A Quasi-experimental Study on the Effect of the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative Program on African American Males

Johana I. Rivera
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Abstract
The disappearance of African American males on college campuses has become a nationwide concern. This epidemic has resulted in the establishment of a variety of intervention programs to assist in closing this gap. This study investigated the Black Male Initiative (BMI) program at Medgar Evers College (MEC). Using a quasi-experimental design, it examined how this program addresses the dearth of African American males on college campuses. The study compared the success of African American males who participated in the BMI program with those who did not. In the context of this study, success was defined as persistence towards graduation, as measured by college GPA, high school GPA, high school attended, semesters attended, credits earned, semesters multiplied by college GPA, college GPA multiplied by credits earned and degree attainment. Using a quasi-experimental design, this quantitative study explored whether relationships exist between high school GPA and high school attended as predictors of college GPA. The findings indicate there is a strong relationship between BMI participants and college GPA, semesters attended, credits earned and degree attainment. Additionally, there was a weak relationship between high school GPA and college GPA, credits earned and semesters attended. An unexpected finding was how well foreign educated students fared as several of the tests conducted.

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A Quasi-experimental Study on the Effect of the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative Program on African American Males

By
Johana I. Rivera

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

Supervised by
Dr. Christopher Griffin, Ed.D.

Committee Member
Dr. Janice Kelly, Ph.D.

Ralph C. Wilson Jr. School of Education
St John Fisher College

August 2012
Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my sister and best friend Monica, my greatest cheerleader and advocate who inspires me every day to do better and be better; and who never doubted me even when I did. To Dan, whose love keeps me inspired. To my friend, colleague and classmate Nireata Seals, who introduced me to the program and continuously talked me off the ledge when I doubted the process. To friend and classmate Ellen Gambino, who provided inspiration and a model for me to follow and to my parents whose words of encouragement kept me going.

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An exclusive thank you to my advisor Dr. C. Michael Robinson from St. John Fisher College who brought leadership, integrity and inspiration into everything he did and who taught me to live by my leadership motto: “To HEAL: Help others recognize and reach their potential, Encourage those who come after me to be better, Always inspire courage, and to Leave the world better than I found it.”
Biographical Sketch

Johana I. Rivera is currently the Registrar at Medgar Evers College, in Brooklyn, New York. Ms. Rivera is a graduate of the City University of New York (CUNY), where she received a B.A. in English and a M.A. in Liberal Studies. She came to St. John Fisher College in the summer of 2010 and began doctoral studies in the Ed.D. program in Executive Leadership. Ms. Rivera pursued her research on the CUNY Black Male Initiative Program under the direction of Dr. Christopher Griffin and Dr. Janice Kelly and received the Ed.D degree in 2012.
Abstract

The disappearance of African American males on college campuses has become a nationwide concern. This epidemic has resulted in the establishment of a variety of intervention programs to assist in closing this gap. This study investigated the Black Male Initiative (BMI) program at Medgar Evers College (MEC). Using a quasi-experimental design, it examined how this program addresses the dearth of African American males on college campuses. The study compared the success of African American males who participated in the BMI program with those who did not. In the context of this study, success was defined as persistence towards graduation, as measured by college GPA, high school GPA, high school attended, semesters attended, credits earned, semesters multiplied by college GPA, college GPA multiplied by credits earned and degree attainment. Using a quasi-experimental design, this quantitative study explored whether relationships exist between high school GPA and high school attended as predictors of college GPA. The findings indicate there is a strong relationship between BMI participants and college GPA, semesters attended, credits earned and degree attainment. Additionally, there was a weak relationship between high school GPA and college GPA, credits earned and semesters attended. An unexpected finding was how well foreign educated students fared as several of the tests conducted.
# Table of Contents

Dedication ........................................................................................................................... ii

Biographical Sketch ........................................................................................................... iii

Abstract .............................................................................................................................. iv

List of Figures .................................................................................................................. viii

Chapter 1: Introduction ........................................................................................................1

  Problem Statement ........................................................................................................... 3

  Theoretical Rationale ....................................................................................................... 8

  Statement of Purpose ..................................................................................................... 11

  Research Questions ........................................................................................................ 14

  Significance of the Study ............................................................................................... 16

  Definition of Terms ....................................................................................................... 21

  Chapter Summary ......................................................................................................... 22

Chapter 2: Review of Literature ........................................................................................24

  Significant Empirical Findings ...................................................................................... 36

  Chapter Summary ......................................................................................................... 40

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology ........................................................................41

  Research Participants ..................................................................................................... 46

  Instruments to be Used in Data Collection .................................................................... 49

  Procedures for Data Analysis ......................................................................................... 51

  Summary of the Methodology ....................................................................................... 52
List of Tables

Table 4.1 Enrollment: Spring 2007-Fall 2008 ...........................................................59
Table 4.2 BMI Participation 2007-2008 .................................................................60
Table 4.3 Variables: 2007-2008 .............................................................................62
Table 4.4 Number of BMI and non-BMI students who obtained a degree ............90
Table 4.5 Number of students who obtained a degree as measured by high
    school attended ....................................................................................................92
Table 5.1 CUNY programs not funded in 2013 ....................................................110
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Bar graph of projected working population by race in 1980-2020.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Bar graph of African American male enrollment by college 2003-2009.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Bar graph of AP exam participants by race.</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Bar graph of college enrollment by race 1976-2007.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Cylinder chart: Percentage of ethnic composition at Medgar Evers College:</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2010.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Cylinder chart of African American enrollment at Medgar Evers College:</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2007-Fall 2008.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Boxplot of average college GPA for African American students:</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Frequency table of college GPA.</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Frequency table of high school GPA.</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Boxplot of average college GPA indicated by high school attended.</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Scatterplot of high school GPA as a predictor of college GPA.</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Graph of participation in BMI and high school attended as predictors of</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>college GPA.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Scatterplot of participation in BMI and high school GPA as predictors of</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>college GPA.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Boxplot of median semesters attended: 2007-2008.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.9  Boxplot of average semesters attended as indicated by high school attended .................................................................71

Figure 4.10  Graph of mean semesters attended as indicated by high school attended ..................................................................................72

Figure 4.11  Average semesters attended as indicated by high school GPA .................................................................73

Figure 4.12  Frequency table of credits earned .................................................................................................................................74

Figure 4.13  Boxplot of average credits earned .................................................................................................................................75

Figure 4.14  Boxplot of average credits earned as compared to high school attended .................................................................................76

Figure 4.15  Scatterplot of average credits earned as compared to high school GPA ..................................................................................77

Figure 4.16  Graph of mean credits earned by high school attended .............................................................................................................78

Figure 4.17  Graph of credits earned compared to high school GPA .............................................................................................................79

Figure 4.18  Boxplot of semesters x GPA ...............................................................................................................................................80

Figure 4.19  Boxplot of mean semesters x GPA viewed by high school attended ......................................................................................81

Figure 4.20  Scatterplot of semesters x GPA view by high school GPA .............................................................................................................82

Figure 4.21  Graph of mean semesters x GPA viewed by high school attended ..........................................................................................83

Figure 4.22  Scatterplot of mean semesters x GPA viewed by high school GPA ..........................................................................................84

Figure 4.23  Boxplot of mean GPA x credits ...........................................................................................................................................85

Figure 4.24  Boxplot of GPA x credits as viewed by high school attended .................................................................................................86

Figure 4.25  Scatterplot of GPA x credits as viewed by high school GPA .................................................................................................87

Figure 4.26  Graph of mean GPA x credits as viewed by high school attended ...........................................................................................88

Figure 4.27  Scatterplot of GPA x credits as viewed by high school GPA .................................................................................................89
Figure 4.28  Bar graph of percentage of BMI and non-BMI students who
obtained a degree .................................................................91

Figure 4.29  Bar graph of percentage of all students who obtained a degree as
measured by high school attended ..............................................93

Figure 4.30  African American male students 2007-2008 Non-BMI. Bar graph
of percentage of students who obtained a degree as viewed by high
school attended........................................................................94

Figure 4.31  African American male students 2007-2008 BMI. Bar graph of
percentage of students who obtained a degree as viewed by high
school attended........................................................................95

Figure 4.32  African American male students 2007-2008 Non-BMI. Histogram
of college GPA .........................................................................96

Figure 4.33  African American male students 2007-2008 BMI. Histogram of
college GPA ............................................................................97

Figure 4.34  African American male students 2007-2008 Non-BMI. Histogram
of semesters attended ............................................................98

Figure 4.35  African American male students 2007-2008 BMI. Histogram of
semesters attended ...............................................................99
Chapter 1: Introduction

In recent years, terms such as crisis, at-risk, marginal, and endangered described the plight of young African American males. The most important quality of life indicators suggested that African American males are in trouble (Noguera, 2002). The connection between lower degree attainment among African American men and the economic impact was profound. As the demand for a more highly educated workforce increases, the economic impact of lower degree attainment among African American males became even more significant. Esters and Mosby (2007) stated, “Colleges must certainly recognize that the cost of implementing programs to improve the success of black men could be substantial; however, the return on their investment is far more rewarding to the nation than the possible costs of creating the programs.” (Esters & Mosby, 2007, par. 7).

The low engagement of African American students not only affects the individual students but our society as a whole. A national report describes the importance of investing in educational engagement and achievement for minority students (The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2005). This report projects that by the year 2020 the workforce will undergo a transformation as the working population of whites decline to 63% while the working population of African Americans will increase (10%-13%) and Hispanics will triple (6%-17%) as represented in Figure 1.1.
To address dropout rates among African American males, leaders in higher education are developing new programs and initiatives to engage African American men in higher education. These initiatives are designed to increase the achievement, engagement, and participation levels among these underrepresented groups. University-based programs address issues faced by African American males specializing in student support and instructional programs. Such programs include components such as mentoring, leadership development, and training.

The goals of the Black Male Initiative (BMI) programs are to increase retention and graduation rates of African American males. The program focuses on providing pipeline programs to strengthen academic skills, improve self-confidence, improve professional mobility of students, and partner with institutions, non-profits, and community based organizations throughout New York City.

This study began with an analysis of the factors that place African American males at greater risk, and how these factors shape the relationship targeting this population to increase their presence, retention, and graduation in higher education. This study examined theories associated with these indicators and strategies that counter these effects. The educational performance and progression of African American males has
received an extensive amount of local and national attention. The primary reason is that African American males are underachieving significantly according to national measures of academic achievement (Garibaldi, 2007).

**Problem Statement**

According to the Justice Policy Institute (2002), by the end of the century, there were a third more African American men in prison and jail than in universities or colleges.

In 2000, there were approximately 791,600 African American men under the jurisdiction of state and federal prison systems and in local jails. That same year, there were 603,032 African American men enrolled in higher education. This means there were 188,500 more African American men incarcerated than in higher education at the millennium. (p. 9).

The nation’s future depends on raising the skill levels of all its citizens. If African American males are not benefiting from higher education, there will be negative repercussions for families and the work force. Exploring strategies for assisting African American males to enter and succeed in college is in the best interest of the students, the colleges, and society at large (Cuyjet, 2006). Educators are gatekeepers to the power and status that accompanies educational attainment. It is essential that researchers and practitioners recognize and embrace their responsibility to increase the numbers of African American male college graduates (Bailey, 2003).

Institutions nationwide have developed programs targeting African American males and developing strategies to assist in helping them graduate. In 2003, the educational system in Georgia charged a subcommittee to identify programs of
excellence for increasing access for African American males in higher education (Allen et al., 2003). The programs ranged from intense summer instruction of high school students to weekend retreats encouraging African American males to pursue advanced degrees. Contributors recommended collecting a set of best practices and successful programs both in Georgia and nationwide that they would use to develop a model of their own (Allen et al., 2003).

Successful programs identified as best practices included reaching out to African American males as early as the third grade. One such summer enrichment program reached out to ninth graders to focus on reading, writing, language arts, math, computer applications, and study skills. Other best practices noted, include training in self-management, business skills, valuing diversity, and community involvement/leadership. These programs reached out to “at risk” African American males throughout their academic career. Many of these programs boasted amazing results. In the first 3 years of one of the program’s inception, over 3000 students have participated. Additionally, the program reports that students who participated in the program averaged a 2.90 GPA as compared to a GPA of 2.26 of students who did not participate in the program. Additionally, “97% of the participants graduate from high school and 77% of those tracked reported attending a 2-year or 4-year college.” (Allen et al., 2003, p.12).

In 2005, the Children’s Aid Society launched the African American Male Initiative to respond to the growing concern of why African American males were trailing in school and to bring about change. The initiative aimed to more fully understand the issues facing African American male students and create new program strategies that will better address the needs of this population. The program provided
four main services (a) Life coach who serves as a mentor, (b) Saturday academy, which provides cultural enrichment activities, (c) Academic support after school and, (d) Everyday heroes – African American male volunteers to provide mentoring and serve as role models (Morgan, 2008).

Another program claiming great success is the Morgan State University’s Male Initiative on Leadership and Excellence (MILE). Founded in 2003, the program supported minority males in pursuit of academic and personal success. The program aimed to help African American male students navigate towards graduation, provide a sense of purpose, and inspire academic and personal confidence. The programs’ vision helped navigate the difficulties in transitioning from high school to college. In hopes of increasing academic success and better graduation rates, Morgan State offered programs that inspire and help to improve students’ perceptions of their self-value and potential. MILE’s core values include the encouragement of critical thinking and dialogue, fostering a brotherhood atmosphere, valuing a broadening perception of ourselves and recognizing that personal success is connected to world and community success (Morgan State University, 2009).

For the first time in American history, closing the racial achievement gap had become a national priority. There is evidence that on every major indicator from wages, to health, to criminal justice, and housing, race continues to matter in profound and significant ways (Noguera, 2010). Despite superficial gains in college access, the racial achievement gap persists with African American males. If we are to assist African American male students in beating the odds against their success in higher education, educators must examine the nature of their experiences as college students. Thus, the
purpose of this study was to explore a college program targeting African American male achievement.

In 2005, the City University of New York (CUNY) launched a Black Male Initiative (BMI) program to target the low number of enrolled African-American men in the CUNY system. The program’s goal was to recruit, retain, and graduate more African American males in higher education. Each year CUNY dedicated $2.25 million to achieve this goal. The money funded the creation of BMI Centers at each of the campuses, hiring of directors, mentors, and programs to encourage African American males to apply to college and participate in activities once there. The $2.25 million a year also included GED programs, and academic interventions intended to strengthen academic skill-sets, improve self-confidence, and develop personal goals.

A review of the Institutional Research Board indicated that many of the CUNY colleges continued to show a decrease in the number of African Americans enrolled on their campuses (OIRA, 2010). Figure 1.2 represents all of the comprehensive and senior colleges in the CUNY system and their respective enrollments of African American students from 2003-2009. Two colleges represented are showing as much as a 9.0% decrease.
Programs dedicated to address concerns of these underrepresented groups have recently come under attack. In 2006, Schmidt reports that the New York Civil Rights Coalition filed a federal complaint challenging CUNY’s BMI proposal as discriminatory. The complaint alleged that the program violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits racial discrimination by colleges receiving federal assistance and prohibits sex discrimination by such institutions (Schmidt, 2006). The question is whether institutions can implement programs to help young African American males, while staying clear of these racial discrimination claims. CUNY forged ahead and implemented BMI programs at several of its institutions and continued to expand programs to help young African American males transition and succeed in higher education.

Figure 1.2. Bar graph of African American male enrollment by college 2003-2009.
Theoretical Rationale

This study examined a university-based program intended to attract and retain African American males in order to understand the degree to which these programs were effective. This topic was examined through the theoretical lens of Emile Durkheim’s (1953) theory of social integration. Durkheim’s theory centered on an individual’s inability to integrate into society. When an individual is unable to assimilate or integrate into society (make friends and long lasting relationships), he/she permanently withdraws, therefore, committing suicide from society.

Durkheim’s (1953) Theory of Social Integration focuses on the four types of suicides: egoistic suicide describe how too little social integration isolates the individual; altruistic suicide discusses an immersion or too much integration; anomic suicide consists of four categories acute economic anomie, chronic economic anomie, acute domestic anomie and chronic domestic anomie; fatalistic is the last type of suicide (Thompson, 1982). The issue of social integration and persistence has been of serious concern as it relates to underrepresented students. For African American males who pursue higher education, society convinced them that true success is only in the presence of white people. “As a result, the students fail to graduate unless they assimilate thus losing any sense of cultural identity.” (Gassaway, 2006, p. 2).

An example of altruistic suicide is seen in African American males who choose to immerse themselves into a life a crime in order to “fit in” with the society around them and therefore lose sight of their own individuality. The anomic suicide has four categories, which include social integration with religion, wealth, and power, death of a loved one, and relationships between men and women. In each of the categories, there is
a risk of losing one’s identity to fully assimilate into a new environment. Durkheim’s (1953) theory of social integration applied in these circumstances.

Durkheim’s suicide types detailed a permanent withdrawal (suicide) from society. This theory tied into William Spady’s (1970) student attrition model and the theory of persistence. “Durkheim’s contribution to the study of the relationship between society and health is immeasurable. Perhaps most important is the contribution he has made to the understanding of how social integration and cohesion influence mortality.” (Berkman, Glass, Brissette, & Seeman, 2000, p. 844).

Spady (1970) was the first sociologist to develop a persistence theory modeled after Durkheim’s work. In Spady’s Student Attrition Conceptual Model, he compared Durkheim’s (1953) suicide theory to a process of college students who drop out. Spady (1970) suggested that students not supported by the institution through available resources so as to maintain good grades are likely to drop out as well. He detailed how both social and academic integration are critical influences on a student’s persistence. He proposed five variables: grade performance, intellectual development, normative congruence (patterns of interactions with others), friendship support, and social integration (Summers, 2003).

Durkheim (1953) and Spady (1970) set the foundation for other theories to discuss behavior and persistence as it related to students. In the sections that follow, we begin to understand the theories associated with integration, faculty-student relationships, non-traditional students, student involvement, race, ethnicity, and the environment. These elements help us understand how it affects behaviors and persistence in students.
The researcher examined in depth other theories, which had been influenced by Durkheim (1953) and Spady (1970). Hurtado and Carter (1997) discussed the sense of belonging theory. This theory examined how understanding a student’s sense of belonging may be the key to understanding how social and academic experiences affect them. To understand the sense of belonging theory, one must understand how culturally related organizations are important in how students view their membership in a college community. It is essential for students in a new environment to feel a sense of “fitting in”, to feel welcomed and that they are part of something, this served as the foundation for many other theorists. Astin (1970), like Spady (1970), conducted groundbreaking research on access and persistence. Astin’s development of the content theory portrayed students in a passive role, simply recipients of information (Astin, 1999). Tinto developed the Student Integration Model (SIM), which described how a student's tendency to stay in college relates to the degree to which the student feels integrated into the social and academic life of the college (Elkins, Braxton, & James, 2000).

Later, through their research, Pascarella and Terenzini (1979) explored the interaction effects of Spady (1970) and Tinto’s (1975) work. Their theory focused on the interactions and interrelationships between students and faculty (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1979). Bean and Metzner (1985) conducted research on the non-traditional student (older, part-time and commuter student). Their model focused on academic variables such as grade point average, high school performance, and psychological values, including satisfaction, family acceptance and stress on student outcomes. Tierney (1992) examined the minority element present in higher education. He suggested that minority
students must assimilate into the cultural mainstream and abandon their ethnic identities to succeed on predominantly white campuses (Metz, 2002).

Students may ultimately leave the institution because they cannot meet the expectations or deal with the rigors associated with maintaining good academic grades. Students who do not share values with other students, do not interact socially and do not feel compatible with the social system of college are more likely to drop out (Summers, 2003). Black Male Initiative (BMI) programs built their foundation on these same variables. Their program focused on providing pipeline programs to strengthen academic skills, improve self-confidence, improve professional mobility of students and partner with institutions, non-profits, and community based organizations throughout New York City.

Statement of Purpose

The Male Development and Empowerment Center (MDEC) at Medgar Evers College is just one of many programs that assist African American males. The program goals are to:

- Guide all men successfully into higher education and/or the workforce.
- Develop a desire for intellectual growth and development in pursuit of self-actualization.
- Emphasize fundamental values and traits of good character.
- Provide an understanding and appreciation of their place in history and position as role models in their respective communities.
- Develop leadership skills and an entrepreneurial mind-set that will allow them to become change agents in their respective communities
Programs such as these include various mentoring and job training programs that match youth with adult role models; rites of passage programs aimed at socializing and preparing young males for manhood, fatherhood and community responsibility (Noguera, 1997). Another such program was the Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA). CBMA (2008) has helped in narrowing down the three areas that shape life outcomes of African American males – education, family, and work. The campaign promoted education equity, provides tools to become empowered citizens and helps to fund resources for African American men and boys (Open Society, 2008). A preliminary review of the data indicates that despite dedicated resources throughout CUNY, colleges continue to struggle in enrolling and retaining African American males (OIRA, 2010).

Numerous social and economic indicators point with alarming consistency to the fact that large numbers of individuals who fall within the social categories of African American and male are in crisis. They lead the nation in homicides, both as victims and perpetrators and in what observers regard as an alarming trend; they now have the fastest growing rate for suicide (Center for Disease Control, 2009). For the last several years, African American males contracted HIV and AIDS at a faster rate than any other population (Center for Disease Control, 2006). Even as babies, African American males have the highest probability of dying in the first year of life, and as they grow older they face the unfortunate reality of being the only group in the United States experiencing a decline in life expectancy (Center for Disease Control, 2008).

This study investigated the success rate of African American male students who participated in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative Program. The purpose of this study was to investigate if African American male students are persisting towards
graduation as measured by variables collected by the researcher. The objectives of Black Male Initiative (BMI) programs at CUNY are to identify the obstacles of African American males in college admissions and retention; devise and support programmatic interventions to mitigate those obstacles; and provide a small annual budget to accomplish goals one and two (Bobb, 2006).

African American male graduates and CUNY can be traced back to 1884. William Hallett Green was the first African American graduate of City College, the flagship CUNY institution, which was then named the Free Academy. Mr. Greene graduated in 1884 at the age of 19 and went on to be the first black member of the U.S. Army Signal Corps. (The City College of New York). Although the CUNY colleges had been known for their selectiveness in earlier years, the doors were flung wide for open admissions in 1969. College encountered a flood of immigrants from Mexico, Latin America, the Caribbean and East Asia (Glazier, 1998). With the new student population, the colleges as a system had to change to meet the demands of their students.

Gassaway (2006) states that Black Male Initiative (BMI) programs acknowledge African American men are invisible on college campuses. The City University of New York’s (CUNY) goal is to increase the presence and success of this population. Programs such as BMI pledge to cultivate partnerships among African American males aspiring to the same goal. Brochures and websites describe how through mentoring, these young men are able to bond and collaborate with each other in order to become change agents on campus and in the community. The common theory underlying each of these indicators is an assumption that by specifically targeting the needs of African American males, we can serve them better.
Research Questions

1) Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as college GPA? Do the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as college GPA? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and college GPA?

2) Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as semesters attended? Do the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as semesters attended? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and semesters attended?

3) Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as total credits? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as total credits? Do the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and total credits?

4) Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as GPA multiplied by semesters? Do the type
of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as GPA multiplied by semesters? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and GPA multiplied by semesters?

5) Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as GPA multiplied by total credits? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as GPA multiplied by total credits? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and GPA multiplied by total credits?

6) Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as attainment of a degree? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as attainment of a degree? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and attainment of a degree?

Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot (2005) suggested students whose higher education was never presented to them as important, need the support of focused and intentional initiatives, tailored to their individual needs. BMI programs are multi-layered programs that seek to intervene in the lives of underrepresented African American males. These programs help to draw them to college and keep them there until they graduate. It helps
them avoid the sociological hazards that befall these men in disproportionate numbers. BMI programs claim to maintain social virtues, stress the value of an education, the satisfaction of good citizenship, and the importance of exercising personal responsibility.

**Significance of the Study**

The achievement gap for African American males in higher education widens on a daily basis. This crisis is now a national concern. Colleges nationwide are concerned with the gradual disappearance of African American males on their campuses. This study looked at students who participated in such programs and presented how they fared compared to students who do not participate in these programs. The research informs the higher education community and can provide a springboard for additional studies and further findings.

The results of this study has brought awareness in determining whether resources dedicated are sufficient and whether the outcomes are beneficial to both students and the colleges. College administrators can assess the data collected in order to determine if changes in the programs offered are necessary and how resources are used. Literature on African American males in higher education is vast. Theories on departure, retention, and achievement gaps are also widely available. The literature detailed variables that administrators must be aware of when working with this population, but there is a real need for a model on creating successful BMI programs. This study generated enough interest in how resources are spent to warrant a true assessment of the programs being offered in CUNY and a desire to create such a model on best practices to assist this population.
Support programs such as BMI promised to help close the achievement gap. Over the past decade, legislation has focused on this as well. The primary focus of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and other curricular reform efforts, was to narrow the achievement gaps by ensuring that all students are academically prepared for college. Many states responding to NCLB have increased minority student access to rigorous coursework. The literature cited the importance of making significant investments in high quality education for African American students as they continue to be underrepresented among the nation's high achievers.

States responded to No Child Left Behind by increasing access to rigorous coursework, only five of the fifty states eliminated the racial/ethnic equity gaps that persist in Advanced Placement (AP) classrooms. African Americans are "significantly underrepresented in AP classrooms nationwide" (The College Board, 2007, p. 8). This same article also reports that while African American students represent 13.7% of the national student population, only 6% of those minority students took an AP exam. Unfortunately, even with increased access to AP courses, there have been no significant changes in the equity gap since the year 2000. In fact, the percentage of African American students only increased by 0.9% by 2006. Furthermore, a significant percentage of those African American students, who participated in the 2006 AP exams, still performed lower than most other students, as represented in Figure 1.3.
According to Strayhorn (2008), “African American males today, represent the exact same proportion of all students enrolled in American colleges as they did in 1976.” (p. 27). The United States Department of Education (2009) reported that of over 18 million undergraduate students in the United States, only 10% are African American males. This study detailed the number of African American males enrolled as it compares to all the other populations nationwide. In 1976, the African American male enrollment was 8.1% as compared to 83% of their White counterparts and 3.6% of Hispanic counterparts. In 1990, they represented 7.7%; in 2004 10.3% and in 2007 10.7%. Whites enrolled at percentages of 77%, 67%, and 65% respectively and Hispanic enrolled at 5.6%, 10.1% and 11% respectively. Similarly, White female students out enrolled African American and Hispanic female students at similar rates as represented in Figure 1.4 (USDE, 2009). Figure 1.4 represents the total fall enrollment in degree-granting
institutions, by race/ethnicity, sex, attendance status, and level of student: Selected years, 1976 through 2007.

Figure 1.4. Bar graph of college enrollment by race 1976-2007.

The literature presented evidence that African American students’ culture sabotages their educational opportunity to achieve. In identifying the major problems of educating African American students, recent studies focused on the barriers created by cultural and school factors. Ogbu (2003) identifies African American cultural resistance to education as the primary blame for the academic gap. Although controversial, he found that African American students choose not to enroll in challenging courses. Accordingly, Ogbu's findings consistently demonstrate that “low-effort syndrome” may be more to blame than race relations may. Ogbu studies the enrollment gap in advanced courses and programs and concludes "...discrimination alone is not the cause of the low
school performance” (Ogbu, 2003, p. 45). Noguera’s (2002) research echoes Ogbu’s theory on self-sabotage:

Black males often adopt behaviors that contribute to their own failure. It is not just that they are more likely to be punished or placed in remedial classes; it is also that they are more likely to act out in the classroom and to avoid challenging themselves academically. Black males are not merely passive victims, but may also be active agents in their own failure means that interventions designed to help them must consider this. Changing policies, creating new programs, and opening new opportunities will accomplish little if such efforts are not accompanied by strategies to actively engage black males and their families in taking responsibility to improve their circumstances. (Noguera, 2002).

Black males who surround themselves with like-minded, academically driven peers seem to experience academic success. Children, who do not have role models to emphasize the importance of college, will most likely never pursue it. Whereas, children who have parents, guardians, and friends who highlight college as essential, will tend to apply and persist. Universities “might consider using support mechanisms that actively engage peers to influence student success. With this learning community, universities can promote and enhance academic success, foster peer accountability, and encourage learning outside as well as inside the classroom.” (Palmer, Davis, & Maramba, 2010, p. 99).
This study was significant because it provided an empirical basis for various college practitioners. The data helped to expand our knowledge of the challenges and opportunities in developing educational programs and institutional practices. These opportunities support African American male students to degree attainment. This study represented an important contribution to our literature. It extended our understanding about the ways in which academic variables, such as credits earned and college GPA may be predictors to a successful college career. It is possible for schools to take actions that can reverse the patterns of low achievement among African American males. The fact that some schools and programs manage to do so successfully is further evidence that there is a possibility of altering these trends.

**Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of this study, the researcher will define the following terms as follows:

**African American** – in relationship to this study, the term African American describes individuals from African and American descent and is used interchangeably with black or black American. It is important to note that at Medgar Evers College from 1970-2009 used an ethnicity choice for black which was inclusive of Caribbean descent. It was only in 2011 that the ethnicity criteria was restructured to include other categories.

**BMI** – this term refers to Black Male Initiative which is aimed at assisting African American males persist in higher education.

**CUNY** – this refers to the City University of New York, which is the governing body of 17 New York City college campuses.
MDEC Cohort – this term describes a group of students at Medgar Evers College who participated in the Male Development and Empowerment Center (2007-2008).

Participant – for the purpose of this study, the term participant applies to a student who attended at least one BMI program activity.

Student Departure – for the purpose of this study, this term refers to students who enroll in a four-year institution and depart during their first year of enrollment.

Student Persistence – for the purpose of this study, this term refers to students who complete a semester of enrollment in college and re-enrolls for a second semester. This term also describes students who remain in institutions until they earn their college degree.

Student Retention – refers to the enrollment of two consecutive terms. In the case of this study, retention relates to students who enrolled in the fall and spring semester of the same academic year.

Success – for the purpose of this study, the term success will apply to progress towards graduation.

Chapter Summary

When students leave college prematurely the results can be devastating, particularly for African American male students who may never return to the institution. This chapter has provided an overview of the problem. Each of the sections above, were devoted to a specific aspect of this research. The next chapter will provide an overview of the literature specific to issues related to African American males in higher education.

This study has discussed how Durkheim’s work on suicide types is the foundation for other theories that develop in later years. Durkheim’s suicide types were prevalent in
theories developed by Tinto (1975, 1987), Tierney (1992, 1999) and others. The Black Male Initiative programs discussed culture, ethnicity, and environment as features of the program. The purpose of these programs are to help African American males succeed in college while still allowing them to be culturally responsible and take pride in their ethnicity. Chapter 2 will provide an in depth review of the foundational theory and research, while Chapter 3 will reflect the methodology used for the study. In Chapter 4 the results will be revealed and in Chapter 5 there will be a discussion of the finding and future research.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter will discuss the literature related to recruiting and retaining African American males in higher education. The first section of the chapter provides some background and the goals of African American males in higher education. The sections that follow will concentrate on the theoretical models that apply to the impact of student integration, retention, and departure on male student persistence as well as, current findings on retention and persistence among African American male students, exploring themes related to institutional culture and engagement.

The purpose of this study was to present information on how African American males who participated in the Medgar Evers College (MEC) Black Male Initiative (BMI) program persisted towards graduation as measured by college GPA, high school GPA, high school attended, semesters attended, credits earned, semesters multiplied by college GPA, college GPA multiplied by credits earned and degree attainment. The objectives of the Black Male Initiative (BMI) programs at the City University of New York (CUNY) were to identify the obstacles of African American males in college admissions and retention; devise and support programmatic interventions to mitigate those obstacles; and provide a small annual budget to accomplish the first two goals (Bobb, 2006).

In 2005, the City University of New York launched a Black Male Initiative program to target the low number of enrolled African-American men in the CUNY system. The program’s goal was to recruit, retain, and graduate more African American males in higher education and each year CUNY dedicates $2.25 million to do so.
The research on student engagement for African American male college students suggests that when colleges design educational programs, college leaders need to consider academic and social interactions of African American male students. Student social and academic integration in higher education plays a major role in determining the level of commitment the student has to degree completion at a particular institution (Swail, Redd, & Perna, 2003). The section below focused on theories regarding social integration, student attrition, sense of belonging, student involvement, student integration, interaction theory, faculty/student relationships, and the minority element as it relates to African American males in higher education.

**Emile Durkheim’s Theory of Social Integration.** Durkheim (1953) defined suicide, as “all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result.” (Kushner & Sterk, 2005, p. 2). Durkheim presented a theory of permanent withdrawal (suicide) from society. This theory was defined as four types of suicides: the first was egoistic suicide, which resulted from too little social integration, that is individuals who are not bound to social groups; isolated. Durkheim stated that single males in particular have less to bind and connect them and therefore, commit suicide at higher rates.

The second type was altruistic suicide, which is a result of too much integration. This type is the opposite of egoistic suicide; it occurs when individuals in social groups lose sight of their individuality and become willing to sacrifice themselves for the group’s interests. Durkheim stated that this type was common among members of the military. The regiment and discipline of military life teaches soldiers a sense of unity. This unity has strong ties to loyalty, trust and brotherhood. Often times, these individuals
lose their own identity in order to be accepted into the new environment and become part of a culture.

The third type was anomic suicide, which was broken down into four categories. The first was acute economic anomie, which is when traditional institutions such as church and government fail to exercise the moral restraints on a capitalist society. The second was chronic economic anomie, the fallacy that wealth and power provide happiness. Durkheim (1953) stated higher suicide rates among the wealthy than the poor. The third was acute domestic anomie – caused by sudden changes/disruptions to your home life, such as the death of a spouse or child, which may make an individual distraught and suicidal. Finally, the fourth category was chronic domestic anomie. This referred to the way marriage regulates the sexual and behavioral needs to balance men and women. Durkheim’s last suicide type was fatalistic suicide; the disenchantment of an unfulfilling life may drive an individual to suicide (Thompson, 1982).

**Spady’s Student Attrition Conceptual Model.** Spady (1970) was the first sociologist to develop a persistence theory modeled after Durkheim’s work. Spady developed the Student Attrition Conceptual Model, in which he compared Durkheim’s suicide theory to a process of college students who drop out. “While Durkheim’s work presented a theory on permanent withdrawal (suicide) from society, Spady suggested that students have specific characteristics and goals, thus academic performance in college became a dominant influence affecting student behavior.” (Metz, 2002, p. 5).

Spady’s (1970) model focused on two aspects of Durkheim’s theory; shared group values and friendship support are expected to reduce suicide, and by analogy to his attrition model, reduce dropout. Spady identified background characteristics such as
family background, academic potential and socio-economic status as important characteristics in the dropout process (Bean, 1981). He proposed five variables: grade performance, intellectual development, friendship support, social integration, and normative congruence (Summers, 2003). Spady defined normative congruence as the pattern of interaction with others and used five areas of measurement “(1) patterns of relationships and expectations from high school; (2) personality dimensions; (3) intellectual, moral and vocational values; (4) attitudes towards the university, and (5) three measures of sub-cultural orientation” (Bean, 1981, p. 5).

**Hurtado and Carter’s Sense of Belonging.** Hurtado and Carter (1997) studied how a sense of belonging allows researchers to “assess which forms of social interaction (academic and social) further enhance students' affiliation and identity with their colleges” (p.328). They built a model of students’ sense of belonging where key objectives were to test the significance contribution of college transition experiences and the environment for racial-ethnic diversity to students’ sense of belonging. The results indicated a strong relationship between students' sense of belonging for student who engaged in discussions of course content with other students outside class. Students who tutored other students and spoke with faculty outside the classroom also reported a high sense of belonging compared with those who did not engage in these activities (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Hurtado and Carter’s (1997), theory parallels that of Tinto’s (1987) social and academic integration.

Additional findings show that students’ membership in religious organizations is the most significantly related to students' sense of belonging. Participation in organizations such as sororities, fraternities, and the student government has significant
but somewhat weaker effects on students' sense of belonging in different years. “These findings all suggest that not only the nature of the integration construct but when it is measured during a student's career stage may affect the results and interpretation” (Hurtado & Carter, 1997, p. 339).

Students with the best intentions on degree completion can become aggravated or discouraged by a lack of institution commitment. Lack of institutional commitment will dissociate students who are looking to make a connection with the school and this deficiency will likely alienate students. Black Male Initiative (BMI) programs aimed to connect underrepresented African American male students to the college. The aim of the program was to provide a sense of belonging so students will stay because they felt a connection to the institution (City University of New York, 2005).

**Van Gennep’s Rites of Passage.** Van Gennep (1960), studied tribal societies; rites of passage are rituals designed to move individuals from one stage of their development to another. These rituals are examined as they take place throughout the individual's life. The reaching of adulthood for men and women is one of the most common rituals. Van Gennep argued that all cultures have similar rituals. He believed the rituals are a crucial part of every society, and that without their existence, cultures would not survive.

Van Gennep (1960) argues that the process of relationship transmission between groups is marked by three phases. These rites of passage are referred to as separation, transition, and incorporation. According to Van Gennep, each state consists of pattern changes and interactions between the individual and the members of society. The first is separation; it involved separating oneself from past associations. This included a severe
decline in interactions with members from the group where the individual has come. The second was transition; in this stage, the individual begins to interact with members from the new group where membership is being sought. This stage echoes Hurtado and Carter’s (1997), Sense of Belonging theory. Students “transitional experiences play a key role in determining the students' sense of belonging. By modeling aspects of transition, we also identified areas that can be influenced by specific institutional interventions.” (p. 330). The final and third stage was incorporation, where the individual takes on new patterns of interaction with members from the new group.

**Astin’s Student Involvement Theory.** Astin (1970), like Spady (1970), conducted groundbreaking research on access and persistence. In 1970, Astin developed the content theory, which portrayed students in a passive role, simply recipients of information. In this model, the student was passive while the faculty and university programs develop them. In 1984, he updated his theory to present an input-environment-output model for student involvement theory. The input referred to students enrolling in college and student’s characteristics (sex, race, and ethnicity). The environment referred to the college’s environment (programs, faculty, resources, etc.) and finally the output was how students changed because of their interaction with the environment. This new concept discussed students as active participants in the learning process. Astin suggested that involvement is an active role that requires that the student devote both physical and psychological energy to the academic experience (Astin, 1999).

Astin (1993) further investigated college impact and student involvement, specifically concentrating on the environment as an important factor. College experience has the potential to affect any aspect of a student’s life, “student’s development –
cognitive and affective, psychological and behavioral – is affected in some way by peer group characteristics. Generally, students tend to change their values, behavior, and academic plans in the direction of the dominant orientation of their peer group.” (p. 363). Astin detailed that motivation is an important aspect of involvement, but also emphasized that behavioral aspects are critical “it is not so much what the individual thinks or feels, but what the individual does, how he or she behaves, that defines and identifies involvement.” (Astin, 1999, p. 519).

**Tinto’s Student Integration Model.** Tinto developed the Student Integration Model (SIM), which described how a student's tendency to stay in college relates to the degree to which the student feels integrated into the social and academic life of the college. Tinto’s model included variables such as backgrounds, initial commitments to college study, and interactions with peers as contributors to social and academic integration. Tinto drew a parallel to Durkheim’s (1953) theory that social integration equates to a desire to live, as Tinto’s academic integration equates to success. Similarly, as Durkheim’s (1953) alienation or failure to integrate equates to withdrawal and suicide, Tinto’s disengagement with the college experience equates to dropping out.

Tinto’s (1987) research discussed incongruence and isolation. Incongruence is the outcome of poor quality interactions between the individual and other members of the institution. Departure occurs when the “individuals find the intellectual demands of the institution insufficiently stimulating…unlike incongruence; isolation is largely the outcome of lack of interaction between the person and other members of the institution” (pp. 5–6).
Tinto’s theory suggested that students arrive at college with certain expectations and aspirations. Their interaction with other students, college administration, and their involvement in extracurricular activities help shape their progress (Elkins, Braxton, & James, 2000). Black Male Initiative (BMI) programs theorized the same concept by integrating students with programs and individuals to which they can relate and thereby increasing students’ likelihood for success.

Tinto’s revised Student Integration Model indicated different factors associated with student attrition and persistence. Tinto defined academic and social integration as an outcome of persistence. The research examined how gender, ethnicity, social-economic, psychological and interactions with others contribute to students’ success and persistence. By associating the theory to the research, one may identify how the variables relate to the persistence of African American males.

Tinto is credited with improving Spady’s application of Durkheim’s social integration to higher education by modeling the social and academic systems in which students' interactions take place. Yet, the “distinction between students' interactions in the academic and social systems and their actual psychological sense of identification, and affiliation with the campus community remains ambiguous.” (Hurtado & Carter, 1997, p.326). Tinto's (1993) revised framework states that participation in the social and academic systems is different from social and academic integration.

Tinto linked Van Gennep’s work with student persistence claiming that the process of student persistence is functionally similar to that of becoming incorporated into the life of “human communities generally, and that in this process, too, is marked by similar stages of passage through which individuals must typically pass in order to persist
in college” (Tinto, 1987, p. 94). College students are also moving from one community to another. They leave their high school community, rituals, and friends to integrate into a new community in college with new friends and rituals. They must separate themselves from past associations, to a degree, in order to transition into college life (Tinto, 1987).

Guiffrida (2006) presented a cultural limitation to Tinto’s (1993) work. He states that Tinto’s theory discussed how students must “break away” from previous relationships in order to submerge and integrate themselves in social and academic situations. Yet this theory did not include minority college students. Tinto’s model spoke to the developmental progress within a culture but did not examine the model where minority students must transition from one culture to another. In Tinto’s theory, he focused on predominately-white institutions. In this environment, he discussed how students must transition from one phase of adapting to their environment to another. Tinto neglects the minority element, his disregard for the minority student in his theory leaves out an important element. Minority students must not only transition from one phase of their education to another, but simultaneously, they must also assimilate into a new cultural environment.

Guiffrida (2006) goes on to suggest that a cultural advancement to Tinto’s work would include recognizing the need for minority students to “retain and nurture connections to their cultural heritage and to draw support from members of their home communities” (p.4). The need to recognize cultural and familial connections is essential as presented in Hurtado and Carter’s (1997), sense of belonging theory.

**Pascarella and Terenzini’s Interaction Theory.** Through their research, Pascarella and Terenzini (1979) explored the interaction effects of Spady (1970) and
Tinto’s (1975) work. Their theory focused on the interactions and interrelationships between students and faculty. Pascarella and Terenzini’s (1979) research concentrated on three basic purposes: to determine social and academic integration with various measures of student prediction of voluntary persistence/withdrawal decisions; identify measures of social integration and measures of academic integration, and identify the interactions between student-faculty relationships, and other forms of social and academic integration.

The findings indicated that the amount of time spent with faculty both in and outside of the classroom, strongly influence student intent and persistence. To persist in a new environment, students must be able to adapt socially and intellectually. Pascarella and Terenzini criticized Tinto’s theory for ignoring this essential relationship. Tinto’s theory concentrated on the student’s individual desire to succeed, placing all of the responsibility on the individual. Pascarella and Terenzini provided evidence that these essential relationships solidify a student’s allegiance to the institution (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1979).

The relationships that African American males build in connection to education are their lifelines to persistence, students who reported having “frequent and varied supportive relationships with faculty, staff, and peers were more likely than other Black males to be highly satisfied with college.” (Strayhorn, 2008, p. 40). For some, having strong support of an advisor or mentor can “offset the socioeconomic disadvantages (e.g., inadequate academic preparation for college, lack of rigorous courses in high school) that may threaten their odds for success in college.” (Strayhorn, 2008, p. 40). Strayhorn’s research confirms findings from research conducted by Pascarella and Terenzini’s (1979) on student and faculty relationships.
**Bean and Metzner’s Student Attrition Model.** Bean and Metzner (1985) conducted research on the non-traditional student (older, part-time and commuter student). These researchers argued that Tinto’s SIM failed to discuss non-traditional students and therefore felt a need to study this population. Although older, part-time and commuter students were sometimes included in the traditional student population, they felt it warranted a closer look.

Their model added academic variables such as grade point average, high school performance and psychological values, including satisfaction, family acceptance, and stress on student outcomes (Bean & Metzner, 1985). Spady (1970), Tinto (1975), and Pascarella (1979), relied heavily on socialization or similar social processes to explain the attrition process. One characteristic of the non-traditional student was the lack of social integration into the institution (Bean & Metzner, 1985). Bean and Metzner’s theory focused on four sets of variables:

Students with poor academic performance are expected to drop out at higher rates than students who perform well, and GPA is expected to be based primarily on past (high school) academic performance. The second major factor is intent to leave, which is influenced primarily by the psychological outcomes but also by the academic variables. The third group of variables expected to affect attrition are the background and defining variables—primarily high school performance, and educational goals. These effects, however, may be mediated by other endogenous variables in the model. Finally, the environmental variables are expected to have substantial direct effects on dropout decisions (p. 490).
Hurtado and Carter’s (1997), sense of belonging theory was crucial here. Many of the academic programs at the college level today cater to the traditional, full-time students graduating high school. The older, part-time or commuter student is many times left out of the planning phases for programs or resources. This lack of connection with the institution again speaks to Tinto’s (1987) social integration theory as well as Pascarella and Terenzini’s (1979) interaction theory.

**Tierney’s Minority Element.** In 1992, Tierney examined the minority element present in higher education (Metz, 2002). Tierney’s (1999) research maintained that Tinto's theory of college student retention “misses the mark for minority students.” (p.80). Tinto suggests that such students must “assimilate into the cultural mainstream and abandon their ethnic identities to succeed on predominantly white campuses, Tinto's framework is faulted not only for overlooking the history of ethnic oppression and discrimination in the U.S. but also for being theoretically flawed” (Tierney, 1999, p. 80).

Durkheim’s (1953) suicide types were prevalent in Tierney’s work. Tierney stated,

*Cultural integrity transfers the problem of educational inequity from the student to the institution and identifies cultural background as an essential element for academic success. Whereas Tinto's model assumes that college students must commit a form of cultural suicide to be academically successful, students from marginalized communities should find ways to have their cultural backgrounds affirmed and honored on their respective campuses.* (p. 85).

In response to Tierney’s work on race and ethnicity, Tinto revised his theory in 1993. This study was vital in understanding that minority students are a
large element on our campuses today. Tierney opened up several new avenues of research on underrepresented and underprepared students (Tierney, 1999). A component of Black Male Initiative programs was to explore African American heritage and culture while still supplying the tools and resources for success in higher education. The existence of BMI programs can be linked to Tierney’s work on race and ethnicity. Tierney’s research on the need for understanding the minority presence on college campuses paved the way for programs such as BMI to exist.

**Significant Empirical Findings**

Where have all the African American males gone and why are individuals beyond the educational framework not concerned about their departure? What is most alarming about the current state of the African American males on America’s college campuses is that “those who are in positions of leadership have been slow to recognize the situation as a state of emergency and have been almost reluctant to own up to their responsibility to take corrective action” (Esters & Mosby, 2007 p. 1). The accumulated research studies on the subject of African American male student retention may be a source for colleges to gain some insight as to how they may appropriately respond to the epidemic.

Barker (2010) stated there are a number of reasons that African American men are not attending and graduating college. Many African American men are academically and socially unprepared for college. Those who have the necessary intellectual ability often choose to hide that fact in order to be accepted socially. “For some, African American students doing well in school is a sign that one has “sold out” or opted to “act white” for the sake of individual gain” (Noguera, 2002, p. 4).
The issue of perception among young African American males is a concern. Kafele (2009) detailed the stereotypes those African American men must battle, and how some peers, perceive education:

It is not always cool to be smart among black males due to their perceived stereotypes of what it is to be a black male; if they attempt to demonstrate their intelligence, they may be ostracized or ridiculed by their peers. A related challenge that black males face is the myth that to be smart is to “act white” and therefore not be “down”, “cool” or “black”. The alternative then is to “act black,” which in the eyes of too many black males is to forgo their natural intelligence at the expense of high academic achievement (pp. 18-19).

The commitment to improve the college experience for minority male students requires the support of leaders who are able to develop an institutional culture focused on improving access, equity, and achievement. To promote change, leaders must integrate organizational strategies that maximize the efforts of programs and initiatives to support minority male students.

Chickering and Gamson (1987) developed the seven principles of good practice. They include: to encourage student-faculty contact – this crucial relationship is the most important factor in student’s motivation and involvement; to encourage cooperation among students – team effort enhances learning; encourage active learning – students must apply what they learn to their daily lives. Additionally, to give prompt feedback – this will help students to assess existing knowledge and competence; emphasize time on task – allocate realistic amounts of time for effective learning; communicate high
expectations – expect more and you will receive it. Finally, to respect diverse talents and ways of learning – give students the opportunity to show their talents and learn ways that work for them.

Commitment to programs that support African American male students must be present at every level of the institution. More specifically, the institutional philosophies and financial priorities should serve as the foundation of the admission, recruitment, and retention programs (City University of New York, 2005). Like Chickering and Gamson (1987), Parker (1997) discussed areas of focus for higher education institutions: Parker (1997) recommended that higher education institutions should create positions dedicated to handling retention activities; recognize the need for additional funding sources. Further, they recommend establishing mentor programs for minority students—programs that help minorities to see successful staff and students who can show them a path to success and that give them the confidence and support they need.

Chickering and Gamson (1987) believe there is need to reorganize faculty/staff duties and responsibilities to assist in retention activities, especially for institutions with limited resources, as well as develop a reporting system for identification and tracking so that institutions can have accurate data and data processing capabilities on the different facets of their program. Finally, they state that institutions should develop faculty/staff training programs to understand minority populations (p. 120).

Dwyer, Millet, and Payne (2006), explained how across the country, college leaders are concerned about the engagement levels of African American male students. When discussing engagement levels, Dwyer, Millet and Payne (2006) discussed it in the sense of using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). NSSE collects data
on student participation in programs and activities that promote learning, and personal
development. In institutions of higher education, student engagement functions as a
measurement of the relationship between what the student has learned and how the
institutions are functioning. While student engagement is often used to measure the
effectiveness of the institutional engagement processes, student engagement itself should
not be viewed as a measure of student learning; rather it should be used as a measure of
the student’s active participation in the learning process.

Institutions must function as student advocates striving to meet students where
they are and help get them where they need to be (McLeod & Young, 2005).

Higher education institutions frequently function as if their primary task is to
weed out students who are not suited for higher education. In their practice, if not
in their professed ideals, institutions are often guided by a form of social
Darwinism that envisions academic failure as proof of a student’s unfitness for
higher education. The viewpoint conveniently absolves institutions of
responsibility for promoting student success (McLeod & Young, 2005).

This study examined the number of semesters in progress towards graduation and
total number of credits accumulated as factors of success. Data collected concentrated on
the population of African American males who participated in the Male Development and
Empowerment Center (MDEC) at Medgar Evers College and compare semesters, and
cumulative credits with African American males who did not participate in the program.
For the purposes of this study, the researcher only gathered data on students who self-
identified as African American males when accepted to Medgar Evers College, since this
is the population that the Black Male Initiative (BMI) program targets.
Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed that Durkheim’s work on suicide types formed the foundation for other theories that developed in later years. Hurtado and Carter’s (1997) sense of belonging theory is threaded along many of the theorists discussed. Spady’s (1970) research on student attrition was a foundation for Tinto’s Student Integration Model. Later, researchers such as Pascarella and Terenzini, Bean and Metzner and Tierney criticized Tinto for his omissions on gender, race, socio-economic factors and relationships with faculty and the institution. In 1993, Tinto revised his model for the third time to incorporate the variables identified by these researchers.

This study represented an important contribution to our literature. It extends our understanding about the ways in which academic variables, such as semesters attended and college GPA may be predictors to a successful college career. It is possible for schools to take actions that can reverse the patterns of low achievement among African American males. The fact that some schools and programs manage to do so successfully is further evidence that there is a possibility of altering these trends. In Chapter 3 the methodology and design will be discussed.
Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

This chapter discusses the general perspective on recruiting and retaining African American males in higher education. The first section of the chapter provides the research context and describes the research participants. The sections that follow concentrated on the instruments that were used in the data collection and data analysis. This section will conclude with summarizing the methodology.

The intent of this study was to analyze whether participation in the Black Male Initiative (BMI) had a positive impact on the persistence toward graduation of African American males as measured by college GPA, high school GPA, high school attended, semesters attended, credits earned, semesters multiplied by college GPA, college GPA multiplied by credits earned and degree attainment. The BMI program is a resource program established in 2005 to help African American males progress towards graduation in higher education by providing resources such as mentoring, tutoring, advising, and scholarships (City University of New York, 2005). The objectives of Black Male Initiative (BMI) programs are to identify the obstacles of African American males in college admissions and retention; devise and support programmatic interventions to mitigate those obstacles; and provide a small annual budget to accomplish goals one and two (Bobb, 2006). Many consider colleges with “open door” policies, as denoting their unique role of providing an affordable and quality education for the masses. However, one has only to take a look behind those ‘open doors’ to see very clearly that Black males are disappearing before they complete any
meaningful goals, and those who remain lag behind other learners on almost every indicator of academic achievement. (Esters & Mosby, 2007, p. 1).

The researcher attempted to answer whether there is a statistically significant difference in measuring persistence towards graduation for students who participate in the BMI program as compared to African American males who do not participate in BMI. Persistence towards graduation were measured by the following variables: college GPA, high school GPA, high school attended, semesters attended, credits earned, semesters multiplied by college GPA, college GPA multiplied by credits earned and degree attainment. Research Context

The design of this study was quantitative in nature. “Quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures.” (Creswell, 2009, p.4). The specific research type was quasi-experimental. Quasi-experimental research is a “type of research design for conducting studies in a field or real life situations where the researcher may be able to manipulate some independent variable but cannot randomly assign subjects to control and experimental groups” (Vogt, 2005, p. 257).

In studying the post hoc or archival data, the researcher reviewed data after the fact; there were no interventions/treatments conducted during the data collection process. The data collected was extracted from the Medgar Evers Student Information Management System (SIMS). SIMS has been in use at the college for student data since 1995. This system stores all academic records, student registration activities, high school information, immunization data, and financial billing information. With the assistance of
Institutional Research, the data was exported into an excel spreadsheet. The variables collected for this study included:

- semester first attended – students who were first time freshman in Spring 2007, Fall 2007, Spring 2008 or Fall 2008;
- high school attended – information will identify if the students attended a public school, private school, acquired a GED, foreign educated or out of state.
- high school grade point average (GPA) – the GPA is numeric in value from 0.00-100.00;
- total college credits earned – number of cumulative credits earned at Medgar Evers College. This category will include all student credits whether they attended part time, full time or received transfer credit;
- number of semesters attended – number of cumulative semesters attended at Medgar Evers College beginning in either Spring 2007, Fall 2007, Spring 2008 or Fall 2008 through Spring 2011;
- average credit per semester – a statistical mean will be calculated to show average number of credits taken per semester attended;
- grade point average (GPA) – cumulative GPA at Medgar Evers College for all semesters from first enrolled through Spring 2011. The college’s GPA is calculated on a 0.00 – 4.00 scale;
- degree awarded if any – a Yes or No indicator will show if the student graduated from Medgar Evers College
• GPA multiplied by semesters attended: a mathematical equation of the GPA, and semesters attended to gauge a numerical mean for progress towards degree attainment.
• GPA multiplied by credits earned: a mathematical equation of the GPA, and credits earned to gauge a numerical mean for progress towards degree attainment.

The data collected was coded in a manner to maintain student confidentiality.
• Column 1: Cohort category: (1) Spring 2007; (2) Fall 2007; (3) Spring 2008; (4) Fall 2008.
• Column 2: Student identifier, students were each given a number starting at 1 through the number of participants for that particular semester. This column will show 1-122 for non BMI participants and 1b-29b for BMI participants.
• Column 3: AAMS078 – this column represents African American Male Students 2007-2008, essentially the entire study population. The students are coded using column #2 with either a BMI or NONBMI listing.
• Columns 4-12: Semesters Spring 2007 through Spring 2011 are listed. Student attendance is recorded with a “1” for attended and a “0” for no attendance that semester.
• Column 13: First time freshman (FTF) – this column indicates the semester in which the student was admitted to the college.
• Column 14: High School – this column indicates the high school the student attended, for the purposes of this study, the researcher has grouped the high
schools into the following categories: (1) public school, (2) private school, (3) GED, (4) foreign educated or (5) out of state.

- Column 15: High school average – this column is numeric and is grouped as follows: (1) 100-90 (2) 89-80 (3) 79-70 (4) below 70.
- Column 16: Cumulative College Credits, this is a numeric value
- Column 17: Degree – this column indicates a Yes or No on whether the student acquired a degree from Medgar Evers College
- Column 18: College GPA - Grade Point Average (GPA) – cumulative GPA acquired through Spring 2011
- Column 19: Total semester attended – numeric value (sum total of columns 4-12)
- Column 20: Semesters multiplied by GPA: a mathematical equation to gauge a means for progress towards degree attainment.
- Column 21: GPA multiplied by credits earned: a mathematical equation of the GPA, and credits earned to gauge a mean for progress towards degree attainment.

A preliminary review of the data indicated that despite dedicated resources throughout CUNY, colleges are still struggling to enroll African American males (OIRA, 2010). Social, economic, and cultural issues are factors in deterring young African American men from pursuing higher education. Gassaway (2006) states that Black Male Initiative (BMI) programs acknowledge African American men are invisible on college campuses. The City University of New York’s (CUNY) goal is to increase the presence and success of this population.
Programs such as BMI pledged to cultivate partnerships and support groups among African American males who are like-minded in aspiring to graduate college. Brochures and websites describe how through mentoring, these young men are able to bond and collaborate with each other, in order to become change agents on campus and in the community. The common theory underlying each of these indicators is an assumption that by specifically targeting the needs of African American males we can serve them better. This study conducted an analysis of a specific BMI program at Medgar Evers College, which provided an important reflection on this theory. Variables that were collected were college GPA, high school GPA, high school attended, semesters attended, credits earned, semesters multiplied by college GPA, college GPA multiplied by credits earned and degree attainment. These variables will help to formalize a portrait of these students’ academic achievement.

**Research Participants**

Medgar Evers College is one of 17 City University of New York (CUNY) colleges. CUNY represents three types of colleges, senior, comprehensive and community. Senior colleges offer Certificate, Baccalaureate, Masters and PhD courses. Comprehensive colleges offer Certificate, Associate, and Baccalaureate degrees. Community colleges offer Certificate and Associates degrees only. The research location was Medgar Evers College (MEC), which is a predominantly black institution, with an enrollment of approximately 7,000 students.

MEC is a comprehensive college, the youngest in the CUNY system and the smallest in terms of enrollment. The ethnic composition of the college is predominately African American and Caribbean, making up nearly 94% of the total population as
represented in the chart below (Chan, 2010). The gender distribution of the college is also interesting; the makeup is 25.7% males to 74.3% females (Chan, 2010).

![Percentages of Ethnic Composition at MEC](chart.png)

**Figure 3.1.** Cylinder chart: Percentage of ethnic composition at Medgar Evers College Spring 2010.

The college was founded in 1970; it is located in the Crown Heights area of Brooklyn, a predominately-Caribbean community. Medgar Evers College has traditionally served students 25 years of age and older. In recent years, the college has seen a younger population attending. In Spring 2010, 54.2% of the student population was 25 years and younger, 25.1% represented ages 26-35, 12.4% for ages 36-45, and 8.2% for ages 46, and older (Chan, 2010).
The methodology of this study included collecting data on African American males who were first-time freshmen in Spring 2007 (Cohort 1), Fall 2007 (Cohort 2), Spring 2008 (Cohort 3), and Fall 2008 (Cohort 4). There was no data prior to Spring 2007 as that was the first semester that the college’s BMI program collected data on student participants. The four cohorts were divided into two comparative groups: (1) African American males who participate in the BMI program and (2) African American males who did not participate in the BMI program. There was a ratio of approximately 10 to 1, of African American males who did not participate in the program to those who did in each of the cohorts.

This was a quasi-experimental study on the impact that the BMI program has had on students as measured by college GPA, high school GPA, high school attended, semesters attended, credits earned, semesters multiplied by college GPA, college GPA multiplied by credits earned and degree attainment. The researcher reviewed post hoc/archival data on African American males who participated in the Black Male Initiative (BMI) program (experimental group) at Medgar Evers College as compared to African American males that did not participate (control group). The sample was derived from the total population of African American males admitted to Medgar Evers College in Spring 2007, Fall 2007, Spring 2008, and Fall 2008.

Finally, the researcher’s preliminary review of the data revealed that there was approximately 100 non-BMI participants in a given semester, compared to approximately 20 BMI participants for that same semester.
Instruments to be Used in Data Collection

This researcher has identified the independent variable as the BMI program, which will affect the outcome of students who participate. The dependent variable was determined to be the progress towards graduation, the outcome that is caused by the independent variable. This researcher looked at variables that have an impact on whether students in these groups are persisting towards degree completion. This study investigated whether African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success was defined as college GPA, semesters attended, total credits, GPA multiplied by semesters, GPA multiplied by total credits and attainment of a degree.

Success of the program would indicate that they advance in all areas over a non-participant. The data collection began with a request to the Office of Institutional Research for a listing of all African American males enrolled at Medgar Evers College in Spring 2007, Fall 2007, Spring 2008, and Fall 2008. The Office of Institutional Research produced a report titled Snapshot, detailing information regarding the college’s demographics. Figure 3.2 is a depiction of the number of African American males who were admitted in Fall 2007, Spring 2008 and Fall 2008 (Chan, 2008 & 2009, p. 17).
Figure 3.2. Cylinder graph of African American male enrollment at Medgar Evers College Spring 2007-Fall 2008.

For the purposes of this study, these four cohorts were considered the universe. The report was then reviewed to determine the number of students in these four semesters that have the specific variables the researcher is studying: high school information, high school GPA, total credits earned, number of semesters attended, college GPA, degree awarded and degree attainment. The last two variables were chosen in order to obtain a mathematical equation of average credits per semester, and average GPA per semesters attended to graduate.

Data collection began in December 2011, once IRB approval had been granted. The researcher obtained permission from the Vice President of Student Affairs at Medgar Evers College to conduct this study at Medgar Evers College, and gain access to the data. To ensure content security and risk against tampering and data corruption, the data was stored on a dedicated computer that is only available to the researcher. This data was
backed up nightly onto a password protected external hard drive and will be stored for a minimum of three years.

**Procedures for Data Analysis**

The researcher compared means, using an analysis of means to determine statistical differences between African American males who participated in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program and those who do not. The variables that were collected included: semester first attended, high school attended, high school GPA, total credits earned, number of semesters attended, and if a degree had been awarded. In this study, the differing variable between the control and experimental group was whether they had participated in a BMI activity.

The researcher used EXCEL, SPSS, t-test, ANOVA, ANCOVA, Pearson r correlation, Mann Whitney U test, Spearman rho correlation, Chi-square and binary regression as data analysis instruments to compute means and conduct all statistical analysis. SPSS is a widely used brand of computer software that performs most standard statistical analyses of data. The use of SPSS allowed the researcher to define variables and examine output files in order to analyze the data (Cronk, 2008). The researcher established an alpha value of 0.05 as a criterion for statistical significance and used the instruments to determine the degree of error when comparing means.

The two tailed t-test “is often used to test the null hypothesis regarding the observed difference between two means” (Patten, p. 125). This test is primarily used to test the difference between two averages without indicating which one is larger (Vogt, 2005). The analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used when the researcher’s study involves looking for a difference between two variables. “The analysis of variance can be used to
see if there is a significant difference between two sample means” (Huck, 2008, p. 259). For instance, the researcher may find that the average credits for a BMI participant is 7.1 per semester, while a non-BMI participant may average to 6.4 credits per semester. Although there is a visible difference between the two means, the researcher must determine whether the difference is significant, using an alpha value of .05, or more likely a result of chance.

The analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) is an extension of the ANOVA, it is used to measure of how much two variables change together and how strong the relationship is between them. An ANCOVA will allow more than two variables to be involved in the analysis. A two-tail Pearson r test depicts the “linear relationship between two variables that have been measured on interval or ratio scales” (Vogt, 2005). The Mann Whitney U test is used to measure the statistical significance of differences between two groups. This test may be used in lieu of a t-test to compare two independent variables (Huck, 2008). Spearman rho tests are used to show the relationship between variables that are arranged in rank order, such as high school GPA and college GPA.

Chi-square tests are used to show differences between frequencies, it is a statistical test for categorical data (Patten, 2009). Finally, the researcher also used binary logistic regression analysis, this test is used to predict the outcome for a categorical variable. This test can be utilized to illustrate degree attainment.

**Summary of the Methodology**

The researcher has outlined that this research design was quantitative in nature. The variables that were collected included:
• Cohort category: (1) Spring 2007; (2) Fall 2007; (3) Spring 2008; (4) Fall 2008.

• Student identifier, students were each given a number starting at 1 through the number of participants for that particular semester. This column will show 1-122 for non BMI participants and 1b-29b for BMI participants.

• AAMS0708 – this column represents African American Male Students 2007-2008, essentially the entire study population. The students are coded using column #2 with either a BMI or NONBMI listing.

• Semesters Spring 2007 through Spring 2011 are listed. Student attendance is recorded with a “1” for attended and a “0” for no attendance that semester.

• First time freshman (FTF) – this column indicates the semester in which the student was admitted to the college.

• High School – this column indicates the high school the student attended, for the purposes of this study, the researcher has grouped the high schools into the following categories: (1) public school, (2) private school, (3) GED, (4) foreign educated or (5) out of state.

• High school average – this column is numeric and is grouped as follows: (1) 100-90 (2) 89-80 (3) 79-70 (4) below 70.

• Cumulative College Credits, this is a numeric value

• Degree – this column indicates a Yes or No on whether the student acquired a degree from Medgar Evers College

• College GPA - Grade Point Average (GPA) – cumulative GPA acquired through Spring 2011
• Total semester attended – numeric value (sum total of columns 4-12)
• Semesters multiplied by GPA: a mathematical equation to gauge a means for progress towards degree attainment.
• GPA multiplied by semesters attended: a mathematical equation of the GPA, and semesters attended to gauge a numerical mean for progress towards degree attainment.
• GPA multiplied by credits earned: a mathematical equation of the GPA, and credits earned to gauge a numerical mean for progress towards degree attainment.

The study was conducted at Medgar Evers College and was a quasi-experimental study on the persistence towards graduation of African American males who attend the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative Program as measured by the variables collected. The data collection began in December, once IRB approval was granted.
Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This study began with an analysis of the factors that place African American males at greater risk, and how these factors shape the relationship targeting this population to increase their presence, retention, and graduation in higher education. This study examined theories associated with these indicators and strategies that counter these effects.

Black Male Initiative (BMI) programs are intended to increase retention and graduation rates of African American males. These program focus on providing pipeline programs to strengthen academic skills, improve self-confidence, improve professional mobility of students, and partner with institutions, non-profits, and community-based organizations throughout New York City.

Problem Statement

In 2005, the City University of New York (CUNY) launched a Black Male Initiative (BMI) program to target the low number of enrolled African-American men in the CUNY system. The program’s goal was to recruit, retain, and graduate more African American males in higher education. Each year CUNY dedicated $2.25 million to achieve this goal. The $2.25 million a year also included GED programs, and academic interventions intended to strengthen academic skill-sets, improve self-confidence, and develop personal goals. This study reviewed several factors to ascertain whether students
who participated in a BMI activity progressed towards graduation as measured by those variables.

**Research Questions**

The researcher developed the following research questions:

1. Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as college GPA? Do the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as college GPA? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and college GPA?

2. Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as semesters attended? Do the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as semesters attended? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and semesters attended?

3. Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as total credits? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as total credits? Do the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and total credits?
4. Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as GPA multiplied by semesters? Do the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as GPA multiplied by semesters? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and GPA multiplied by semesters?

5. Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as GPA multiplied by total credits? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as GPA multiplied by total credits? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and GPA multiplied by total credits?

6. Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as attainment of a degree? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as attainment of a degree? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and attainment of a degree?
Participant Demographics

Medgar Evers College is one of 17 City University of New York (CUNY) colleges. The research location was Medgar Evers College (MEC), which is a predominantly black institution, with an enrollment of approximately 7,000 students. MEC is a comprehensive college, the youngest in the CUNY system and the smallest in terms of enrollment.

The ethnic composition of the college is predominately African American, making up nearly 94% of the total population (Chan, 2010). The gender distribution of the college is also interesting; the makeup is 25.7% males to 74.3% females (Chan, 2010). Medgar Evers College has traditionally served students 25 years of age and older. In recent years, the college has seen a younger population attending, In Spring 2010, 54.2% of the student population was 25 years and younger, 25.1% represented ages 26-35, 12.4% for ages 36-45, and 8.2% for ages 46, and older (Chan, 2010).

This study involved 722 participants. The participants were categorized in two groups 1) those who participated in a BMI activity are coded as BMI, of which there were 45 participants and 2) those who did not participate in a BMI activity are coded NON-BMI, of which there were 677. All students were self-identified African American males who attended Medgar Evers College during the 2007 or 2008 academic years.

Table 4.1 provides enrollment figures for the college over the two-year period under consideration. Total enrollment represents college enrollment including both full and part time students. The first-time freshman (FTF) includes those students who never attended college prior to enrolling.
**Table 4.1**

*Enrollments Spring 2007 – Fall 2008*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Spring 2007</th>
<th>Fall 2007</th>
<th>Spring 2008</th>
<th>Fall 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Enrollment</td>
<td>5464</td>
<td>5451</td>
<td>5615</td>
<td>6037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA Male Students</td>
<td>1242</td>
<td>1258</td>
<td>1263</td>
<td>1350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Time Freshmen</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL Study Population</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(677 non-BMI + 45 BMI)

**Data Analysis**

The researcher compared means, using an analysis of means to determine statistical differences between African American males who participated in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program and those who do not. The variables that were collected included: college GPA, high school GPA, high school attended, semesters attended, credits earned, semesters multiplied by college GPA, college GPA multiplied by credits earned and degree attainment. In this study, the differing variable between the control and experimental group was whether they had participated in a BMI activity.

The researcher used EXCEL, SPSS, t-test, ANOVA, ANCOVA, Pearson r correlation, Mann Whitney U test, Spearman rho correlation, Chi-square and binary regression as data analysis instruments to compute means and conduct all statistical analysis. SPSS is a widely used brand of computer software that performs most standard statistical analyses of data. The use of SPSS allowed the researcher to define variables and examine output files in order to analyze the data (Cronk, 2008). The researcher
established an alpha value of 0.05 as a criterion for statistical significance and used the instruments to determine the degree of error when comparing means.

The methodology of this study included collecting data on African American males who were first-time freshmen in Spring 2007 (Cohort 1), Fall 2007 (Cohort 2), Spring 2008 (Cohort 3), and Fall 2008 (Cohort 4). There was no data prior to Spring 2007 collected on the campus. The four cohorts were divided into two comparative groups: (1) African American males who participate in the BMI program and (2) African American males who did not participate in the BMI program. There was a ratio of approximately 10 to 1, of African American males who did not participate in the program to those who did in each of the cohorts. Table 4.2 provides figures for students who participated in at least one BMI activity in the academic years 2007 and 2008. Figures represented include African American (AA), first time freshman (FTF) total enrollment for that year compared to total BMI participation for that year. The reason for the low BMI participation is that there was no robust marketing being conducted on the campus to let students know about the Male Development and Empowerment Center (MDEC), which is the BMI program at Medgar Evers College.

Table 4.2

*BMI participation 2007 – 2008*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA FTF Total Enrollment</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA FTF BMI participants</td>
<td>19 (4.47%)</td>
<td>26 (6.19%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This was a quasi-experimental study of African American males who participated in the Medgar Evers College BMI program and progressed towards graduation as
measured by: college GPA, high school GPA, high school attended, semesters attended, credits earned, semesters multiplied by college GPA, college GPA multiplied by credits earned and degree attainment. The researcher reviewed post hoc/archival data on African American males who participated in the Black Male Initiative (BMI) program (experimental group) at Medgar Evers College as compared to African American males that did not participate (control group). The sample was derived from the total population of African American males admitted to Medgar Evers College in Spring 2007, Fall 2007, Spring 2008, and Fall 2008.

**Data Findings**

For the purposes of this study, the researcher used categorical and scale variables. The categorical variables were BMI, high school attended and degree attainment. The scale variables were high school GPA, credits earned, college GPA, semesters attended, semesters multiplied by GPA and credits earned multiplied by GPA. Since several of these variables have skewed distributions, it influenced the decision on which statistical tests to use. Table 4.3 below indicates the variables examined, the number of participants where data was readily available ($n$), mean, standard deviation ($SD$) and median.
Table 4.3

Variables table 2007-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HS GPA</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>71.97</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits earned</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>39.26</td>
<td>39.68</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College GPA</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semesters</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semesters x GPA</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>9.72</td>
<td>7.98</td>
<td>7.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits x GPA</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>653.87</td>
<td>967.81</td>
<td>179.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before delving into the results, it will be helpful to understand the coding that was used when analyzing the data. Participant data was coded to keep the anonymity of the participants. A category of African American Male Students 2007-2008 (AAMS0708) was created to combine both cohorts. Non-BMI students who participated in the study were first time freshman (FTF) in either the Spring 2007, Fall 2007, Spring 2008 or Fall 2008 semesters. BMI students who participated in the study attended a BMI activity in either 2007 or 2008.

High school average was collected to determine if this was a predictor in college success. This field was numeric and ranged from 57 to 95. Degree attainment was also a variable that was examined. Finally, the type of high school attended was collected and grouped into 1 of 5 categories: public, private, GED, foreign and out of state. The researcher examined each research question separately and discussed the results.

**Research Question 1**: Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as college GPA? Do the type of
high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as college GPA? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and college GPA? It is important to note that 124 students were removed from this analysis because they did not have a college GPA. This is a result of students who attended the college but registered for remedial or non-credit bearing courses.

Figure 4.1 is reflective of 553 Non-BMI students and 45 BMI students. An independent sample two-tailed t-test comparing BMI and non-BMI participants on college GPA was statistically significant with BMI participants’ mean GPA 1.37 points higher than that of non-participants.

Figure 4.1. Boxplot of average college GPA for African American students: (2007-2008).
Furthermore, Figure 4.2 below depicts a histogram that reveals the college GPA range for the study population. The mean is 2.09 ($SD = 0.988$, $n = 598$), for students who had a college GPA. It is a clear picture of the type of student at Medgar Evers College. Many needing remediation (0 credit courses, no GPA accumulated) and therefore are stuck in the 0-2.00 GPA. It is also noteworthy that New York State has remediation credit limits. In order for students to continue being eligible for financial aid, they must meet certain program and pursuit requirements. The student must maintain a certain GPA and be progressing with a minimum of six credits towards their degree. Once a student has taken a remedial course twice and still failed to pass it, the student is now at risk of dismissal for failure to comply with program and pursuit regulations.

![Histogram of College GPA](image)

Figure 4.2. Frequency table of college GPA.
Figure 4.3 below indicates the frequency table of high school GPA for the population examined. Most of the students being accepted at Medgar Evers College are entering with a high school GPA of approximately 68 or 75. The high school GPA mean is 71.97 ($SD = 4.971$, $n = 698$).

![Frequency table of high school GPA.](image)

**Figure 4.3.** Frequency table of high school GPA.

Figure 4.4 depicts a oneway ANOVA comparing type of high school attended on college GPA. The ANOVA was used in order to view the difference between two variables; in this case College GPA and type of High School attended. The variable type of high school has 5 groups (public, private, GED, foreign and other). This test is
looking for a difference between two or more of the types of schools on college GPA. The analysis was statistically significant, with a post hoc test revealing foreign-educated students as having statistically significantly higher college GPAs than their colleagues who were educated at public and private schools. The box plot below illustrates that relationship.

**Figure 4.4.** Boxplot of average college GPA indicated by high school attended.

Figure 4.5 shows a two-tailed Pearson r correlation was statistically significant for high school GPA and college GPA. This test was used in order to see the linear relationship between the two variables. Bean and Metzner’s theory focused on how
college GPA is expected primarily on past (high school) academic performance. Yet we can see by this test, that it is not the case. The model was significant indicating that high school GPA is a very weak predictor of college GPA for the sample. Each circle on the scatter plot represents one of the study’s participants. The number of participants that actually fell on the best-fit line is not enough of a representation to suggest a significant relationship.

![Figure 4.5. Scatterplot of high school GPA as a predictor of college GPA.](image)

\[ R^2 \text{ Linear} = 0.036 \]
Next, Figure 4.6 reflects a fixed-factor ANOVA wherein BMI participation and type of high school attended were independent variables and college GPA was the dependent variable. In examining the graph below, there seems to be a simulated relationship, while there is no interaction between type of high school and BMI participation. Both BMI and Non-BMI cohorts show a lower GPA for students who were educated in private schools while also showing its highest peak on each diagram for students who were foreign educated.

*Figure 4.6. High school attended as predictors of college GPA.*
Finally, in Figure 4.7, an ANCOVA was conducted, with BMI participation and high school GPA as independent variables, and college GPA as the dependent variable. Judging from the graph, BMI participation had a stronger relationship with college GPA than high school GPA. Additionally, although there is no relationship between high school GPA and college GPA, we do see a statistical significance in BMI participation and college GPA. An ANCOVA was chosen to in order to have more than two variables included (College GPA, High School GPA, BMI and Non-BMI).

Figure 4.7. Scatterplot of high school GPA as predictors of college GPA.
**Research Question 2:** Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as semesters attended? Do the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as semesters attended? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and semesters attended?

Figure 4.8 shows a Mann-Whitney U test comparing BMI and non-BMI participants on semesters attended was statistically significant with BMI participants’ mean semesters attended 3 semesters more than that of non-participants. This test is similar to a t-test, a t-test will represent a difference between two means, while this test, represents the statistical significance between two groups (BMI and Non-BMI).

![Boxplot of median semesters attended by African American male students (2007-2008).](image)

*Figure 4.8.* Boxplot of median semesters attended by African American male students (2007-2008).
Figure 4.9 demonstrates a one-way ANOVA comparing type of high school attended on semesters attended. A post hoc test reveals foreign-educated students as having statistically significantly higher semesters attended than their out-of-state colleagues. It is of interest to note that there were some private school students who are listed as outliers, having attended 8 and 9 semesters.

![Boxplot of average semesters attended as indicated by high school attended.](image)

**Figure 4.9.** Boxplot of average semesters attended as indicated by high school attended.

Figures 4.10 represents a fixed-factor ANOVA, wherein BMI participation and type of high school attended were independent variables and semesters attended was the dependent. The type of high school was not statistically significant as a factor within the
model leaving BMI participation as the sole significant factor. The researcher observed there was a high semester mean for BMI students who attended private school, whereas, there was no corresponding peak for the non-BMI students. In examining the graph below, there seems to be a simulated relationship. Both BMI and Non-BMI cohorts show a lower number of semesters attended for out of state students while also showing a high peak on each diagram for students who were foreign educated.

Figure 4.10. Graph of mean semesters attended as indicated by high school attended.

Finally, Figure 4.11 represents an ANCOVA was conducted, with BMI participation and high school GPA as independent variables, and semesters attended as the dependent. High school GPA was not statistically significant as a factor within the model leaving BMI participation as the sole significant factor.
Figure 4.11. Average semesters attended as indicated by high school GPA.

**Research Question 3:** Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as total credits? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as total credits? Do the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and total credits?

Figure 4.12 shows the number of credits earned, the mean was 39.26 ($n = 602$ students, $SD = 39.679$). As discussed in question #1, the number of credits earned is extremely low due to the number of students who enter the college requiring remediation.
Figure 4.12. Frequency table of credits earned.

In Figure 4.13, a Mann-Whitney U test compares BMI and non-BMI participants on credits earned and proves statistically significant with BMI participants’ mean credits earned 80.45 points higher than that of non-participants. The BMI program offers tutoring and advisement to their participants. Therefore, students who take advantage of that resource can test out of remedial courses quicker, allowing them the ability to take credit-bearing courses sooner. Students who do not participate in BMI are not subject to this intervention and therefore may spend several semesters attempting to pass the remedial courses, all along receiving no credits towards graduation. It is important to note that there were several outliers in the Non-BMI group who acquired many more
credits than the mean. This may be attributed to students who sought out advisement or tutoring services on their own.

Figure 4.13. Boxplot of average credits earned.

Figure 4.14 details a one-way ANOVA comparing type of high school attended on credits earned. A post hoc test revealed foreign-educated students as having statistically significantly higher credits earned than their public-educated, private-educated, and GED-educated colleagues had.
Figure 4.14. Boxplot of average credits earned as compared to high school attended.

In Figure 4.15, a two-tailed Spearman’s rho correlation approached statistical significance for high school GPA and credits earned. The model was significant indicating that high school GPA is a very weak predictor of credits earned for the sample.
Figure 4.15. Scatterplot of average credits earned as compared to high school GPA.

Next, Figure 4.16 shows a fixed-factor ANOVA was conducted, wherein BMI participation and type of high school attended were independent variables and semesters attended was the dependent. Judging from the graph, BMI participation had a stronger relationship with credits earned than type of high school attended. In addition, an interaction between the two factors approached significance. It is also important to note that there is a simulated relationship between the two cohorts as a significant peak is reflected for foreign educated students.
Figure 4.16. Graph of mean credits earned by high school attended.

Finally, Figure 4.17 demonstrates an ANCOVA was conducted, with BMI participation and high school GPA as independent variables, and credits earned as the dependent. The corrected model as well as each independent variable were statistically significant. However, judging from the corresponding graph, BMI participation had a stronger relationship with credits earned than high school GPA.
Figure 4.17. Graph of credits earned by high school GPA.

Research Question 4: Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as GPA multiplied by semesters? Do the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as GPA multiplied by semesters? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and GPA multiplied by semesters?
Figure 4.18 below depicts a Mann-Whitney U test comparing BMI and non-BMI participants on semesters multiplied by GPA was statistically significant with BMI participants’ mean 9.77 points higher than that of non-participants.

![Boxplot of semesters x GPA](image)

**Figure 4.18.** Boxplot of semesters x GPA.

Figure 4.19 details a one-way ANOVA comparing type of high school attended on semesters multiplied by GPA was conducted. The post hoc test revealed that foreign-educated students had statistically significantly higher means than their public-educated and private-educated colleagues did. One can note that both public and private educated had a few outliers who ranged higher in the semesters x GPA variable; it was not substantial enough to change the mean for those types.
Figure 4.19. Boxplot of mean semesters x GPA viewed by high school attended.

Figure 4.20 indicates a two-tailed Spearman’s rho correlation was statistically significant for high school GPA and semesters multiplied by GPA. The relationship was then tested in a linear regression. The model was significant indicating that high school GPA is a very weak predictor of semesters multiplied by GPA for the sample.
Next, Figure 14.21 shows a fixed-factor ANOVA was conducted wherein BMI participation and type of high school attended were independent variables and semesters multiplied by GPA was the dependent. The type of high school was not statistically significant as a factor within the model leaving BMI participation as the sole significant factor. Once again, we see that foreign educated students are showing a high peak for this variable as well.
Figure 4.21. Graph of mean semesters x GPA viewed by high school attended.

Finally, Figure 4.22 depicts an ANCOVA was conducted, with BMI participation and high school GPA as independent variables, and semesters multiplied by GPA as the dependent. The model was statistically significant, however, judging from the corresponding graph, BMI participation had a stronger relationship with semesters multiplied by GPA than high school GPA.
Figure 4.22. Graph of mean semesters x GPA viewed by high school GPA.

**Research Question 5:** Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as GPA multiplied by total credits? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as GPA multiplied by total credits? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and GPA multiplied by total credits?
Figure 4.23 shows a Mann-Whitney u test comparing BMI and non-BMI participants on credits earned multiplied by GPA was statistically significant with BMI participants’ mean 1,707 points higher than that of non-participants. The circle on the Non-BMI side indicate outliers whose GPA x credits was outside the mean. The stars indicate extreme outliers.

![Boxplot of mean GPA x credits of BMI and Non-BMI.](image)

**Figure 4.23.** Boxplot of mean GPA x credits of BMI and Non-BMI.

Figure 4.24 depicts a oneway ANOVA comparing type of high school attended on credits earned multiplied by GPA. A post hoc test revealed foreign-educated students as having a statistically significantly higher mean than their public-educated and private-
educated colleagues have. The circles on the Non-BMI side indicate outliers whose GPA x credits were outside the mean. The stars indicate extreme outliers.

Figure 4.24. Boxplot of GPA x credits as viewed by high school attended.

Figure 4.25 depicts a two-tailed Spearman’s rho correlation was statistically significant for high school GPA and credits earned multiplied by GPA. The model was significant indicating that high school GPA is a very weak predictor of credits earned multiplied by GPA for the sample. The circles indicate outliers whose GPA x credits were outside the mean. The stars indicate extreme outliers.
Figure 4.25. Scatterplot of GPA x credits as viewed by high school GPA.

Next, in Figure 4.26, a fixed-factor ANOVA was conducted wherein BMI participation and type of high school attended were independent variables and college GPA was the dependent. The graph below reflects BMI participation had a stronger relationship with credits earned multiplied by GPA than high school GPA. It is interesting to note how there is a spike in the mean GPA x credits for BMI students who attended public school, and conversely there is a decline for the Non-BMI students.
Finally, Figure 4.27 shows an ANCOVA was conducted, with BMI participation and high school GPA as independent variables, and credits earned multiplied by GPA as the dependent. The graph below represents BMI participation had a stronger relationship with credits earned multiplied by GPA than high school GPA.
Research Question 6: Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as attainment of a degree? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA serve as indicators of success in college, when success is defined as attainment of a degree? Does the type of high school attended and high school GPA moderate the relationship between BMI participation and attainment of a degree?

Table 4.4 shows the percentages and count of BMI and Non-BMI students who obtained a degree. Of the 649 students who failed to obtain a degree, non-BMI
represents 98%, while BMI only represents 2% of that population. When reviewing the 73 students who did obtain a degree, non-BMI represents 56.2%, compared to 43.8% of BMI participants.

Table 4.4

*Number of BMI and Non-BMI students who obtained a degree*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>African American Students</th>
<th>Degree Attained</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non BMI</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>608.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.28 below reflects a chi-square test on the crosstabulation between BMI participation and degree attainment was statistically significant. The Chi-square test is used to show differences between frequencies of categorical data. The graph below shows that BMI students obtain a degree at a higher rate (by ratio of numbers used) than non-BMI students.
Figure 4.28. Bar graph of percentage of BMI and Non-BMI students who obtained a degree.

Table 4.5 details the number of students who obtained a degree as measured by the type of high school attended. Public school attendees fared much better than the rest followed by foreign education and then GED recipients.
### Table 4.5

**Number of students who obtained a degree as measured by high school attended**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Degree Attained</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public School</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>33.61</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within High School</td>
<td>92.80%</td>
<td>7.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Degree Attained</td>
<td>53.50%</td>
<td>37.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>48.10%</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private School</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within High School</td>
<td>98.40%</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Degree Attained</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>138.4</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within High School</td>
<td>89.00%</td>
<td>11.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Degree Attained</td>
<td>21.10%</td>
<td>23.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>19.00%</td>
<td>2.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Educated</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>90.80%</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within High School</td>
<td>76.20%</td>
<td>23.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Degree Attained</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
<td>32.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>10.70%</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of State</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>27.90%</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within High School</td>
<td>87.10%</td>
<td>12.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Degree Attained</td>
<td>4.20%</td>
<td>5.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
<td>0.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within High School</td>
<td>89.90%</td>
<td>10.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Degree Attained</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>89.90%</td>
<td>10.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.29 represents a chi-square test on the crosstabulation between types of high schools attended and degree attainment was statistically significant.

Figure 4.29. Bar graph of percentage of all students who obtained a degree as viewed by the high school attended.

Figures 4.30 and 4.31 reflects how a binary logistic regression with high school GPA as the predictor and attained a degree as the dependent was not statistically significant. This test was used because it predicts the outcome of degree attainment. A chi-square test on the crosstabulation between type of high school attended and degree attainment for only non-BMI participants was statistically significant. However, a chi-
square test on the crosstabulation between type of high school attended and attained a degree for only BMI participants was not statistically significant.

![Figure 4.30](image)

**Figure 4.30.** African American male students 2007-2008 Non-BMI. Bar graph of percentage of students who obtained a degree as viewed by the high school attended.
Figure 4.31. African American male students 2007-2008 BMI. Bar graph of percentage of students who obtained a degree as viewed by high school attended.

Summary of Results

In reviewing the tables and figures that were presented above, it is clear that for students who participate in the BMI program there was a statistical significance in how well they do. Figures 4.32 and 4.33 detail the range of college GPAs of Non-BMI students as compared to BMI students. The college GPA for Non-BMI students shows a mean of 1.99 (n = 552, SD = 0.950), while the college GPA for BMI students is heavily
concentrated nearer to 3.00-4.00, with a mean of 3.36 ($n = 45$, $SD = 0.399$) for students who participated in BMI during our 2007-2008 years.

Figure 4.32. African American male students 2007-2008 Non-BMI. Histogram of frequency table of college GPA.
Figure 4.33. African American male students 2007-2008 Non-BMI. Histogram of frequency table of college GPA.

Furthermore, the retention of these students is quite evident for the BMI population. Figures 4.34 and 4.35 indicate the semesters attended for each cohort. The Non-BMI students exhibit high numbers in semesters 2 and 3, but show a decline thereafter, showing a deficiency in retaining them. The mean was 4.03, \( n = 553, SD = 2.241 \). The BMI students begin with low in semesters 1 through 3 but spike in semester
4. The spike can be attributed to the BMI interventions. Clearly, the BMI figure shows a high retention rate for students in this cohort with a mean of 5.62 ($n = 45, SD = 2.461$).

*Figure 4.34. African American male students 2007-2008 Non-BMI. Histogram of semesters attended.*
Figure 4.35. African American male students 2007-2008 BMI. Histogram of semesters attended.

The findings indicate there is a strong relationship between BMI participants and college GPA, semesters attended, credits earned and degree attainment. Additionally, there was a weak relationship between high school GPA and college GPA, credits earned and semesters attended.

A detailed summary and discussion of the findings are presented in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter will review the results of the study, detail limitations the researcher faced, make recommendations for future research and discuss what can be done with the data. This study examined student success as measured by a number of variables: college GPA, high school GPA, high school attended, semesters attended, credits earned, semesters multiplied by college GPA, college GPA multiplied by credits earned and degree attainment.

In this study, the researcher discovered that the Medgar Evers College (MEC), Black Male Initiative (BMI) Program invested $597,362 in 2007 and 2008 ($298,681.00 per year) to assist 53 BMI participants towards graduation. It is important to note that initial data reflected that there were 53 BMI participants. The study reviews data for 45 because the other students did not have data for all the variables being considered. That is a cost of $11,270.98 per student. The question we need to answer is “Is the investment worth it?”

A U.S. Census details the average lifetime earnings of individuals in 2006-2008 with a high school diploma as compared to those with a Baccalaureate degree. “The typical bachelor’s degree recipient can expect to earn about 66% more during a 40-year working life than the typical high school graduate earns over the same period.” (College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, 2010). Since this study concentrated on African American (AA) males, I will provide figures for that population. The average lifetime earnings for an AA male with a high school diploma are $1,340,407.00. The average
lifetime earnings for an AA male with a college diploma are $2,107,728.00. That is an increase of $767,321.00 over their lifetime (Julian & Kominski, 2011).

In 2008, the College Board reported that the average high school graduate working full time would earn a median annual salary of $33,800 while a college graduate would earn $55,700. Furthermore, approximately 27% is contributed to federal, state and local governments in the form of tax payments. The after-tax earnings for baccalaureate recipients was approximately $16,000 (College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, 2010). Given the initial investment of $11,270.98 per annum per student to help them progress towards a college degree; it seems that it is well worth it in the long-term earnings. If college graduates pay back approximately 27% ($1500) in taxes annually, then the educational investment is paid off with interest.

**Implications of Findings**

The researcher began this study with an inquiry about whether or not the BMI program was effective and whether the capital investment was worth the long term benefit. The results of this study indicate that the BMI program is indeed benefiting those students who participate and that the average lifetime earnings is affected by obtaining a college degree. The study revealed that many first time freshmen who were admitted in 2007 and 2008 had accumulated zero credits. This is primarily because most students accepted to MEC are in need of remediation. Community and comprehensive colleges are the only types of colleges still offering remediation for underprepared students. Since the senior colleges no longer offer this resource, college students must either have scored high and be excluded from remediation, or attend a community or comprehensive college in order to exit out of these courses and then reapply to a senior college.
college. Remedial courses do not acquire college credit. Many students, after having spent a year or two in remediation, exhaust their financial aid resources and having received no credit, will become frustrated and drop out. At that point, their only options are to attend and pay out of pocket for the courses, take out a loan, or attempt to attend a propriety school, which may offer other types of funding.

In Durkheim’s (1953) Theory of Social Integration, the student’s inability to assimilate into their new society, integrate into the mainstream of college credit courses makes them feel withdrawn, deficient and ashamed. This eventually results in them withdrawing from college altogether. Durkheim’s (1953) suicide theory discusses egoistic suicide, where too little social integration leaves individuals feeling isolated. Durkheim stated that single males in particular have less to bind and connect them and therefore, commit suicide at higher rates. Medgar Evers College is a predominately-black institution. The student population is overwhelmingly African American and Caribbean; approximately 94%. This population brings with it certain stereotypes and stigmas about college and being educated.

Kafele (2009) discusses the challenge that many African American males face; young males who attempt to explore their potential and demonstrate their intelligence are often ridiculed by their peers. Many will withdraw or disregard education altogether in order to maintain their status within their group. Others may not face the same stigma but suffer from lack of role models. African American males who may be first generation college students may feel lost because they do not have a role model who has traveled this path before and can offer guidance. They are oblivious of college policies
and procedures, which may lead to bad choices and eventually result in withdrawing or dropping out altogether.

Many students enter college unaware of differences between high school and college. Few are knowledgeable of the financial implications when they do not progress towards graduation. At Medgar Evers College 78% of the students are receiving some type of financial aid. When students find themselves repeating remedial courses they cannot pass, the state discontinues providing aid. The state allows students to take remedial courses a maximum of two times before the state will no longer pay for the course. When those finances are no longer there, an education becomes unobtainable. Spady (1970) suggested that students not supported by the institution through available resources so as to maintain good grades are likely to drop out as well (Summers, 2003). Colleges do offer other venues to pay for college such as loans or scholarships but many times the loans can carry high rates and the scholarships are scarce and competitive.

Students graduating from New York City high schools today seem to be less and less prepared for college life. Many come to MEC with the assumption that it is an extension of their life in high school. Almost immediately, they are surprised by the expectations of college life. Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot (2005) discuss that when higher education is not presented as an important endeavor, and when there is no support or focus on studies, that students will drop out. Children who lack role models to emphasize the importance of college will likely not pursue it. In addition to the high schools doing a poor job at preparing students for college, the high school counselors are overworked with large student caseloads.
The National Association for College Admissions Counseling (2012) is reporting that in some states, the counselor to student ratio can be as much as 986:1 in California and 799:1 in Minnesota. Unfortunately, New York and New Jersey did not report district-level data to the Department of Education. These types of figures make it virtually impossible for a student to receive the type of dedicated attention needed when making choices for college. Additionally, “the good ones have learned on the job — you can be fairly certain that they haven’t been taught much about the college-admissions process. Bob Bardwell, a vice president at the American School Counselor Association, estimates that only two dozen or so graduate programs offer a college counseling class.” (Shaughnessy, 2009).

BMI programs educate students on the importance that a college degree will have on their lives and insist that they surround themselves with other students who value how education will enrich their lives. Students who fail to socially interact will never feel compatible to others and are likely to drop out (Summer, 2003). In order to integrate fully into the new environment students need to transform. Tinto’s theory is prevalent here, college students are moving from one community to another. They must leave their high school community, rituals and friends to integrate into a new community where new friends, rituals and community will be established. Students must separate from their past in order to fully accept the future.

Van Gennep (1960) discusses the three phases of this transformation: separation, transition and incorporation. Students must make a concerted effort to separate from their high school mentality and understand that they are embarking on a new journey. Once in college, students must transition into the new reality of expectations. An
understanding of the commitment required for success in the new setting. Finally, students must consciously incorporate this new entity into their lives. They must seek to fit into a group in order to survive. Students who fail to incorporate into college life may find it challenging to single-handedly achieve all the goals. Support from family, faculty, fellow students and the institution is essential in the success of each student.

Additionally Hurtado and Carter’s (1997) Sense of Belonging theory is echoed as well. The BMI program creates a sense of brotherhood, through the activities they sponsor and the counseling; tutoring and advisement the students are able to better manage the stresses of college and therefore persist towards degree attainment. When students don’t join groups that give them that sense of belonging, they begin to feel isolated or detached and leave that environment feeling uncared for. This study revealed the predictors of persistence towards graduation and which variables were not useful in the assessment. Below the researcher will examine each of the research questions and findings.

**Research Question 1:** Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as college GPA. In analyzing the college GPA as a predictor of student persistence towards graduation, the study revealed that there is a strong relationship between BMI participation and college GPA. Students who participated in the BMI program averaged a GPA of 1.37 points higher than non-participants. The high GPA can be contributed to the tutoring services dedicated to BMI participants. Additionally, the research shows that students with the highest college GPA’s were primarily foreign educated and GED recipients. Furthermore, the high
school GPA was measured against college GPA and it was determined that high school GPA is a weak predictor of college GPA. Of the total study population of 722, there were 598 students whose college GPA was reviewed, the 124 not included here did not acquire any college credits with passing grades and therefore did not have a college GPA.

**Research Question 2:** Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as semesters attended? The data revealed that BMI participants attended more semesters in college than non-participants. On average BMI participants attended 6 semesters while non-BMI participants only attended 3. The study confirms that there is a strong relationship between BMI participation and semesters attended. Moreover, the data shows there is a weak relationship between the semesters attended and the credits earned; this is a direct effect of students who spend several semesters in remediation, acquiring no college credits. Interestingly, when examining semesters attended by type of high school attended, the data revealed that foreign educated students attend more semesters, followed by private and public school, with GED and out of state trailing. All 722 students were included in the review of this variable.

**Research Question 3:** Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as total credits? The study showed that BMI participants acquire more credits than non-BMI participants. The average credits earned for BMI participants was 113 as compared to 33 of non-BMI participants. This shows that there is a strong relationship between BMI participation and
credits earned. Since BMI has support programs such as tutoring, students who take advantage of that resource will test out of remediation sooner, therefore being able to move into the college credit bearing courses and begin to receive credit sooner than some of their counterparts. When comparing types of high schools attended, the researcher discovered that the foreign educated students earn more credits than the other types of high schools attended. Furthermore, there was a weak relationship between credits earned with semesters attended. Again, this can be attributed to the number of semesters spent in remediation.

Research Question 4: Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as GPA multiplied by semesters? This variable was a mathematical equation devised to compare figures between BMI and non-BMI participants in a nominal way. When comparing the two groups on GPA multiplied by semesters, it was statistically significant with BMI participants’ mean 9.77 points higher than that of non-participants. The total study population was 722, there were 598 students whose college GPA was reviewed, the 124 not included here did not acquire any college credits and with passing grades and therefore did not have a college GPA, hence could not be tallied in this mathematical equation.

Research Question 5: Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as GPA multiplied by total credits? Similar to the GPA multiplied by semesters attended, this calculation was also used to compare both groups mathematically. Again, when comparing these cohorts we
see a statistically significant relationship with BMI participants’ mean 1,707 points higher than that of non-participant; there was no surprise that the pattern continues to emerge. Foreign educated students fare much higher on this scale; followed by GED recipients. The total study population was 722, there were 598 students whose college GPA was reviewed, the 124 not included here did not acquire any college credits with passing grades and therefore did not have a college GPA, hence could not be tallied in this mathematical equation..

**Research Question 6:** Do African American male students who participate in the Medgar Evers College Black Male Initiative program have a higher level of success in college than those who do not, when success is defined as attainment of a degree?

Finally, when comparing BMI and non-BMI participants in degree attainment, it was evident that there was a very strong and statistically significant relationship between BMI participation and degree attainment. Interestingly enough when reviewing the type of high school attended and degree attainment, the public school scored the highest with foreign educated students coming in second for both the general population and the non-BMI cohort. When examining the BMI participants separately, GED recipients reflected the highest numbers.

**Limitations**

The BMI program at Medgar Evers College (MEC) had several limitations. The program does not market to new students, nor does it recruit at open houses or academic fairs. Only students who happen to come across the office or their website will be aware of the services they offer. The program relies on word of mouth advertising and program
activities to recruit students. Therefore, their participation rate was not high.

Unfortunately, resources to branch out into marketing have been scarce.

Another limitation was the type of ethnicity information that was available at the college; the current categories do not categorize Caribbean students in a separate ethnicity category. The college only had six ethnicity categories on their applications: White (non-Hispanic), Black (non-Hispanic), Puerto-Rican, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, and American Indian, Native Alaskan. There was no representation for the majority of countries represented on the Medgar Evers College campus, which included Jamaica, Trinidad, Guyana, and Haiti just to name a few. In 2011 the college attempted to begin to categorize different ethnicities, Appendix A is a representation of the options now available in addition to the standard six, but the college still falls short since there are still no identifiers for Caribbean students.

Yet another limitation of the study was that BMI program pledged engagement and participation of African American males as a measure of success. Unfortunately, the program at Medgar Evers College did not collect data on the engagement of students as it relates to advisement, tutoring or counseling. This was a loss of vital data that could have potentially informed institutional policy and contribute to a holistic model on how to better provide for this population.

**Recommendations**

Since the inception of BMI in 2005, the University has dedicated a total of $20.25 million dollars on this initiative ($2.25 million annually). On March 12, 2012 the Queens Borough President, Helen Marshall presented the 2013 Fiscal Year: Expense and Capital Budget Priorities report to Mayor Bloomberg, Members of the City Council and
Directors of Management and Budget. The report (Appendix B), details several major initiatives and projects that were funded in 2012 and indicates they will not be funded in 2013.

Later in the report it states that although CUNY is not being targeted specifically for a budget reduction, that the City Council will not fund the BMI program in 2013 (Appendix C). Table 5.1 displays the programs that will no longer be funded by CUNY in 2013.

Table 5.1

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Unfortunately, other than budgetary constraints, the report does not explain the decision behind cutting funding for BMI. Two months later, on May 18, 2012, the CUNY Chancellor’s Office posted testimony made by CUNY officials responding to the March 12th report. The testimony states that

Last year, more than 7,000 students, administrators, faculty members, and community partners were involved in CUNY BMI projects and programs. As I
promised last year at this hearing, the development of a proposal for a BMI Institute has also been included in the Master Plan. This institute will elevate the work of the BMI to a national level. It would provide funding for fellowships to researchers or CUNY graduate students who are studying issues of equal educational opportunity, as well as issues of race, ethnicity, and diversity as they relate to education. I am very grateful for the council’s ongoing support of this essential initiative and ask for your assistance in restoring funding for the coming year (CUNY, 2012, par.9).

Based on the testimony given above, CUNY is working on a proposal to establish a BMI Institute and elevate its status nationally. Clearly based on the research, BMI does work; the data shows significant statistically positive relationships between BMI participation and several of the variables, which can be used to measure success towards degree attainment. The researcher recommends that if the program is taken nationally a large part of the development should be spent on marketing. As seen by the data, the lack of marketing is harming the number of potential students that can be reached and helped by this program.

Another recommendation that the researcher can make is that campuses be required to keep logs of students who come in for tutoring, advising and mentoring. During the study, the researcher would have wanted to be able to see what role if any advisement, tutoring and mentoring played in the success of the BMI participants. Unfortunately, at Medgar Evers College, that component of the BMI program is not recorded or maintained. Palmer, Davis & Maramba (2010), discuss how universities need to encourage learning inside and outside of the classroom. It is these types of
relationships that cement student’s attachment to the university. If BMI is expanded to a national model, it would be instrumental to keep a record of which students are utilizing those resources and how often. It would also be beneficial for the program directors to assess effectiveness and evaluate whether additional resources are needed.

**Future Research**

The researcher has several recommendations for future research. First, at the time of this study, the ethnic descriptors used at Medgar Evers College (MEC) were limited to White, Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Native Alaskan and Other. Today, the college has added 92 additional codes (Appendix A). Given that, nearly 40% of MEC’s student population is foreign born from Jamaica, Trinidad, Guyana, Haiti, Africa and others, the researcher would recommend research comparing the BMI experience for both AA males as compared to foreign-born males. This research may prove quite interesting since in the results provided in this study show that foreign educated students scored highest in college GPA, semesters attended and credits earned. It would be interesting to break down the different countries to see which ones prepare students the best for a college education in the states.

Additionally, although the Black Male Initiative program was initially developed to assist African American males, the program’s language now states “the initiative is open to students regardless of race or gender and includes projects on every CUNY campus, from mentoring programs to career workshops” (CUNY, 2012, par 9). Based on the change in language, the researcher would be interested in further research to discover if females are now participating in the program. The research may include how female students contribute and are accepted to a program aimed at African American males. The
future researcher can utilize Durkheim’s Theory of Social Integration, particularly to
discuss how the program modifies, incorporates and integrates women into this new
environment.

Furthermore, the researcher would recommend monitoring all students who begin
in BMI and track them through graduation. It will be interesting to see how other
ethnicities such as Asian, White, Indian and Hispanic are included in a program that has
concentrated on the needs of African American males. Finally, the researcher would be
interested in comparing staffing changes if any with the new model. Many of the staff
and directors hired for the BMI centers around CUNY are African American males. This
was intentional so that BMI participants feel a connection with someone who looks like
they do. In the new model, the researcher would be interested if women and other
ethnicities will be hired to continue that sense of belonging with the new students they
will be admitting to the program.

Ideally, the researcher would also like to be able to research the participation level
of African American males as compared to Caribbean males. Culturally Caribbean
parents have had an awareness of the benefits to sending their children to college.
“Minority parents, especially African-Caribbean, have been enthusiastic for any forms of
schooling that would seem to offer communities some measure of control over the
education of their children.” (Tomlinson, 2005). The researcher believes there would be
interesting data to discover in conducting an analysis and comparison of African
American male students as compared to African-Caribbean male students with parental
involvement and influence as intervening variables.
Moreover, the researcher would be interested in investigating why BMI students joined the program. Given that the program has such poor marketing, the researcher would be interested in finding out how did students who joined the BMI program find out about the program. Additionally, what was it about the program that enticed them to join? The researcher would like to probe whether it is the student’s resiliency for degree attainment that resulted in them seeking out the BMI program; or if there was a specific attraction about the program that appealed to them.

The topic of resiliency, commitment and persistence is a complex one. One can argue that it is the student’s individual desire to succeed; others may argue that outside pressure from family, work or friends may push students towards degree attainment. Further study would need to be conducted in order to determine the factors associated with initiative, motivation, resiliency, persistence and commitment of degree attainment.

**Conclusion**

The study investigated outcomes of students in the BMI program and those who attended Medgar Evers College but did not participate in that program. The design was quasi-experimental in that it examined students and how they measured against different variables. Throughout this study, the researcher discovered that CUNY will no longer fund the initiative in 2013, but instead is writing a proposal in order to take BMI to a national level. The researcher has several recommendations for both future research as well as listing a host of suggestions for the national model.

For an effective national model, the researcher recommends a strong marketing campaign, one that would create interest during open houses and high school recruiting events while still engaging not only first time freshman, but continuing students as well.
Secondly, collecting surveys on a semester basis to inquire about the programs offered and student’s feedback. Through the surveys, administrators can gain pertinent information such as how well or how often the resources offered are being used and if the staffing in those areas is adequate for the population being served. Additionally, one can gauge interest in extended hours or topics for upcoming events.

In addition, the current model primarily arranges events that involve guest speakers and informational sessions. The national model would benefit from creating more community and team building activities. One of the goals of BMI is for these students to become leaders and change agents in their communities. The national model should incorporate activities where students work with the community to plan and execute events pertinent to that community. Finally, the national model should have enrollment and graduation goals every year. Similar to how colleges and universities are given enrollment targets, the BMI Institute should have an enrollment goal every year. This type of goal will keep the administrators and staff managing the program constantly reinventing the program to stay fresh, innovative and energetic as they recruit new students.

The results of this study suggest that an investigation of the national BMI Institute would provide the basis for a universal model. This model could incorporate and utilize the best practices of models all over the world. However, this type of undertaking would involve sharing of data and strong collaborations throughout all educational institutions at all levels. A herculean feat, but one that this researcher believes is vital to the literature.
References


http://www.cuny.edu/academics/initiatives/bmi.html

http://trends.collegeboard.org/education_pays/report_findings/indicator/1#f1


### Appendix A

Ethnicity Codes used at Medgar Evers College (2011)

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Appendix B

Cover Letter from Queens Borough President Helen Marshall to Mayor Bloomberg

TO: Mayor Bloomberg
   Members of the City Council
   Director of Management and Budget

FROM: Queens Borough President Helen Marshall
   Members of the Queens Borough Board

March 12, 2012

The future of New York City’s economy continues to be of concern to all New Yorkers. Although tourism is up, there is a modest local economic recovery. Our revenue has increased slightly and our real estate taxes and local economy are showing signs of rebounding. As in years past, Mayor Michael Bloomberg continues to propose a fiscally prudent financial plan. While the budget does not contain new taxes, layoffs of teachers, police and firefighters, it contains an agency gap program reducing already strained services and programs. This year’s budget relies on a $29 million increase in revenue from fees and fines as well as a more-aggressive auditing of high-end tax returns. The budget counts on funding from a health care reserve fund and $1 million from the sale of new taxi medallions.

The Fiscal Year 2013 Budget and Financial Plan is $68.7 billion. This is only slightly higher than Fiscal Year 2012. In addition to targeted reductions of 6% to most agencies, several major restorations and initiatives funded by the City Council in the Fiscal Year 2012 Adopted Budget, will not continue in Fiscal Year 2013. These items include the elimination of 20 Fire Companies, Borough Presidents’ Discretionary Funding for the Department for the Aging, funding for afterschool programs including Beacon programs.

Pursuant to Section 241 of the New York City Charter, the Queens Borough Board respectfully submits its Fiscal Year 2013 Expense and Capital Budget Priorities. This document includes both expense and capital budget priorities in each program area, as well as an impact statement for each agency. In addition, we have included a summary of testimonies from our charter mandated Borough Board Budget Hearing that afforded borough residents and local service organizations an opportunity to comment on the Mayor’s Fiscal Year 2013 Preliminary Budget and Financial Plan. Finally, we have incorporated a number of revenue and savings options to fund our priorities. Therefore, the Queens Borough Board urges the Mayor to ensure that the funding priorities contained herein be funded in the Executive Budget.

As New Yorkers, we, the Queens Borough Board, submit this document knowing its implementation will provide sorely needed services and strengthen our economy.
Appendix C

Section of letter indicating Black Male Initiative funding will be cut in Fiscal Year 2013

City University of New York

The City University of New York (CUNY) serves as a gateway for the city’s residents to the rewards of higher education and successful careers. The CUNY campuses in Queens, LaGuardia and Queensborough Community Colleges, Queens College, York College, and the CUNY Law School, also provide resources to the borough and city as a whole, including classes and lectures, arts and cultural events, resources for economic development and other programs.

CUNY provides vital assistance for our most economically vulnerable students and a gateway to the middle class. As the economic recession continues, more and more people look to the educational services CUNY has to offer at reasonable tuition costs. The City University of New York now serves a record number of students. At nearly 271,000, enrollment has grown by more than 11,000 degree credit students since Fall, 2009. This is the University’s 11th straight year of growth.

The Fiscal Year 2013 Preliminary Budget does not target a reduction to CUNY. However, the City Council allocated funding in the Fiscal Year 2012 Adopted Budget that is not continued in Fiscal Year 2013.

This funding is as follows:

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<th>Summary of Fiscal 2012 Council Initiatives: Higher Education</th>
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- **Black Male Initiative**
  Funding to support programs and services at several CUNY campuses to recruit and support under-represented groups, particularly black males. Some of the initiatives include transition to college programs, academic enrichment, mentoring, leadership development, and non-violent conflict resolution.

- **Nursing Program**
  This funding provides professional training for a new class of nurses.

$2,250 million

$500,000