives of the MMIs. The authors noted that the study referred to goals in the context of statements usually wide in scope and interrelated to a strategic plan, but not measurable, while outcomes were viewed as specific and examined a certain competency the college desires students to achieve. Based on the comparative institutional analysis, Keflezighi et al. (2016) identified engagement, leadership and professional growth, sociocultural adjustment, personal growth, and academic advancement as the main MMIs' goals. There were 23 identified outcomes connected to the program goals, including 13 affective (disposition and emotional growth) outcomes and 10 performance outcomes (student engagement and student success markers). Very few programs included in the study specifically identified learning outcomes within the stated goals. Keflezighi et al. (2016) also found many programs focused on professional skills development and mentoring as the primary interventions to address a wide range of goals.

The findings from the Keflezighi et al. (2016) study contribute to the existing literature on programs serving men of color in higher education. They provide additional empirical data about the nature of programming activities and the formal support that

exists on college campuses for these planned activities. The findings also reveal key program interventions and outcomes that were underpinning efforts to support the academic goals of men of color in higher education.

Brooms et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative study, using semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire that were focused on the effect of participating in a Black Male Achievement (BMA) program for Black male college students at MidSouth University. The BMA program was developed and implemented in response to the low academic achievement of Black males in comparison to other student groups. The BMA program sought to improve the retention, persistence, and degree completion rates of undergraduate Black male students attending MidSouth University. Specifically, the researchers wanted to know how the BMA program influenced the academic performance, retention, social support, and engagement of Black males. At the time of this study, MidSouth University, a large, urban public institution located in West Memphis, Arkansas, enrolled over 20,000 students and Black students comprised 11% of the student enrollment (Brooms et al., 2015). The researchers used a convenience sampling approach to recruit students. Of the 19 students who were invited to attend a retreat and participate in the interview and survey, 16 students completed both the interview and survey.

Brooms et al. (2015) analyzed the data and discovered three emergent themes: meaningful interactions and connections, self-empowerment, and building and engaging with the BMA program. The researchers reported that the responses from the participants revealed the opportunities for cultural connections, such as other Black male students and MidSouth faculty and staff, motivated their participation in the program. Participant

responses also revealed that they were able to gain an increased sense of self-empowerment; they were able to develop a stronger collective identity, helping to dispel negative stereotypes and witness how other Black males desired to achieve; they were able to engage with positive role models; and they were exposed to opportunities for professional development through networking and learning opportunities. The participants shared that they primarily viewed the activities offered by the BMA program as unique learning opportunities (Brooms et al., 2015).

Brooms et al. (2015) concluded that their research findings reinforced findings from earlier studies. Earlier studies suggested that self-awareness and self-understanding are critical factors for Black male collegians who are trying to understand where they belonged is in the context of the history of African Americans at the institutions they attended and in the larger American society (Bridges, 2011). Earlier studies also suggest that personal growth for Black males is a characteristic associated with participating in BMA-type programs (Zell, 2011).

Brooks et al. (2013) studied undergraduate retention programs designed for African American males to assess the efficacy of retention programs as an enhanced multicultural approach to traditional university academic methods. This mixed-methods study was based on 90 out of 136 matriculated Black male students who were selected based on gender, class status, and ethnic orientation. The 90 students investigated were students between the ages of 18 and 21 years old who participated and completed a semester-long formal mentoring program offered as part of the study. The three specific questions guiding the study were (a) Do retention programs retain African American male students past freshman year?, (b) Is there an increase in scholastic achievement?,

and (c) Do retention programs increase the comfort level and decrease perceived obstacles for African American male students? (Brook et al., 2013). The researchers implemented a four-step process to conduct the study. The four steps included recruiting potential participants, having participants enroll in a mandatory seminar course, pairing participants with upper-class mentors, and collecting and analyzing the data. The data were collected and combined from responses on the Retention Program Pretest and Posttest Assessment (RPPPA) and from a questionnaire administered by the researchers. The RPPPA is an assessment consisting of 40 questions designed to assess college students' academic acculturation, social integration, self-esteem, and the mentor/mentee relationship.

Gibson's (2014) paper on the impact of mentoring programs for African American male community college students is also significant to this current research. The purpose of the Gibson paper was to provide an argument in support of the idea that mentoring programs can increase academic success, provide a sense of community, and build positive relationships for African American male students. The paper provided a review of the literature on the effects of mentoring on African American male students, offered definitions for mentoring programs, explored major arguments connected to mentoring programs, and addressed how mentoring impacts retention for African American males. Similar to the Gibson study, the LaVant et al. (1997) study provided recommendations for community colleges to consider in effectively implementing a mentoring program.

Brooks et al. (2013) reported that the findings from the study uncovered no statistically significant difference in terms of social integration or self-esteem when pre-

and posttest data scores were compared. Conversely, a statistically significant difference was observed between pre- and posttest scores relating to academic acculturation and mentee/mentor relationship. Additionally, the Black male participants noted greater rapport with mentors, enhanced academic acculturation to the institution, and better social integration into the college community (Brooks et al., 2013). The findings from the Brooks et al. study also revealed that over 90% of the student participants matriculated from the first semester to the second semester, and they were in good academic standing. The Brooks et al. (2013) findings concluded that the mentoring intervention, in fact, influenced participants.

Limitations identified in the Brooks et al (2013) study included that the findings only described freshmen Black males who were attending college in the South, which affected the generalizability of the study. Other limitations identified were the absence of a framework for recruiting and retaining Black males, and ambiguity about whether other colleges had the capacity to design and implement similar types of programs.

The research on Black males in higher education has clearly identified the challenges impeding their academic success and ultimate degree completion, however, few studies offer solutions to remedy these challenges (Brooks et al., 2013). The authors of the Brooks et al. study argued that a retention program that includes a mentoring component is a practical intervention to address Black male retention and degree completion in higher education.

LaVant et al. (1997) addressed the retention of African American male students through mentoring initiatives as a practical option that would work in favor of Black males. The purpose of their research was to show how mentoring serves as an alternative

option, benefiting Black males and positively effecting their academic achievement. Taking a qualitative approach, LaVant et al. (1997) reviewed interview response data from two similar studies that focused on African American student perceptions and attitudes toward participation in research and science mentoring programs. Findings from both studies suggest that the presence of faculty mentors and the relationships established with students had positive effects on the African American students' attitudes toward college. The researchers also reviewed and summarized seven successful college faculty mentoring program models, including programs designed specifically for Black males, and those that were inclusive of Black females. Based on their observation, LaVant et al. provided specific recommendations for colleges to consider in developing sustainable and effective mentoring programs that are designed to increase and strengthen retention, academic success, and leadership development of Black males. In contrast to the studies that primarily focused on students' experiences, LaVant et al. reviewed the approaches taken to develop mentoring initiatives for African American students and made recommendations for college leadership to consider in enhancing Black male achievement.

The review of research on Black male college mentoring and success programs offers higher education professionals with better insight into key program interventions and outcomes that are currently underpinning programs to support Black male academic success. The literature also provides student affairs practitioners with a possible framework to design and implement programs that were proven to be successful in impacting the ability of Black males in higher education to acculturate academically, achieve academically, establish positive peer relationships, and ultimately persist toward

degree completion. The literature in this review is equally important in reinforcing the belief that Black males participating in retention and success programs have a positive effect on their overall sense of self-awareness, self-worth, learning, and personal growth.

Peer Mentoring

According to Harris (1995), the development of interpersonal relationships with peers is a significant determinant of adult interpersonal competence. Success within peer groups increases self-esteem and gives a sense of self-validation. Harris also believed that the low level of academic achievement among Black male peer groups is because of the lack of acknowledgment for those who succeeded academically as well as the peer glorification of Black men who are disruptive or play sports. Harris (1995) posited that promoting an environment of academic achievement within this group should put those who are academically successful at the forefront of their peer group. Due to the significant impact peers have on each other, institutions of higher education have, for years, attempted to structure more formal interactions between students (Colvin & Ashman, 2010). The Leidenforst et al. (2014) research findings suggested that a positive outcome resulting from programmatic interventions, such as peer support programs, is an increase in study success and a decrease in drop-out rates among student participants. However, Cornelius et al. (2016) noted that there is little research on the combination of academic-peer-student mentorship. As previously described, mentoring involves a faculty member or mentor having a positive impact on the socialization of a student (mentee) into the institution (Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). Most of the research specific to mentoring tends to define mentoring in terms of the role of a mentor in relationship to a mentee (Jacobi, 1991). Mentoring in higher education can be described as a process that

provides a neophyte college student with a continuous relationship with a supportive person who can help with navigating challenges and opportunities that many students are not familiar with because of inexperience or a lack of cultural capital (Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014).

During the 2007-2008 academic year, Leidenfrost et al. (2014) conducted a quantitative study at the University of Vienna in Austria. The study aimed to examine the effects of a peer mentoring program on mentee academic performance. The study had two objectives. The first objective was to examine what academic impact mentoring during the first semester had on a student after the first year of college, and after the second year of college. The second objective was to examine if different effects on mentee academic achievement after the first year of college and after the second year of college, were observable between three different mentoring styles (Leidenfrost et al., 2014). The researchers noted that a sample of 417 first-year psychology majors, from a population of 494 first-year students majoring in psychology, participated in the study. Each student participating in the study was designated to a mentee group or was part of a control group. Subsequently, 376 of the students voluntarily participated as mentees in a newly implemented blended online and face-to-face peer group mentoring program (Cascaded Blended Mentoring) for 3 months. Each of the 48 groups had eight mentees and one peer mentor. The first-year psychology students who chose not to participate in the study served as the control group. The research findings conclude that no statistically significant differences existed within any of the academic performance indicators when mentees and mentors were compared. Similarly, no statistically significant differences

were found within any of the academic performance indicators when the three groups of mentoring styles were compared (Leidenfrost et al., 2014).

According to Leidenfrost et al. (2014), the overall findings suggest academic achievement was greater among students who participated in the mentoring program. Students who participated in the mentoring program also passed a greater number of their courses after 1 year and 2 years, when compared to students who did not participate in the mentoring program. Additionally, the mentoring style that mentees were exposed to in the groups did not result in a statistically significant difference in mentee academic achievement. However, Leidenfrost et al. (2014) suggested the reason for the absence of a statistically significant difference could be attributed to a specific mentoring style that was primarily contingent upon online mentoring activities, lessening the opportunity for face-to-face mentee/mentor interaction. This finding possibility may have significance and support the research findings from Tremblay and Rodger (2003), which concluded that the frequency of mentee/mentor interaction positively impacts student achievement. Leidenfrost et al. (2014) reported all peer mentors were required to meet with their mentee at least five times during the mentor program, whereas the students participating in online mentoring activities set their own meeting frequency. The difference in meeting frequency between online mentoring and face-to-face mentoring and their correlation to academic achievement, suggests the absence of a statistically significant difference in the result of the frequency of interaction and not the result of different mentoring styles.

Hall and Jaugietis (2011) conducted a 6-year, mixed-methods study designed to assist in the development of a peer mentoring program and to identify the components of the peer mentoring program that contributed to successful outcomes. The study began in

2004 at the University of New South Wales, located in Sydney, Australia, with an enrollment of over 46,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The methodological approach in Hall and Jaugietis' (2011) study included analyzing feedback from mentor and mentee surveys and applying integration and social support theory. There were 42 student mentees who participated in the study. Based on the research, Hall and Jaugietis' (2011) found that improvements made to mentoring programs that were based on the mentees' perceptions of the helpfulness of the program may have positively impacted the mentees' decision not to withdraw from college, that the mentee feedback showed a positive correlation to the lower reported problems experienced by the mentees, that the mentee feedback resulted in improvements in how the mentees rated the helpfulness of the mentors, and that the mentors expressed enhanced communication, social, employment and organizational skills, and self-confidence.

The prior studies of Tremblay and Rodger (2003) and Hall and Jaugietis (2011) only examined the link between mentoring and academic success. These studies uniquely contribute to the mentoring literature in higher education because they sought to evaluate the findings, based on participant feedback, to improve a mentoring program. Subsequently, these researchers reported on the improvements incorporated into the mentoring program, which was due to participant feedback; by sharing subsequent findings of how well the improvements affected participant satisfaction and student academic success; and by providing a theoretical analysis and empirical evidence of the most impactful components contributing to successful outcomes. The Tremblay and Rodger (2003) and Hall and Jaugietis (2011) studies make a major contribution to the

existing mentoring literature by providing a methodological approach to how future studies on mentoring may be conducted.

Based on the findings from their study, Hall and Jaugietis (2011) identified a mentoring program at one university where the implementation of the program was based on a theoretical analysis and empirical evidence of the elements of the program that contributed most to successful outcomes. The components of the program relied upon empirical evidence from survey feedback that was provided by the mentors and mentees, using Tinto's (1975) social integration theory and Pearson's (1990) social support theory.

Tremblay and Rodger (2003) conducted a quantitative study at the University of Western Ontario and examined the effect of participation of first-year college students in a full-year peer mentoring program. The study also examined individual differences in motivation in relation to outcome measures of retention and achievement. The researchers reported a sample of 983 incoming first-year students, taken from a total population of 4,400 incoming first-year students, who applied to be mentored by an upper-class student. Of the 983 students 537 students were randomly selected to participate in the program, and the remaining students formed a randomly assigned control group. An additional control group was formed that consisted of 506 randomly selected students from the 4,400 incoming first-year students who did not apply to participate in the program (Tremblay & Rodger, 2003). The findings from this study did not fully support the hypothesis suggesting that peer mentoring would have a positive effect on achievement, however, the findings did suggest the extent to which students participated in the mentoring program was a determining factor of achievement outcomes. In fact, the research findings concluded that students who exhibited high

levels of participation in the mentoring program had a score significantly higher than the students who did not participate in mentoring. Tremblay and Rodger (2003) also found that the level of academic motivation had no bearing on participation in the mentoring program. When comparing grades of students who experienced high test anxiety and low test anxiety in the peer mentoring program, no significant difference was found; however, when comparing students who experienced high test anxiety and low test anxiety in the control groups, the findings concluded that those with high test anxiety did significantly worse than those with low test anxiety.

The findings from the Tremblay and Rodger (2003) suggest a relationship between peer mentoring, test anxiety, and academic achievement. Specifically, the findings suggest that first-year students personally engaging with a peer mentor may reduce academic anxiety, thus positively influencing their academic achievement. The Tremblay and Rodger study also advances the research knowledge on peer mentoring and the effect peer mentoring has on first-year student academic achievement. Specifically, the findings from the study (Tremblay & Rodger, 2003) inform the existing research by concluding that the frequency of mentee and peer mentor interaction has a positive effect on academic achievement, and the positive effect is not contingent on motivation as a determining factor.

The findings from the study Tremblay and Rodger (2003) suggest that student participation in a mentoring program is not reliant on the student's motivation. Considering that the students in the study who participated more frequently in the mentoring program achieved significantly higher grades, Tremblay and Rodgers (2003) suggested that additional research is needed to find out what has an impact on

participation. The findings also provide practical implications related to efficient use of resources. The researchers noted that the study has the potential to assist in identifying and targeting students who may benefit most from participating in a mentoring program. The researchers suggest that this will guide decision making on choices of program funding, student groups to receive assistance, and what outcomes may be influenced when resources are scarce.

Peer mentoring research findings relate to this current study by providing theoretical analysis and empirical evidence of the most impactful components contributing to successful outcomes. Researchers can draw on these findings to search for other evaluative mentoring studies and explore potential mentoring programs to support the need for this current study. The findings of this current study may assist in determining if the same impactful components identified in Hall and Jaugietis' (2011) study emerged from a subsequent search.

Chapter Summary

Research studies, as early as 1991, have determined that no singular definition exists to explain mentoring as a process or a practice. The lack of a common definition of mentoring has resulted in challenges to the methodological rigor and the theoretical approaches associated the research in mentoring. Mentoring literature, when considered collectively, suggests mentoring can be more accurately defined by identifying the commonalities associated with various typologies and taxonomies of mentoring (Dawson, 2014). Additionally, mentoring studies have provided insight into how mentoring programs are structured, and the methods employed in developing programs that have been successful in meeting the intended outcomes. The extant literature on Black male

retention and success programs provides higher education practitioners with a more in-depth understanding of major program interventions and results. The literature on Black male retention and success programs also identifies a possible framework to develop mentoring models that have yielded success in affecting how Black males realize academic success, build healthy peer relationships, and successfully complete college. A major finding in the review of peer mentoring research uncovered important inquiry and evidence of mentoring components that have been highly impactful in the achievement of successful outcomes.

Chapter 3 describes the researcher's methodology that was utilized for this study, including the research design, sample and sample procedures, instrumentation, and data collection strategies.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand program directors' perceptions of how the BMI mentoring programs were designed and structured at the CUNY community colleges that aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates. This qualitative descriptive approach sought to gain insight into the topic through the lens of the practitioner, using open-ended inquiry and by analyzing program-related documents.

The methodology used in this study is described by detailing the research design, the research context, the research participants, the instruments used to collect the data, the procedures used for data collection, and the procedures used to analyze the data. To achieve the purpose of this study the following research questions were addressed:

1. What factors are considered in designing structured BMI mentorship programs at CUNY community colleges?
2. How does each factor influence the design of structured BMI mentorship programs at CUNY community colleges?
3. What specific design elements exist within each structured BMI mentorship program at CUNY community colleges?

Kim, Sefcik, and Bradway (2017) summarized qualitative descriptive research as being germane to research questions seeking to uncover the who, what, and where of events or experiences and to gain a deeper understanding from the informants regarding a poorly understood phenomenon. Kim et al. (2017) further explained that a qualitative description is a suitable goal when a direct description of a phenomenon is desired, or

when information is required to develop and refine questionnaires or interventions.

Qualitative description is a feasible approach when (a) researchers aim to describe or explore participants' experiences and the factors related to certain phenomena, events, or interventions; (b) when techniques originating in other qualitative traditions may be used, and (c) when a lack of strict boundaries in methods, when designing a study, enables the researchers to collect rich data and produce a comprehensive summary to answer research questions using various data collection and analysis approaches (Kim et al, 2017).

A qualitative methodological approach was used because the purpose of this study was to explore and understand program directors' perceptions about the factors that influenced the design and the distinct design elements of CUNY community college BMI structured mentoring programs. This is best achieved using qualitative research methods. A descriptive study approach was appropriate for this study because it allowed for each program director, who was responsible for a mentoring program, to describe in the director's own words, how the design of the program was perceived as being influenced by certain factors and elements. A descriptive study was also appropriate because it allowed the researcher to gain insight into designing mentoring programs based on direct descriptions from the program directors, because the process of mentoring has been suggested by researchers to be a poorly understood phenomenon. A descriptive study also allowed the researcher to interpret the findings and provide a detailed description, comparative analysis, and synthesis of program data.

Qualitative research was described by Creswell (2013) as a process transitioning from philosophical assumptions to an interpretive lens and resulting in procedures involved in studying social or human issues (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A framework or

approach to inquiry is then developed for the procedures. Qualitative research methods are informed by purposeful sampling, gathering of open-ended data, analysis of written or visual artifacts, figures and tables that are used to represent information, and personal understanding and explanation of the findings (Creswell, 2014).

Research Context

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand program directors' perceptions of how the BMI mentoring programs were designed and structured at the CUNY community colleges that aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates. The BMI is a CUNY-wide initiative with a vision of creating model projects throughout the University, which is intended to give additional academic and social support to students from populations that are severely underrepresented in higher education, particularly, African, African American/Black, Caribbean, and Latino/Hispanic males. At the time of this research, each program director who was interviewed was responsible for a campus project, including a mentoring program, which was identified between 2016 and 2018 by the CUNY BMI for its best practices in structured mentoring. According to the *CUNY BMI Best Practices* (Best, 2018) publication, the process of identifying program best practices included bi-yearly site visits with a goal of observing the BMI programs in action to understand each project's strengths and areas in need of improvement. Following each site visit, the CUNY BMI central staff provided a site assessment that reviewed key areas of the program model. Each assessment was designed with the goal of providing technical support where needed. The program best practices were identified by CUNY BMI central staff based on assessment data pertaining to the six program areas. Each program submitted to CUNY BMI a one- to two-page description of the

program's area of expertise. The best practices document (Best, 2018) was used to expose some of the CUNY BMI best practices, internally, throughout CUNY and with higher education institutions nationwide. The document could also be helpful in inspiring other universities to start their own BMI program and to assist in attracting more underrepresented students, particularly men of color, to attend and complete college.

This study took place at three CUNY community colleges in New York City. Each program director's name was substituted with a pseudonym, and the name of each community college was changed to provide confidentiality as to individual respondents' identities.

New York City is a large, urban, densely populated, metropolitan city located at the southern tip of New York State, comprising the five boroughs of Manhattan, the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island. Each of the community college BMI mentorship programs identified for this study resides in a different borough of New York City.

Southern Community College (SCC) was established more than 55 years ago. At the time of this research, the college offered 38 associate degrees and four certificate programs. The racial and ethnic diversity of the enrolled students was evident with over half of the college's students born outside the United States, representing over 140 different countries and over 70 different native languages. Approximately 60% of enrolled students were the first generation in their families to attend college. The college served approximately 14,000 degree-seeking students, and it consistently ranked among the leading community colleges in the country in associate degrees awarded to minority

students. In 2013, the college ranked in the top 15 for African American graduates, in the top 25 for Asian American graduates, and within the top 15 for all minorities. The BMI program at SCC provides academic and peer support to self-identified men of color to help empower them and to improve their college experience. The BMI program offers services through peer-to-peer mentoring, intensive academic supports, networking with other students, career exploration, cultural and educational focus trips and activities, a lending library, an open house for all students each semester, and a men's support group. The program at SCC was identified in 2016 by the CUNY BMI for its best practices in structured mentoring, academic enhancement/programming, and advisory committee.

Northern Community College (NoCC) was founded 56 years ago and opened its doors a year after it was founded, as a small, primarily business-oriented community college, offering programs aimed at the business community. The main campus of the college is situated on 4.28 acres of land. At the time of this research, the college served over 27,000 students and offered more than 45 associate degree programs. Students attending the college came from the New York City area and over 155 countries, speaking a variety of languages. NoCC was ranked in the top three, nationally, in African American student enrollment and in the top five nationally in awarding associate degrees to minority students. The college enrolled nearly 8,000 Black, Non-Hispanic students; females accounted for more than 4,500 students, and males accounted for the approximately 3,300 Black, Non-Hispanic students enrolled. The college's BMI program was established in 2005 and is classified as a special program offering academic support to students and providing opportunities for students to enhance their college experience. The BMI program is open to all students, faculty, and staff without regard to race,

gender, national origin, or other characteristics. The BMI program is situated in the Office of the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs, and oversight responsibility rests with the Assistant Dean for Academic Support Services. In 2016, the BMI program was identified by the CUNY BMI for its best practices in institutional commitment, structured mentoring, and academic enhancement/programming.

Eastern Community College (ECC) opened 60 years ago, originally as a campus of the State University of New York (SUNY); 56 years ago, the college transferred to CUNY. The college is situated on a 37-acre campus in a community of nearly 100,000 residents. ECC distinguishes itself from other colleges and universities as having nearly equal populations of African Americans, Asians, Caucasians, and Latino students. At the time of this study, students attending ECC represented over 127 countries and spoke 78 different languages. The college offers transfer and degree programs through 17 academic departments. The college enrolled more than 15,000 students. Degree and certificate students account for more than 13,000 of the total enrollment. ECC's BMI program has been funded by the CUNY BMI Project since 2005. The programs and activities sponsored by the program are available to all academically eligible students, faculty, and staff, without regard to race, gender, national origin, and other characteristics. Focusing on increasing enrollment and support services for African American males and other underrepresented groups, the goal of the program is to provide students with the tools needed to succeed in the field they have chosen to pursue. The program offers services including mentoring, employment support, internships, a student club, and workshops. The BMI program was identified in 2016, by the CUNY BMI, for its best practices in structured mentoring.

Research Participants

The qualitative methodological approach of this study used a descriptive design to explore, through the lens of each program director, how three CUNY community college BMI programs, with a structured mentoring component, are designed. Creswell and Poth (2018) highlighted the importance of determining a strategy for the purposeful sampling of individuals or sites being studied, arguing that a purposeful sample will deliberately sample a group that can best inform the researcher about the problem being investigated. A purposeful sample was drawn from a population of program directors who were overseeing mentoring programs at community colleges that were identified between 2016 and 2018 by the CUNY BMI for exhibiting best practices in structured mentoring. The program directors have full administrative oversight of the BMI program and usually report to a dean in the division of student affairs or the division of academic affairs. A census sample, representing the whole population, included four full-time staff members who were serving as the program directors of four BMI programs at a CUNY community college that was identified as exhibiting best practices in structured mentoring. Exploring and understanding the factors and elements involved in designing mentoring programs, through the lens of the program director who could best inform the researcher on the perceived factors that influenced the design of each program, the specific design elements of each program, and how the design of each program contributed to increasing retention and graduation rates among Black males.

It is important to note, that interviewing the program directors and gaining each person's perception of the factors and elements involved in designing each mentoring program assumes some degree of program director bias or positionality. The bias or

positionality may lead to program directors feeling a need to present themselves or the program favorably to the researcher (Collins, Shattell, & Thomas, 2005). This type of respondent bias is commonly referred to as social desirability bias, and it exists when the interviewee's responses reflect a pattern of changing responses to align with one's self-concept, for example, the tendency to give socially desirable responses (Wetzel, Böhnke, & Brown, 2016). Strategies to reduce response bias by the program directors are addressed in the following sections.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

Qualitative research methods allow for the purposeful selection of participants, the collection of open-ended data, and data analysis providing insight into patterns and themes in the data. Information from three of the four CUNY community college BMI mentoring programs was collected using program-related documents, and open-ended interview questions (Appendix A). Documents used for collecting information included the Project Funding Applications for 2016, 2017, and 2018 from the participating directors; the CUNY BMI Task Force Report (CUNY, 2005), and the 2016 CUNY BMI Overview (Wright et al. 2016). Data content included in each document was reviewed and analyzed identifying keywords, phrases, ideas, and patterns that helped inform factors and/or elements related to designing the mentoring program and that led to emerging themes connecting program design and increased retention and graduation rates. Data were collected from the interview participant at each college by conducting one-on-one, in-person, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. Field notes taken during interviews were also used as documented information. The purpose for using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions was to develop an in-

depth understanding of the factors influencing the design and the specific design elements of each BMI mentoring program, from the lens of the interview participant, and in relation to the research questions. To establish validity, before participants were interviewed, interview questions were peer-reviewed by a CUNY BMI program director at a community college not included in the study. Resulting from the peer review, one interview question was revised to eliminate the assumption that the specific elements identified by CUNY BMI existed as part of the program design.

Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

A combination of program-related public documents and documents requiring permission to access were used to collect information. The 2016 CUNY BMI Overview Report (Wright et al., 2016) and the 2005 CUNY BMI Task Force Report (CUNY, 2005) were retrieved from the CUNY BMI website. The 2016, 2017, and 2018 BMI Project Funding Applications from the participating directors for each program were requested in writing from the University Director of the CUNY BMI and from each program director at the conclusion of the interviews. An email message (Appendix B) with an attached informed written consent form (Appendix C) was sent, inviting each BMI program director to voluntarily participate in the study. The contact email for each program director was obtained from the Campus Projects section of the CUNY BMI website. The email invitation included details outlining the purpose and potential significance of the study, the value of the program director's contribution to the study, the interview process and how findings would be used and shared, the potential time commitment for the program director, and how the data would be managed to ensure confidentiality. After participation in the study was agreed to by the program director, and the informed written

consent form was returned to the researcher, a phone call was made by the researcher to thank the program director for agreeing to participating in the study and outlining the next steps in the study. The program directors were asked to arrange the use of a private space, one campus, of their choice, where the one-on-one, in-person interview could take place. Interviews were scheduled for 60-90 minutes, and they were recorded using a digital recording device. An interview protocol form (Appendix D) guided the researcher in addressing key points during each interview, and helped convey pertinent information to the program directors, such as the purpose of the interview, how information would be kept and disseminated, and any confidentiality concerns they might have. To reduce the likelihood of social desirability responder bias from the program directors during the interview phase, leading questions and questions implying a right answer were minimized. The types of questions asked were diversified, using emotionally charged terms during the interview process was avoided, and the interview protocol form was used to ensure effective administration of the interview.

To gain a better understanding of how BMI structured mentoring programs are designed and the specific design elements of each program, this study used a qualitative descriptive design. Analyzing qualitative interview data and program-related documents helped the researcher to understand the factors related to designing mentoring programs and how each factor influenced the design of the specific mentoring programs. Data analysis also helped to identify specific design elements within each program, if specific common design elements were present among the programs, and the possible emergence of common themes related to designing mentoring programs addressing low retention and graduation rates among Black males.

Coding process. The data analysis process involved coding. Magilvy and Thomas (2009) explained the three steps in the coding process that were followed in this study. The first step in the coding process was the identification of repeated words or phrases of the participants found throughout individual texts. The second step in the coding process involved identifying similar code words and phrases that were grouped and regrouped together into categories. The third and final step in the coding process involved reviewing and organizing the categories into common topics that resulted in themes.

Using the description of mentoring by Fornari et al. (2014), identified in the Definition of Terms in Chapter 1, and using the specific student needs that should be addressed in establishing a mentoring program for Black males, as outlined in the 2005 CUNY BMI Task Force Report (CUNY, 2005), seven a priori codes were identified: (a) student growth, (b) student development, (c) student satisfaction, (d) personal support, (e) academic support, (f) cultural support, and (g) social support. The a priori codes were used during the open coding cycle to analyze interview and content data and to understand if these factors contributed to the design of the mentoring programs at the CUNY community colleges.

The full coding cycle included a combination of open, axial, and selective coding techniques. A priori coding, descriptive coding, in vivo coding, process coding, concept coding, and values coding techniques helped facilitate the data analysis process. The various open coding cycle techniques gave the researcher an opportunity to: (a) simplify large segments of datum, (b) honor the authentic voice of each participant, (c) identify when an action was described, (d) interpret words and statements suggesting broader

ideas, (e) recognize ideas and concepts having importance and meaning for the participants. An independent coder analyzed one of the interview transcripts, applying the same coding techniques as the researcher. An acceptable level of agreement was found between the codes established by the researcher and the independent coder.

During the second cycle, axial coding techniques including pattern coding and focused coding, guided the data analysis process. The two axial coding techniques helped identify patterns of similar codes among participant's transcripts and determine codes most frequently found in the data. The recorded pattern and focused codes identified were reclassified into categories. The third and final cycle included selective coding techniques, guiding an analysis of relationships among and between the categories and uncovering the central theme(s) associated with the related research question and overall study.

Emergent and a priori coding techniques were applied to analyzing data from the BMI program-related documents. Words and phrases in the program-related documents were labeled using codes established from research literature identifying elements involved in designing mentoring programs. The researcher identified a priori codes using Dawson's (2014) framework for defining and specifying mentoring models. The framework is outlined in Table 1.1.

Interviews were recorded using a digital recording device. During, and after each interview concluded, the responses were member checked to improve the validity and trustworthiness of the study. Interview data were transcribed using a professional transcription service to produce verbatim transcripts for review of accuracy. The verbatim transcripts included significant inaccuracies. The researcher reviewed and

edited each verbatim transcript while comparing the audio recording of each participant's interview to strengthen the degree of data accuracy.

Transcription process. Each program director also reviewed the interview transcript for further accuracy and trustworthiness. Reviewing and coding of the interview transcript data, the researcher's notes, and the program-related documents assisted in identifying keywords, terms, patterns, categories, and themes. The interview and document transcription data were manually coded in three phases. The first coding phase included an open coding method that identified keywords and phrases to find patterns in the data and to provide initial impressions and meanings in the data. The second coding phase included an axial coding method where the data were grouped into categories based on themes that emerged from the data. Finally, a method of selective coding was used to further analyze the emergent themes and focus on the main ideas that resulted from the coding process. The main ideas resulting from the data coding process provided a descriptive interpretation of the findings. One interview transcript was evaluated by an independent coder to determine an acceptable degree of consistency and level of intercoder reliability, and to increase the validity of the findings. Additionally, coding protocols were established and applied consistently throughout the content analysis process to establish intra-coder reliability. A thematic analysis process, using a selective coding process, was used to analyze the emergent themes associated with each mentoring program, to identify if new emergent themes or insights were revealed, and to give deeper meaning to the data.

Triangulation process. Triangulating the data involved the participants' review of their interview responses and the primary researcher cross-analyzing the data by

comparing the commonalities and differences in codes, categories, or themes, between the various sets of data (Saldaña, 2016). Specifically, the triangulation process included (a) each program director reviewing his or her transcribed interview data for accuracy, (b) the primary researcher cross-analyzing the interview transcript data and program-related document data (data source triangulation), (c) the independent coders evaluating the interview transcript data (analyst triangulation), and (d) the primary researcher cross-analyzing the program-related document data with Dawson's (2014) framework for designing and specifying mentoring models. Data collected from program-related documents included information from the 2016, 2017, and 2018 BMI Project Funding Applications from the participating directors for each mentoring program. The documents included data from the 2016 CUNY BMI Overview Report (Wright et al., 2016) and the 2005 CUNY BMI Task Force Report, and they presented information detailing design elements that existed in each of the mentoring programs. Program-related data also included research findings, which lead to recommendations for the development of a series of action-oriented projects including assisting Black males overcome the attendant weak enrollment, retention, and graduation from institutions of higher education.

The conceptual framework for specifying the structured mentoring programs identified 16 elements associated with designing mentoring programs. Triangulating the data assisted in determining if the framework's 16 elements existed among the different programs, to determine if each element was explicitly addressed in the design of each program, and to possibly specify the diversity of the mentoring between each program, based on the choices determined for specific elements that may have assisted in concise

and accurate specification of the models. For example, after the data collected from each mentoring program were analyzed and coded, and emergent themes were identified, a comparative thematic analysis was done to determine whether emergent themes were identified among the four mentoring programs. Triangulation allowed for testing for consistency of the findings and determining the validity of the data, to provide depth to the findings, and to possibly provide insight into the commonalities and differences among the BMI mentoring programs.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand program directors' perceptions of how the BMI mentoring programs were designed and structured at the CUNY community colleges that aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates. This chapter provided a written detailed summary of the research process, including the general perspective, study design, research context, research participants, instruments for data collection, and procedures for data collection and data analysis to conduct the study. Applying a qualitative descriptive approach may provide clarity about specific aspects or elements of mentoring designs, empirical evidence, and deeper insight into successful strategies used to address low retention and graduation rates among Black males in higher education. Researching programs that are identified for exhibiting best practices in structured mentoring, as described by the program director responsible for each program, allowed for a comparative understanding of the distinct program designs and differences in approaches to designing each program. Combining insights from the different programs being explored through the lens of the program director allowed for

the development of a rich detailed understanding of how mentoring programs are designed and the complexities associated with designing such programs.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore and understand program directors' perceptions of how the BMI mentoring programs were designed and structured at the CUNY community colleges that aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates. This chapter presents the findings based on the data analysis of the program director interview responses and the data analysis of the BMI program-related documents. Direct quotes from participant responses are included in this chapter to highlight the participants' thoughts, perceptions, reflections, experiences, and voices using their authentic words and expressions. The findings from this study point to the complexity of the considerations involved in designing BMI mentoring programs, how the choices that were determined for specific elements were influenced by the factors considered when designing a mentoring program, and the common and specific design elements that existed within and between the BMI mentoring programs. The key results from the research findings provide a framework for program directors to consider when designing Black male mentoring programs and for including specific design elements to address the variables associated with low retention and graduation rates of Black males.

Research Questions

Directors who were overseeing the BMI structured mentoring programs at CUNY community colleges were interviewed and asked questions that were directly related to the three research questions. The research questions address two main challenges that were identified in the literature when examining mentoring as a phenomenon: (a) the

absence of a common and agreed-upon definition of mentoring (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Gershenfeld, 2014, Jacobi, 1991), and (b) the absence of research on designing structured mentoring programs that address the low retention and graduation rates among Black males attending community colleges (Redmond, 1990). The following research questions were developed:

1. What factors are considered in designing BMI structured mentorship programs at CUNY community colleges?
2. How does each factor influence the design of BMI structured mentorship programs at CUNY community colleges?
3. What specific design elements exist within each BMI structured mentorship program at CUNY community colleges?

Interview Questions

A set of semi-structured, open-ended interview questions were developed to address each of the research questions. A program director who was overseeing a BMI structured mentoring program at a CUNY community college reviewed the interview questions to ensure question validity. The program director who peer-reviewed the interview questions did not participate in this study. Feedback from the peer review resulted in one question being modified. A follow-up question was added to an interview question, asking the participants whether the specific elements they requested to be outlined in the annual CUNY BMI Project Funding Application from the participating directors were, in fact, included in the program design. The additional follow-up question was included to eliminate the assumption that the specific elements identified by the CUNY BMI programs existed as part of the program design. Table 4.1 displays the

interview questions in alignment with the research questions. All participants were asked all interview questions in the order that they are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Interview Questions Aligned to Research Questions

Interview Questions	Research Questions
A. How would you describe your involvement in the design of the mentoring program?	1
B. Were there other people who worked with you in designing the mentoring program?	1
C. If the program was established prior to you working with the program, can you tell me who were the people involved and what were their roles at the college?	1
D. In your own words, and being as detailed as possible, how would you describe the mentoring program?	1, 2, 3
E. In your opinion, what specific factors were considered in designing the mentoring program? For example, student demographic population, available resources, or research on other campus programs.	1
F. How would you describe the process of identifying those specific factors that were considered in designing the mentoring program?	1
G. What factors do you think have the most influence on the effectiveness of the mentoring program? Why?	2
H. What factors do you think have the least influence on the effectiveness of the mentoring program? Why?	2
I. The BMI Funding Application asks each program director to outline the activities, frequency, relationship guidelines, and assessment, as to the elements of the program. Does your program include these design elements? If not, why not?	3
J. What other elements can you identify as part of your program besides those required by the CUNY BMI program?	3
K. CUNY BMI describes the mentoring program as a culturally competent peer-to-peer mentoring program. How do you view cultural competency factoring into the design of the mentoring component of the program?	3
L. Is there any additional information you would like to me to know about the design of the program in general?	1, 2, 3

Interview questions A through C were posed to explore the participants' responsibility and connection to the programs and the programs' designs, the length of time the programs had existed at the college, and insight into other key individuals involved in designing the programs. Interview questions A through C did not explicitly

address the factors or elements involved in the design of the programs. However, the open-ended, semi-structured nature of the questions allowed for the participants to provide responses containing important information that was relevant to the factors and elements involved in designing the structured mentoring programs. The structure offered opportunities to ask additional relevant follow-up questions and gain deeper insight into each participant's initial response. Interview question D was asked to obtain an overview of the programs from each participants' perception, providing responses potentially relevant to either of the three research questions. Interview questions E through H asked the participants to specifically address the factors that were considered and the influence of those factors on the design of the programs. Interview questions I through K asked the participants to address the elements that existed in the design of the programs, including cultural competence. Interview question L gave each participant an opportunity to reflect on the questions and responses and to add any final thoughts about the programs.

Research Participants

Four directors who were overseeing CUNY community college BMI structured mentoring programs were identified as potential interview participants for this study. The directors were identified in connection with the BMI mentoring programs that were highlighted in the 2016 CUNY BMI Overview Report (Wright et al., 2016) and the *CUNY BMI Best Practices* (Best, 2018) publication. The four directors represented a census sample of the directors overseeing programs recognized by the CUNY BMI for exhibiting best practices in structured mentoring. One of the four program directors was not able to participate in this study. Each program director's name was substituted with a pseudonym, and the name of each community college was changed to provide

confidentiality as to individual respondents' identities. The three participants and the affiliated community colleges were named Mr. Douglas (SCC), Mr. Smith (NoCC), and Ms. Rodriguez (ECC). Two participants self-identified as Black, and one participant self-identified as Latina. At the time of the interviews, the participants had worked with the BMI programs for an average of nearly 8 years. Two of the participants worked in higher education prior to working with the BMI program. Each participant was a full-time employee in their directing of the BMI programs. However, one participant's time was divided between overseeing the BMI program and another campus-wide program.

Program-Related Documents

Content analysis was performed on the BMI mentoring program-related documents to triangulate the data and establish validity of the findings that resulted from the interview data analysis. The 2016 CUNY BMI Overview Report (Wright et al., 2016) and the 2016, 2017, and 2018 BMI Project Funding Applications from the participating directors for each program were analyzed to identify the objectives of the mentoring program and to identify specific design elements outlined as part of each program. The 2005 CUNY BMI Task Force Report was analyzed to determine if the overall design of each mentoring program was aligned with the findings and recommendations of the report to support increased Black male college retention and graduation.

Data Analysis and Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand how program directors perceived the factors involved in designing BMI mentoring programs, the influence the factors had on the design of the program, and the specific design elements existing within

each program. Analysis of responses to open-ended, semi-structured interview questions, and data from program-related documents assisted in gaining a deeper understanding of how directors of BMI mentoring programs at CUNY community colleges perceive the factors and elements involved in designing the program. The researcher employed an immersion process (Dr. W. J. Wallis, personal communication, April 7, 2018) during the open coding cycle of the interview transcript data. The immersion process included reading each participant's interview transcript and listening to each participant's interview audio recording. The data immersion process helped the researcher identify, familiarize, and understand key words, phrases, and statements used by the participants.

Interview transcript data were analyzed to find emerging concepts and themes based on participants' thoughts, reflections, ideas, and words. Identifying emerging concepts and themes provided deeper insight into how and why factors and elements are important in designing mentoring programs for Black males. Finding meaning in the data also provided insight into what the factors and the design elements indicate in the context of supporting increased retention and graduation rates for Black males attending community colleges. Program-related documents were analyzed to triangulate the data and establish validity of the findings resulting from the transcript data analysis. The program-related data contained information detailing design elements existing in each of the mentoring programs.

The data resulting from coded interview transcripts and coded program-related documents were cross-analyzed to establish validity of the findings. Cross-analyzing data was achieved by comparing the commonalities and differences in codes, categories, and themes between the various sets of data (Saldaña, 2016). The findings from the

analysis of the program-related data and participant interview data related to specific program design elements, and they were cross-analyzed to validate consistency between the findings and the conceptual framework and to determine if common design elements existed among the mentoring programs.

The following section details the results of the participant data that was derived from the responses to the interview questions connected to the research questions. Each research question is presented in this section, along with a table that illustrates the emergent categories and themes that resulted from the participant data. Additional tables are included in this section to show the frequency of the participants' responses.

Research Question 1. *What factors are considered in designing BMI structured mentorship programs at CUNY community colleges?* The participants were asked how decisions were made in designing the mentoring program at their college. Their responses provided insight into what the program directors considered important in designing the BMI mentoring programs. Their responses also provided insight into the choices determined for specific elements used in designing the BMI mentoring programs. Table 4.2 displays the codes, categories, and themes that emerged from the participant responses to the interview questions associated with Research Question 1.

Nine categories and three themes emerged from the coded data associated with the responses to questions about the factors considered in designing the BMI structured mentorship programs. The categories and themes are discussed to provide insight into how the program directors approached designing the BMI mentoring programs for Black males in community colleges.

Table 4.2

Factors Considered – Codes, Categories, and Themes

Code	Category	Theme
Limitations, physical and financial limitations, where are the resources, program is outgrowing resources.	Access to Resources	Resource Availability
Space; dedicated, much larger space, a place for private conversations with students, an actual place, no specific area, host, luxury benefit	Physical Space	
Help recruit students, cross-recruit, get out there, recruit minority students, how you recruit and get students, we make contact a lot of referrals, mostly student referrals, developing relationships, word of mouth	Student Recruitment	Program Sustainability
Program has grown, scaling, as we grow, our program has grown, in order to scale, required to grow every year, how to reach them all expand efforts to reach Black and Latino men, creative about how we reach more students	Program Growth	
Trust and faith in students, super mentors, students with well-defined plans, a smiling face, self-driven and motivated, students are great, everyone is a mentee, character, personal growth, students who can stand flat-footed, high-achieving mentors, shake hands with anybody, everyone is a mentor, you should be teaching somebody, women would make phenomenal mentors	Student Character	Human Capital
Acknowledge and celebrate differences, who's in the room, diverse, not a monolithic group, different cultural beliefs, different personal beliefs, acknowledge, validate, celebrate, move together, different worldviews, diverse backgrounds, respect our diversities, different cultural components	Cultural Awareness	
Leadership impact, vision, wealth of knowledge, leadership influences culture, goal is to plant seeds, create a culture where people thrive, students believe in the staff	Professional Staff Leadership	

Categories. The nine emergent categories are based on the responses to the interview questions exploring the individual factors that were considered in designing a BMI mentoring program. Table 4.3 displays the full set of categories derived from the

interview data and the frequency of the factors identified based on the responses to the interview question.

Table 4.3

Factors Considered – Categories/Frequency of Responses

Categories	Participants			Total
	Mr. Douglas	Mr. Smith	Ms. Rodriguez	
Access to Resources	●	●	●	3
Physical Space	●	●	●	3
Personnel Support	●	●	●	3
Financial Deficiency	●	●	●	3
Student Recruitment		●	●	2
Program Growth	●	●		2
Student Character	●	●		2
Cultural Awareness	●			1
Professional Staff Leadership	●		●	2

Access to resources. Limited access to resources was addressed in the context of resource availability. For example, Mr. Douglas reflected on his view of resources and how a scarcity of resources impacts the ability of the mentoring program to meet students’ personal, academic, cultural, and social needs.

As we grow, our resources have to grow, and sometimes that doesn't happen.

That doesn't happen for a long time. They're great programs; we know that they work. But, historically, programs like this are underfunded. And today we're underfunded based on the need that we serve.

Mr. Smith shared similar thoughts, “I think the way we designed it had perhaps a lot to do with some of the physical and financial limitations that we have.”

Ms. Rodriguez, in the context of resource availability, also referenced the idea of limited access:

Limitations that I see—space is definitely a big one. I think it would be great to have a much larger space, a space that would allow for us to have private conversations with the students. I’d like to have a full-time staff person. Because I think that will provide a different consistency and that’s something that I’ve brought to the VP.

Physical space. The participants highlighted the existence of a dedicated place where students feel a sense of belonging, a sense of comfort, and where students were able to engage with others and feel empowered. The advantages and disadvantages of space were contrasted in terms of how the size of the space impacts students’ ability to effectively use the space. The participants also discussed how space can be used to support mentoring meetings, to support students who need a place to study, and to support students who may attend college during evening and weekend hours. The value associated with physical space that was dedicated to the BMI programs and how that space impacts the design of the programs was summed up by Mr. Douglas:

I was charged by a former dean, who looked me in the eye and said, “you have what others don’t have. You have a space. Fill it up if you want to keep it.” This is a help in our program; this can help us in our program because now we can host mentoring meetings here. I don’t have to work with event management every semester to find space. This is a luxury. On any campus, dedicated space is a

luxury, so that was a consideration. So, I had to consider how do we use it, and then develop programming around the fact that, well, we have space.

Personnel support. The need for additional full-time professional staff was shared by Mr. Smith and Ms. Rodriguez. Mr. Smith and Ms. Rodriguez expressed frustration with having additional responsibilities that were not directly related to the BMI program and how those additional responsibilities limited their ability to dedicate adequate time to overseeing the mentoring program. Mr. Smith and Ms. Rodriguez both shared a desire and a need for additional personnel support when discussing the BMI programs. Mr. Smith expressed his frustration, stating,

I oversee three to four hundred students, so just that number, alone, is ridiculous.

I need more help—more staff. I use a lot of students and a lot of part-time people, but I need another me, another full-time guy.

Ms. Rodriguez also emphasized the need for personnel support:

I'd like to have a full-time staff person. Because I think that will provide a different consistency, and that's something that I've brought to the VP. If there's any way we would be able to get someone, to be more hands-on, I think it would be great.

Financial deficiency. Mr. Douglas and Mr. Smith discussed funding as a direct consideration relating to expanding the number of students participating in the programs. The participants viewed a lack of funding as impeding their efforts to increase program participation. The program directors expressed challenges in hiring additional mentors and being able to recruit and match more mentees without sufficient financial resources. For example, Mr. Smith shared his perspective, noting,

The other challenge is funding and scaling, and making it bigger, because you only have a certain amount of funds, to hire a certain amount of mentors, to reach a certain amount of mentees, and you want to build and expand beyond that, but there's limitations as to what you can do with that.

Mr. Douglas' shared a similar perspective, stating, "our program has grown, but our money has not. That's very real. And that's a consideration." Ms. Rodriguez briefly commented about funding while expressing being unsure whether the CUNY BMI, ECC, or both would provide funding to support additional staff in the future.

Student recruitment. The program directors provided examples of how student recruitment was dependent, to some extent, on building collaborative relationships with other college departments, on knowing which student leaders to recruit as mentors, or on building programs with reputations that attracted students to participate. Mr. Smith shared that the college should increase efforts to recruit students into the BMI program. For example, Mr. Smith believed that students should be automatically connected to the program or receive communication directly from the BMI director or admissions office about the programs. He felt that students should have the choice to opt out if they did not find value in the program, instead of the program staff having the sole responsibility of recruiting students into the program. Ms. Rodriguez considered cross-recruiting student leaders from other programs on campus as an effective strategy in identifying mentors.

Program growth. Mr. Douglas and Mr. Smith shared similar perspectives on how program growth, through student participation, affects the design of the BMI programs. Mr. Douglas commented, "we're stretched really thin, although we're required to grow every year by a certain number, or we're required to grow 10% every year. That's a

CUNY central requirement. That's tough when the resources remain the same every year.”

Mr. Smith had a different view of program growth. In his view, the number of students served by the BMI mentoring program at NoCC was insignificant when compared to the total number of students attending NoCC. Mr. Smith saw this as a need to be creative in identifying different ways to reach more students. In essence, by using a different approach to involve more students in the BMI mentoring program would have to be considered when deciding how to design student recruitment efforts.

Student character. The type of students that were selected to be BMI mentors was viewed as a major consideration in the design of the mentoring program. The participants shared the attributes they looked for in potential mentors, the qualities that the existing mentors possessed, and characteristics they hoped students would exhibit as a result of participating in the BMI mentoring programs. Mr. Douglas often referred to the type of student he wanted to “build” or the type of student he wanted the program to “produce.” Mr. Smith also alluded to student character when he shared, “what we’re doing is we’re putting a lot of responsibility and onus on the students, and we’re putting a lot of trust and faith in the students, that they’ll be able to help each other, and do their best.”

Cultural awareness. Mr. Douglas was the only participant who indicated that student diversity and acknowledging student difference was a factor in how his BMI program was designed. Cultural awareness was identified as an emergent category because it was heavily emphasized as important to the design of the program, and because it directly related to cultural competence, as a key design element of the BMI

mentoring program. Mr. Douglas emphasized the importance of not just recognizing cultural differences among students, but acknowledging, validating, and celebrating cultural differences, and how that impacts the space the BMI members shared.

Mr. Douglas provided a perspective, commenting, “some people will ignore their differences and say we’re all here together. But you can’t ignore this young man’s upbringing that he’s very proud of. His world view is very different than somebody else’s worldview.”

Professional staff leadership. The professional staff were considered to be responsible for establishing the culture of the programs and for expressing a sense of authentic care for the students in the programs. Professional staff leadership was viewed as genuinely wanting to help students in the program and understanding how the desire to want to help impacts the students’ lives.

The categories connected to Research Question 1 emerged directly from the data associated with the responses to the interview questions, and they assisted in understanding what factors the program directors considered when designing the BMI mentoring programs at the CUNY community colleges. The data were further analyzed to discover emergent themes and to provide a broader understanding of the factors that were considered. The emergent themes connected to Research Question 1 are next discussed.

Themes. The analysis of the data from the interview responses produced three major themes: resource availability, program sustainability, and human capital. The three major themes offer a deeper understanding of the factors the program directors perceived as important considerations when designing the BMI mentoring programs.

Understanding the factors the program directors considered when designing the BMI mentoring programs also can assist in further understanding the choices determined for specific elements existing in the mentoring program.

Resource availability. Resource availability emerged as one of three major themes associated with Research Question 1. Resource availability was the only major theme that emerged from the data and that was associated with the categories based on the interview question responses. The participants highlighted resource availability as an important factor in the context of access to resources, designation of a physical space, adequate full-time staffing, and sufficient funding.

Program sustainability. Program sustainability emerged as another theme that was related to Research Question 1. The idea of increasing the number of mentees and mentors that were participating in the BMI mentoring programs and the process of identifying and choosing mentees and mentors to participate in the programs were important considerations in designing the programs. The references to “recruitment” and “selection” in the analysis and findings of this study are not synonymous and they were not used interchangeably. Recruitment refers to identifying and encouraging students to participate in the BMI mentoring programs. Selection refers to choosing students to participate in the BMI mentoring programs. The decision to select a student was usually based on qualifying criteria, such as GPA, number of credits earned, class status, leadership involvement, or other similar attributes. The ability to attract mentors and mentees and the choices determined for specific elements had an impact on the sustainability of each BMI program.

Human capital. The collective attributes, values, perspectives, and unique experiences students and staff brought to the BMI programs, including characteristics the programs sought to foster in the students, emerged from the data as important factors considered in designing the programs. The mentors, mentees, and professional staff shaped and gave distinction to each program.

The emergent categories revealed from the interview responses connected to Research Question 1 help in understanding the factors and elements involved in designing structured mentoring programs for Black males. Not only is it important to understand the factors considered but also how the factors influence designing the programs. Data associated with Research Question 2 is presented to gain insight into how the factors considered by the program directors influenced the mentoring programs' designs.

Research Question 2. *How does each factor influence the design of BMI structured mentorship programs at CUNY community colleges?* The participants answered questions about how the factors they identified influenced the design of the mentoring program. The responses resulted in several emergent categories and major themes. Three categories and one major theme emerged from the data. Table 4.4 displays the codes, categories, and theme uncovered from interview the response data that was connected to Research Question 2.

Three categories and one major theme emerged from the coded data associated with responses about how factors influence the design of BMI structured mentorship programs. The categories and theme that emerged from the data provide context in

understanding how specific factors influence the choices determined for specific elements and the overall mentoring program model.

Table 4.4

Influence – Codes/Categories/Themes

Code	Category	Theme
How to design a program, consider how, finding creative approaches, figure out a way, acknowledging diversity, shift thinking, creating a culture of success, decide best use, exploring different ways, trial and error,	Decision Making	
Fluidity, change according to specification, enhance, make better, continuous change, adjust, shift	Changeability	Mentoring Programs as a Dynamic Construct
Space influences monitoring, relationship between recruitment and selection or tie strength, leadership’s impact on objectives, access to recourses can dictate cardinality	Interdependence	

Categories. The three emergent categories resulted from responses to interview questions exploring how the factors perceived as important influence the design of the mentoring program. Table 4.5 displays the three categories derived from the interview data and the frequency of responses based on participant feedback.

Table 4.5

Influence – Categories/ Frequency of Responses

Categories	Participants			Total
	Mr. Douglas	Mr. Smith	Ms. Rodriguez	
Decision Making	●	●	●	3
Changeability	●	●	●	3
Interdependence	●	●		2

Decision making. Each participant expressed making decisions that influenced the design of the mentoring programs based on the factors that were considered important. The factors identified influenced how and what type of decisions were made regarding designing the mentoring programs. One participant viewed the students who were entering college having more well-defined plans compared to students entering college in previous years. Students having more well-defined plans may experience greater benefits from an assigned faculty and peer mentor to assist him in getting connected to college. Factors, such as changing student characteristics, requires making decisions about designing mentoring programs. As an example, deciding whether to match students with a faculty mentor and a peer mentor would require deciding whether to change the cardinality, or the number, of each type of role involved in the mentoring relationship.

Changeability. The participants discussed their views on regularly changing the program design according to certain factors that were considered. One of the factors viewed as influencing change in the program design, was professional staff leadership. For example, Mr. Douglas discussed how professional staff leadership can influence changes in the program design:

The initial dean who helped me build the program was insistent that we not have women as mentors, and I didn't agree with it. I'm considering having a conversation with my current dean to see what this looks like. Because, ultimately, we have to remain true to our mission and to our purpose. That's why I think it's okay to have young women as mentees and eventually as mentors, because it's not really about gender, it's about the mission.

Professional staff exercising leadership is an example of how individual factors can bring about changes in a mentoring program design. Other factors, such as cultural awareness and personnel support, can also influence changes in a mentoring program design.

Interdependence. A conceptual coding method was used to interpret data leading to the emergence of interdependence as a category. The findings from the research concluded that the way factors influenced designing the mentoring programs was determined by the choices that were determined for specific elements. However, the data also revealed that specific design elements were dependent upon one another and may have also influenced the mentoring program design. Mr. Douglas offered an example of interdependence when expressing the challenge of dual reporting and how professional staff leadership influenced program objectives and goals. Mr. Douglas noted:

All of us have a CUNY BMI director, but we also have somebody on the campus we report to. That creates a different dynamic because what the college wants is not really what BMI wants. Sometimes there's two different goals. When you drill down, there's some different kind of requests needed, different interests, to say the least.

Analysis of participant data uncovered three categories that underpinned how the factors considered in designing the BMI mentoring programs influenced program design and the choices that were determined for specific elements. The broader theme uncovered from the data is discussed in the next section.

Theme. One major theme emerged from the participants' data analysis that is connected to Research Question 2: mentoring programs as a dynamic construct. The

theme emerged from the data suggesting that the factors considered in designing mentoring programs influence the choices that are determined for specific elements and from the data suggesting that dependence may exist between design elements. Mentoring programs, as a dynamic construct, is better understood as the continuous changing of the mentoring design framework to improve the implementation of the mentoring program model. The continuous changing of the mentoring design framework is based on the dependence between the factors and the specific design elements.

The responses to Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 presented data for analysis that resulted in a deeper understanding of how the program directors considered the factors in designing the BMI mentoring programs and how those factors influenced the design of the programs. Research Question 3 explored that specific elements involved in designing the BMI mentoring programs. The results are presented in the following section using tables to illustrate the data and detailed descriptions of the emergent categories and themes.

Research Question 3. *What specific design elements exist within each BMI structured mentorship program at CUNY community colleges?* Table 4.6 displays the codes, categories, and themes that emerged from content data, emergent data, and research data.

In vivo coding and a priori coding methods were used to group the data into 20 categories and five emergent themes. The coding and analysis of the data related to Research Question 3 uncovered three design elements that were not included as part of Dawson's (2014) framework and were not included as requirements of the CUNY BMI

Table 4.6

Design Elements – Codes, Categories, and Themes

Code	Category	Theme
Self-select, selection process, students who are doing well, students that are early on in their journey	Selection	Procedural Elements
Some training, different training, our training is really good	Training	
Write-up from mentors, who's in the room, process for track mentor/mentee discussion topics	Monitoring	
Used to recruit more heavily, we also kind of cross recruit	Recruitment	
Written assessment, refined and assessed	Assessment	
Create a culture where people thrive, support the success of students, connecting students, encourage students	Objectives	Operational Elements
I am the program director, the person who would do the matching, he works with the staff	Roles	
Our program is unique because we have one-on-one, one-to-one mentoring	Cardinality	
Code of conduct, expectations, maintain a professional relationship	Policy	
Very high touch, forges a deeper relationship, personal touch, and high-touch environment	Tie Strength	Relational Elements
Staff who agree to be mentors, high achieving mentors, we work with student leaders	Relative Seniority	
Expected to meet for an hour once a week, work about 5 hours a week with their mentee, they will start meeting very regularly	Time	
Similar interest or similar degree, matching of the mentors	Matching	
Counselors, we have space, departments, stakeholders, computers, and textbooks	Resources and Tools	Supplemental Elements
We get them to sign up on the app, as soon as they sign up, they get a welcome email from us, easier and faster to recruit students	Roles of Technology	
Awards ceremony, create certificates, really powerful, show our appreciation	Reward	
Provide tutoring, one on one tutoring, but we have added some tutoring	Tutoring	Enrichment Elements
Instituted workshops, hands-on workshops, financial literacy workshop	Developmental Workshops	
Attending events, zip lining, paintball, students versus faculty basketball game	Activities	
Always have to consider who's in the room, we are diverse, respect our diversities, different cultural beliefs, acknowledge, celebrate, different cultural components	Cultural Competence	

programs. The three design elements identified as categories in Table 4.7 represent recruitment, tutoring, and developmental workshops. The participant data describing the nature and composition of the BMI mentoring programs helped to distinguish the heterogeneity of each mentoring model.

Categories. The coded data resulted in the emergence of 20 categories:

- (a) selection, (b) training, (c) monitoring, (d) recruitment, (e) assessment (f) objectives, (g) roles, (h) cardinality, (i) policy, (j) tie strength, (k) relative seniority, (l) time, (m) matching, (n) resources and tools, (o) roles of technology, (p) reward, (q) tutoring,

Table 4.7

Design Elements – Categories/Frequency of Responses

Categories	Participants			Total
	Mr. Douglas	Mr. Smith	Ms. Rodriguez	
Selection	●	●	●	3
Training		●	●	2
Monitoring	●	●		2
Recruitment		●	●	2
Assessment				0
Objectives	●	●	●	3
Roles	●	●	●	3
Cardinality		●		1
Policy	●			1
Tie Strength		●		1
Relative Seniority	●	●	●	3
Time	●	●	●	3
Matching	●	●	●	3
Termination				0
Resources and Tools	●	●	●	3
Roles of Technology		●		1
Reward		●		1
Tutoring		●	●	2
Developmental Workshops	●	●	●	3
Activities	●	●	●	3
Cultural Competence	●			1

Note. The frequency of the participant responses reflects design elements referenced by the participant prior to reviewing Dawson’s (2014) framework.

(r) developmental workshops, (s) activities, and (t) cultural competence. Table 4.7 displays the participants contributing to each category. Table 4.7 denotes the participants' references to specific elements before reviewing Dawson's (2014) framework. However, to emphasize salient points about each of the design elements, the interview participants' comments made before and after reviewing the framework are included in the following section.

Selection. Ms. Rodriguez talked about the criteria used in selecting students, commenting that, "our goal is to connect students who are doing well, [who] have been successful, with students [who] are early on in their journey." Mr. Smith did not describe the criteria used to select students to participate in the BMI program but briefly made the distinction between recruitment and selection, stating, "so we don't really have to recruit, but we do have a selection process." Mr. Douglas explained that participating in the BMI program at SCC was based on the discretion of the student. "What we do is we—when a student comes in and shows interest—everybody who joins our program—is, basically, they self-select themselves into it."

Training. Mentors are required to attend a university-wide training offered by the CUNY BMI program, and each program hosts its own on-campus training. The participants acknowledged the importance of training mentors to understand how to work with mentees. For example, Mr. Smith explained that mentor training teaches mentors how assist mentees and address different situations the mentees may present. Mr. Smith also gave his perspective on mentor training. Mr. Smith viewed mentor training not only as contributing to the relationship with the mentee but also as contributing to the growth and development of that student.

Monitoring. Mr. Douglas viewed monitoring activity dynamics in the BMI space and monitoring student group dynamics as a major responsibility that required a lot of time. Mr. Douglas spent a significant amount of time monitoring activities and student interactions in within the BMI program because many students spend a significant amount of time in the space. Depending on who walks into BMI space, the dynamics of the room can quickly change. Mr. Douglas shared the importance of monitoring the dynamics and working with staff to gain as much information as possible to manage the dynamics more effectively. Conversely, Mr. Smith viewed monitoring the program as being, “somewhat laissez-faire, meaning we’re not over the students’ backs. We are not watching everything they do. We put a lot of trust into the students.”

Recruitment. Staff members within different departments volunteer their time and refer students to the BMI program as part of the mentoring program recruitment efforts. The value of building supportive relationships with staff in different departments was important to the participants. Mr. Smith viewed students as an asset to the recruitment efforts. Students referred other students to the program because the program had/has a positive reputation.

Assessment. Assessment is one of the design elements the CUNY BMI program asks program directors to report on at each community college. However, prior to reviewing the framework, none of the participants mentioned assessment in the context of designing their programs. After reviewing the framework, only Mr. Douglas referenced assessing the program, stating, “BMI has provided a structure that provides direction. What have you done? What do you plan on doing? How are you going to assess it?”

Objectives. Each participant articulated the importance of outlining the objectives of the mentoring program. The objectives provide direction for the program. The CUNY BMI program requires each mentoring program to annually outline the program objectives and report program progress in meeting the objectives, mid-year and at the end of the year.

Roles. Staff members working with each BMI program have specific roles germane to the implementation and execution of the program. For example, each program has a designated person who is responsible for matching mentors with mentees. The assistant director at ECC is responsible for working with staff, scheduling events, and working on program activities. Part-time office assistants at ECC work more directly with the students. Mr. Douglas shared that at least one staff member at SCC was responsible for reviewing the assessment process that was in place for the BMI program.

Cardinality. The NoCC BMI mentoring program has a one-on-one mentoring structure. In other words, each mentee at NoCC is matched to one mentor. It was not clear whether the mentoring programs at SCC and ECC were designed to offer students one-on-one mentoring.

Policy. Policy is another design element the CUNY BMI program asks the program directors to outline as part of the mentoring model. However, the CUNY BMI refers to policy as, *mentoring relationship guidelines*. Each participant interpreted policy as providing guidelines on the nature of the relationships between mentors and mentees. The common phrase the participants used when referring to policy was “maintain a professional (type of) relationship.”

Tie strength. Mr. Smith was the only participant who discussed the intensity of the relationship developed between the mentors and mentees. Mr. Smith stressed the importance of mentors establishing a strong sense of rapport with their mentees. Mentors and mentees were accountable for forging deep relationships that fostered a strong sense of support and engagement.

Relative seniority. The participants described relative seniority between the mentors and mentees based on academic or leadership success. For example, Ms. Rodriguez targeted student leaders as potential mentors for the ECC BMI mentoring program. Mr. Smith explained how honor students at NoCC were trained and paired with students who might have been struggling or who requested assistance.

Time. CUNY BMI refers to time as *planned frequency* and asked the program directors to outline the time commitment required of the mentors to spend with the mentees and to do other program-related work. Each of the participants acknowledged some type of time was required for the mentors and the mentees to spend together. When discussing *policy* as a design element, Mr. Douglas noted that mentors and mentees “are expected to meet for an hour once a week.” When discussing how mentors are *selected* and *trained*, Mr. Smith also shared, “the mentors would work four or five hours a week with their mentee, just covering things like helping them out in terms of organizing their studies, motivating them, just checking in.”

Matching. Ms. Rodriguez made a key observation about matching mentors and mentees, particularly at the community college level. At the community college, matching mentors and mentees was challenging because students had competing and conflicting responsibilities. Sometimes conflicting schedules prevented the matching of

mentors and mentees with one another. Ms. Rodriguez commented, “the reality is our students oftentimes are juggling multiple things and their time is valuable. Finding their availability is one of the factors we have to contend with.”

Termination. None of the participants interviewed addressed termination as a part of the BMI mentoring program. After reviewing the framework associated with the study, Mr. Smith provided context as to why considering termination does not happen. At the community college level “you have people moving through the system and people changing quite frequently.” The fast pace of the community college usually dictates the ending of a mentoring relationship. Termination usually happens organically because students graduate or discontinue the program, students take time off between semesters, or because students are assigned to a new mentor each semester or annually.

Activities. The CUNY BMI identified program-related activities as a design element of the BMI mentoring program. Mr. Smith and Ms. Rodriguez talked about the activities that happened as part of the BMI program at their respective community colleges. Ms. Rodriguez shared that students participating in the BMI program at ECC formed a social club to host programs and activities, such as a faculty versus student basketball game. Mr. Smith shared that students at NoCC started a social club to host programs and activities such as zip lining and paintball. Activities were designed to engage students academically and socially, and to connect students to the larger college community.

Resources and tools. One common identifiable resource expressed by each of the program directors was support from their colleagues—whether volunteering their time to recruit students, serving as a mentor for the program, or collaborating on an event or

initiative organized by the BMI program. Donated textbooks from former or current students in the program was another example of resources and tools. Donated textbooks and other materials help with offsetting some of the financial burdens of college-related expenses.

Roles of technology. Mr. Smith was the only interview participant to explicitly discuss the role of technology. Mr. Smith explained how the role of technology plays an important part in recruiting students for the program. When staff connect with a new student, the student is added to an email list through a mobile application. The mobile application was created for the BMI program, allowing students to sign up to receive messages about the college. The mobile application also allowed staff to communicate with students immediately after the student was added to the email list. After reviewing the design elements included in Dawson's (2014) framework, Mr. Douglas expressed, "What jumps out at me is the role of technology. Increasingly that plays a more important role in what we do. It's not something that was initially considered."

Reward. Reward was perceived by program directors as adding value to the BMI programs. At least one BMI program financially compensated their students for being mentors. One BMI program hosted an awards ceremony to show students they were appreciated for the work they put into the mentoring program. Rewarding participants adds value to the BMI program because it shows appreciation for the work that goes into being a part of the program.

Tutoring. According to at least two participants, tutoring was built into the design of the programs. However, one participant discussed how efforts to establish a BMI

tutoring program failed because of a conflicting policy with an academic department that required all students to only receive tutoring services from the academic department.

Developmental workshops. Developmental workshops were described by the participants as workshops designed to enhance students' personal and professional growth. For example, Mr. Smith talked about planning a weekly leadership workshop for students to discuss campus culture. During the workshops students also had an opportunity to decide on plans for future workshops. Students in the BMI mentoring program at NoCC were responsible for organizing different workshops and "they have a stake in what goes on with the program." Ms. Rodriguez shared that the BMI mentoring program at ECC organizes workshops for students on topics such as financial literacy.

Cultural competence. Cultural competence is a specific design component that was added to the BMI program structure in 2016. Each interview participant responded to the same question regarding how cultural competence factored into the design of the BMI mentoring program. One participant explained that students from different cultures are targeted to participate in the BMI program because a great deal of diversity exists on campus. However, aside from diversity discussions during the regular training at the beginning of each year, at least one participant noted that cultural diversity was not intentionally integrated into the mentor training. Another participant viewed cultural competence as resulting from exposure to various workshop and informal discussions. Student had opportunities to share their stories, learn, and gain an appreciation for the cultural experiences of others. It was also believed that "being culturally competent means that we are aware. It's really about respecting the different cultures, honoring them, and validating them."

The categories emerging from the participant data provide an understanding of the specific elements existing in BMI mentoring programs. Further analysis of the data and categories revealed emergent themes. The analysis of the participant data and emergent categories led to the discovery of emergent themes. The emergent themes are presented as broader typologies, providing further understanding of the elements existing in BMI mentoring programs.

Themes. Five emergent themes related to Research Question 3 emerged from the data: procedural elements, operational elements, relational elements, supplemental elements, and enrichment elements. The five major themes each represent a typology describing a set of design elements.

Procedural elements. Procedural elements include and describe design elements of the BMI mentoring programs with attributes that relate to the functional processes necessary for the implementation, facilitation, and continuation of the BMI mentoring program.

Operational elements. Operational elements include and describe design elements of the BMI mentoring programs with characteristics connected to parameters guiding the implementation and execution of the BMI program. The operational elements establish the purpose and utility of the program.

Relational elements. Relational elements include and describe the design elements of the BMI mentoring programs with qualities that relate to defining relationships between mentors and mentee participating in a BMI mentoring program. The relational elements establish the nature of the interaction between mentors and mentees who were participating in the programs.

Supplemental elements. Supplemental elements include and describe design elements of the BMI mentoring programs associated with incorporating supportive mechanisms into the program. Supplemental elements enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of mentoring programs meeting intended objectives.

Enrichment elements. Enrichment elements include and describe design elements of the BMI mentoring programs that are representative of how the students' academic and social experiences enhance and increase in value through participation in the program. Enrichment elements strengthen the overall learning, engagement, and personal growth experience for students participating in the mentoring program.

Framework elements in rank order. After responding to interview question J in Table 4.1, the participants reviewed the 16 design elements that are identified in Dawson's (2014) framework. Each participant rank ordered the design elements by perceived importance. The results of the rank order responses were compared with responses to the three interview questions to find differences and commonalities in responses and to establish validity of the findings. Table 4.8 presents the results from the rank ordering of the design elements.

The most prominent results were the rank ordering of *objectives* and *termination*. All three participants ranked objectives as most important and termination as least important of the 16 design elements. Understanding the role of the CUNY BMI programs is important in understanding why each participant ranked *objectives* as the most important design element. Responses during the interview process revealed that the CUNY BMI programs provide guidance and direction to the individual community colleges with established goals supporting the mission of the program (CUNY, 2019c).

Table 4.8

Dawson's Framework Elements – Rank Order of Importance

Design Elements	Description	Ms. Rodriguez	Mr. Smith	Mr. Douglas
Objectives	The aims or intentions of the mentoring model	1	1	1
Roles	A statement of who is involved and their function	11	3	4
Cardinality	The number of each sort of role involved in a mentoring relationship	12	11	11
Tie Strength	The intended closeness of the mentoring relationship	7	4	10
Relative Seniority	The comparative experience, expertise, or status of participants	13	9	9
Time	The length of a mentoring relationship, regularity of contact, and quantity of contact	8	8	12
Selection	How mentors and mentees are chosen	2	7	5
Matching	How mentoring relationships are composed	3	6	6
Activities	Actions that mentors and mentees can perform during their relationship	9	5	13
Resources and Tools	Technological or other artifacts available to assist mentors and mentees	14	2	2
Roles of Technology	The relative importance of technology to the relationship	15	14	15
Training	How necessary understandings and skills for mentoring will be developed in participants	4	10	14
Reward	What participants will receive to compensate for their efforts	10	12	7
Policy	A set of rules and guidelines on issues such as privacy or the use of technology	5	13	8
Monitoring	What oversight will be performed, what actions will be taken under what circumstances, and by whom	6	15	3
Termination	How relationships are ended	16	16	16

The program directors have latitude in executing the achievement of program objectives. However, CUNY BMI generally establishes the goals. The interview responses to the questions exploring design elements provided some rationale as to why termination ranked least important according to all participants. Community colleges prepare students to graduate with an associate degree within 2 years and to transfer to a 4-year college or enter the workforce. Community college mentoring relationships typically end due to either the mentor or mentee graduating, discontinuing the mentoring program, taking time off between semesters, or because the program is designed to assign mentors and mentees each semester or each year. Therefore, because termination of the mentoring relationships usually happens naturally and at a fast pace, directors do not prioritize having mechanisms in place to address other reasons why mentoring relationships may end.

The responses during the interview process also suggested that the culture that exists at a community college is different when compared to the culture that exists at a 4-year college. Limited availability of time and the fast-paced community college environment helps one to understand why the participants ranked termination as the least important design element. Students attending a community college tend to have less free time available than students attending a 4-year college because of personal responsibilities. The availability of time, coupled with the pace of environment, influenced how the mentor and mentee relationships were established and maintained at community colleges.

Program-related documents. The 2016 CUNY BMI Overview Report (Wright et al., 2016) and the 2016, 2017, and 2018 BMI Project Funding Applications from the

participating directors for each program were analyzed to establish validity of the findings associated with the data that resulted from the interview responses, which were aligned with the three research questions when exploring the factors and elements involved in designing mentoring programs. The Overview Report (Wright et al., 2016) and BMI Project Funding Applications from the participating directors outlined the goals and objectives of each mentoring program and design elements that existed in each program. The CUNY BMI Task Force Report (CUNY, 2005) was analyzed to determine if the overall design of each mentoring program was aligned with the findings and recommendations of the report. Comparing the findings from the interview data and the findings from the program-related document data indicated that the program-related document data did, indeed, validate the findings from the interview response data.

Results from analyzing the a priori codes derived from Dawson's (2014) framework confirmed consistent findings with the emergent categories associated with the interview responses including *recruitment*, *tutoring*, and *developmental workshops*. Additional analysis compared the project funding application data with the a priori codes of student growth, student development, student satisfaction, personal support, academic support, cultural support, and social support. The a priori codes were derived from the description of mentoring by Fornari et al. (2014) and specific student needs that should be addressed when establishing a mentoring program for Black males as outlined in the CUNY BMI Task Force Report (CUNY, 2005). The results indicate that each mentoring program in this study addressed the students' personal, academic, cultural, and social needs through the design of the BMI mentoring program. This finding emerged from

analyzing the summary of the goals and objectives of the BMI project and the elements of the structured mentorship program outlined in the project funding applications.

Summary of Results

This qualitative, descriptive study was designed to explore how BMI structured mentoring programs, which are aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates, are designed. More specifically, this study focused on understanding what factors were considered in designing each program, how each factor influenced the design of the program, and the specific elements included in the design of each program.

The open coding techniques produced a large volume of data. The data resulting from the coding process summarized many coding descriptions, which are consistent with interview participants' perceptions of the factors and elements involved in designing BMI mentoring programs. The results of this study produced five major findings. The findings provide new information about the factors and elements involved in designing BMI structured mentoring programs and how the identified factors influence the program design. Additionally, the findings reveal a conceptual framework comprising five broad typologies that exist among the mentoring programs. Chapter 5 outlines the five major findings, discusses how the findings relate to the body of literature presented in Chapter 2, what implications the findings have for practitioners and for future researchers, details the limitations that existed in this study, and provides recommendations for consideration for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study addresses the lack of research on designing Black male mentoring programs at community colleges and the absence of a common definition and framework for defining and specifying the practice of mentoring. In particular, this study explores program directors' perceptions of how BMI structured mentoring programs, which are aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates, are designed. The results of this study were achieved by employing a qualitative, descriptive methodological design to gain an understanding of the topic through the lens of practitioners; by conducting one-on-one, in-person, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions; and by analyzing program-related documents. This study includes the findings based on the collection and analysis of data provided by three directors overseeing CUNY community college BMI mentoring programs exhibiting best practices in structured mentoring and program-related documents. In this chapter, the researcher briefly (a) outlines the major findings, (b) discusses how the findings relate to the current body of literature, (c) highlights what implications the findings have for practitioners and for future researchers, (d) acknowledges the limitations and delimitations associated with this study, and (d) provides recommendation for future practice and research.

The results of this study reveal five major findings, and the five major findings provide responses to the three research questions. The findings present new information regarding how BMI mentoring programs are designed and how program designs are influenced by certain variables. Additionally, the findings reveal unique elements

existing in mentoring programs that are related to this study and present a conceptual framework for designing mentoring programs. The five major findings are:

1. Resource availability is perceived as the key factor considered when designing BMI mentoring programs.
2. The objectives of the BMI mentoring program are perceived to determine the factors considered in designing the program.
3. The factors considered in designing BMI mentoring programs contribute to establishing a dynamic network of interdependent variables that assist in meeting Black male students' personal, academic, cultural, and social needs.
4. Recruitment, tutoring, and developmental workshops are unique elements that were found existing in the design of BMI mentoring programs.
5. BMI mentoring programs include design elements sharing distinct characteristics that can be developed into a conceptual framework comprising five specific typologies: procedural, operational, relational, supplemental, and enrichment.

This study has implications for practitioners and researchers. The implications that stem from the findings are discussed in the next section.

Implications of Findings

The findings from this study are significant for practitioners and researchers and illuminate the voices of program directors overseeing BMI mentoring programs at community colleges. The findings from this study add to the body of knowledge addressing interventions aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates for Black males, particularly, at the community college level; seeking definitions to better

understand mentoring; and seeking rigorous qualitative methodological approaches to studying, mentoring, and mentoring programs.

For practitioners, this study offers pragmatic considerations for supporting the design of BMI mentoring programs to a wide audience including local and state government officials, public and private funders, college and university executive officers, faculty, administrators, and students. Most importantly, this study also points to the importance of practitioners to display an appropriate degree of cultural responsiveness in presenting considerations for supporting BMI programs. For example, the findings from this study provide understanding about how resource availability influences program sustainability. This new information will help practitioners respond, with a sense of cultural awareness, to the challenges associated with designing mentoring programs for Black males, specifically culturally competent, peer-to-peer mentoring programs. Some of the challenges include the high costs associated with operating BMI mentoring programs and the low percentages of Black males benefitting from BMI mentoring programs.

For researchers, this study contributes new information to the existing body of knowledge on defining, conceptualizing, and researching BMI mentoring programs, and it addresses low retention and graduation rates among Black males in higher education. For example, the findings from this study present a framework for conceptualizing mentoring models based on design elements that share distinct characteristics. This conceptual framework will help researchers identify design elements with common characteristics, help researchers better understand the relationship and interdependence between the elements, and provide researchers with a structure to concisely define and

explain mentoring programs. Additionally, the findings from this study provide researchers with a foundation for examining how specific design elements may influence Black male retention and graduation rates and for explaining program assessment outcomes in the context of program design.

Major finding 1. *Resource availability is perceived as the key factor to be considered when designing BMI mentoring programs.* The program directors identified the availability of funding, physical space, and full-time personnel as important considerations and germane to achieving the mission, goals, and objectives of the BMI mentoring program. One key contribution of this study is that it offers empirical data on how program directors view the relationship between resource availability, program objectives, program sustainability, and operational effectiveness.

This finding aligns with the research findings from previous studies examining Black male success and mentoring programs. Harper (2012), focusing on the factors that influence success for high-achieving Black undergraduate males, found that the Black male participants indicated availability and access to institutional resources had a positive impact on their success, although none of the participants acknowledged a formal mentoring program contributing to their success, but rather they acknowledged informal mentoring relationships. Harper's (2012) finding points to the general importance of resource availability and access to Black male undergraduate success. Brooks et al. (2013) also highlighted findings from their study, which was related to resource availability, noting that programs specifically designed to positively impact low retention and graduation rates of Black males in college provide Black male students with the space to discuss issues in a group setting. Commonality existed when comparing the

findings from this study and a study conducted by Putsche et al. (2008). Participants in both studies indicated that creativity in building collaborative relationships with existing programs, to ensure sustainability when funds were limited, was important. This commonality between the two studies directly relates to how resource availability is perceived as impactful on program sustainability and the need to collaborate with campus partners.

The findings from this study imply that resource availability, specifically funding, physical space, and full-time personnel, influence operational effectiveness and sustainability, indirectly influences the ability to satisfy the intended program objectives. Understanding the importance of resource availability and how it relates to program objectives, program sustainability, and operational effectiveness is necessary because the expected program-growth and resource availability for BMI mentoring programs may not always be aligned. For example, executive and senior-level administrators must acknowledge and accept that the intended program objectives are unachievable without adequate resources. Furthermore, a lack of resources threatens opportunities for program-growth and sustainability, while lack of resources also places unrealistic expectations on program directors to continuously meet the intended program objectives. When executive- and senior-level administrators acknowledge the imbalance between intended program objectives and available resources, they have accountability and a shared responsibility to rethink the strategic planning of resourcing the mentoring interventions that are aimed at increasing Black male retention and graduation rates.

Major finding 2. *The objectives of BMI mentoring programs are perceived to determine the factors to be considered when designing the programs.* The aims and intentions of BMI mentoring programs are articulated as their objectives.

The findings from this study assert that program directors who are overseeing CUNY BMI mentoring programs at community colleges perceive a statement indicating the aims and intentions of the program model as the most important design element. The program objectives were found to guide and influence decision making about how each program was designed, including the choices determined for specific elements. In fact, when asked to rank order the 16 design elements included in Dawson's (2014) framework for defining and specifying mentoring models, each program director ranked *objectives* as the most important element.

This study yielded findings that are consistent with the research conducted by Keflezighi et al. (2016). Their findings indicate that goals and objectives were common design elements that existed among minority male initiative programs. Keflezighi et al. (2016) noted the distinction between goals and objectives among the programs investigated, referring to goals in the context of statements usually wide in scope and interrelated to a strategic plan, but not measurable, while outcomes were viewed as specific and were examined with a certain competency colleges desire students to achieve. Each program director participating in this study highlighted the distinction between BMI mentoring program goals and objectives. The goals for each program were determined by the CUNY BMI; however, according to the students' needs and the institutional culture, each director had discretion to establish the program objectives and decide how the goals would be achieved.

A second implication of this study is that it informs practitioners that program objectives must be developed with intentionality and specificity to address the intended outcomes of the mentoring program. Researchers have argued that program effectiveness depends on establishing goals that guide how mentoring programs are organized (Karcher et al., 2006). Mentoring programs that do not include a well-developed intended purpose have led to poorly defined programs. Karcher et al. (2006) argued this point by positing that the diversity in mentoring has generally resulted in program developers randomly assigning whatever name seemed to best identify the selected mentoring approach. This mislabeling usually results in various forms of mentoring being plagued by haphazard and inconsistent definitions.

Major finding 3. *The factors considered in designing BMI mentoring programs contribute to establishing a dynamic network of interdependent variables that assist in meeting Black male students' personal, academic, cultural, and social needs.* BMI mentoring programs assist in integrating Black males into the college culture and in navigating the process of degree completion. A dynamic approach requires advancing creative methods that may influence changes toward achieving program objectives, and which may also influence the choices determined for specific elements included in the mentoring framework. The choices for specific elements in operationalizing the mentoring programs are determined by the uniqueness of each program model, and they require constant evaluation in achieving the purpose of the program.

Researchers have documented numerous variables contributing to Black male retention and graduation rates at community colleges (Bush & Bush, 2010; Harris & Wood, 2013; Ingram et al., 2013; Mason, 1998; Wood & Turner, 2011; Wood &

Williams, 2013). Mason's (1998) persistence model for African American male urban community college students was derived from Bean and Metzner's (1985) model of nontraditional student undergraduate student attrition. Mason's (1998) model specifically associates variables relating to background (age, enrollment status, educational goals, high school performance), academics (study habits, academic advising, absenteeism, major certainty, course availability), environment (finances, employment, outside encouragement, family responsibilities, opportunity to transfer), academic outcome (GPA), psychological outcome (utility, satisfaction, goal commitment, stress), and intent to leave as variables that impact Black male persistence at the community college level.

A third implication resulting from this study points to the need for practitioners and researchers to understand how specific design elements may influence certain factors relating to low retention and attrition of Black males in community colleges. Community college administrators and researchers must give attention to the variables associated with Black males not successfully completing their degrees. Understanding how the variables may be influenced by specific design elements will assist practitioners in determining the choices for specific elements of the mentoring programs and will guide researchers in examining the relationship between the variables associated with Black male attrition and mentoring program designs that are aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates.

Major finding 4. *Recruitment, tutoring, and developmental workshops are unique elements found to exist in the design of BMI mentoring programs.* Recruiting students contributes to program sustainability. Tutoring and developmental workshops provide support for the academic, personal, social, and cultural needs of students participating in BMI mentoring programs. During the researcher's interviews with the

program directors, student recruitment was viewed as an important process that supported successful implementation, facilitation, and continuation of the BMI mentoring programs. However, the researcher was not able to identify a formal structure to guide the student recruitment process.

Putsche et al. (2008) identified establishing a recruitment plan for existing and prospective participants as most important for successful development and implementation of a formal mentoring program. The research conducted by Keflezighi et al. (2016), seeking to gain an understanding of the program funding streams, interventions, and objectives associated with minority male interventions, found tutoring to be one of the most commonly used programs in the design of the interventions. Much of the discussion in this current study relating to student recruitment focused on building relationships with other campus departments and relying on mentors, mentees, and BMI program alumni to assist with efforts in attracting new students to the programs. Tutoring and developmental workshops were viewed as elements of the programs that were included to enhance and enrich the students' academic, social, and cultural integration into the college community. More importantly, by providing students with opportunities to receive tutoring and to engage in discussions to aid in their personal growth and ability to navigate the institutional landscape, the programs were viewed as invaluable to the students' continued success.

A fourth implication of this study is derived from the finding that recruitment of participants, tutoring services, and developmental workshops were unique elements found existing in the design of BMI mentoring programs. What this finding exposed and should be considered by community college leadership is: (a) coordination of student

recruitment efforts are viewed as a responsibility that is most often assumed by the individual program, and (b) offering tutoring services is a critical element of BMI mentoring programs that can be hindered by uncompromising academic policies. If community college leaders consider increased retention and graduation rates in accordance with campus-wide metrics, such as retention, time to degree, number of credits, and graduate rates, then a campus-wide effort to recruit Black males to participate in a program aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates should be a general expectation. The establishment of a recruitment plan that includes campus-wide support in attracting students to participate in the BMI mentoring program, or a plan that integrates BMI mentoring program recruitment into the larger institutional recruitment plan will increase the likelihood that the BMI mentoring program is sustainable. To the point of BMI offering tutoring exclusively to its students, higher education institutional leaders, including vice presidents, provosts, deans, and program directors, should discuss how to achieve such an objective without compromising the value gained from students receiving tutoring services in an academic departmental space.

Major finding 5. *BMI mentoring programs include design elements that share distinct characteristics, and they can be developed into a conceptual framework comprising five specific typologies: (a) procedural, (b) operational, (c) relational, (d) supplemental, and (e) enrichment.* The identification of specific typologies, as part of a conceptual framework for explaining mentoring programs, may contribute to providing future researchers with insight into the relationship and potential interdependence between design elements. Furthermore, the typologies may contribute to practitioners concisely defining mentoring programs. The interdependence between and among design

elements is evidenced in how they contribute to achieving the objectives of the program. For example, recruitment, selection, and training are important processes that ensure students, who are encouraged to become mentors, who meet the necessary criteria to qualify as mentors, and who are ultimately chosen to serve as mentors, have the resources and tools to assist their mentees. Another example is the relational characteristic existing between time and tie strength. The duration and closeness of the relationships between the mentors and mentees may affect how relationships are formed and maintained, which would likely contribute to how successful a program is at achieving an intended goal. For instance, the bond established between the mentors and mentees may influence an intended goal such as acclimating new students to the campus environment.

The Karcher et al. (2006) research findings reflect and support the findings of this study. They found distinctions among the design elements in their study of youth mentoring programs. The findings identified infrastructure and dosage as two critical common features influencing program outcomes. Infrastructure refers to practices related to the screening, matching, training, and continuous support of mentors. Dosage refers to the amount, intensity, and duration of the mentoring taking place. Karcher et al. (2006) suggested that the frequency, in terms of total hours of mentor-mentee contact, the depth of the mentoring interaction, and the total length of the mentoring relationship, when considered collectively, may be interdependent and may have an influence on one another.

The fifth and final implication from this study suggests that higher education leaders strongly consider how mentoring programs, which are designed to support Black males succeeding in college, are modeled. A mentoring model, as described by Dawson

(2014), is a set of choices made against the elements that are included in a framework. The set of choices determined for the specific design elements may contribute to a program's effectiveness in accomplishing its goals. The program model may also contribute to the influence the mentoring program has on student retention. The model of the mentoring program may prove to significantly contribute to increased retention and graduation rates among Black males at the undergraduate level. This major finding also suggests that researchers examine whether specific design elements that exist in a mentoring framework have any influence on Black male students' intent to leave college, subsequently contributing to higher retention or attrition rates. Such findings may lead researchers to conclude if prominent design elements correlate with the variables associated with Black male attrition and if the correlation is statistically significant.

Limitations and Delimitations

This section addresses the limitations and delimitations of this study, which are distinctly different. The limitations are conditions that are not controlled by the researcher and that influence the design and outcome of the study. The delimitations are conditions that are controlled by the researcher and that influence the design and outcome of the study.

One limitation of this study was the interview setting. Each participant was interviewed in in-person, one-on-one sessions within the participants' natural work settings. At the time of the interviews, each participant's personal office sat in an open-concept space that was shared with the CUNY BMI program. The interview space did not allow for full privacy or was not an environment free from external distractions. A second limitation of this study was the length of time the participants had served as BMI

program directors in the community colleges. This limitation affected at least one participant's ability to provide detailed responses to certain interview questions. A third limitation was the small sample size of four CUNY community college BMI program directors. All seven CUNY community colleges have a BMI program director. However, the sample size represented only the directors overseeing CUNY community college BMI mentoring programs who had exhibited best practices in structured mentoring. The fourth and final limitation was the number of program directors participating in this study. Even though four directors represented BMI mentoring programs that had exhibited best practices in structured mentoring, only three program directors were able to participate in this study. The combination of these limitations influenced the breadth of data associated with the findings. The findings cannot be generalized to all CUNY community college BMI mentoring programs. For example, the findings do not indicate additional factors that may have been perceived as important in the design of the mentoring programs if all seven CUNY community college BMI program directors were included in this study.

A delimitation of this study required that the participants be directors overseeing BMI mentoring programs at CUNY community colleges. This requirement was necessary to address the research questions and to explore the perceptions of the persons responsible for the design of the mentoring programs. This qualification was also necessary because this study focused specifically on mentoring programs that were designed to increase Black male retention and graduation rates at community colleges. The researcher wanted to explore mentoring programs that were designed for Black males attending community colleges because the existing research examining Black

males in higher education mainly focuses on those attending 4-year institutions. The results of this study do not provide insight into whether similarities or difference in perceptions exist between different directors' overseeing BMI mentoring programs at 2-year and 4-year CUNY colleges. Further, the findings do not conclude whether unique elements exist in the BMI programs designed at 4-year CUNY colleges, which may be different than those found present in the 2-year CUNY colleges included in this study. Insight into these similarities and differences may have contributed to a different set of outcomes, implications, and recommendations involving the design of BMI mentoring programs.

The findings from this study add empirical evidence to the limited body of research focusing on mentoring programs designed for Black males attending community colleges. Based on the results of this study, specific actions should be implemented by practitioners and researchers who are invested in the success of Black males in higher education. While the results of this study are significant for practitioners and researchers, future qualitative research should be conducted for generalizability with other community college BMI mentoring programs. Likewise, recommendations for future research offer considerations for exploring how design elements influence Black male retention and graduation rates, for replicating this study by exploring 4-year colleges, for determining if the same or additional factors are considered when designing mentoring programs, and for examining how the conceptual framework identified in this study may establish external validity and advance research purposed with defining mentoring programs. The recommendations for practitioners and researchers are included in the next section.

Recommendations for Future Practice

Five recommendations for future practice involving BMI mentoring programs at community colleges are outlined in this section. The recommendations, based on the findings from this study, offer considerations for addressing program resource availability, program sustainability, program design, program assessment, and intended program outcomes.

Recommendation 1. The CUNY BMI mentoring program was intended to be an action-oriented project to help Black males overcome the attendant weak enrollment, retention, and graduation from institutions of higher education. The establishment of a CUNY BMI strategic plan that addresses students' academic, personal, and social needs, that is culturally responsive to the particular challenges Black males face in higher education, and that supports the fundamental tenant of the CUNY mission to ensure equal access and opportunity to its population without regard to ethnicity, race, and gender is paramount to the success and sustainability of the BMI mentoring program on each community college campus. The findings from this study point to the need for increased resource availability and the importance of program sustainability. This information is important and should be included in the CUNY BMI strategic plan addressing how to better resource community college BMI mentoring programs.

The findings from this study may provide support to CUNY BMI executive leaders who are seeking additional funding to support the mentoring programs. The CUNY BMI executives should use the findings from this study as evidence to support lobbying efforts to encourage public and private donors to fund the CUNY BMI. For example, using the findings from this study may influence the New York City Council to

continue, and potentially increase, financial support for CUNY BMI. Perhaps CUNY BMI can use the findings from this study to apply for large governmental grants that support college access and achievement of traditionally underrepresented students, particularly males of color. In line with these suggestions, and considering the forthcoming Congressional update to the Higher Education Act, CUNY executive leadership should consider submitting a federal grant proposal to include the CUNY BMI as a Federal TRIO Program, which is a federal outreach and student-services program designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. Additionally, TRIO includes a training program for directors and staff of recognized projects. This measure, if successful, would increase support for access to critical resources, such as space, full-time personnel, and program funding; would increase the likelihood of the programs' sustainability resulting from federal support; would potentially decrease the direct costs the community colleges have to incur to sustain the BMI mentoring program; and would positively contribute to supporting the operational effectiveness and intended objectives of the BMI mentoring program, thus positively influencing Black male retention and graduation rates.

Research findings have widely indicated financial need as a variable associated with low retention and graduation rates among Black males in college. This study did find financial support included as a choice associated with *reward*, one of the elements in the BMI mentoring program design. The program directors' indicated that students might receive a stipend for serving as a BMI mentor. However, the researcher recommends that the CUNY Chancellor convene a new CUNY BMI Task Force to explore strategies to secure funding options that provide additional direct and indirect

financial support for community college students who are participating in campus-based BMI mentoring programs. Such support may be offered through waivers for tuition and mandatory fees, Metro cards, and additional financial assistance to defray the cost of textbooks. These financial supports exist as part of the CUNY Accelerated Study in Associate Program (ASAP), which started in 2007, 2 years after the CUNY BMI Program started. The ASAP is designed to help associate degree-seeking students earn their degrees as quickly as possible, with a goal of graduating at least 50% of the students within 3 years. However, due to the qualifying criteria to participate in the ASAP, not all BMI students may be eligible. The CUNY executive leadership deciding to offer direct financial support to students participating in the BMI mentoring program illustrates an awareness for providing financial equity and an increased level of commitment to addressing a major need associated with Black male retention and graduation rates and overall academic success.

Recommendation 2. A well-designed mentoring program should result in a clear purpose, the appropriate design elements, committed leadership, and accountability. These characteristics will drive the program outcomes. This study found that program directors perceived *objectives* as a specific element that determined the factors considered in the designing of the BMI mentoring programs at CUNY community colleges. Program directors should ensure that the objectives of the BMI mentoring program are aligned with the intended program outcomes. A culturally competent peer-to-peer mentoring program must include objectives addressing the cultural needs of the participants. The intended outcomes of each program must address students' academic success, but they also must address the successful cultural development of the student

participants. The alignment between program objectives and intended outcomes begins with the CUNY BMI executive leadership defining the purpose of the program including culturally competent peer-to-peer mentoring. The alignment process should continue with the program director determining how the mentoring program will be designed to achieve its purpose, according to the community college's campus culture and the students' academic, personal, social, and cultural needs. The alignment between the objectives and intended program outcomes supports program effectiveness and assists program directors in identifying the factors that may be considered in the mentoring program design. The alignment also helps to accurately define the mentoring program. Additionally, alignment between the objectives and the intended outcomes of the mentoring programs will better inform program directors how the program design may be leveraged against the choices determined for specific design elements, goals, objectives, and intended outcomes of the program. A well-designed mentoring program, including objectives and intended goals that are appropriately aligned, should ensure that the combined elements reliably achieve the programs' intended outcomes.

Recommendation 3. This study found that the BMI mentoring programs are designed to create a dynamic network of interdependent factors and elements that assist in meeting Black male students' personal, academic, cultural, and social needs. This finding underscores the importance of program directors overseeing CUNY BMI mentoring programs when making decisions about how and when the program design may require modification. These decisions are usually based on resource availability, the changing culture of the community college, and the needs of the students—particularly those participating in the BMI mentoring program. The complexity of decisions made by

program directors affect the continuous changing of the mentoring design framework to improve the implementation of the mentoring program model.

Program directors should continuously evaluate the BMI mentoring program model to assess the effectiveness of the model's resources, objectives, processes, and impacts/outcomes. In a broader context, BMI mentoring program stakeholders should engage in continuous exploration of research and strategies to identify best practices in designing, implementing, facilitating, and sustaining BMI mentoring programs. This includes working with researchers, specifically, in studying interventions that are designed to support increased retention and graduation rates among Black males attending community colleges. Finally, the CUNY BMI should continue to host the annual Black Male Initiative Conference and consider a future theme that focuses on national best practices in mentoring programs that would be intended to increase Black male college retention and graduation rates. A theme such as this would support the vision for CUNY to position the University as a "national voice" on the plight of Black males and to create action-oriented strategies that would have a long-term impact on improving the chances of Black males to lead successful lives.

Recommendation 4. The 2005 CUNY BMI Task Force Report (CUNY, 2005) indicates that recruitment, retention, and performance are linked to programs established to meet the personal, academic, social, and financial needs of Black males. The findings are based on previous research that examined Black males attending and succeeding in college. However, this study found that student recruitment, or more specifically program sustainability, was a major consideration in designing the CUNY BMI mentoring programs.

The CUNY BMI programs, as described on its website, is a “CUNY-wide initiative, with a mission to increase, encourage, and support the inclusion and educational success of students from groups that are severely underrepresented in higher education, in particular African, African American/Black, Caribbean and Latino/Hispanic males” (2019a, para. 1). The goals of the initiative include increasing the enrollment and matriculation of underrepresented students, increasing retention of underrepresented students, improving the overall GPA of underrepresented students, and increasing the graduation rate of underrepresented students. Student recruitment, student retention, student GPA, time to degree completion, number of credits, and graduation rate are all metrics associated with Black male student success. Positive outcomes associated with the identified metrics also have the power to sustain the BMI mentoring program on community college campuses.

Too often, program initiatives designed to support underrepresented populations are designated as *special* programs. This designation subtly reinforces and supports the long-standing equity gap in higher education, specifically when relating to students of color, particularly Black male students. The CUNY executive leadership should consider re-envisioning the placement of the BMI program in the system-wide organizational flow chart to reinforce the seriousness and commitment to Black male students’ academic success. Specifically, the chancellery should consider aligning the CUNY BMI with the Academic Affairs division instead of Special Programs, and the chancellery should further consider aligning the campus-based mentoring program as a standard academic support initiative in the division of academic affairs. Including the BMI mentoring program as a standard academic support initiative within the division of student affairs

would place greater accountability and shared responsibility on senior academic administrators—including the vice presidents of academic affairs and provosts—to commit to the overall success of Black males as a critical student group.

Recommendation 5. According to the results of this study, *recruitment* and *tutoring* emerged as unique elements that exist in the design of BMI mentoring programs. The findings conclude that recruitment is important to the growth and sustainability of the BMI mentoring programs. The findings also conclude that tutoring is important in addressing Black male students' personal, academic, cultural, and social needs, which are associated with success in higher education. Community college administrators who are responsible for enrollment management, particularly student recruitment, should develop plans to support student participation in the BMI mentoring programs or at least integrate BMI recruitment strategies into the college-wide recruitment plan.

All community college BMI mentoring programs have not successfully integrated tutoring as a service specifically provided to students participating in the program. Based on previous research findings, it is known that Black male students tend to respond positively and feel a deeper sense of connection to the institution, when access to tutoring and other academic-enrichment services are provided in spaces that Black males consider safe when those services are offered by individuals that Black males view as genuinely will to care for their well-being and overall success. Often, Black males do not feel a sense of care in spaces that they do not perceive as supportive. Senior community college academic affairs administrators, including provosts, deans, and department chairs, along with faculty and BMI program administrators, should convene to establish strategies for BMI mentoring programs to offer students, who are participating in the

program, direct tutoring services without compromising the value they gain from receiving tutoring services in an academic department space. Perhaps this may include identifying faculty from specific departments who have an interest and willingness to commit to working in partnership with the BMI mentoring programs. Modeling the BMI mentoring programs in such a way supports strengthening positive relationships between faculty and Black male students at CUNY community colleges. A BMI mentoring program model that allows direct tutoring services from faculty, who express a desire to work with Black males, further illustrates positive cultural responsiveness from academic administrators in implementing strategies that are designed to increase Black male academic achievement. Positive relationships between faculty and Black male students tend to positively influence Black male students' decision to remain in college, thus supporting increased retention and graduation rates.

Recommendations for Future Research

Three recommendations for future research involving BMI mentoring programs at community colleges are outlined in this section. The recommendations, based on this study's findings, offer consideration for addressing program resource availability, program sustainability, program design, program assessment, and intended program outcomes.

Recommendation 1. Researchers should examine whether specific mentoring program design elements influence Black male retention and graduation. For example, examine whether a correlation exists between the specific design elements and Black males' intent to leave college, or examine the variables that are associated with other factors identified as influencing Black male attrition, which indirectly influences

retention and graduation rates. For example, research examining whether enrichment elements, such as *tutoring* or *developmental workshops*, influence a student's decision to persist through college or to drop out can help program directors in determining the frequency of offering such enrichment activities. Likewise, research examining if a relationship exists between relational elements such as *matching* or *tie strength* and environmental variables associated with Black male attrition can inform staff about matching strategies or the level of engagement needed for mentors to establish rapport with mentees. Such studies may provide researchers with information about which design elements are prominent in addressing students' intent to leave college. The findings may provide program directors with ideas regarding how to implement useful strategies to leverage design elements against variables that influence Black male attrition. The findings may also guide program directors to purposely design mentoring programs to achieve intended program outcomes, and the findings may guide program directors to identify and assess to what degree a particular aspect of a mentoring program may contribute to successful program outcomes.

Recommendation 2. Future researchers should replicate this study to explore the commonalities and differences in perception between directors overseeing BMI mentoring programs at 2- and 4-year colleges. Expanding the research to include other 2- and 4-year CUNY colleges will confirm whether the findings similar to this study exist, and it may uncover additional important factors considered when designing mentoring programs. Directors overseeing BMI mentoring programs at non-CUNY colleges should also be included in future studies.

Recommendation 3. The findings from this study identify typologies based on design elements that share distinct characteristics and provide researchers with a conceptual framework for use in future studies on mentoring. Future studies on mentoring can use the conceptual framework identified in this study to explore other BMI mentoring programs. By conducting future research in the study of BMI programs in a different context, and using the conceptual framework identified in this study, researchers can determine, based on their results, whether this framework has external validity. Researchers can also use the results of this study to advance future studies that are purposed with defining mentoring programs. More importantly, if the conceptual framework identified in this study is found to be externally valid, it will help to address the argument that research examining mentoring and mentoring programs is missing an externally valid framework.

Conclusion

Several impediments negatively impact Black males pursuing a college education, and they ultimately hinder academic success. These impediments, noted by Druery and Brooms (2018), include underrepresentation, feelings of isolation, stereotype threats, gendered racism, and hyper-surveillance. The effect of these educational barriers results in a false rhetoric, a continuing belief, and a mischaracterization of Black males as not caring about education. These misrepresentations of Black males result in a lack of acknowledgement of the structural forces that impact Black males' educational experiences, how schools act on those structural forces, the limitations to information and resource to support Black males' efforts, and no recognition of the resilience and persistence Black males show when confronted with such impediments (Brooms, 2018).

This has led to researchers calling for programs that intentionally support and provide increased positive experiences for Black males (Druery & Brooms, 2018). Ponjuán, Jones, Hernández, Palomín, and Sáenz (2017) suggested that institutional programs and policies play a critical role in creating a campus environment that fosters student engagement. Druery and Brooms (2018) reported that since 2004, efforts to enhance the academic success and experiences of Black males in higher education have included institutional, system-wide, state, and federal programs. These programs aim to improve Black male retention and graduation rates at 2- and 4-year institutions, however this study focused on 2-year institutions only.

For many Black males, the community college is their first experience with higher education (Ponjuán et al., 2107). An established BMI program can be a powerful and nurturing learning space that offers academic and social support, access to critical campus resources, improved psychological and personal development, increased Black male peer-bonding, and support for career aspirations (Brooms, 2018). Research highlights that evidence is needed in identifying what elements contribute to the positive experiences of Black males who are participating in BMI mentoring programs, how the elements influence the outcomes, and what traits might explain the differences in participants' experiences (Mondisa & McComb, 2018). Research also highlights that evidence is needed when examining mentoring program design elements, frameworks, and subsequent models to better address the challenge of defining or conceptualizing mentoring and determining its effectiveness (Dawson, 2014; Karcher et al., 2006; Redmond, 1990). Redmond (1990) pointed out that particular attention should focus on the planning and designing of mentoring programs that are purposed with supplementing

efforts toward increased retention and timely graduation, such as those developed specifically for Black males in higher education. Not many studies exist that focus specifically on mentoring Black males who are attending community colleges (Gibson, 2014; Ray et al., 2009). Research acknowledges that community college practitioners and organizations have significantly increased their efforts to substantiate the impact and to find ways to scale up on promising practices (Hatch & Bohlig, 2016). These promising practices include programs that support Black male success, such as BMI mentoring programs. Hatch and Bohlig (2016) made the distinction that although programs focusing on student success at 2- and 4-year colleges share many similar characteristics, students attending community colleges are different in important ways from those students attending senior colleges. Hatch and Bohlig further noted that the differences require programs to be tailored to the culture of the community college and the needs of the students who are attending.

The aim of this study was to address the limited body of research focusing on designing Black male mentoring programs at community colleges and to address the lack of an agreed-upon common definition and framework for defining and specifying mentoring. The purpose of this study was to explore and understand program directors' perceptions of how BMI structured mentoring programs are designed at CUNY community colleges that are aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates. A theoretical framework of nontraditional undergraduate student attrition and a conceptual framework for defining and specifying mentoring models underpin this study.

A qualitative descriptive design was used to gain insight into how program directors consider certain factors involved in designing BMI mentoring programs, how

each factor influences the program design, and the specific design elements that exists in each program. The researcher used semi-structured, open-ended interview questions to collect data from the participants. The participants included in this study were directors overseeing CUNY BMI community college mentoring programs, which were identified as exhibiting the best practices in structured mentoring. The researcher also used BMI mentoring program-related documents to collect data. A combination of various coding approaches was used to analyze, and cross-analyze the data. The analysis of the data collected from interview question responses and program-related documents assisted in answering the research questions connected to the problem statement. In this study, the researcher responded to three research questions relating to exploring the factors and elements involved in designing mentoring programs, which was aimed at increasing Black male retention and graduation rates at community colleges.

1. What factors are considered in designing BMI structured mentorship programs at CUNY community colleges?
2. How does each factor influence the design of BMI structured mentorship programs at CUNY community colleges?
3. What specific design elements exist within each BMI structured mentorship program at CUNY community colleges?

The findings of this study present new information, adding to the dearth of research literature exploring the design of mentoring programs that are aimed at increasing retention and graduations rates among Black males attending community colleges.

This study found that program directors strongly perceive *resource availability* as the key factor when designing BMI mentoring programs. This study also found that

program directors view the factors considered in designing BMI mentoring programs at CUNY community colleges to be determined by the objectives of the program. The influence that those factors have on the design of BMI mentoring programs results in the creation of a dynamic network of interdependent factors and elements that assist in meeting Black male students' personal, academic, cultural, and social needs. This study reveals recruitment, tutoring, and developmental workshops as three unique design elements that exist in community college BMI mentoring programs. This study also found that the BMI mentoring programs included design elements that shared distinct characteristics that can be developed into a conceptual framework comprising five specific typologies: (a) procedural, (b) operational, (c) relational, (d) supplemental, and (e) enrichment.

The CUNY BMI program design includes a peer-to-peer mentoring model that trains high-achieving upper classmen as peer mentors. Peer mentors assist lower classmen, and they specifically acknowledge cultural differences, such as race/ethnicity, gender, ability, class, and sexuality, and they exhibit an understanding of these differences. Peer mentor training assists in cultivating awareness of the many levels of diversity that exist between peer mentors and paired mentees, and it explores how those levels of diversity impact the mentor/mentee match. The training also provides a chance for peer mentors to explore personal, existing assumptions and stereotypes, and the trainings have a forum to express the mentors' feelings on the diversity of values and cultural backgrounds, as well as cross-cultural matching. The overall results of this study align with the findings from the existing research and conclude that BMI mentor programs at CUNY community colleges that are exhibiting best practices in structured

mentoring are specifically designed to consider the culture of community colleges and the needs of the students who are attending the community colleges.

Based on the findings from this study, when developing interventions to decrease Black male attrition, perhaps higher education stakeholders might no longer rely on traditional mentoring designs that are used to address factors associated with traditional student attrition. The discovery of additional and different variables associated with Black male attrition may require differing perspectives in mentoring designs. The methods used in addressing the factors associated with Black male attrition at the community college level will require nontraditional mentoring designs that address the variables associated with nontraditional student attrition, specifically, Black male student attrition. Stated another way, using traditional operational mentoring models may not be the best approach in addressing issues that lead to low retention and graduation rates among Black males in community colleges. Additionally, identifying the specific elements of a mentoring program, individually and/or collectively, may help to begin to explain the influence a mentoring program has on Black male retention and graduation rates. To the extent that specific elements become more pronounced, the influence of the mentoring program becomes more important as an intervention to combating low retention and graduation rates among Black males. Furthermore, the program can be easily assessed based upon the intended outcomes of the program. The findings from future research investigating as to whether specific design elements existing in a mentoring framework influence Black male retention and graduation may assist in refuting the prevailing general acceptance of mentoring as an effective intervention and lend support to additional funding for Black male mentoring interventions and research.

The results of this research study have implications for practice and for future research that guide specific recommendations. The specific recommendations based on the findings from this study include actionable strategies that are intended to support increased academic success for Black males attending community colleges. The recommendations for practitioners include strategies for supporting increased resource availability and for greater access to academic support services. Also included in the recommendations for practitioners are considerations for examining the alignment between program objectives and intended program outcomes and a rethinking about the placement of the CUNY BMI in the system-wide organizational structure as well as the placement of the BMI mentoring program in the institutional organizational structure.

This study calls for program directors to continuously evaluate and assess their program designs to ensure their effectiveness and for CUNY BMI to continue using its platform to position the University as a national voice for Black male success. The recommendations for researchers include examining whether mentoring program design elements influence Black male retention and graduation rates, replicating this study to determine whether commonalities and difference exists when exploring the perception of BMI directors at 4-year CUNY colleges, and applying the typologies identified in this study to explore other Black male mentoring interventions and establish external validity of the framework.

The overall results of this study uncovered new information about the factors involved in designing CUNY community college BMI mentoring programs, how each factor influences the design of the program, and specific elements that exist in the design of the program. The findings associated with this study provide practitioners and

researchers with empirically based information, bringing forward the voice of community college program directors who are responsible for designing, implementing, and executing BMI mentoring programs, which are the voices that until now have been relatively silent in the research.

This research study is not only about supporting Black males in higher education. It is also about increasing social equity and expanding social justice for Black males in American society. Black males in American higher education have a history of encountering an unwelcoming environment, feeling uncomfortable, and being systematically marginalized. These experiences are the result of institutional racism that thrives from an imbalance of power and privilege. Community colleges were established as part of the United States educational plan to offer college access, academic achievement, and degree attainment through open admissions policies, to people traditionally excluded from opportunities for success. Success is achieved by design. Therefore, community colleges have an inherent and fundamental responsibility, and they must be held accountable to ensure that intentional, committed, continuous, and sustainable efforts are strategically designed and integrated into the institutional framework to support successful educational outcomes for Black males in higher education.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about your position and why you were interested in working with the BMI program?
2. How long have you been involved with the BMI program?
3. How long has the BMI program existed at the college?
4. How would you describe your involvement in the design of the mentoring program?
 - a. Were there other people who worked with you in designing the mentoring program?
 - b. If the program was established prior to you working with the program, can you tell me who were the people involved and their roles at the college?
5. In your own words, and being as detailed as possible, how would you describe the mentoring program?
6. In your opinion what specific factors were considered in designing the mentoring program? For example, student demographic population, available resources, or research on other campus programs.
7. How would you describe the process of identifying those specific factors considered in designing the mentoring program?
8. What factors do you think have the most influence on the effectiveness of the mentoring program? Why?
9. What factors do you think have the least influence on the effectiveness of the mentoring program? Why?
10. The BMI Funding Application asks each program director to outline the activities, frequency, relationship guidelines, and assessment, as elements of the program. Does your program include these design elements? If not, why not?
 - a. What other elements can you identify as part of your program beside those required by CUNY BMI program?
11. CUNY BMI describes the mentoring program as a culturally competent peer-to-peer mentoring program. How do you view cultural competency factoring into the design of the mentoring component of the program?
12. Is there any additional information you would like to me to know about the design of the program or about the program in general?

Appendix B

Letter of Invitation to BMI Program Director

Dear Mr./Ms. _____ (Program Director Name)

I am Jerrell W. Robinson, a doctoral student in the Executive Leadership Program at St. John Fisher College – Iona College Extension Site. I am writing to invite you to volunteer to participate in a research study on the CUNY Black Male Initiative Program that I will be conducting for my dissertation. My research topic is: *Program Directors' Perceptions on the Factors and Elements Involved in Designing Black Male Mentoring Programs at Community Colleges*. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study is to explore program directors' perceptions of how BMI structured mentoring programs supporting increased retention and graduation rates for Black males are designed at CUNY community colleges. You have been identified as the primary point of contact for the BMI program at your institution and your program has been recognized by CUNY BMI for exhibiting best practices in structured mentoring.

This research is significant because most of what we know about formal mentoring programs supporting Black males is based on research conducted on Black males attending 4-year institutions, and mainly focuses on their perceptions of the mentor/mentee relationship or the value of mentoring as a process. As a key administrator in the organization of a BMI program existing at a CUNY community college, your perception regarding the factors and design elements involved in designing the mentoring component of the program is also important.

My goal is to conduct a face-to-face interview with you, at an on-campus location of your choice. The interview would be scheduled for no more than an hour and a half. With your informed consent, the interview will be digitally audio recorded and transcribed following the interview. The interview will focus on your knowledge and understanding of the factors considered in designing the mentoring component of the BMI program, how each factor considered influenced the design of the mentoring component of the program, and the specific design elements that exist within the mentoring component of the program. After the interview is transcribed, I would like to send you a copy of the transcript of our conversations for your review. Your name will not be used in the transcript or in the research report. I would also appreciate your assistance in gathering mentoring program related documents. The gathered documents may include but are not limited to the following: annual reports, notes from planning meetings, project funding applications, mentoring training materials, budget, organizational structure, and/or recruitment materials.

I anticipate gathering program documents may take approximately one hour. You will also have an opportunity to review transcripts from our interviews, which may take an additional hour to review. I anticipate that the total potential time commitment over a six-month period will be between three and four hours. Your name will not be used in the transcript or in the research report, nor will the institution at which this research is being conducted be identified in reports.

If you are interested in participating in this research effort, please let me know by return email and I will contact you to review the consent form which I have attached to this email correspondence, and to select of a date, place, and time for the interview that

best fits your schedule. For your convenience, my contact information is included at the end of this letter.

All digital audio recordings and transcriptions of interviews will be maintained using a private, locked, and password-protected file and password-protected computer stored securely in the private home of the principal researcher. Electronic files will include assigned identity codes and pseudonyms; they will not include actual names or any information that could personally identify or connect participants to this study. Other materials, including notes or paper files related to data collection and analysis, will be stored securely in unmarked boxes, locked inside a cabinet in the private home of the principal researcher. Only the researcher will have access to electronic or paper records. The digitally recorded audio data will be kept by this researcher for a period of five years following publication of the dissertation. Signed informed consent documents will be kept for five years after publication. All paper records will be cross-cut shredded and professionally delivered for incineration. Electronic records will be cleared, purged, and destroyed from the hard drive and all devices such that restoring data is not possible.

I would appreciate your response by _____2019.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact: Jerrell W. Robinson (____)

_____ - cell _____@sjfc.edu or Dr. W. Jeff Wallis (____) _____ -

_____@sjfc.edu. Thanks for your time, and I hope you will decide to be a part of this

study. *Based on Program Director Invitation Letter found in Senegal, 2011, p. 200.

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

Title of study: Program Directors' Perceptions on the Factors and Elements Involved in Designing Black Male Mentoring Programs at Community Colleges

Name of researcher: Jerrell W. Robinson

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. W. Jeff Wallis Phone for further information: _____

Purpose of study: The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study is to explore and understand the perceptions of staff serving in a director capacity (“program directors”) of how BMI structured mentoring programs supporting increased retention and graduation rates for Black males are designed at CUNY community colleges

Place of study: _____

Length of participation: 60 minutes – 90 minutes

Method(s) of data collection: Data for this study will be collected by conducting one-on-one, in-person, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, and by analyzing program related documents.

Risks and benefits: There are no anticipated risks associated with this study. As a participant in this study, you have a right to request receipt of a copy of the summary of findings from this study, upon completion of the dissertation. With your consent the interview will be digitally audio recorded. The audio recordings will be transcribed by the researcher or by a transcription service.

Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy of subjects: In the written dissertation, a pseudonym will be used in place of your first name. The institution where you are employed will be generally described by type, size, and geographical location. Your information may be shared with appropriate governmental authorities ONLY if you or someone else is in danger, or if we are required to do so by law.

Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy of data collected: All digital audio recordings and transcriptions of interviews will be maintained using a private, locked, and password-protected file and password-protected computer stored securely in the private home of the principal researcher. Electronic files will include assigned identity codes and pseudonyms; they will not include actual names or any information that could personally identify or connect participants to this study. Other materials, including notes or paper files related to data collection and analysis, will be stored securely in unmarked boxes, locked inside a cabinet in the private home of the principal researcher. Only the researcher will have access to electronic or paper records. The digitally recorded audio data will be kept by this researcher for a period of five years following publication of the dissertation. Signed informed consent documents will be kept for five years after publication. All paper records will be cross-cut shredded and professionally delivered for incineration. Electronic records will be cleared, purged, and destroyed from the hard drive and all devices such that restoring data is not possible.

Your rights: As a research participant, you have the right to:

1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

3. Refuse to answer a question without penalty.
4. Be informed of the results of the study.

I have read the above, received a copy of this form, and I agree to participate in the above-named study.

Print name (Participant)	Signature	Date
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Print name (Investigator)	Signature	Date
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If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher(s) listed above.

The Institutional Review Board of St. John Fisher College has reviewed this project. For any concerns regarding this study/or if you feel that your rights as a participant (or the rights of another participant) have been violated or caused you undue distress (physical or emotional distress), please contact Jill Rathbun by phone during normal business hours at (____) _____ or irb@sjfc.edu. She will contact a supervisory IRB official to assist you.

Appendix D

Interview Protocol Form

Date _____

Start time _____

End time _____

Location _____

Interviewer _____

Interviewee _____

Release form signed? _____

Before we begin, do you have any objection to our conversation being recorded?

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview for my dissertation study. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study is to explore the perceptions of staff serving in a director capacity (“program directors”) of how BMI structured mentoring programs supporting increased retention and graduation rates for Black males are designed at CUNY community colleges. Specifically, I am interested in learning about your knowledge and understanding of the factors considered and the perceived impact of each factor on designing the BMI mentoring program, and the specific design elements that exist within the program. This information will be valuable in providing insight into the approaches CUNY community colleges take in designing the mentoring component of BMI mentoring programs and the specific design elements included in the program. In addition to providing further insight, this information may also lead to findings helping to

better understand and interpret how specific elements of a mentoring program are perceived as impacting variables associated with Black males dropping out of college.

The proposed research is a component of the dissertation for the Doctorate of Education Program. I will share results with participants, and the Executive Director of CUNY BMI upon successful completion and defense of the dissertation.

As mentioned previously, and stated in the informed consent form, your identity will be held in the strictest of confidence.

I anticipate our conversation will last anywhere from 1 hour to 1.5 hours. Do you have any questions before we get started? If at any time you choose not to answer a question, or wish to discontinue with the interview, please let me know.

1. Can you tell me about your position and why you were interested in working with the BMI program?
2. How long have you been involved with the BMI program?
3. How long has the BMI program existed at the college?
4. How would you describe your involvement in the design of the mentoring program?
 - a. Were there other people who worked with you in designing the mentoring program?
 - b. If the program was established prior to you working with the program, can you tell me who were the people involved and their roles at the college?
5. In your own words, and being as detailed as possible, how would you describe the mentoring program?
6. In your opinion what specific factors were considered in designing the mentoring program? For example, student demographic population, available resources, or research on other campus programs.
7. How would you describe the process of identifying those specific factors considered in designing the mentoring program?
8. What factors do you think have the most influence on the effectiveness of the mentoring program? Why?
9. What factors do you think have the least influence on the effectiveness of the mentoring program? Why?
10. The BMI Funding Application asks each program director to outline the activities, frequency, relationship guidelines, and assessment, as elements of the program. Does your program include these design elements? If not, why not?
 - a. What other elements can you identify as part of your program beside those required by CUNY BMI program?

11. CUNY BMI describes the mentoring program as a culturally competent peer-to-peer mentoring program. How do you view cultural competency factoring into the design of the mentoring component of the program?
12. Is there any additional information you would like to me to know about the design of the program or about the program in general?