For Lane College: A Review of Literature on Black Male Retention and Recruitment Techniques for Private HBCUS

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Abstract

This exploration into the extant literature surrounding Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) was conducted with the underlying goals of discovering the activities, practices, and polices that Lane College can implement to increase student retention and persistence. Lane College is a private HBCU located in Jackson, Tennessee and therefore does not receive state funding in the same manner as neighboring HBCU, Tennessee State University (TSU).[1] Lane College must not only rely on student persistence, but also fiscal creativity to generate the type of funding streams necessary to compete in the post-secondary market. The expressed desire of Lane officials to increase persistence in STEM majors is a well-designed strategic goal that aligns with the needs of minoritized communities nation-wide. Many Minority Serving Institutions (MSI), including HBCUs, are especially vulnerable during market fluctuations, which is important to note amidst the unprecedented COVID-19 Pandemic. Accordingly, this work analyzes the extant literature devoted to social integration at HBCUs, and recommends strategies for successful STEM implementation. Through the examination the work of prominent scholars such as: John Braxton, Shaun Harper and Marybeth Gasman, this work explores social integration as a prerequisite for persistence and retention, at MSIs.

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[1] TSU is the only public HBCU in Tennessee.

Black Male Retention and Recruitment Techniques for Private HBCUs: A Review of

Literature

"Within the academic system…dropout appears to be related both to academic grade performance and intellectual development, but in apparently different ways for males and females" (Tinto, 1975, p.19). In the 21st century, the noticeable attrition rate of the Black male college-going population is a national concern, however, a generalizable solution still seems afar off. While we do not know enough to predict what leads members of certain races to depart from school, (Tinto 1975), a study in 2018 conduct by Dominique J. Baker and some of her esteemed colleagues provides insight about what helps HBCU students achieve the type of social integration that fosters retention. Additional disaggregation in future empirical studies are necessary to properly diagnose the high attrition rate of college-going, Black male population (Palmer Wood Arroyo, 2015). The stark difference in the completion rates of Black males as compared to that of their female counterparts, (Kimbrough & Harper 2006; Roach, 2001) creates fertile ground for collaborative research of the Black male populations at HBCUs (Arroyo, Palmer & Wood, 2015). Further, the completion rates of Black males fall behind that of every other race/gender combination in the U.S. (Flores, Oseguera, 2013; Perna, 2006)

Gender Disparities in HBCUs

This Black male retention phenomenon is also evident on HBCU campuses.[2] Fortunately, some scholars have taken an interest in investigating possible explanations and solutions. While this work highlights the importance and need to explore the collegiate experiences of minority males, as it relates to retention and persistence, it illuminates the greater need for further exploration of

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[2] HBCUs are a fertile ground for research as these institutions generally have larger overall percentage of black males when compared to other institutional types.

the experiences of minority males at all Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) (Palmer et. al., 2015).

Building from Vincent Tinto's (1975) intergrationist model, Braxton et. al., (2014) developed a theory of student persistence in residential institutions; an institutional description that fits Lane College as well as many other of our nation's HBCUs. Baker et. al., (2018) tested the Braxton et. al., (2014) framework in residential HBCUs. The Baker et. al., (2018) study is the most applicable empirical study in the extant literature for private HBCUs.

The New Big Three: Communal Potential; Proactive Social Adjustment; & Psychosocial Engagement

To assist in the retention efforts of Lane College and other institutions with similar populations, it is critical to address factors that influence the persistence of their first-year male student population. While academic performance may have a direct influence on retention, the ability of Black males to perform well academically dovetails with their ability to socially integrate the campus culture at an institution. Herein lies the logical coalescence of the departments of *Academic Affairs* and departments of *Student Affairs*.[3] Of the *six antecedents of social integration* (Braxton et. al., 2014) mentions, the (Baker et. al., 2018) study found that only three (3) have a significant influence on social integration, in the HBCU setting: *Communal Potential; Proactive Social Adjustment; and Psychosocial Engagement* ("Big Three"). In this work, I will explore these three antecedents broadly, within th context of the extant literature on Black males at HBCUs.

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[3] These are general names for department that manage curricular implementation, and student services, respectively. The names of these departments and divisions vary by institution.

In applying *Communal Potential,* the operative question is whether students perceive that there is a subgroup of students on campus that hold values, beliefs and goals similar to their own. This triggers an institutional interest to help students identify possible subgroups (Braxton et. al., 2014). Next, *Proactive Social Adjustment* requires (1) the pre-requisite awareness that a social adjustment is necessary; as well as (2) the desire to make that adjustment (Braxton et. al., 2014). Finally, *Psychosocial Engagement* denotes both the psychological and temporal commitment of students to the maintenance of social interaction with their peers as well as to the performance of their extracurricular responsibilities (Braxton et. al., 2014). The HBCU may already provide accessible and authentic role models necessary to achieve relevant permutations of Bourdieu's cultural capital theory (Carter 2003; Swartz, 1977). Part of the utility of this work is to provide Lane College and other institutions with a crystallization of literature that can assist in the maintenance of supportive post-secondary environments, where minorities can learn and grow without threats to their *Proactive Social Adjustment* (Baker et. al., 2018; Museus & Quaye, 2009; Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002).

"HBCUs [are often] heralded for their student-focused, student-centered approach to teaching" (Commodore & Gasman 2014, p.13). Thus, HBCUs must perform affirmative acts to maintain this accolade through the facilitation of social integration and student engagement, which according to research, will inevitably lead to persistence and retention. Unfortunately, the choice of attending an HBCU has been poorly marketed. This avails students who would be better served at an HBCUs, to negative interactions with academic and social systems at other institutional types, which may unnecessarily lead to departure (Harper, 2013; Tinto, 1975).[4]

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[4] Although more research should be done to study the social engagement of Black males (Dancy, Palmer, Strayhorn & Wood 2014), holistic interactions between Black males and the social systems of HBCUs compared to their

The antecedent, *Proactive Social Adjustment* in non-MSI venues can require Black males to "change themselves to acculturate and assimilate into Eurocentric spaces or face the high potential of dropping out." Baker et. al., 2018, p.2; Rendon et. al., 2000.) If they are unsuccessful at meeting this high burden, Walter Allen (1992) makes it clear that the venue can negatively affect the academic achievement of Black students. The lack of *Psychosocial Engagement* in non-MSI venues that do not lead to social integration, leave room for hypersensitivity to racial microaggressions that can disrupt social integration for minority students through sub-types of microaggressions called a microinsults. Microinsults are often disaggregated into four (4) sub-types, including *Ascription of Intelligence*, which is "assigning a degree of intelligence to a person of color based on their race" (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, & Esquilin, 2007; Tienda, 2013, p.8). The chances of Black males experiencing this disruptive phenomenon is diminished at an HBCU.

Student Engagement for Black Males

According to the 2014 ASHE report, the sense of belonging on a college campus for Black males is comprised of 6 factors: student organizations; faculty/student interaction; peer interaction; Black Greek Letter Fraternities (BGLFs); Black Male Initiatives (BMIs), and mentors (Palmer, = Wood, Dancy, & Strayhorn, 2014).), that can be reconciled with the three antecedents to social integration from (Baker et. al., 2018). Put differently, these factors can facilitate *communal potential, proactive social adjustment and psychosocial engagement*. Specifically, BGLFs help facilitate supportive environments for Black males and motivate them

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interactions with that of 4-year PWIs and 2-year institutions, make HBCU forums advantageous venues for Black male retention, at the undergraduate level.

to pursue leadership roles, which in turn create supportive environments for peer mentorship (Harper, 2008; Fleming, 1984). Contrary to the nature of Interfraternity Council (IFC) governance, the life-long active status of BGLF members provide a multifaceted and advanced scaffold for both faculty mentorship and peer mentorship, within many HBCU networks.[5] Thus, Student Affairs professionals at HBCUs should rely heavily on the economic viability and human capital of BGLFs to assist in student development (Palmer et al., 2014; Becker, 1962; Becker, 1993; Paulsen, 2001a, Becker, 1962; Schultz, 1961). Further, maintaining fruitful relationships with the regional leadership of BGLFs, extends the opportunity for off-campus stakeholders to help combat Black male departure (Tinto 1975; Palmer &Young, 2008). This exclusive yet pervasive phenomena of the BGLF network, combines the benefits of peer interaction, campus engagement and external resources, which all assist undergraduate students in successfully navigating both classroom and out-of-class issues (Astin, 1993; Tinto, 1988; Harper, 2006b, 2013; Strayhorn, 2008a; Palmer et. al., 2014). In their 2012 study, Palmer & Maramba explain "that when students are not engaged in both domains (in- and out-of-the classroom), their likelihood for success at the institution is compromised." (p.15)

The familial-like relationships of BGLFs can help augment lapses in college knowledge during students' first-year experiences. Also, it should not be lost that many faculty and staff at HBCUs are already BGLF members. Therefore, it is merely the nature of the interactions between students and these on-campus stakeholders that require methodical adjustment to provide the *quality* of interaction necessary for research-based student development (Nettles, M. T., Wagener, U., Millett, C. M., & Killenbeck, A. M., 1999). In addition, by combining student

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[5] The level of engagement of active members over the age of 40 in BGLF graduate chapters also distinguishes BGLF governance structures from that of other fraternal councils.

interaction with an adequate dosage of aspirational capital and maturity (Yosso, 2005),

engagement with culturally attuned sponsors may diminish any potentially deleterious effects

social clubs may have on academic achievement. The type of transfer of social capital may be

better utilized by Black females who are shown to make better use of their discretionary time

when compared to that of their Black male counterparts (Palmer, Wood Arroyo, 2015), thereby,

future study of National Panhellenic Council (NPHC) sororities may be prudent.[6]

By soliciting on-campus stakeholders from both *Academic Affairs* and *Student Affairs* to

encourage and motivate Black males, Lane College could build out organic alliances across

departments, that may have been previously siloed (Davis, Maramba & Palmer, 2010). McClure

(2006) explored the impact that BGLFs had on the social and academic success of college

students and found that it created a sense of belongingness and support. It also increased

students' academic success and satisfaction with their college experience. Furthermore,

engagement in BGLFs facilitated student leadership, and racial identity (Palmer, Davis, &

Maramba, 2010).

Application of the Big Three to BGLFs

BGLFs lead to what the literature calls *fictive kinship relationships* that assist in the development

of cultural capital and habitus, useful in the acquisition of social status and degree attainment.[7]

(Tierney & Veneges, 2006; Pierre Bourdieu 1986; Fordham, 1988; Coleman 1961, 1990). The

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[6] HBCUs may still be a better option for Black males than community colleges where the completion rates for all races at 2-year are unimpressive, especially for that of Blacks at 27 percentage points lower than the average of Whites (Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, & Person, 2006). 1/5 of Blacks that attend community colleges fail to accumulate more than ten credits before stopping out and not returning for at least eight years, if at all (Rosenbaum et al., 2006).
[7] The fictive kin theory is explicated more on page 9.

first two antecedents identified in the aforementioned Big Three, *Communal Potential and Proactive Social Adjustment* are triggered by the perception that (1) association with a BGLF is attainable and that (2) the respective network is desirable because it often holds the key to elevated social standing amongst peers, as well as access to exclusive gatherings and sometimes classified information.

Respective groups within the BGLFs often adapt their own habitus, which can consist of organic group behaviors that can sometimes conform to pre-existing BGLF chapter stereotypes and ethos (Bourdieu 1986; Tierney & Veneges, 2006). The enormous benefit of a BGLF organization for the individuals who are a part, as well as for the communities they serve, strongly suggest that Lane College and other institutions with similar populations should enhance the role of BGLFs. Student Affairs personnel working together with BGLF graduate chapters and *well-trained* faculty advisors can make reasonable efforts to ensure undergraduate BGLFs adhere to school policies and community standards.[8]

The Fictive-Kin Theory

Combining the fictive kin theory with the existing familial nature of BGLFs, gives students access to powerful alumni and an overall greater level of social and economic capital (Ebaugh & Curry, 2000; Tierney & Veneges 2006). Although this dynamic exists in PWIs, the on-campus BGLF network is oftentimes, even more pronounced in an HBCU environment due to the higher proportion of BGLF faculty staff administration as compared to those who are agnostic to the existence of these organizations (Palmer & Maramba 2012). In (Kendricks, Nedunuri, & Arment, 2013), faculty mentors behaved like fictive kin in a manner similar to

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[8] Hazing culture remains a challenge for some institutions. Faculty advisors need training and social support to navigate the complexities of surviving hazing allegation and investigation procedures.

manners already exhibited by BGLF members, by providing student to access pre-established professional networks, in and across the respective BGLFs. All BGLFs promote civic engagement and ascribe to principles that promote service, education and brotherhood. These principles comport well with the Big Three social integration antecedents and thereby, meaningful student engagement (Palmer, Maramba, & Dancy, 2013). The comparative practices of the five respective BGLF organizations reveal similarities they share, that provide for *Communal Potential* across the organizations as well as within the organizations. For example: servitude; leadership; tradition; friendship; and a deference for humanity, can be found enumerated in their mottos and observed in the documented practices of members of these organizations.

Having all five organizations present and active on a campus provides a welcome permeability to these otherwise exclusive clubs. This organic development of accessibility and exclusivity is essential to the maintenance of *Proactive Social Adjustment*. Skilled Senior Atudent Affairs Officers are necessary to properly facilitate respect for the autonomy multi-faceted Greek organizations require, alongside the enforcement of the policies and practices of the institutional host. Moreover, these organizations necessitate that the level of *Psychosocial Engagement* Junior Student Affairs Staff must demonstrate evinces a psychological and temporal commitment to facilitating not only the social interaction amongst students but also a psychological and temporal commitment of staff, to student programming.

It would be remiss not to mention that some research discusses whether Black male engagement in activities with same-race peers dissuade academic success. (Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Majors & Billson, 1992) Contrarily, Black males encourage academic success for their same-race peers even if it means shouldering responsibility

for another's academic record by temporarily shifting the hierarchical dynamic of the

relationship. (Harper 2013, Palmer, Davis, & Maramba, 2010). This is common phenomenon

within BGLF peer groups where students simultaneously navigate leadership, racial identity and

accountability for one another's academic success (McClure, 2006). Lane College and other

institutions with similar populations can take advantage of some of these conceptual frameworks

to pilot quality student-faculty relationships that may lead to higher levels of retention (Weidman

et. al., 2014).

Conservatism at HBCUs that may affect Retention

Although religiosity and ritualistic spiritual ceremonies are shown to help Black students cope

with stressors (Herndon, 2003; Herndon, McNeal & Riggins, 2008; Chatters & Taylor, 2010;

Weddle-West, Hagan, & Norwood, 2013), the conservative nature that sometimes accompanies

private sectarian HBCUs can complicate self-expression for members of the campus community

that identify as part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender (LGBT) community (Harper

& Gasman 2008; Palmer and Maramba 2012). "The conservative environment of HBCUs may

inhibit students' self-expression, as well as the expression of their sexuality and sexual

orientation" (Palmer, Wood, & Arroyo, 2015, p.6). Taken together with the results from (Baker

et. al., 2018), students may remain loyal to their institution despite feelings of inequitable

treatment. (Baker et al., 2018) calls for an improvement in metrics that comprise the *communal*

potential antecedent, at HBCUs, especially in the context of living learning communities. For

example, the Tennessee State University (TSU) BMI offices exist on the first floor of the largest

male residence hall in an effort to offer ongoing support to the entire Black male student

population as well as the Resident Life and Housing staff in meeting residential education

expectations. Although it is still too early to tell, combining the fundamental attributes of *Student*

Affairs and *Academic Affairs* in a communal space may offer many benefits to African American males at 4-year institutions like TSU, Lane College and others[9] Being in close proximity to campus personnel in pivotal spaces restores the familial support and atmosphere for which HBCUs are famous (Palmer & Maramba, 2012).

An Approach in STEM training at the HBCU

As is common amongst many MSIs, Lane College officials desire to increase persistence in STEM majors. In addition to fictive kin relationships, more formal advising models should be used to support persistence and retention in STEM fields. Although, Morehouse College is a single-sex institution, it is a comparable peer institution to Lane College because it is also a private HBCU.   Morehouse applies an example of fictive kinship in a summer program that focuses on, among other things, mathematics and community building. Additionally, Rust College, which is also a religiously affiliated private HBCU, applies a similar format that is augmented by student internship placements that align with students' majors. These internships are set for seamless actualization at designated times, after students matriculate to the status of upperclassman (Killenbeck, et al., 1999). Although it is not a private institution, a mentorship program at the HBCU, Morgan State University, focuses on leadership and teambuilding. An evaluation of the Morgan Male Initiative on Leadership and Excellence (MILE) was conducted by Chickering, Peters, & Palmer (2009) revealing that the model was successful in the reduction

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[9] Contrarily, two-year institutions severely lack the *Communal Potential* characteristic of traditional of 4-year institutions (i.e., Student Affairs departments that house BGLFs), "black men perceive faculty in 2-year institutions as unsupportive and apathetic toward their success" (Palmer et. al., 2014, p.16). This absence of the *Communal Potential* antecedent can decrease chances for social integration (Baker et. al, 2018; Braxton et. al., 2014).

of Black Male departure (Palmer, Davis, & Maramba, 2010; Hargrove et al., 2008; Commodore & Gasman, 2014).

The Committee on Underrepresented Groups (2010) calls the enhancement of minority success in the STEM fields a national priority; a sentiment corroborated by other researchers (Maton, Pollard, McDougall-Weise, & Hrabowski, 2012). This disparity is even more striking for undergraduates that attend HBCUs (Adeyeye, Fakayode, Mohammed, Pollard, & Yakubu, & 2014; Schwartz, 2011). I recommend Lane College pilot a combination of the three examples from the peer institutions in this section while focusing on the applicable highlights from each.[10] My hope is that this section provide Lane College with more creative programming to retain Black Males interested in STEM majors. However, proper assessment can only go so far without skilled facilitation by trained academic advisors; a concept that is addressed in the following section.

Comprehensive Advising

Before students become too invested into a STEM major, Lane College and other institutions with similar populations should consider allowing studens to review information about career paths that correspond with these respective majors, so they can make the most informed decisions possible. Advisors should not only assess students' interests, but they should also evaluate students' academic progress, especially in the area of mathematics achievement. Diagnoses should not discourage students from aspiring to certain majors but rather determine if these students may benefit from additional academic services.[11] This additional help could increase retention rates within STEM

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[10] I identify my highlights of each program in the section titled: An Approach in STEM training at the HBCU
[11] Assessment should be done regularly to see if advisement discourages aspiration.

majors and retention rates, overall. More importantly, advisors can use the information to determine which students may need additional assistance before they are overwhelmed in their chosen major (Nguyen, Williams, & Ludwikowski, 2017).

Although Harris, (2018) found that minority students attending MSIs may be more satisfied with an advising approach that most aligns with the definition of developmental advising, a subset of advisors should offer specialized help and attention to students with STEM majors, as those classes tend to be more difficult (Ludwikowski, Nguyen &Williams, 2017). Leaders at Lane College may also want to evaluate the impact of these advising specialized to determine the its impact on STEM retention. This is more difficult when the advising component of the assessment is conflated with the fictive kinship relationships students gain through BGLF and faculty-student mentorship. While advisors who are dedicated to STEM students can also support other students with social and miscellaneous concerns, it should be made clear to them that the students they are assigned to advise academically, are their primary responsibility.

In sum, this subset of STEM advisors, *advising specialists*, should be a dedicated cohort of experts that have the time and training to thoroughly and pointedly address any existing need for academic augmentation. In alignment with best practices used in the CUNY ASAP program evaluation, advisors for the STEM program participants should be dedicated solely to the students in the program. The reason for making advisors exclusive to the STEM participants is to maintain the difference between the experience of the participants and that of the comparison group (Scrivener, &Weiss, 2013). For Lane College, the adjustment would merely be a substantial decrease in the number of students that these newly designated *advising specialists* serve. Research also supports the

assertion that the STEM students will have a better perception of their advising experience when there is a lower student to advisor ratio (Scrivener, & Weiss, 2013).

Pinpointing the 'M' in STEM

Mathematics is challenging for students a vast amount of post-secondary institutions. From what I understand this is also true at Lane College, which in no way implies any fundamental institutional deficiency. Data from a study by Commodore and Gasman (2014), show that students who complete an on-line summer bridge mathematics program before they start college, have a higher first-year retention rate and GPA as compared to their counterparts. These results suggest that offering an on-line math bridge program is effective at increasing academic success of first-year, minority students. This can provide Lane College with an economically viable option that potentially serves the entire first-year population with as little as one faculty member. For program assessment and fiscal reasons, I am recommending it only for prospective STEM majors at Lane College. Of most significance, the participants in the (Harrington, Lloyd, Smolinski, & Shahin, 2016) pre-freshman study were "87% minority (p.13). They excelled over their peers in subsequent math courses despite the fact that "a majority of them were first-generation" (Harrington et. al., 2016, p.13). The cohorts also did very well in the online introductory math course, perhaps due to a combination of the (1) structured environment of the parental/guardian home, (2) excitement about attending college, and (3) the lack of distractions associated with the initial infatuation of campus life (Harrington et. al., 2016). These factors may be convergent with the lived experiences of many students, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the circumstances, perhaps Lane College should take advantage of these circumstances and facilitate a pilot.

Mission re-alignment to Strategic Goals: Unconventional Paths to Recruiting and

Retention

Faculty

When conducting pilots in anticipation for collegiate-wide implementation, a pilot board consisting of influential faculty members is a profitable course of action (Massy, 2016). To show respect for the population of faculty, Lane College should consider allowing faculty to vote on new ideas (whether in the faculty senate or other governing bodies) before and after adding a sample of the faculty to the pilot (Massy, 2016). To achieve financial efficiency in the context of strategic planning, that aligns with the mission of Lane College, it is prudent for the faculty to assist senior administrators in choosing which curriculums and programs do *not* contribute to enrollment and/or completion and are thereby are not worth the continued investment (Prager, Sealy & Co., 2016).

Another method that Lane already seems to be deploying, and that has also proven by research is the increase of budget flexibility through the use part-time employee and temporary faculty (Goldstein, 2019). Senior officials should endeavor to show the rest of the campus that they are invested in the new budgetary practice initiatives in ways that will hedge against the potential of either, fading stakeholder interest, or pressure from distinguished/highly respected faculty (Massy, 2016). At the same time, senior administration and the Lane College Board should welcome reasonings from faculty cohorts that may interpret newer recruitment and retention tactics as an intrusion on curricular authority (Goldstein, 2019). Regardless, the vantage point of a faculty cohort could provide beneficial perceptions of potential institutional

effects, that may not be conspicuous to non-faculty members of the Lane community. For instance, some educators assert that exposure to part-time faculty may have negative effects on retention (Eagen & Jaeger, 2008). In context, this observation is helpful when considering if students are taking courses with part-time faculty in STEM, introductory courses. Assuming part-time have less pressure to produce a large body of research, and are less likely to hold another job, full-time tenure-ineligible faculty, may be a favorable middle-ground for STEM introductory course instruction (Eagen & Jaeger, 2008). Taken together, this observation coalesces institutional goals of curbing departure (due to dissatisfaction) with the fiscally saleable course of action of reducing unreasonable *faculty salary* line-items in financial statements. In sum, if the issue with part-time faculty is the *availability* of the instructors, students in STEM, introductory courses may experience discouragement that leads to departure whether or not their faculty instructors are tenured (Eagen & Jaeger, 2008).

Additional bargaining points that align with the institutions strategic initiatives are: reevaluating current faculty tenure/promotion guidelines to include or give additional weight to STEM mentorship; discussing ways to decrease teaching loads for faculty who participate in STEM advisement, and; incentivizing faculty by releasing them from less desirable administrative duties (Schwartz, 2011). As a result, buy-in from well-respected faculty members may be useful to deter internal opposition to institutional campaigns, which avoids appearances of instability and shifting agendas, that could discourage alumni from investing (Prager Sealy & Co., 2016).

While it does take a while for curriculum changes to take effect, the new protocols that most postsecondary institutions, including Lane College, have enacted in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic have already resulted in remote learning and mass administrative shifts. If

Lane College uses this transitionary period to consolidate programs that "capture the high-volume, high return programs and courses [that] generate profits" for the institution, it could set a fiscal trajectory that evinces more intergenerational equity in years to come (Goldstein, 2019, p.264; Massy 2016). The goal of fiscal responsibility amongst departments must be measured and compared to depict faculty dedication (or lack thereof) to the overall alignment of institutional and budgetary mission(s). In the face of stakeholders who may push to return to the status quo, Massy's point that professors do not like to look bad in front of their peers, may come in handy when this data displaying metrics of fiscal responsibility are made available to all stakeholders (2016). According to (Maton et. al, 2012), the support of senior leadership can successfully hedge against any potentially detrimental negativism from influential faculty and staff, that may effect student integration (Braxton et. al., 2014). However, dissatisfaction of the student population is best quelled by students, themselves. Thus, allied partnerships via fictive kin relationships with student leaders, that leverage the highly developed NPHC networks (which includes that of the BGLFs), are helpful.

Students Retaining (and Recruiting) Students

"Student retention interventions work best when they are integral to the entire college community, which views them as being part of the institution's mission and vitality" (Killenbeck, et. al., 1999, p.14). With a redefined mission, Lane College can appeal to their modal customer-base, to immediately attract more of the type of student who statistically, already possess the demographic characteristics and test scores that correlate with a high probability of enrollment. To be clear, Lane College should continue to aim their recruitment efforts at high school students that fit the modal profile of their typical prospective freshman. Students attracting students with the promise of NPHC eligibility as a freshman is an institutional

attribute that would set Lane College apart from their counterparts in the state. This is an example of how framing retention as a competitive endeavor for students enlists all stakeholders as partners in enrollment management.

When visiting the surrounding high schools, Lane College can encourage current students and staff to inform high school counselors about Lane's relatively low cost. Although many people misperceive the cost of tuition at private post-secondary institutions (Palmer et al., 2010)., Lane College has a relatively low cost of attendance when compared to the surrounding institutions. This work including the graphics shown in the appendix can provide a template for research-based marketing and recruitment scripts.   In sum, a tuition increase coalesced with the departmental resource allocation would be appropriate to supplement engagement and retention strategies explicated within this work.

Marketing in the New Higher Education Landscape

The deviation from traditional student affairs, retention rhetoric is appropriate for the times. Lane College has been thrust into stiff market competition with institutions that have more financial streams to attract students. Strategic initiatives must be employed by all HBCUs to protect their operational budgets from unexpected shifts in enrollment. Student engagement theories lose applicability without constant assessment of contextual nuances. For example, in Tenneessee, even the public HBCU struggles to make up for lost revenue from decreased state funding.[12] Thus, the contextual nuance of Tennessee's outcome-based funding policy has an

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[12] See Figure 3

indirect effect on Lane College. TSU has to vigorously recruit in Jackson, Tennessee to atone for the inequitable result of the state funding system.[13]

By 2023 35% percent of this present-day, college-going population will be housed in the southeastern sector of the United States (McGee 2015). Hopeful indications that the South will be home to a large percentage of high school graduates in the United States, should encourage Lane College toseek , attract and retain students via social media by portraying the facilitated lived experiences that are indicative of the desirable college experience of their client base. While it is sometimes uncomfortable for educators to look students as customers, higher education has no empathy for institutions who do not invest in marketing and recruitment. Now, more than ever, the college student fits the quintessential definition of consumer.

I recommend the Lane College commission aneducational consultant to assist with the reengineering of the programmatic design of some of their degree offerings and help redefine what makes the institution distinctive as compared to other institutions in the state (McGee 2015).

While some post-secondary institutional types can disproportionately depend on grant funding to supplement dips in tuition, other institutions have chosen to raise their sticker price (Zumeta et. al, 2012). A call for marketing strategy research strategies that increase recruitment and retention efforts at HBCUs is also an important task that scholars should take up.

Investment in the Built Environment as a Retention Strategy: Important Considerations

Being careful not to view the collegiate strategic plan and operating budget as two tenuously related documents, (Prager Sealy & Co., 2016) new residence halls and/or added attention to deferred maintenance in the existing residence halls attracts more bodies to any

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[13] Lane College is located in Jackson, Tennessee. (TSU is located in Nashville, Tennessee.)

institution. Deferred maintenance should be calculated in current rates and translated into

concrete estimates for consideration (Goldstein, 2019). It is easier for institutions with better

debt ratios to compete in the space of the built environment. This puts institutions with lower

debt ratings, relative to their in-state counterparts, at a disadvantage because students now

choose campuses based upon aesthetics, real estate and amenities (Goldstein, 2019). Thus, older

buildings at HBCUs that are behind on deferred maintenance could be adversely affecting their

recruitment and retention efforts (Goldstein, 2019).

Although many HBCUs are used to significant constraints on their operating budgets,

(Commodore & Gasman, 2014) perhaps Lane College should explore creative off-campus lease

contracts with private student housing developers as a low-cost measure for campus

beautification, recruitment and, retention. Lane College should consider seek to incentivize

private developers by working with their Board of Trustees to loosen restrictions that might

make that process unnecessarily difficult. Without underestimating the coveted appearance of

philanthropy, developers can also monetarily gain while helping large amounts of

underrepresented students benefit from beautiful built environments, without upsetting more

fiscally conservative constituencies. This can help avoid unnecessary lapses in the consistent

and sufficient allocation of funds that can create gaps between ideals in strategic plans, and

successful completion of major capital projects (Prager Sealy & Co., 2016).

Summation of Recommendation Application

In closing, I reiterate key recommendations for Lane College to increase their student retention rate. Utilizing analogous frameworks that comport with HBCU retention theories, I adapted five factors from a strengths-based model used by The Meyerhoff Program to increase minority acquisition of STEM PhDs in consideration of all concepts mentioned in this work (Maton et. al., 2012): (1) require students who identify a STEM major to take an introductory online mathematics course the summer after high school graduation; (2) allow freshman males to engage in BGLFs membership intake processes rather than waiting until their sophomore years; (3) employ fulltime advising specialists to monitor and support student academic progress in the STEM field; (4) require faculty participation of STEM department chairs and faculty in the training of advising specialists for STEM initiatives; (5) tie undergraduate BGLF chapter privileges to mandatory facilitation of and participation in study groups (Fakayode, Yakubu, Adeyeye, Pollard, & Mohammed, 2014).

The remaining recommendations consider both the recruitment and retention of Lane College students:

- Full-time Black Greek Letter Fraternities (BLGF) nontenure track faculty may offer the meaningful interactions and potential fictive-kinship relationships that lead to improved academic performance, and student recruitment at Lane College. Consider building on strategies to encourage these pre-existing faculty-student interactions.

- Enhance the role of BGLF Student Affairs personnel working together with BGLF graduate chapters in Tennessee, and *well-trained* faculty advisors can make reasonable

efforts to ensure undergraduate BGLFs adhere to school policies and community

standards and avoid hazing allegations that tarnish the reputation of all stakeholders.

- Lane College can differentiate itself as the premier market for quality education for Black

  males by citing research throughout this work that suggests that Black males have a better

  chance at maximizing their potential at Lane College than they do at 2-year institutions in

  Tennessee. (Please Note: students that complete at a 2-year institutions are not able to

  contribute to the alleviation of the racial wage-earning gap between minorities and their

  counterparts unless they acquire a 4-year degree (Anderson & Cross, 2013; Figure 2)

- Educate current students and college counselors, when visiting the surrounding high

  schools, about the relatively low cost of Lane College.

- Commission an educational consultant that is informed about this special population of

  institutions to assist with the reengineering of the programmatic design of degree

  offerings to help redefine what makes Lane College distinctive as compared to other

  institutions in the state of Tennessee..

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Appendix

Figure 1: Enrollment Trends by Institutional Type and Race

Fall enrollment change between 2005 and 2015

■ Selective public colleges   ■ Middle-tier public colleges   ■ Open-access public colleges
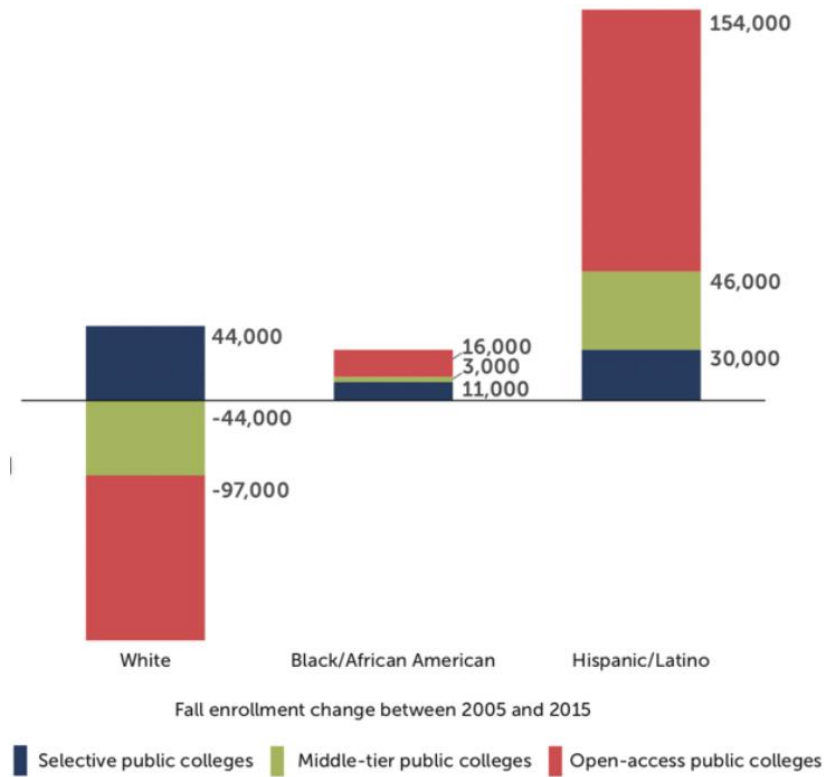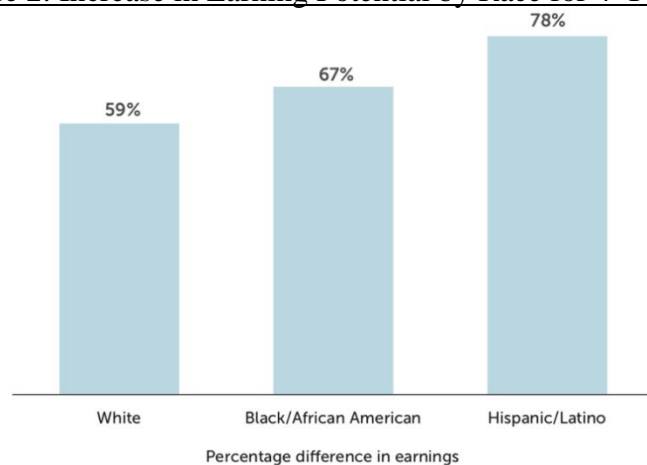
Figure 2: Increase in Earning Potential by Race for 4-Year Degree[14]

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau's *American Community Survey*, 2015.
Note: Earnings were calculated for prime-age workers (25-to-64-year-olds) who worked full time for the full year.

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[14] Thus, students who begin their journey towards a bachelor's degree at 2-year institutions have a much lower chance of escaping the tax bracket of their parents or guardians (Reynold, 2012; Stephan, Rosenbaum & Pearson, 2009; Doyle, et al., 2009; Figure 2).

Figure 3: Discriminatory Effects of Outcome-Based Funding in TN

Tennessee Higher Education Commission
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