"HIGHER EDUCATION: ENDEAVORS TO HELP FIRST GENERATION, FIRST YEAR
AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS SUCCEED"

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FIRST-YEAR AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract

HIGHER EDUCATION: ENDEAVORS TO HELP FIRST GENERATION, FIRST YEAR
AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS SUCCEED
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Under the Supervision of Daniel Leitch Ph.D

This paper presented the challenges faced by first generation first year African American college students, differences between first generation and non-first generation students, ways to infuse the curriculum with diversity, and programs aimed at helping students to succeed at predominantly White institutions. The research was conducted to find if there are ways in which higher education can serve the needs of first generation first year African American students so that they succeed on predominantly White campuses. Research revealed that there are ways to accommodate these students by recommending families, educators, community members, and others play transforming roles in the lives of children through interventions such as special status, positive naming, ascending cross-class identification, inspirational teaching, and informal connection. Programming is a positive incentive to insuring the success of first generation first year Africa American students and should be implemented during high school to college transition. This paper will provide readers with an opportunity to learn firsthand what works and what does not work for students of different ethnic backgrounds, especially African American students on predominantly White campuses.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Some students grow up with the expectation that they will go to college while other students who are first-generation will not decide to attend college until they are in high school. One of the factors determining whether or not a student will attend college is the education level of his/her parents (Garcia, 2010). First-year African American students, especially, face challenges; they are typically less academically prepared for college than continuing-generation students. Historically, African Americans have been underrepresented as a proportion of the total enrollment of students at institutions of higher education in the United States. By the close of the 1960s, the majority of African American students enrolled at institutions of higher education were attending predominantly White colleges and universities (Douglas, 1998). Today, most African American students continue to attend institutions of higher education where the racial/ethnic composition of the students, faculty, and staff is predominantly White (Douglas, 1998). One of the key points this paper will address are the challenges first-generation African American students face when transitioning from high school to a predominantly White university.

In addition, research will reveal what programs institutions of higher education are implementing to help first-generation first-year African American students succeed at predominantly White universities. This paper will provide information on how it benefits those particular students. Readers will also be provided with an opportunity to learn firsthand what works and what does not work for students of different ethnic backgrounds, especially African American students on predominantly White campuses.

Statement of the Problem

The problem to be addressed is, "What is higher education doing to help first generation first year African American college students succeed at predominantly White universities?" From the proposed research, a more in-depth analysis will give readers an opportunity to read about actual programs that are being implemented to help first-generation first year African American students succeed at predominantly White universities, as well as what areas of student services need further instruction. Throughout this paper, research will show that there is a difference in academic performance between first-generation and non-first-generation college students, and also include how social transition plays a role in academic performance, and also include how social transition as well as campus environment play roles at predominantly White universities.

Definition of Terms

First-generation college student:

Students who are the first in their families to attend an institution of higher education; more strictly refers to students whose parents have attained education at or below the high school level (Garcia, 2010).

Non-first generation college student:

Generally used to refer to participants with at least one parent who has completed a college degree (Nichols & Ramos-Sanchez, 2007).

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

Challenges of First-generation African American college students

  The enrollment of minority students in higher education has increased over the past 30 years; from 1976 to 2000 the number of Black students enrolled in degree-granting institutions rose 14.9 percent, according to Fischer (2007). Fischer (2007) indicates that the vast majority of these students attend predominantly White institutions, but researchers Thomas et al. (2007) believe that African American students' graduations rates at their predominantly White Southern university were lower than the total rate for the university as a whole. Even though there has been an increase in diversity among college students, graduation rates among Black and White students are not equal (Prospero & Vohra-Gupta, 2007). As Black students' enrollment in higher education expands, so does the need to understand what constitutes a successful transition to college for those students (Fischer, 2007). Blacks are more likely to be first generation college students and to be from low socioeconomic backgrounds. These factors, in addition to their family background, will put them at a disadvantage in comparison to their White counterparts. (Fischer, 2007; Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007).

  In the words of David Conley, "in terms of opportunities for college our society is not a level playing field (Dolan, 2007)". Middle and upper classes have far more access to the right information than others (Dolan, 2007). First-generation African American college students do not receive the full message before college that there's more to college than staying in a residence hall and having school pride. What most do not understand is that you need a lot of knowledge in many different areas when transitioning from high school to a college atmosphere. According to an article entitled "Minority Students and College Success: Challenges and Solutions" by Thomas Dolan, most of the knowledge students need to grasp is concepts. When

students, particularly African American students from low–poverty backgrounds, attend local public schools in impoverished neighborhoods, the quality of education is often inferior to their White counterparts attending affluent suburban public schools.

African American students will not receive the opportunity to have highly qualified teachers because of the area in which they live; there is not enough funding to pay teachers what they deserve. Researchers Thomas et al. also assert that "segregated" education prior to college places minority students at a disadvantage in several respects; students of color in "segregated" schools have fewer resources, less experienced teachers, and fewer of the advanced placement courses. This means that the curriculum will lack certain concepts pertaining to math, writing, or science that other educational institutions are teaching. When students of color, in particular, transition from high school to college, they are not equipped with the proper math skills, writing or basic knowledge about science (Dolan, 2007). An article from *Inside Higher Ed* (2005) entitled "First Generation Challenges" also states that first generation students are at a disadvantage throughout their time at colleges and universities because they enter without as much preparation. This can cause them to get lower grades and become more likely to drop out at higher rates (71%) than non-first-generation students (Inside Higher Ed, 2005; Prospero & Vohra-Gupta, 2007).

One issue that isn't considered for the dropout rates of African American first-generation students who attend college are that most of them come from urban school districts with majority of their peers being students of color and suffer cultural shock arriving on campus predominantly composed White students. Dolan (2007) indicates that many students of color "suffer culture shock," and they feel isolated and alienated because there are not as many students who share the same ethnic background. The author also states that these same students have to be shown how

to understand what campus life is like, how to fit in, and also that they are not alone with those feelings (Dolan, 2007). Research has shown that Black students reported needing to find someone who cared about them, looking both to instructors and to peers for help (Thomas, et al., 2007).

So how are those particular groups of students able to challenge themselves to become successful at predominantly White universities when they do not receive support from instructors nor peers? Fischer (2007) indicated that through interaction in the social and academic realms, students either reaffirm or reevaluate their initial goals and commitments. Furthermore, those who lack sufficient interaction with others on campus or have negative experiences may decide to depart the university as their way of reevaluation. Factors such as interaction with other students and faculty are positively related to degree completion (Fischer, 2007).

In today's educational system, many high school students are not sufficiently challenged. Consequently, they are not prepared to endure the rigors of higher education. Dolan (2007) believes that students have to be challenged to really achieve in key areas. How is this possible, then, when some scholars suggest that Black students may underachieve because achievement is considered "acting White" (Thomas, et al., 2007)? Authors Thomas et al. (2007) make very interesting points when discussing why Black students do not push to achieve in college. Research has shown that institutional climate, social stress, negative effects of stereotyping, and underachievement are influencing factors as to why Blacks withdraw and fail at predominantly White institutions (Thomas, et al., 2007). Fischer (2007) supports the findings of Thomas, et al, but believes that factors that have a major affect on student success in college are minority status, socioeconomic disadvantage, and being a first generation college student. In the Thomas et al. (2007) article "Experiences of Struggling African American Students at a Predominantly White

University," it is revealed that institutional climate is indeed a factor when predicting student persistence. The pressure is placed on students to accommodate themselves to the existing institutional climate, which is essentially adjusting to the morals and values of White culture. What is not recognized is that there are characteristics that distinguish first-generation African American students from non-first-generation peers.

First-Generation and Non-First-Generation College Students

There are several characteristics that distinguish first-generation African American students from non-first-generation students. One example that authors Garcia (2010) and Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols (2007) offer is that first-generation students tend to be older than the average college student. Another characteristic of first-generation African American students is that they are typically less academically prepared for college than continuing generation students (Garcia, 2010). First-generation African American students are distinguished from non-first-generation students because "non-first-generation students" generally refer to those with at least one parent who had completed a college degree (Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007). Despite all of the challenges mentioned early on in the paper, first-generation students whose parents did not attend college were often unable to provide their children with the guidance and mentoring needed in the college admissions process (Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007). In addition, Garcia (2010) indicates that because of the high number of first-generation students now enrolled in institutions of higher education, more research needs to be conducted specifically on first generation students and how their involvement can lead to success in higher education. According to Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols (2007) research, differential college experiences between first-generation students and non-first-generation college students were evident throughout their academic careers.

Infusing the Curriculum to Fit the Needs of African American Students

Institutions have been working to diversify the curriculum for a long time according to Giesecke, Roden, & Parkinson's (2009) research. Their research indicated that since 1990, five foundations and a corporate giving program have included curricular and campus climate diversity initiatives among their funding priorities. One example of these initiatives is the Campus Diversity Initiative launched by the Ford Foundation in 1990 (Giesecke, Parkison, & Roden, 2009). What this did was challenge colleges and universities to make diversity the central mission of the educational process. Even though external funding is not the only way institutions have moved forward, the vast majority of institutions in the United States have supported diversity initiatives through their own institutional resources, motivated by educational, intellectual, and moral imperatives (Giesecke, Parkison, & Roden 2009).

As discussed by researchers Giesecke, Parkison, and Roden (2009), infusing diversity into the curriculum has relations to faculty's role in student success and how their engagement in and outside of the classroom plays a major part. Prospero & Vohra-Gupta (2007) also believe that engagement plays its part in student success, studies have also found that first generation students benefit more than non-first-generation students from classroom involvement. Researchers Hirsh, Morisano, Pihl, Peterson, and Shore (2010) indicated in their study that setting, elaborating, and reflecting on personal goals improves academic performance. Hirsh et. al (2010) stated that of students who enroll in four-year universities, 25 percent never finish. In their study they investigated whether an intensive, online, written, goal-setting program for struggling students would have positive effects on academic achievement. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two intervention groups: half completed the goal setting program, and half completed a control task with intervention-quality face validity.

After a four month period, students who completed the goal setting intervention displayed significant improvements in academic performance compared with the control group. From the results, the goal setting program appears to be a quick, effective, and inexpensive intervention for struggling undergraduate students (Hirsh et. al 2010). The result from this study indicates that personal goals do improve academic performance which has an effect on student retention. Hirsh et. al (2010) believed that potential causes of the problem of academic failure and departure which effects retention rates at universities surround financial stress, decreased motivation, disorganized thinking, mood deregulation, and relationship problems. At the end of the Hirsh et. al (2010) study, they concluded that participants of the study who completed the goal-setting exercise experienced three benefits in the post-intervention semester and indicate that personal goal setting deserves greater attention as an effective technique for improving academic success and retaining students.

Brower and Ketterhagen (2004), indicate that there is no evidence that black or White students are inherently more or less able to succeed in college. In addition, Grier-Reed, Madyun, and Buckley (2008) believe that students of color, especially African American students, are still underrepresented in institutions of higher education and graduate at lower rates than Whites and Asians over a five year period. So apparently there is evidence that shows that there is a difference in college success between White students and black students. According to Grier-Reed, Madyun, and Buckley (2008) available data indicates that the four year graduation rate for even the highest ability students is approximately 25 percent higher for Whites than for blacks. In efforts to improve retention and graduation rates for underrepresented students on campus, Grier-Reed, Madyun, and Buckley (2008) conducted a pilot study that included two males and three females from 19-23 years old, and participation ranged from one to four semesters. Of the

total participants three identified as African American, one as biracial, and one identified as bicultural (Grier-Reed, Madyun, & Buckley, 2008). The pilot study was based in qualitative research and as a result of the overall study, seven themes were identified in students' experiences. The purpose of the study was to share their responses to the problem of retention at their predominantly White campus and to explore black student experiences on campus (Grier-Reed, Madyun, & Buckley, 2008). In conclusion Grier-Reed, Madyun, and Buckley (2008) findings state that the most successful retention programs at predominantly White universities are the African American Student Network (AFAM). They found that successful retention programs like AFAM focus on viewing students holistically in order to retain students as well as addressing the social ecology of black students' experiences (Grier-Reed, Madyun, & Buckley, 2008).

Programs being Implemented

Some ways of implementing programs that help first-generation African American college students in predominantly White colleges and universities would be to include more diversity workshops on campus. Research shows that diversity workshops are slightly more likely at more selective institutions and substantially less likely at institutions where minority students predominate (McCauley, Wright, & Harris, 2000). Diversity workshops are very rare at institutions where minority students predominate because those specific institution feel that there is no necessary need because the majority of the student population are minorities. According to McCauley, Wright, and Harris (2000), diversity workshops employ a wide range of activities in which individuals have time to share stories of bias and discrimination, as well as group exercises exploring ethnic differences. From McCauley, Wright, and Harris (2000) revealed that their study was designed to provide information that would be helpful both to college and

university administrators considering whether or how to introduce diversity workshops. Results from this study provide evidence that the concern behind the use of diversity workshops is specifically a concern for improving the ability of majority individuals to communicate and interact with minority individuals. Brayboy and McKinley (2003) believe that one of the reasons why university administrators may not feel the need to address diversity within the curriculum is because their work may be minimized as being self-serving (e.g. an African American administrator pushes for curriculum that highlights his own ethnic background).

The argument that researchers Brayboy and McKinley (2003) were trying to get across was that language of diversity and efforts to implement diversity are bound to fail in the absence of an institutional commitment to incorporating strategies for diversity into their research, teaching, and service missions. The author of this seminar paper supports Brayboy and McKinley (2003) study because if an institution shows no commitment to incorporating diversity into areas of the university, what examples are we setting? Their research relied heavily on interviews with African American, American Indian, Asian, and Latino faculty members of junior status in predominantly White colleges and universities. Brayboy and McKinley (2003) wanted to get background from faculty who teach at predominantly White colleges and universities about the implementation of diversity. Brayboy and McKinley (2003) state that even if an institution implements diversity, there is still a color-blindness that allows institutions to continue operating as if no problems exist.

Overall, White institutions of higher education often view diversity as a free-standing policy, and believe that it is something that can be infused without necessarily changing the underlying structure of the institution and its day-to-day operations (Brayboy & McKinley, 2003). Institutions do implement diversity but once diversity workshops takes place, nothing is

really done to change (according to particpants of Brayboy and McKinley (2003) study); research shows that institutions can merely offer new courses on diversity, hire a few faculty of color, assign faculty to committees, work with students of color and serve as role models, but does this make diversity more effective? The idea that faculty bodies constitute a program of implementing diversity is often considered "good enough," so once these bodies are present institutions appear to believe that diversity has been implemented (Brayboy, & McKinley, 2003). White faculty remain unmarked because the presence of faculty of color suggests those faculty members can carry the extra responsibility of implementing diversity. What Brayboy and McKinley (2003) showed was that there are problems with implementing diversity at predominantly White colleges and universities. Ultimately, it seems White faculty members feel that it is the job of faculty of color to discuss diversity issues on campus because they are persons of color.

Switching the focus back to student issues, according to Morrison's (2008) study, 21 African American, Asian American, and Latino students were interviewed in order to ascertain the nature of their experience as students of color on a small, predominantly White university campus. The purpose and significance of the study was to capture the experiences of being a student of color at a predominantly White university (Morrison, 2008). The data revealed several common themes in the experience of these students, yet there was also a divergence in the phenomenon between the experience of most of the participants and that of a small group of participants. Results indicated that their ability to maintain connections with family and friends seemed to enable these students to take the risk of being part of a small and visible minority group on a predominantly White campus.

In addition Katie Branch Douglas, author of "Impressions: African American First-Year Students' Perception of a Predominantly White University" (1998), conducted a study at the University of Willsfield which describes African American first-year students' impressions of a predominantly White public university. Participants (N=10) were asked to take photographs illustrative of their perceptions of the campus environment and to discuss their photographs in individual and small group interviews (Douglas 1998). The findings of the study suggest that Willsfield should continue to support its existing programs that focus on improving minority undergraduate student recruitment and retention, programs like Student Support Services and TRIO. Further findings of the study suggest that Willsfield's faculty need to become more aware of their potential influence on intercultural relationships at the university (Douglas, 1998).

Research suggests that a principal vehicle through which relational diversity can be achieved is interpersonal relationships across group boundaries (Denton & Gould, 2008). Denton & Gould (2008) share some of the same similarities as Douglas (1998) when discussing the implications of friendships with majority-group peers for institutional belonging and satisfaction among minority students at elite, historically White universities. In Douglas' (1998) research, she points out that universities need to turn their attention to addressing aspects of student's lives and why students might feel negatively about the campus environment and issues related to social transitions (Douglas, 1998).

LEAD (Leadership Education and Development) Program

Siegel (2008) suggests that one prominent program that institutions of higher education can implement would be LEAD (Leadership Education and Development). The goal of LEAD is to introduce underrepresented high school students to business education and careers in business; LEAD is a partnership of the non-profit umbrella organization (Siegel, 2008). Executives from

McNeil Pharmaceuticals, a division of Johnson & Johnson, were fresh from a recruiting trip when they presented the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School with a proposition in which they observed a distressing lack of minority students pursuing the M.B.A. degree. McNeil offered to "supply an experiential component, provide financial support, and recruit other businesses to the cause if Wharton would provide an academic experience for talented minority students" (Siegel, p.197 2008).

This specific program is important because it gets students interested early in their education careers. Because their interests are encouraged early on, students receive, access to resources related to their fields of study. According to Siegel (2008), corporate interviewees indicated that reaching students early in the process is a recruiting imperative and that programs like LEAD help facilitate this objective. Siegel suggested that, "We are trying to connect these students as early as possible to eliminate possible failure in postsecondary education and promote more access for those who are underrepresented." In addition Siegel (2008), indicates that "access is everything"; if first generation first year African American students are presented with the same access as early as their White counterparts, they are more likely to go into a field/major their first year at a predominantly White institution. LEAD participants have the opportunity to go through a special training and mentoring program where students are exposed to an intensive three-week summer curriculum providing insight into a variety of business disciplines including: marketing, accounting, finance, economics, computer science, ethics, leadership and entrepreneurship (College of Business at Illinois). Students are also exposed to real business simulations and business careers, with opportunities to learn from successful corporate executives. The LEAD Program offers students and opportunity to face realistic challenges in which they face on a day-to-day basis, which makes it beneficial when they go to

college because they are equipped with proper communication skills and problem-solving skills (College of Business at Illinois).

Advanced Placement (AP) Program

School leaders view programs as an attractive option to resolve the ongoing achievement gap so that students are able to succeed in institutions of higher education. Flores & Gomez (2011) state that field research has provided strong evidence that, more often than not, the rigor of the curriculum is highly correlated with student academic achievement. In addition, some school leaders have viewed programs like Advanced Placement (AP) as an attractive option to resolve this ongoing problem (Flores & Gomez, 2011). The AP program is a cooperative educational endeavor between secondary schools and colleges and universities. Since its inception in 1955, the program has provided motivated high school students with the opportunity to take college-level courses in a high school setting (Advance Placement Program, 2011). Students who participate in the program not only gain college-level skills, but in many cases they also earn college credit while they are still in high school. AP courses are taught by dedicated and enthusiastic high school teachers who follow course guidelines developed and published by the College Board (Advance Placement Program, 2011). The success of the program is rooted in the collaborative efforts of motivated students, dedicated teachers, and committed schools. By participating in the AP program, secondary schools make the commitment to organize and support at least one class that is equivalent to a first-year college course (Advance Placement Program, 2011). This is beneficial for students who parents have no college experience because it gives first generation first year students an opportunity to experience college courses before coming to campus.

The AP program is important for first generation first year students because of the benefits. Two of these benefits are that AP exams reduce tuition and the number of semesters in college, and AP students are more likely to complete college in four years (Flores& Gomez, 2011). First generation first year African American students enrolled in this program take exams to show their capabilities to succeed in a higher education atmosphere. Taking these exams reduces how long they actually need to be enrolled. As a first generation first year African American student myself, I have witnessed students who are not prepared for college take extra semesters to complete their degree because of the need to retake the course, which sets them back from graduating on time. Being a part of the AP program eliminates extra time spent enrolled in higher education, according to those involved with the Advance Placement Program (2011).

Other benefits associated with AP are improved writing skills, problem-solving skills, and study habits, which results in better preparation in college; additionally AP courses encourage minority students to enroll in college by providing information about college as well as stressing the importance of college. As mentioned earlier in the research, preparation plays a major role in success. First generation first year African American students need to be equipped with the proper social skills and time management skills when arriving to college, and AP involvement equips those students with those skills. In order for a student to do better, he/she has to want better for his/herself as well. Stressing the importance and advantages of attending college to first generation first year African American students through the AP program shows dedication to the success of that student's education.

According to the Advance Placement Program (2011), there are currently more than 110,000 teachers leading AP courses in high schools worldwide. The program is strengthened by

teachers' participation in professional development workshops and Summer Institutes and in the annual AP Reading where thousands of AP teachers and college faculty gather at college sites across the United States to score the AP Exams using rigorous guidelines (Advance Placement Program, 2011). By having these rigorous guidelines, students know what to expect in higher education.

Summary

This paper has presented the challenges in which first generation first year African American students face at predominantly White institutions. Most do not recognize that these particular groups of individuals deal with having the lowest graduation rate in the United States because of the lack of preparation supplied during high school. When students, particularly African American students from poverty stricken backgrounds, attend local public schools in impoverished neighborhoods, the quality of education is often inferior to their White counterparts who often attend affluent suburban public schools. African American students will not receive the opportunity to have highly qualified teachers because of the area in which they live; there is not enough funding to pay teachers what they deserve, so these particular students have are deprived of a good education. As stated before, curriculum will lack certain concepts pertaining to math, writing, or science that other educational institutions are teaching so more has to be done to meet the needs of the students at risk. When students of color, in particular, transition from high school to college, they are not equipped with the proper math skills, writing or basic knowledge about science (Dolan, 2007), so they face challenges when they transition to college.

There is a difference between being a first generation African American student and being a non-first generation White student. The difference that most do not recognize is their learning styles. African American students tend to be field dependant learners who prefer working together to improve academically with cooperative learning methods of teaching. As to their White counterparts, they are more likely to be independent and prefer to work alone. I found that differences between both contribute to the way in which they are raised, their culture, as well as if any of their parents received a college degree. Despite all of the challenges

mentioned early on in the paper, first-generation students whose parents did not attend college were often unable to provide their children with the guidance and mentoring needed in the college admissions process (Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007).

In order to reach the goal of making sure that every student regardless of race receives proper education, diversity should be infused into the curriculum. As discussed by researchers Giesecke, Parkison, and Roden (2009), infusing diversity into the curriculum has relations to faculty's role in student success and how their engagement in and outside of the classroom plays a major part. Prospero & Vohra-Gupta (2007) also believe that engagement plays its part in student success; studies have also found that first generation students benefit more than non-first-generation students from classroom involvement. Brower and Ketterhagen (2004) indicate that there is no evidence that black or White students are inherently more or less able to succeed in college. In addition, Grier-Reed, Madyun, and Buckley (2008) believe that students of color, especially African American students, are still underrepresented in institutions of higher education and graduate at lower rates than Whites and Asians over a five-year period. There is evidence that a difference in college success between White students and black students. It is time that student services play their part and address these issues.

Lastly, this paper presented programming that can be implemented when helping first generation first year African American students succeed at predominantly White institutions. Research shows that diversity workshops are slightly more likely at more selective institutions and substantially less likely at institutions where minority students predominate (McCauley, Wright, & Harris, 2000). One way as discussed would be to implement these diversity workshops for students who want to express their concerns as being a minority on a White campus.

Chapter Three: Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, this paper presented the challenges faced by first generation first year African American college students, differences between first generation and non-first generation students, ways to infuse the curriculum with diversity, and programs aimed at helping students succeed at predominantly White institutions.

The existing literature on the topic leads to the following conclusions: that there are, in fact, challenges first year African American students face that White non-first generation first year students do not. First generation first year African American students who do attend predominantly White universities deal with not only transition issues, but also stereotyping which plays a major role in how they perform academically and socially. By infusing the curriculum to fit the needs of first generation first year African American students, these particular areas of student services are questioned on how they are meeting the needs of first generation first year students.

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that families, educators, community members, and others play transformative roles in the lives of children through interventions such as special status, positive naming, ascending cross-class identification, inspirational teaching, and informal connection (Rodriguez, 2003). In order for students who are first generation first year to succeed on a predominantly White campus, educators can promote a sense of belonging among students by addressing issues that surround discriminatory practices so that students feel able to approach instructors or peers. You hear that education starts within the home; agree that if family, school, college, and community members can promote informed risk-taking, students will be able to push harder in higher education. By implying this at home, students are able to understand the importance of education and ways to obtain it and gain a new way of life.

According to Mudge & Higgins (2011), higher education can facilitate readiness among students by creating a core academic program that is aligned with and leads to college readiness. This paper has presented insight on how college readiness is a way to push students for success academically through programs like AP and LEAD. Mudge & Higgins (2011) recommend student services to play a part in teaching self-management skills and academic behaviors and expect students to use them in their everyday lives. Research revealed that by helping students manage the complexity of preparing for and applying to postsecondary education, it eliminates negative transitions which first generation first year students face when enrolled at a predominantly White university. The first step in helping any student succeed should be the first priority of student services at any university. When student affairs begin to build partnerships and connections to postsecondary programs and institutions, they should also keep in mind who it affects when programs or social transition is not considered a cause to why first generation first year African American students do not succeed at predominantly White universities.

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