BOOK REVIEW

Black Men in College: Implications for HBCUs and Beyond, by Robert T. Palmer and J. Luke Wood (Eds.)

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Over the past few decades, a plethora of research has been published on educational experiences of Black men in the institutions of American higher education. In response, student affairs departments at both colleges and universities have extended their facilities and support systems to cope with the challenges and needs of socially, logistically and ethnically diverse Black students. In recent years, the enrollments of Black men have significantly increased but Black male collegians are not homogenous groups; they are comprised of distinct social and cultural backgrounds. While college personnel have given a higher priority to recruitment and retention of Black males, this is not enough to address multifaceted challenges and issues of diverse Black college students. There are substantial social risks connected to educational and social experiences of Black students on historically Black college and university (HBCU) campuses (Gasman, 2012). In this context, Black Men in College provides significant information about the roles of male Black graduates in academia. Collectively, this volume addresses enrollment, retention and persistence of such diverse groups of Black men: gay, academically unprepared, low-income, first generation, immigrant and high-achieving in American HBCUs.

Jaschik (2006) reported that at many campuses, about two-thirds of Black students are women, and the number of Black students is decreasing. In their book, Black Men in College, the editors Robert T. Palmer and J. Luke Wood explored the existing challenges, needs, and hidden assumptions about Black male college students that impact matriculation, gradu-
ation rates, and support while they are enrolled at both predominantly white and historically Black colleges and universities. Based on years of research on multidimensional issues of Black students, Palmer and Wood offered suggestions and recommendations on Black student identity, gender disparity, college success, leadership development, mentoring, athletics and student organization in this volume.

*Black Men in College* is organized in thirteen chapters with several themes related to Black men in colleges. As an introduction to the volume, the editors in the first chapter explored the contemporary experiences of Black men at HBCUs, and offered a call for more attention. In Chapter 2, Marybeth Gasman and Dorsey Spencer examined intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors affecting the experiences, challenges and success of high achieving Black men. Gasman and Spender found a connection between academic success of high achieving Black men and their faculty members. In Chapter 3, Terrell Strayhorn and Jameel Scott examined the experiences of Black gay men at HBCUs as a qualitative research study with nine participants. The findings were categorized as homophobia and harassment, marginalization, and lack of family support and identification for Black gay men.

In Chapter 4, Tiffany Fountaine and Joëlle Carter considered a strength-based approach in curriculum to help those academically underprepared Black students facilitate academic success in colleges. They shared the context and experience of a 6 week residential program that helped students succeed in remedial courses—English, mathematics, reading comprehension and vocabulary. In Chapter 5, Jameel A. Scott offered an extensive literature synthesis on improving the retention of low-income Black men at HBCUs. He offered recommendations to deal with the challenges of low-income students such as low graduation rates, poor academic preparation for college, and high dropout rates. Data collected from multiyear qualitative interviews in Chapter 6, Sharon Fries-Britt, Brian A. Burt, and Khadish Franklin studied the college experiences and challenges of Black men majoring in physics on HBCU campuses. They concluded that the importance of "establishing relationships with faculty, administrators, and peers" (p. 84) help physics students succeeding in schools and socializing with other students.

In Chapter 7, Lorenzo DuBois Baber dealt with bicultural experiences of second generation Black American males in postsecondary education. Baber’s observations centered mostly on how African Caribbean and American identities influenced academic and social connections to higher education institutions. Baber wrote that the participants sought “cultural role models outside their family to combat racist, and stereotyping experiences” (p. 103). In Chapter 8, Fred Bonner examined the challenges and opportunities faced by millennial Black students. Bonner found that race, gender and educational attainment were influenced by generational status. In Chapter 9, T. Elon Dancy and Gralon A. Johnson studied multiple identities, persistence and contextual differences of Black fathers in colleges. Dancy and Johnson offered commentary regarding how the identity of Black fathers “plays an important role in reconstructing ideas about race, gender, and fatherhood” (p. 134).

In Chapter 10, Dorian L. McCoy focused on the significance of the Black Greek-letter fraternities on campus as they provide opportunities for involvement, leadership development, identity development and social networking among Black men at HBCUs. David Horton, in Chapter 11, discussed the role of coaches as mentors on Black student-athlete success in higher education, especially in overcoming social stereotypes and other minority discrimination. In Chapter 12, Alonzo M. Flowers explored the perceptions of academically gifted Black male undergraduates in engineering. Flowers mentioned that the construction of academic abilities of Black men emerged within “educational settings that provided both academic and socioemotional support” (p. 169). In the final chapter, the editors summarized four recent innovations in programs,
functions, structure and impact at HBCUs in the United States.

This book has implications beyond the boundary of historically Black colleges and universities because, as Strayhorn (2010) stated, “despite progress in African American students’ enrollment in college, national trends suggest that Black collegians continue to confront arguably unique obstacles and stressors in educational settings, especially predominately White institutions” (p. 1). This book, therefore, is a resource for educators, faculty, students and student affairs personnel to support Black male collegians. It offers critical perspectives on Black male experiences, identity, stereotypes, and college success and offers meaningful recommendations for practitioners. For future researchers interested in the Black male collegiate experience, the editors and chapter authors have recommended future topics for research at the end of each chapter.

Overall, *Black Men in Colleges* is a significant contribution in the literature exploring the experiences of Black men at HBCUs.

**REFERENCES**


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