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Community College Student Success Inventory (CCSSI) for Men of Color in Community Colleges: Content Validation Summary

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This study reports on the content validation of the Community College Student Success Inventory (CCSSI) for Men of Color. The CCSSI was designed to be used by community colleges to assess their effectiveness in addressing success outcomes for men who have been historically underrepresented and underserved in education, particularly men of color. A panel of subject matter experts (SMEs) rated the instrument and provided qualitative feedback on additional areas for consideration. Content validity index (CVI) and scale level index scores (S-CVI) are reported. The instrument illustrated strong CVI and S-CVI scores. SMEs suggested several additional areas for consideration that were added to the CCSSI. The instrument is recommended for use by community colleges interested in enhancing outcomes for men of color.

Nationally, scholars and practitioners have increasingly focused on improving outcomes for men of color in community colleges. Men of color overwhelmingly enroll in community colleges as their primary pathway into postsecondary education (Bush & Bush, 2010). However, success rates for these men are low, with only 12% and 14.6% of Black and Latino men graduating in three years, respectively (Digest of Education Statistics, 2010). These rates were the impetus for this content validation study that sought to create an instrument, the Community College Student Success Inventory (CCSSI) for Men of Color, that could be employed by colleges to assess their effectiveness in addressing success outcomes for these men.

The CCSSI was subjected to validation tests to examine the instrument's content validity. Content validity refers to "the extent to which an instrument adequately samples the research domain of interest when attempting to measure phenomena" (Wynd, Schmidt, & Schaefer, 2003, p. 509). More simply, it is the degree to which an instrument accurately measures what it is intended to measure (Davis, 1992; Grant & Davis, 1997; Waltz, Strickland, & Lenz, 2005). With respect to the CCSSI, the authors evaluated whether the instrument adequately assessed items and content areas regarding programs, services, and policies that influence outcomes for men who have been historically underrepresented and underserved in education.

The CCSSI was designed to be used by community college educators to assess their institutions' efforts and readiness to facilitate student success for men of color. The development of the

inventory was based on an extensive review of published literature and research on men of color in community colleges (e.g., Bush & Bush, 2010; Flowers, 2006; Glenn, 2003–2004; Hagedorn, Maxwell, & Hampton, 2001; Harris & Wood, 2013; Mason, 1998; Perrakis, 2008; Vasquez Urias, 2012; Wood, 2012; Wood & Essien-Wood, 2012; Wood & Harris, 2013). The literature analysis revealed six overarching categories of institutional action and support needed for the success of men of color who are enrolled in community colleges:

1. Financial aid.
2. Student support services.
3. Teaching and learning.
4. Institutional research.
5. Minority male initiatives and programs.
6. Early alert systems.

In addition, our conceptualization and design of this tool was heavily influenced by the Center for Urban Education's (2010) campus inventories for Latina/o student success in Science, Technology, and Mathematics (STEM).

METHOD

To determine the validity of the CCSSI, the authors provided a full copy of the instrument to subject matter experts (SMEs) who were community college professionals and scholars with extensive backgrounds working with and/or researching men of color in community colleges. SMEs were informed that each category had a set of statements or indicators that were intended to support colleges in identifying institutional strengths and areas needing improvement or attention for men of color. SMEs were asked to use a four-point scale to rate whether they perceived each statement as relevant to the goal of improving outcomes for men of color. Qualitative feedback on ratings and additional statements were also collected. Eleven SMEs participated in the content validation of the CCSSI.

Two types of validation scores were calculated: a content validity index (CVI) for each individual statement, and a scale-level index (S-CVI) for each content area. The CVI represents the total proportion of items rated as valid. It was computed by dividing ratings of *not relevant* (coded 1) and *somewhat relevant* (coded 2) by those scored as *relevant* (coded 3) and *highly relevant* (coded 4) (Lynn, 1986; Waltz et al., 2005). Two widely used thresholds for content validation were employed (Polit, Beck, & Owen, 2007). Lawshe (1975) created a sliding scale of CVI scores based on the total number of SMEs; in this case, because there were 11 SMEs, each statement would need a score of .59 or higher to be considered valid. Another commonly used (and more stringent) measure was espoused by Lynn (1986) who suggested that CVI scores for 11 SMEs fall no lower than .78. In determining the validity of the statements in each respective content area (S-CVI), all CVI scores were averaged. A slightly higher threshold for content areas has been set forth in prior research, indicating that a S-CVI score of .80 or higher is needed (Davis, 1992), though other scholars have identified a more rigorous S-CVI score of .90 (Polit et al., 2007). The aforementioned CVI cutoff scores of .59 and .78 and S-CVI scores of .80 and .90 were all

employed in the analysis of the CCSSI's content validity. The lower CVI and S-CVI scores are referred to as moderate while the higher scores are referred to as strong.

RESULTS

The first content area examined was financial aid. Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, and CVI scores for each item. This content area was comprised of four items. All items illustrated strong CVI scores, greatly exceeding both Lawshe's (1975) and Lynn's (1986) thresholds. Items 1.1, 1.3, and 1.4 all demonstrated perfect CVI scores (e.g., 1.00) while item 1.2 illustrated high rater agreement (e.g., .91). The total S-CVI score for the financial aid items was strong, at 0.98. SMEs were in agreement that the statements posed did not account for the institutional support that is needed for undocumented students—given that they can receive state aid but not federal aid (depending on the state). As such, item 1.5 was added: “Students are informed about state financial aid policies that affect their eligibility to receive aid.” In addition, SMEs suggested the inclusion of the following statements: “Students understand how academic progress affects their ability to receive financial aid.” and “Students are made aware of financial aid timelines and deadlines.” Both of these statements were also added to the inventory; they are reflected in items 1.6 and 1.7 in Table 1.

The student support services content area was comprised of 17 items. Thirteen of these items demonstrated strong content validity. Four items demonstrated moderate content validity, with scores falling below the .78 threshold but above the .59 marker. These items are 2.1, 2.5, and 2.6 (see Table 2). Regarding item 2.1, one of the reviewers noted that some men of color may not want to be separated from the general summer bridge program. Regarding items 2.5, 2.6, and also 2.7, some California SMEs noted that, beginning in fall 2014, orientation was mandatory in the state. Thus, they did not perceive these items to be relevant. It is expected that the utility of some items on the instrument will vary by state and region, which is why the instrument has a “not applicable” response category. One additional statement was recommended for inclusion by

TABLE 1
Financial Aid Content Validity Results

<i>Item</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>CVI</i>	<i>S-CVI</i>
1.1 Students are informed about federal financial aid policies that affect their eligibility to receive aid.	3.75	.45	1.00	—
1.2 Colleges have emergency /contingency funds to provide small monies to students who have delays in receiving financial aid.	3.42	.67	0.91	—
1.3 Colleges provide students with opportunities to learn about personal financing management.	3.50	.52	1.00	—
1.4 Students are regularly informed of grant and scholarship opportunities.	3.67	.49	1.00	—
1.5 Students are informed about state financial aid policies that affect their eligibility to receive aid.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1.6 Students understand how academic progress affects their ability to receive financial aid.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1.7 Students are made aware of financial aid timelines and deadlines.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total S-CVI				0.98

TABLE 2
Student Support Services Content Validity Results

<i>Item</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>CVI</i>	<i>S-CVI</i>
2.1 Summer bridge programming is available at the college for men of color.	3.00	0.89	0.73	—
2.2 Summer bridge or other programs are offered to facilitate students' successful transition to college.	3.50	0.67	0.91	—
2.3 The campus has a mechanism to track the extent to which students use academic support services (e.g., tutoring, computer labs, academic advising, career counseling).	3.17	0.58	0.91	—
2.4 Important academic support services (e.g., math labs, computer labs, writing support) are integrated into remedial and introductory courses.	3.50	0.52	1.00	—
2.5 New student orientation is available.	3.00	0.95	0.73	—
2.6 New student orientation is required.	3.00	1.21	0.64	—
2.7 New student orientation is offered in-person.	3.00	1.10	0.64	—
2.8 Students are required to see an academic advisor/counselor for academic planning.	3.50	0.80	0.82	—
2.9 Intrusive advising strategies are employed by academic counselors.	3.17	0.83	0.91	—
2.10 Multiple AND reliable methods for assessing students' academic readiness are utilized.	3.08	0.90	0.82	—
2.11 Multiple AND reliable methods for assessing student readiness inform course placements.	3.25	0.87	0.91	—
2.12 Entrance advising includes an assessment of students' external pressures and obligations (e.g., familial commitments, work schedule).	3.75	0.45	1.00	—
2.13 Free and accessible mental health counseling services are available to students on campus.	3.36	0.50	1.00	—
2.14 College-sponsored trips to four-year institutions are offered for students to receive transfer information and advising.	3.00	0.85	0.82	—
2.15 Transfer information and advising is available to students at all levels (not just to those who are transfer-ready).	3.42	0.51	1.00	—
2.16 Men of color are equitably represented among students who utilize transfer advising services.	3.33	0.78	0.82	—
2.17 Men of color are equitably represented among students who utilize career development services.	3.36	0.67	0.91	—
2.18 Colleges partner with local K–12 school districts to support incoming men of color.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total S-CVI				0.86

an SME: “Colleges partner with local K–12 school districts to support incoming men of color.” This item was added to the inventory. Given the marginal scores of these four items, the overall S-CVI score was .86. This score illustrated moderate scale validity.

Thirteen items were examined in the teaching and learning content area. All of these items illustrated strong content validity (see Table 3) and exceeded the .59 and .78 criteria. Due to the strength of the item CVI scores, the S-CVI score was strong, at .91. This was above the thresholds established in prior research. The next content area examined focused on institutional research and included eight items. All of the items indicated strong content validity. The lowest score was for item 4.7 (see Table 4). One rater noted that the word “inquiry” was too generic and needed more specificity. To provide more clarity, examples of research, assessment, and evaluation were added after the word “inquiry” in the statement.

TABLE 3
Teaching and Learning Content Validity Results

<i>Item</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>CVI</i>	<i>S-CVI</i>
3.1 Faculty-student interaction is assessed in course and program evaluations.	3.64	.50	1.00	
3.2 Students' perceptions of affirmation and support from faculty are incorporated into course evaluations.	3.36	.50	1.00	–
3.3 Educators are competent and well-versed in issues that influence the success of men of color.	3.64	.92	.91	–
3.4 Faculty members receive on-going training in culturally relevant teaching strategies.	3.64	.67	.91	–
3.5 Relevant student support services are highlighted in course syllabi.	3.18	.75	.82	–
3.6 Relevant student support services are discussed by classroom faculty.	3.45	.52	1.00	–
3.7 Prospective faculty hires are assessed for their competency to engage diverse student populations.	3.27	1.00	.82	–
3.8 The racial and gender composition of the faculty reflects that of the student body.	3.55	.93	.91	–
3.9 Men of color are equitably represented among students who participate in learning communities (e.g., first year experience, academically themed communities).	3.55	.82	.82	–
3.10 Academic policies are in place for students to repeat coursework without being heavily penalized.	3.30	.67	.91	–
3.11 Men of color are equitably represented on the institution's dean's lists.	3.36	.92	.91	–
3.12 Men of color are equitably represented among students who participate in "prestigious" academic programs.	3.36	.92	.91	–
3.13 Men of color are equitably represented among students who graduate with honors.	3.45	.93	.91	–
Total S-CVI				0.91

TABLE 4
Institutional Research Content Validity Results

<i>Item</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>CVI</i>	<i>S-CVI</i>
4.1 Enrollment data are disaggregated by race/ethnicity within gender.	3.90	.32	1.00	–
4.2 Persistence data are disaggregated by race/ethnicity within gender.	3.90	.32	1.00	–
4.3 Transfer data are disaggregated by race/ethnicity within gender.	3.82	.40	1.00	–
4.4 Completion data are disaggregated by race/ethnicity within gender.	3.82	.40	1.00	–
4.5 Courses with low outcomes for men of color (by discipline) are identified and targeted for intervention.	3.64	.92	.91	–
4.6 Exit interviews or surveys are conducted with students who leave the college prematurely (e.g., stop-out, drop-out).	3.36	.92	.91	–
4.7 Inquiry (e.g., research, assessment, evaluation) guides institutional efforts to support men of color.	3.36	1.03	.82	–
4.8 Men of color's sense of belonging at the institution is regularly assessed.	3.45	.93	.91	–
4.9 Student disciplinary data are disaggregated by race within gender.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total S-CVI				0.94

Given the preponderance of minority male initiatives and programs on community college campuses, the CCSSI provided 12 statements in this area. All of the statements illustrated strong content validity, with scores of .91 or higher. The S-CVI score for statements in this content

TABLE 5
Minority Male Initiatives and Programs Content Validity Results

<i>Item</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>CVI</i>	<i>S-CVI</i>
5.1 The initiative uses inquiry to inform the development of programs, services, and interventions.	3.36	.67	.91	—
5.2 The initiative's operations are grounded in research on men of color in community colleges.	3.82	.40	1.00	—
5.3 Assessment and evaluation are imbedded into the initiative's programming and practices.	3.55	.69	.91	—
5.4 The initiative is sustainable.	3.55	.69	.91	—
5.5 The initiative can be scaled to serve all men of color at the institution.	3.55	.93	.91	—
5.6 The initiative has a leadership succession plan.	3.45	.93	.91	—
5.7 The initiative is informed by a strategic plan and a set of standards (e.g., see Harper & Kuykendall, 2012).	3.55	.93	.91	—
5.8 The initiative is strongly supported by the institution's leadership.	3.55	.93	.91	—
5.9 The initiative's leadership team has representation from faculty, staff, administration, and students.	3.45	.39	.91	—
5.10 The initiative is adequately resourced (e.g., funding, human capital, space).	3.55	.93	.91	—
5.11 The initiative connects students to men of color who have graduated or successfully transferred from the institution.	3.45	.39	.91	—
5.12 The initiative addresses issues of gender and masculinity in its programming.	3.45	.93	.91	—
5.13 The initiative encourages academic and social development with others (e.g., students, faculty) beyond the initiative itself.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
5.14 The institution's strategic plan has a clear goal to improve outcomes for men of color.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total S-CVI				0.92

TABLE 6
Early Alert Systems Content Validity Results

<i>Item</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>CVI</i>	<i>S-CVI</i>
6.1 The institution has an early alert system in place.	3.55	.93	.91	—
6.2 Faculty and staff are trained on how to use the system.	3.64	.92	.91	—
6.3 Faculty and staff use the system regularly.	3.55	.93	.91	—
6.4 The system allows for timely feedback to students (feedback early on during academic term).	3.64	.92	.91	—
6.5 The system facilitates referrals to student support services (e.g., financial, counseling, academic advising).	3.64	.92	.91	—
6.6 Students are aware of the system (i.e., via catalogs, counselors/advisors, orientations, student success program, websites) and how it is used to facilitate their success.	3.55	.93	.91	—
Total S-CVI				0.91

area was strong at .92. SMEs suggested two statements be added to this content area. The first statement was the following: "The initiative encourages academic and social development with others beyond the initiative itself" (see Table 5, item 5.13). The rationale provided by the SME

was that “validating students is great, but it’s also important to integrate them into the campus as a whole, so that after they finish the program, they feel connected with the campus and don’t use the program as a crutch.” This was the second statement that was added to this content area: “The institution’s strategic plan has a clear goal to improve outcomes for men of color” (see Table 5 item 5.14). This statement was added given that strategic plans serve as the guiding framework for institutional action. Moreover, it illustrates a true institutional commitment to the issue.

The final content area investigated was early alert systems. This content area was comprised of six statements. All of the statements had strong CVI scores of .91. Given this, the S-CVI score was also strong, at .91. One primary point of clarification was suggested by SMEs. Both focused on item 6.6: “Students are aware of the system and how it is used to facilitate their success.” One SME suggested that specific venues where awareness can be created (e.g., catalogs, orientations, websites) be added to the statement. These examples were added to the statement (see Table 6).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the content validity of the CCSSI. SME panelists were provided with statements and asked to rate the relevancy of the statements in addressing the success of historically underrepresented and underserved men in education. Overall, the CCSSI indicated strong content validity.

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