

Foundational Practices to Build a Sense of Belonging for Black and Latino Men

Improving retention and graduation rates for underrepresented student populations has been an uphill battle for institutions in recent years, particularly for Black and Latino men who have the lowest graduation rates of any demographic group. Because Black and Latino men are a distinct minority at most institutions, it is even more difficult for them to find a sense of belonging on campus – unless institutions invest in building the relationships and social networks that contribute to student persistence.

EAB has identified three types of relationships that have an outsized impact on student success, especially for Black and Latino men – relationships with peers, relationships with parents and families, and relationships with role models and mentors. Below, find EAB resources that outline foundational best practices for building and maintaining each type of relationship.

Relationships with Peers

Students who have strong relationships with their peers tend to have a greater sense of belonging in college, which is correlated with higher retention and graduation rates. These resources outline institutional practices that help to build and foster relationships among peers.

First-Year Experience and Summer Bridge Programs

1. [3 First-Year Programs that Close Equity Gaps](#)
First-generation students can be a vulnerable population in higher education, with about 33% dropping out within three years. Learn first-gen retention strategies from UT Austin, Amherst College, and the University of Texas at San Antonio.
2. [First-Year Experience Programs and Lifelong Engagement](#)
First-year students face unique academic and social barriers during their transition to campus which can hinder their retention. Learn about first-year seminars, living-learning communities, and mentor programs that improve student retention. [Click here](#) to watch the accompanying webinar.
3. [Build Resilience, Reduce Early Attrition in Less than an Hour](#)
Students with fewer resources tend not to have the same resiliency as a well-resourced student. Learn about how UT Austin's program "The UT Mindset" sought to understand the importance of self-improvement and belonging for high-risk students.
4. [Learning from those who have gone before](#)
Despite the surge in first-generation college students, four-year institutions struggle to retain this student population – 25% leave after the first year. EAB identified welcome events and campus advocates as two tactics to engage first-gen students with their peers.
5. [Summer Early Start for Borderline Admits](#)
Summer bridge programs help to create a supportive cohort environment where students engage with peers, but many are only a brief, non-credit workshop or seminar. Learn how Georgia State elevated the bridge program model and created a financially sustainable, credit-bearing summer start for students.

Leadership Programs

1. [Guiding Student Leaders to the Next Level](#)
Competition for employment among recent graduates is fiercer than ever and expectations for new hires are high. Student leaders are a natural place to start in providing experiential learning support. Learn about three tactics to prepare student leaders for careers.

Relationships with Parents and Families

Parents and families play an influential role in student retention and success. These resources outline strategies to maximize parent and family engagement, especially during the college recruitment period and in a student's first year.

1. [Supporting Parents of First-Generation Students](#)
Many parents work inflexible and mobile jobs, preventing them from supporting their students' transition to college. Learn how community-located orientation programs make attendance more accessible for parents who can't take time off.
2. [To Engage Parents of First-Generation Students: Start Early and Tailor Your Events](#)
Engaging parents of prospective first-generation students is challenging due to their lack of familiarity with college enrollment. EAB's research identified strategies to build fluency and empower these parents to navigate the admissions process.
3. [5 Ways to Engage Parents During Student Recruitment](#)
Despite parents playing a critical role in a student's college search, enrollment teams are often slow to engage them in the recruitment process. Learn five research-backed strategies to engage parents as their student prepares for college.
4. [Involved Parents Get Their Own College Guides](#)
The high school to college transition is difficult, especially for parents. Learn how Gonzaga University and the University of South Florida tailored programs for parents.

Relationships with Mentors

Most institutions provide some form of advising, mentoring, and training for faculty, staff, and students. However, many mentorship programs lack foundational elements to adequately engage first-year and underrepresented minority students, and many mentors lack in-depth training in how to meet the unique needs of each student population. These resources outline the conditions for effective faculty and peer mentorship as well as strategies to maximize the impact of DEIJ training.

Advising and Mentorship

1. [Targeted First-Year Student-Faculty Mentorship](#)
First-year students often arrive on campus not knowing how to find a faculty mentor. Learn about how the University of Colorado Boulder's faculty-student mentor program targets first-year students to improve the engagement gap.
2. [How to get More Faculty Engaged in Student Success Initiatives](#)
Faculty can play a critical role in flagging and helping students who seem at risk of dropping out. This article summarizes seven ways to engage faculty and improve student success.
3. [A Student-Centered Approach to Advising Study](#)
Advising appointments are often focused on registration, leaving little time for more holistic coaching and intervention. Learn strategies from the University Texas San Antonio and Eastern Connecticut

State University who reorganized advising models to enable consistency and more tailored interventions for at-risk students.

4. [Peer-to-Peer Support Toolkit](#)
Peers are often the best resource to support students in their transition to college. Learn best practices for developing and implementing peer-to-peer support to maximize their impact on student success and student equity. [Click here](#) to watch the accompanying webinar.
5. [3 Ways to be a Better Mentor to Minoritized Students](#)
Mentors, who may be professors, staff members, and administrators, are also critical to recruiting and retaining students from underrepresented groups. Get EAB's guidance on how mentors can listen, share personal stories, and provide actionable next steps.
6. [Why Mentors are Vital to Student Success - and 7 Ways to Make Mentoring More Valuable](#)
Students with seven or more meaningful mentor relationships during college are over three times more likely than the average graduate to say college was a rewarding experience. Learn strategies to bolster student outcomes through mentorship.
7. [5 types of mentors every student needs](#)
Students often struggle to find their academic and/or professional calling. Learn the five types of mentors that all students need in their academic journey.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) Training

1. [Mandatory anti-harassment training: a prime opportunity to further your diversity & inclusion goals](#)
Mandatory anti-harassment training is standard practice; however, institutions shouldn't stop there. Learn how to leverage that offering as a meaningful DEIJ training for students, staff, and faculty.
2. [Why Diversity Training Often Doesn't Work](#)
Diversity training is a go-to solution to improve campus climate, but institutions don't always employ the right training. Learn strategies from effective corporate diversity trainings and how to adapt them for the higher education sector.
3. [Help students find common ground for productive discussions on campus](#)
The rise in flashpoints in recent years has led to a more polarized campus community. Learn three key strategies to help your institution foster a climate for civil discourse.
4. [7 Hallmarks of an Anti-Racist Education Institution](#)
After the racial reckoning summer of 2020, many institutions were unsure of sustainable approaches to racial justice. Learn seven hallmarks and behaviors of an anti-racist institution and how to interrogate the role of educational institutions in addressing structural racism and healing the legacies of racial trauma in our communities. [Click here](#) to watch the accompanying webinar.
5. [Campus Bias Response Briefing](#)
Many institutions struggle to manage the aftermath of a bias related incident. Learn how to create a formal and effective institutional bias policy as well as how to share data and the institutional response with the campus community.