Being and Becoming Men of Character: Exploring Latino and Black Males' Brotherhood and Masculinity Through Leadership in College

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Abstract

This article advances knowledge on the significance of engagement and leadership for five Latino and Black male student leaders at a Hispanic-serving institution. By exploring their experiences in a male-centered initiative, identity and masculinity emerged as salient frames to understand students' engagement on campus. Individual and focus group interviews yielded that relationships and male peer-to-peer bonding built on students' cultural wealth by providing unique opportunities for learning and self-growth. Implications are offered as well.

Resumen

Este artículo avanza el conocimiento del significado de la conexión y el liderazgo en cinco estudiantes hombres latinos y negros líderes en una institución de educación superior que sirve a hispanos. Al explorar sus experiencias en una iniciativa centrada en masculinidad: identidad y masculinaidad emergieron como marcos salientes para entender la conexión de estudiantes y su universidad. Entrevistas individuales y grupos foco indicaron que relaciones y amistades de compañeros hombres construídas a través de la riqueza cultural de estudiantes, proveen oportunidades únicas para aprender y desarrollarse. Además se ofrecen implicaciones.

Keywords

Latino and Black males, engagement, masculinity, leadership, peer bonding

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Introduction

During the past 20 years, focus on increasing the access, retention, and graduation of Latino and Black males in higher education has received increased attention by a wide range of stakeholders and invested parties (Cuyjet, 2006; Harper, 2013; Pérez, 2014; Sáenz, Ponjuán, & Figueroa, 2016; Strayhorn, 2012). Researchers have continued to identify experiences in college and the college environment (academic, social, and cultural) as significant barriers to Latino and Black male student success (Dancy & Brown, 2008; Noguera, Hurtado, & Fergus, 2011; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009). Academic and social integration (Brooms, 2016; Palmer, Wood, Dancy, & Strayhorn, 2014; Strayhorn, 2008) as well as sociocultural factors and peer dynamics contribute to men of color's (lack of) representation and success in college (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2012; Wood & Palmer, 2015). In between their entry to college and their completion, there is much to be learned about how Latino and Black males experience college, especially their engagement in male-centered initiative programs, how they think about and theorize their leadership, and what these mean for their male peer bonding relationships and masculine identity development.

   Developing male-centered initiatives that speak directly to Latino and Black males' needs has been a critical intervention method introduced at both the institutional and statewide levels. Yet, research that documents students' experiences in these programs has received very little attention and remains much needed. This study addresses this gap in student engagement research in higher education by extrapolating the experiences of five Latino and Black male leaders at a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI). The goal of the project is to learn about the experiences of Latino and Black male students who participate in the Brothers for United Success (B4US) program. We are interested in documenting and assessing the impact this program has on Latino and Black male academic performances, retention, social support, and engagement at an HSI. The purpose of this study was to use a mixed-methods approach to understand students' experiences in a male-centered initiative. Specifically, the current analysis relies on both individual and focus group interviews to analyze how their experience as leaders mattered in their engagement experiences. The data analysis is organized around several narrative themes that emerged from the interview data, with particular attention given to their masculine identity and manhood constructs. The findings can assist practitioners and scholars in better understanding the unique experiences of Latino and Black male students leading to new inquiries focused on helping these students succeed in college.

Men of Color in Higher Education

Student engagement, peer relationships, and identity development are important topics in extant literature and discussions about student success in college. For instance, scholars identify student engagement and leadership as contributors to how Students of Color experience, integrate, and persist in college (Dancy, 2012; Guardia, 2015; Palmer et al., 2014; Schneider & Ward, 2003). Colleges are also places in which students negotiate their identity development, especially as it relates to their masculine

identities and manhood in navigating campus (J. E. Davis, 2012; Sáenz & Bukoski, 2014). Scholars interested in students' sense of self, personal development, and sense of belonging identify engagement and identity development as key components to understanding how college affects students (Brooms, 2017; Strayhorn, 2012; Wood & Palmer, 2015). Also, recent scholarship has considered the impact of identity development for men of color in college (Estrada & Arciniega, 2015; Ford, 2011; Garcia, Patrón, Ramirez, & Hudson, 2016).

Within the extant literature, there is a burgeoning agenda that focuses on Latino and Black male success (e.g., Palmer et al., 2014; Sáenz, Ponjuán, & Figueroa, 2016). In focusing on student success, some scholars identify familial and community support as well as sociocultural capital, such as extended social and family networks, to persist in college (Harper, 2013; Strayhorn, 2010; Yosso, 2005). For instance, Strayhorn (2010) found that Black and Latino male students' social and cultural capital (e.g., socioeconomic status, discussions with parents, involvement) were significant predictors of students' undergraduate grade point average and impact persistence as well. Similarly, Yosso (2005) maintained that familial capital (cultural knowledge nurtured among family networks, including extended and fictive kin) provides students with critical sources of consciousness and connection that can empower and support their efforts. Contrasting the students' successes, and success efforts, Black males still experience isolation and race-related stressors in college (Cuyjet, 2006; Harper, 2009) and Latino males are considered invisible, vanishing, or missing from campuses of higher education (Noguera et al., 2011; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009).

Peer Relationships

Social engagement and peer associations for Latino and Black males have been identified as critical to their matriculation, academic performance, and success in higher education (Brooms, Goodman, & Clark, 2015; Estrada, Mejia, & Hufana, 2016; Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez, & Rosales, 2005). Research on peer support, described as brotherhood in Estrada and colleagues' (2016) research, suggests that male social bonding, masculinity, and family orientation are prominent in the experiences of selected college Latinos. Importantly, peer relations and bonding can serve as key sources of motivation for students and can help them develop community on campus. For instance, Sáenz and Ponjuán (2012) found that Latino males who indicated that they had positive peer support were likely to have stronger aspirations for succeeding in college than those who indicated less positive support among peers. Similarly, Strayhorn (2008) found that strong supportive relationships may facilitate students' social adjustment to college and enhance their sense of belonging. These aspirations to succeed and students' heightened sense of belonging both contribute to the likelihood of retention.

Men of Color, Manhood, and Masculinity

The framework for this study draws from conceptions about manhood and masculinity with specific focus on college men. In educational settings, research on college men

has included studies on identity development, gender socialization, role conflict, health and wellness issues, masculine performance, and spirituality (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracey, 2008; Dancy, 2011, 2012; J. E. Davis, 1999, 2012; T. L. Davis, 2010; Ford, 2011; Harper & Harris, 2010; Sáenz, Bukoski, Lu, & Rodriguez, 2013). In their study of men on community college campuses, for example, Sáenz and Bukoski (2014) asserted that traditional concepts of masculinity emphasize the "the importance of remaining tough, or 'strong and silent,' in the face of challenges and avoiding displays of emotion, which can be perceived as a weakness or as overly feminine" (p. 100). Correspondingly, in a study of 130 Latino college students, Sáenz and colleagues (2013) contended that conflicting messages about what manhood means could have negative implications on Latino male youth development. For instance, they argued that adhering to *machismo*—often associated with aggressiveness, power, and obsession with achieving status—could restrict Latino males' emotionality, sensibilities, and relationships. Thus, as researchers attest, more work is needed to study how men of color experience their gender in college as well as their gendered identity development as well.

   In summary, previous studies reveal that how men of color think about their masculine identities and manhood constructs matter in their college experiences. Although there has been a good deal of research on students' peer bonding in college, engagement on campus, and manhood constructs, there is scant research that examine these within male-centered institutionally based programs. We turn a critical eye to how Latino and Black male students' personal development was impacted by their out-of-classroom experiences. In particular, we investigate how their leadership roles and participation in a male-centered initiative program influenced their peer bonding, masculine identity and manhood constructs, and personal development.

Method

This study is part of a larger mixed-methods project—including ethnographic observations, surveys, and individual and group interviews—in which the academic, social, and matriculation experiences of Latino and Black male college students are examined. The current study is based on data collected from student participants in a male-centered success initiative at an HSI across three phases: surveys and observations (Phase 1), one-on-one interviews (Phase 2), and a focus group interview (Phase 3). The student leaders were recruited using a purposive sampling approach (Weiss, 1994). We conducted individual interviews with five of the seven members of the executive committee (two members were unavailable during the times of data collection); these students had been elected by B4US members as leaders, and they all received invitations to participate in Phase 3 of the project—the focus group interview. Participating in the focus group interviews was based on students' availability. The research team identified dates for the focus group interview; based on students' availability for the identified date, five members actually participated in the focus group. Given that our goal is to center the voices of Latino and Black men and learn how they construct meanings, we focus solely on the interview data. We report our findings

Table 1. Student Leader Background Information.

	Student	Race	Major	Year	B4US	Position
1	Andrew	Black	Psychology	3rd	1.5 years	Director, Marketing
2	Tomas	Hispanic	Theater	2nd	2 years	Cochair
3	Caleb	Latino	Business	3rd	1 semester	Cochair
4	Jamie	Latino	Sociology	4th	3 years	President
5	David	Black	Biology	4th	4 years	Vice president

Note. B4US = Brothers for United Success.

through the experiences of these five members as expressed in one-on-one and focus group interviews (see Table 1).

Site Selection

West Coast State University (WCSU; pseudonym) is a master's comprehensive public university on the West Coast. WCSU enrolls more than 11,000 undergraduate students; Hispanic students account for more than 50% of the student population, and Black students account for about 15%. In response to Latino and Black males being among the lowest achieving groups when compared with other student groups on campus, the B4US program was developed as an academic and social cohesive program that focuses on peer group development while serving to improve students' educational outcomes. B4US hosts monthly meetings and professional workshops, provides students with one-on-one and small group mentoring, and various other activities such as community service. These efforts, both individually and collectively, are aimed at building a microcommunity for Latino and Black male students that provides an academic, social, and personal support network.

Data Collection and Analysis

Both the individual and focus group interviews followed a semistructured, open-ended format and were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy (see Weiss, 1994). Individual interviews lasted for nearly 65 min on average, whereas the focus group interview lasted for 2 hr; all of the interviews were conducted in an office or conference room on campus that allowed for privacy. All of the interviews were conducted and transcribed by the first two authors in the days immediately following the interviews. Subsequently, each member of the research team read each transcript independently to identify essential excerpts highlighting the students' leadership experiences in B4US. Afterward, each member reviewed the transcripts to identify collective themes that emerged across the transcripts (Weiss, 1994). After reviewing the data through coding and themes, we organized the data into themes and subthemes. The authors discussed and rereviewed each theme and code for accuracy and saturation and then developed meaning units to highlight the participants' experiences in B4US and the meanings

they ascribed to those experiences. Finally, the first and third authors had several small group and individual meetings with B4US members where we shared several of our findings as a form of member checking and to create recommendations for the program.

Findings

Three major themes emerged from the data with respect to how Latino and Black males experienced their leadership engagement in a male-centered initiative program: (a) Developing Brotherhood, (b) Being a Brother's Keeper, and (c) Becoming Men of Character. Students acknowledged that at the heart of their experiences were their budding relationships with other B4US members and their own personal growth and development. We explore each of these themes more fully in the following sections and use the students' narratives to drive our analysis.

Developing Brotherhood: "It's Very Selfless"

Prior research suggests that men of color seek social connections with their male peers as a means for building social support and developing a microcommunity on campus. Often, these microcommunities are intended to buffer them from hostile campus climates or from feelings of alienation (Palmer et al., 2014). Our participants pointed to developing relationships with other male peers for holistic purposes that encompassed academic, social, and personal development. These relationships were the cornerstone of the men's experiences in B4US; even with the various activities and events that they participated in and developed, the student leaders pointed to their B4US peer relationships as paramount to their experiences within the program. In addition, they found these relationships to be a cornerstone of their collegiate experience as well.

As the students reflected on their B4US experiences, they invoked brotherhood and bonding throughout their narratives. Several of the students discussed how they developed brotherhood with their Latino and Black male peers. Primarily, developing brotherhood was situated as a holistic relationship between the students that extended beyond surface-level associations. In fact, the students wanted to be clear that their relationships were much different from other male associations in college, such as fraternities. For example, when asked to speak specifically to their understanding of brotherhood, Tomas exclaimed,

> I guess, at least in a college setting, the first thing that comes to most people's mind when we say "brotherhood" is fraternity. We're not a fraternity. We don't throw ragers; we're here for the genuine well-being of our members.

All of the student leaders agreed that they wanted to differentiate their ideas and identification with brotherhood from traditional conceptions like fraternities. Importantly, as Tomas asserted, B4US leaders held the general and overall well-being of their members as a central focus. He continued and added,

We're here to take people who need guidance, who need a path and show them the way—and, if need be, guide them through it. That's the sense of brotherhood that we have. It's a matter of keeping pace with one another but also giving them that driving push. It's not just the, "Hey man, how's your day?" It's the, "Hey man, how are you doing in school, do you need help, can I help you with anything?" It's very selfless. It's not for just myself and my brothers who I'm closest to, it's genuinely for all of us as an organization.

The student leaders made clear declarations that focusing on members' well-being necessarily extended beyond their academic endeavors. For instance, the men discussed how many of the males of color on campus rarely acknowledged each other's presence. As leaders on campus, they desired to create an atmosphere on campus that included males of color not only acknowledging each other but also investing in conversations that communicated their care and concern for each other. The questions that Tomas poses—"do you need help" and "can I help you with anything"—reference how they displayed care and invited male peers into potentially deeper conversations about their well-being. Even more importantly, as a number of the students attested, being leaders is a selfless endeavor that is other-centered.

Being a Brother's Keeper: "Someone Who Wants Your Personal Betterment"

For the students in this study, an important component of their engagement in B4US was opportunities to connect with their Latino and Black male peers. In talking with the student leaders, the primary focus of their leadership desires was to provide their fellow members with the best of themselves. Importantly, this service to the organization was embedded deeply in how the students related to each other. Throughout our observations and across our data collection—in both individual and focus group interviews alike—students used labels of "brother" to refer to fellow members and to each other. This sense of connectedness was more than just a casual reference and was used to center the students' understanding of the program, their role and engagement, and the importance of their collective identity with other Latino and Black male students.

As the student leaders reflected on their notions of brother and brotherhood, they acknowledged that it was something difficult to quantify and, sometimes, even more difficult to explain. Often, they described these relationships as a visceral experience that they lived as they bonded, shared, reflected, discussed, disagreed, and remained connected with members of B4US and the larger campus community as well. Importantly, even though they did not explicitly state it in their early definitions, B4US challenged the students to accept accountability and responsibility as part of their engagement in B4US and as manhood constructs as well. Andrew, for instance, asserted,

I definitely would like to say that B4US, we challenge what it means to be a brother and what is a brotherhood. And, I would like to say that someone who is your brother is someone who wants your personal betterment—over all other things.

The students expressed excitement and enthusiasm over the ideals and sense of brotherhood they experienced through B4US. As Andrew noted, B4US members were charged with *being* brothers, which included specific actions and behaviors that would align themselves with supporting fellow members. He continued and added,

> So, say me and brother Caleb, we have the same class. Now he's not going to class or nothing and we have a quiz or something and he's talking to me, "Brother I need answers." The brotherly thing to do is to say, "I'll study with you but I'm not just finna give you the answers because what are you learning? You're not learning and what does that do for you?" Because, in reality, what are we here for? To learn, that's the sole purpose of us being here is to learn. And, I don't feel that you can be somebody's brother, and want the best for you, if they're gon' let them ride your coattail; you know, let them piggy back off of you through their success because their success isn't theirs. The success is really yours and you're just kinda helping them along. So, I feel that a brotherhood is someone who wants your personal betterment in whatever way that means.

In particular, these student leaders focused on how being a brother was centered on helping build up each other while also focusing on wanting members' "personal betterment." Some of the students believed accountability and responsibility to be the hallmarks of what they experienced through their peer bonding.

Becoming Men of Character: "I Am a Person Who Embodies Change in My Community"

The leadership experiences and the brotherly bonds developed within B4US helped to shape the students' identities as men. Across the focus group interview, the students expressed that the experiences of building relationships in B4US had broad impacts, which extended to their self-concepts, personal/peer relationships, professional relationships, and romantic relationships. Furthermore, these student leaders expressed that they developed confidence in their abilities and identities as men of character through their leadership and participation in the organization.

Members in this group both lifted up each other and leaned on one another for support. B4US provided students with opportunities for leadership as well as sources of inspiration and knowledge about what it means to be a man. For Caleb, B4US provided him with an ideal of manhood that he could strive toward. He stated,

> It's really good that I have a lot of people that I can rely on and I call on my brothers. 'Cause growing up myself it was just me and my brother and my little sisters and I really didn't have that strong male figure in my life cause everyone when I started growing up looked to me. And when I started getting older I realized I really don't look up to anyone. I feel that I didn't have much of a direction until I joined this organization. And there's a lot of faces that I can point to where "I wanna be like him." Not necessarily his career but I want to be as good of a person as they are.

Prior to becoming a member and leader of B4US, Caleb found himself being a role model for his siblings and other close associates even though he had no one to look up

to personally. The brothers in B4US come from a variety of racial, ethnic, and social backgrounds. In addition, they are matriculating through various disciplines in college, but the common denominator is that they are all committed to personal development, college persistence, and giving back to their communities. Through the brotherly bonds and peer mentoring/role modeling in B4US, Caleb developed a concept of what type of man he wanted to be, and thus may be better able to serve his family members and the broader community.

According to our participants, communication is an important element of building strong, positive relationships. B4US provided an opportunity for members to reject hegemonic norms of masculinity (e.g., suppressed emotional exchanges or expressions) and communicate in ways that represented the members' full and authentic selves. In speaking about what he learned through his leadership experience, Andrew offered,

> But, one of the things that I can say B4US has helped me with is to understand that I can't let the culture of today define how I go about my life. I can't let, just because other people feel that you don't need to show emotion and you can't show that you're intelligent, I can't let that affect my relationships . . . It's okay to open up and have a better relationship. And I feel that having these more open relationships, especially with males—I don't know what it is, it's not very much talked about but it's specifically something within males, men of color, it's specifically within men of color—this thing where we're not supposed to show emotion within relationships. A lot of people are shocked when I say, "I love you, brother."

As a result of his participation in B4US, Andrew developed the confidence necessary to show love toward other men regardless of what society might have to say. Thus, how these student leaders showed and expressed care for each other was rooted in being their full selves and establishing authentic relationships with their male peers.

Discussion

The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature in several ways. First, the findings provide an in-depth empirical examination of the range of ways that Latino and Black males benefit and make meaning from their leadership experiences. As mentioned, although previous studies have discussed students' leadership in college (Hotchkins & Dancy, 2015) and students' manhood constructs (Arciniega et al., 2008), most of these inquiries have focused on only one of these student groups (either Black males *or* Latino males). In addition, previous research on identity is important as well given that students' identity salience prior to college and racialized campus spaces can impact how they experience college and their identity development as well (Garcia et al., 2016). Our inquiry adds to this research by offering an in-depth exploration of both Latino and Black males and how their engagement and leadership on campus impacted their peer bonding (e.g., "brotherhood"), identity, and personal development. Indeed, scholars have noted that masculinity matters in how students think about themselves in college (Harper & Harris, 2010; Lozano, 2015) and engagement can

inform students' identity development (Dancy, 2011, 2012; Guardia, 2015). The findings in our study provide valuable insights to aid practitioners and researchers in better understanding the ways that Latino and Black males experience their leadership in college through a male-centered program.

Second, the findings in the study confirm earlier research that suggested men of color benefit from peer relationships, as these connections can enhance their sense of belonging, increase their sociocultural capital, sharpen their sense of self, and support their efforts toward success (Brooms, 2017; Brooms et al., 2015; Dancy, 2012; Heys & Wawrzynski, 2013; Strayhorn, 2008). For instance, Hopkins, Martinez-Wenzl, Aldana, and Gandara (2013) argued that relationships with peers, which they identified as "peer social capital," can help Latino students expand their peer networks and provide them with opportunities to develop their identity. Relatedly, Estrada et al. (2016) found that Latino students in their study described brotherhood "as an aspect of their male identity that was fulfilling" (p. 18), partly because of their opportunities to help others. As it relates to bonding in the current study, findings show that these student leaders hold developing relationships with and among their B4US male peers as a significant experience for their engagement in college. In addition, B4US provided students with a valuable and supportive space for exploring their own identities, learning about others, and building positive relationships as well.

Third, as the students discussed building bonds with their male peers, they also discussed their roles as brothers. Here, they focused on *being* brothers and how they thought about and theorized the importance of their collective identity. This sense of peoplehood and collective social identity is evident in numerous kinship or pseudokinship terms that People of Color use to refer to one another. Thus, according to previous researchers, kinship terms, such as "brotherhood" and "brother," are used commonly to express ideas, linked fate, and kinship-like ties (Dancy, 2012; Jackson, 2012). For B4US members, the use of "brother" was intended to denote a sense of peoplehood, and we suggest that it is tied closely to their hopes and desires for how they felt and imagined their connectedness to their male peers. As leaders, the students sought to model the open boundaries of being a brother and impart in their peers the importance of their male relationships. The students conceptualized "brother" as a role that required action.

Fourth, student leaders insisted on differentiating this organization from other men's groups such as fraternities particularly as it came to brotherhood, but the difference still extended beyond conceptualizations of brotherhood. In fact, this distancing from traditional men's groups such as fraternities also could be seen as a rejection of hegemonic masculinity. Typically, men's groups on college campuses endorse hegemonic masculinity (Anderson, 2007), and these hegemonic masculine scripts offer little room for men's vulnerabilities, grievance, and emotions (Arciniega et al., 2008; Dancy, 2011). Although this organization did not necessarily teach its members "how to be men," it did expand their definition of masculinity and provided a safe space where men could express themselves and support one another. Students specifically identified accountability and responsibility as elements that were situated within their manhood constructs as well. In providing alternative masculinity constructs, B4US

allowed members to connect around their vulnerabilities. Several student leaders espoused the importance of communicating and showing their full selves even if that meant being vulnerable.

Research that moves beyond hegemonic notions of masculinity is important to explore for men of color in higher education. For instance, as opposed to *machismo*, which can be restricting and have negative impacts on Latino males' development and engagement in college, scholars have identified *caballerismo* to recognize more advantageous contributions of Latino masculinity, which includes being supportive and nurturing, family-centered, and noble (Arciniega et al., 2008; Estrada & Arciniega, 2015). In our study, we found that these student leaders developed and engaged in cooperative masculinity, which denotes ways in which interconnectedness to achieve collective goals grounds their behaviors and values, provides space for emotional expression, and encourages help seeking from others (including each other). Importantly, how men of color envision their masculinity and manhood plays a critical role in how they engage in college, cope with the college environment, and build and foster relationships (in college and beyond).

Implications for Practice and Research

The findings presented in this research suggest the need for more studies that investigate how men of color experience and make meaning from their engagement on campus, particularly in male-centered programs. The findings from this study revealed a need for extending the conversation further regarding what men of color's engagement in a male-centered program means to their college experiences. As the narratives presented in this research certify, Latino and Black males want and need strong, positive relationships with their male peers for support, advocacy, and personal development. Male-centered programs provide a unique space to harbor positive student development and outcomes. This research adds to the canon of what we know about student engagement: Students' engagement on campus helps them feel valued, can deepen their sense of belonging and mattering, provides safe(r) spaces to explore and develop their identities, and enhances their interactions and relationships with peers (see Brooms, 2017; Brooms et al., 2015; Estrada et al., 2016; Guardia, 2015; Harper, 2013; Lozano, 2015; Strayhorn, 2008, 2010).

Education stakeholders cannot continue to use theories and strategies that were created without Students of Color in mind to engage Latino and Black males (e.g., see Guiffrida, 2006). Educators who understand how men of color benefit from leadership and engagement can help provide meaningful experiences for Latino and Black males. Also, awareness of students' identity salience can inform educators and practitioners how students make connections on campus (or not) and experience the college milieu (e.g., see Garcia et al., 2016). Meaningful engagement experiences and spaces that support their connections to peers and culture for men of color can help bolster their self-efficacy, improve their academic outcomes, and assist in preparing them for life after college. Given the benefits that students attributed to their experiences in B4US, future research should continue to examine ways that Latino and Black males develop

and make meanings from their engagement and relationships in college across various institutional types (such as 2-year colleges, HSIs, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities).

Limitations

Findings from this study were based on the leadership experiences and meaning making of five students and, therefore, do not fully reflect the entire B4US executive board. Thus, we acknowledge the limitations of our findings and their ability to be generalized to a larger population (e.g., B4US members or other Black and Latino males on campus). In addition, the focus group interview format used in Phase 3 of the study, while informative, may contribute to how these student leaders could have relied on responses from each other to inform or shape what was offered (see Weiss, 1994). However, the reflexivity on the part of the researchers and the multiple forms of data collection helped us maintain confidence about the integrity of our data and our findings.

Conclusion

Within this study, we sought to investigate how Latino and Black males experienced, learned from, and made meanings from their leadership roles in a male-centered college program. The findings provide key insights about the students' peer bonding, manhood and masculinity constructs, and personal development. Student affairs professionals, program coordinators, and administrators must continue structuring out-of-class opportunities that provide these students with opportunities for leadership, bonding, and growth, all of which contribute to their sense of belonging, sense of self, and persistence in college.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

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