

A PROGRAM COMMITTED TO THE PERSISTENCE OF  
AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES IN  
HIGHER EDUCATION

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This qualitative study described and examined the characteristics, components and theoretical design of the Student African-American Brother (SAAB). The SAAB is a national program that seeks to increase the academic and social integration of African-American males in higher education to increase their potential to graduate with an undergraduate degree. The SAAB's academic and social integration strategies were compared to Bean and Bennett's conceptual model of black student attrition to determine the congruency between the organization's strategies and the theoretical framework. The methodology was case study. Thirty semi-structured interviews were held with past and current members of the organization to gain a broader knowledge of the SAAB strategies and interventions used to promote their academic and social integration. The research revealed the SAAB applies a three dimensional approach which consists of providing a supportive environment, supporting academic goals, and encouraging campus and community involvement. This approach increases the students' understanding of the organization and structure of the higher education setting to yield successful matriculation through a four year college or university.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most grateful to God, my Lord and Savior, for giving me the strength and endurance to complete my educational goal.

I dedicate my dissertation to my mother, Sarah Samantha Holmes, who was my first teacher. Her legacy continues.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun, or fester like a sore, and then run? Does it stink like rotten meat, or crust and sugar over like a syrupy sweet? Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?

*Langston Hughes*

The college graduation rates of African-American males have been lower than the college graduation rates for White males and African-American females for many years (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). This lower graduation rate has a profound effect on the ability of African- American males to provide public service, participate in the democratic process, engage in economic development and achieve socioeconomic mobility and status, all positive outcomes of a college education (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

Throughout history, numerous researchers view higher education as the foundation to increasing an individual's intellectual, professional and personal status. In 1988, the Institute for Higher Education Policy<sup>1</sup> identified the individual and public benefits of attaining a postsecondary education. Individual benefits included higher salaries, better working conditions, and improved quality of health and life expectancy. Public benefits were viewed as greater productivity in the workforce, quality of civic life, appreciation of diversity and a less likely need for government financial assistance.

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<sup>1</sup> The Institute for Higher Education Policy is a non-profit, non-partisan organization whose mission is to foster access and success in postsecondary education through public policy research and other activities that inform and influence the policymaking process. These activities include policy reports and studies, seminars and meetings, and capacity building activities such as strategic planning. The primary audiences of the Institute are those who make or inform decisions about higher education: government policymakers, senior institutional leaders, researchers, funders, the media, and private sector leaders



There are short term and long term economic and non-economic benefits of a college education (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Likewise, the attainment of a bachelor's degree serves as a gateway for admission in a graduate or professional program. An advanced degree (master, doctorate, or professional) provides access to the highest paying influential careers and occupations. Without the attainment of the undergraduate degree, unfortunately, African-American males are the group most likely to miss invaluable employment opportunities because of their lower numbers of degree attainment (Educational Policy Institute, 2003).

The graduation rates of African-American males compared to White males and African-American females for the year 2001 appear in Figure 1 (Minorities in Education, Annual Status Report 2002-2003, p. 63).

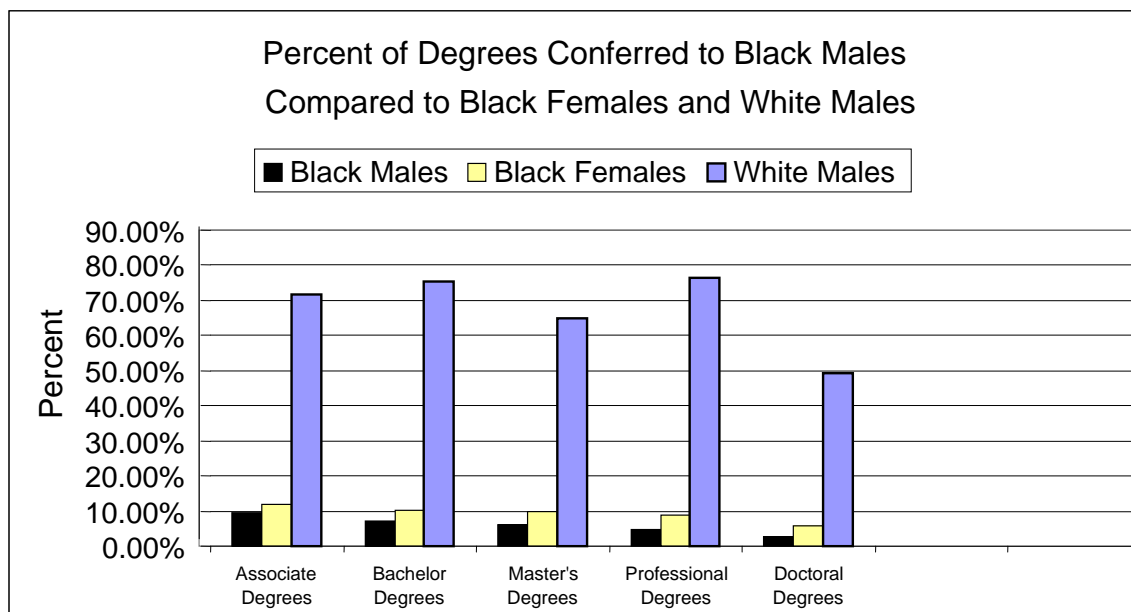


Figure 1. Percentage of degrees conferred comparison.

These data show that an inequity exists between the percentage of bachelor's

degrees conferred to African-American males and the percentage of bachelor's degrees conferred to White males and African-American females. From 2001 to 2002, the number of all degrees earned by African-American men was less than 3 percent. In contrast, the number of African-American females earning associate degrees rose by 6.5%, bachelors by 4.3%, and master's by 4.5% (American Council on Education, 2003). Six-year graduation rates for African-American males in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA, 2001) Division schools were 35%, as compared to 46% for African-American females, and 59% for White males (Ellis, 2004). Given these data, it is apparent that the number of African-American males who attain an undergraduate degree needs to increase to bridge these race and gender gaps.

In order to increase the number of African-American males who attain an undergraduate degree, the issues of high school preparation, recruitment and retention in higher educational settings must be addressed (Bean & Bennett, 1984, Braxton, Vessler & Hossler, 1995, Tinto, 1993). To this end, various studies were initiated. As one example, the University System of Georgia (1997) assembled a task force to identify the barriers to the retention of African-American males that exist within their college system. A few of the factors documented were:

- Inadequate Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) preparation and success;
- Inability to adjust to the college campus environment;
- Inadequate orientation, mentoring and tutoring programs designed for African-American males;
- Limited use of academic support services by African-American males;
- Lack of the institutional commitment to address the retention of African-American males; and

- Lack of research on the experiences of African-American males attending the educational institution. (p.1)

Of course, the above factors represent only the University System of Georgia's findings. However, research has determined the same barriers exist in many four-year colleges and universities (Tinto, 1993; Swail, 2000; Fleming, 1984; Flowers, 2004). Although many of the above barriers are cited in the literature, two indicators have been researched extensively as the strongest predictors of college attrition for all students, especially African-American males: Academic preparedness and campus environment (Anderson, 1985; Bennett & Okinaka, 1984; Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2001; Schartz & Washington, 2002). Because academic preparedness and campus environment play such an integral role in student success in higher education, these indicators have been identified as essential components to successful retention programs for minorities, in general and African-Americans, specifically (Allen, 1988).

### Academic Preparedness

Academic preparedness is considered the most important predictor of college completion for African-American students (Adelman, 1999; Allen, 1985; Davis, 1994; Fleming, 2002; Hagedorn, Maxwell & Hampton, 2002; Hood, 1992; Peltier, Laden, & Matranga, 1999; Spady, 1970). The educational community defines academic preparedness in the college setting on the basis of a student's secondary education college academic performance, which is measured by one or more of the following: high school grade point average (GPA) and rank, college entrance test scores, and the quality and intensity of the high school curriculum (Educational Policy Institute, 2003). In 2004, the average GPA for African-American males graduating from high school was

2.3 (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Minorities, in general, and African-American males, specifically, are often underprepared for college level reading and writing assignments (Adelman, 1996). The ability to read, write, study, and take tests are prerequisites to academic success and continued persistence in higher education. Moreover, the student must have a reading ability to demonstrate mastery of comprehension, application, analysis and evaluation in the college environment for success (McGinnis, 2002). The study conducted by Rowser (1997) gave a glimpse of what assistance African-American males believed they needed to succeed in college academically. Of the 35 males surveyed, the following was revealed: Overall, 72% believed they were adequately prepared to succeed in college; 45% stated they needed assistance with study skills; 28% perceived they needed help with writing skills, while 12% identified reading ability as a weakness. Lastly, 44% assessed their math skills were poor and 16% admitted they needed tutoring. Rowser's research concluded the expectations of this cohort's abilities are above the realities of their academic skills.

### Campus Environment

African-American students continue to perceive indifference on Predominantly White Institution (PWI) campuses in higher education (Britt & Turner, 2002). Also, the students believe racial discrimination occurs more on predominantly white institution (PWI) campuses toward African-Americans than other minorities (Fleming, 1984; Allen, 1992). Suarez-Balcazar; Orellana-Damacela; Portillo; Rowan & Andrews-Guillen's (2003) findings indicated "African-American students experience more discrimination on college campuses than other minority groups" (p.440). Other studies have found

African-American students attending the PWI believe they are treated with different standards by their peers and professors (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; McCormack, 1995). In terms of the experiences of African-American males on PWI campuses, Fleming (1984) reported:

Black males do not feel as if they fit in at PWI. Some feel they are graded differently and are not treated the same as other students because of the color of their skin and gender. It seems that inferiority sets in as to their abilities, and they began to isolate themselves from the setting and ultimately they leave. Black males view White colleges as stressful and hostile environments, where they do not feel warmly received or secure. (p. 120)

It appears African-American males experience the ordeal of attempting to cope in an environment where they perceive they are not wanted (Allen, 1992; Flowers, 2003; Fleming, 1984; Fries-Britt, 2001; Harper, Carini, Bridges, & Hayek, 2004). The negative attitudes and racist stereotypes, combined with overt racial threats are found to create severe problems that force many African-American students to leave college prematurely (Nettles, 1988; Bennett & Okinaka, 1984; Allen, 1986).

The interaction between faculty and students is a cross-cutting theme found in academic preparedness and campus environment research (Fleming, 1984; Allen, 1986; Cabrera & Nora, 1994; Ancis et al., 2000). Christiansen and Sedlacek (1974) reported African-American students have few opportunities to engage faculty. However, African-American males do not experience the same interaction with professors as other students attending higher education institutions (Fleming, 1984; Allen, 1982; Flowers, 2003). Reasons stated for this phenomenon includes, professors do not

believe in the student's abilities, so they purposely will not invest time with them. Equally important, African-American males feel they are treated stereotypically in the classroom settings by professors and students. Although the relationship between students and their teachers is one of the strongest determinants for academic success, African-American males do not engage in this opportunity as much as it is needed.

Consequently, the relationship between African-American male students and their professors are very limited or non-existent (Seyfried, 1998; Bray, 1985; Braxton, Vesper & Hossler, 1995; Holmes, Ebbers, Robinson & Magenda, 2000; Tinto, 1993; Wyckoff, 1999).

Campus retention initiatives have been developed to increase the persistence of African-American male students; however, little is known about their success. Cuyjet (2006) profiled nine programs of this type in his publication, *African-American Males in College*. Each program emphasized the measures taken to intervene in the academic and social integration of African-American males in higher education. Six of the programs were campus specific, while one was an initiative where events had taken place on the campus to raise the awareness of African-American males regarding campus programs and student organizations designed to assist in their educational success. Two programs had chapters and affiliates located on several campuses throughout the United States.

One initiative profiled in Cuyjet's (2006) work was the Student African-American Brotherhood (SAAB). The SAAB was founded in 1990 at Georgia Southwestern State University by Dr. Tyrone Bledsoe to as a response to address the academic challenges faced by African-American males in higher education. While serving as the Student

Affairs Officer, the founder compiled a report to identify attrition rates for various student populations, and noticed the low GPA of African American males and their high attrition from the college. To investigate this finding, and recommend strategies to administrative officials, Dr. Bledsoe developed focus group sessions for African-American male students to discuss their college experiences, reasons for low GPA, and brainstorm on solutions to help them to succeed. From the first meeting, the men talked about their college experiences, and began to dialogue about actions and strategies they had taken individually to navigate the college system. Additional meetings were requested by the students, and Dr. Bledsoe developed the framework for the meetings so it could be a beneficial resource to the participants. Administrators were asked to attend and speak at the meetings. A mentoring program was established, and an information session was created to keep the students informed of upcoming campus events. Since its inception, the organization has grown to 57 chapters in undergraduate colleges and 8 chapters in high schools. The organization's mission is to assist minority males graduate from institutions of high learning by providing academic and social services in a nurturing and supportive environment. Programs offered to help students include weekly informational meetings and tutorial assistance. Participation in college sponsored and community events are a few activities promoted by the national headquarters. Each intervention is considered an important aspect of college success for their members. The national chapter has six standing committees with specific activities and mandates that must be implemented by the undergraduate chapters. The executive board meets three times per year and sponsors four annual conferences in major cities. The national chapter has detailed criteria for undergraduate students interested in establishing a chapter on their

university campus, and works closely with campus administrators to ensure the new SAAB chapter has the full support of the university. SAAB is financially sustained through donations from charitable organizations, grants and membership dues. The organization's staff is composed of former members who volunteer their time to serve as advisors and mentors to undergraduate members. All undergraduate chapter offices are held by students who are active members of the organization. The student organization-based program has shown success by the increased persistence rates of its members to graduation compared to national persistence rates for African-American males.

### Statement of the Problem

With the continued low graduation rates of African-American males from four-year colleges and universities, and limited research on the effectiveness of minority retention programs and initiatives designed to assist African-American males in their pursuit to attain a four-year degree on PWI campuses, there is a need to determine the characteristics, programs offered and theoretical framework of successful initiatives such as SAAB. In studying these initiatives, colleges and universities can learn valuable strategies for retaining this population in institutions of higher education.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe and examine the characteristics, components and theoretically-based design of SAAB programs. Further, this study addressed how the SAAB design compares with the Bean and Bennett's Conceptual



Model of Attrition for Black Students. This research will serve to inform practitioners in higher education of strategies that promote the academic and social integration of African-American males in higher education.

### Research Questions

The following research questions were posed in this study:

1. What are the characteristics of the SAAB program?
2. What programs and activities are offered by the SAAB to African-American males to increase their potential to graduate?
3. To what extent is the structure of the SAAB program congruent with Bean/Bennett's Conceptual Model of Attrition for Black Students?

### Definition of Key Terms

The following definitions were used for the purpose in this study:

- Academic integration - The skill to establish competent membership in the academic domain of the college.
- African-American males – Individuals who self-identify as males of African descent who are enrolled where the research was conducted or who graduated from the same university.
- The Conceptual Model of Black Student Attrition - A theoretical structure developed by John Bean and Christene Bennett to describe and explain why Black students leave the PWI.
- Student African-American Brotherhood (SAAB) – A program developed to provide academic and social integration interventions for African-American male students enrolled in higher education.
- Social integration – The competence to establish membership in the social system of the college.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Well, son, I'll tell you: Life for me ain't been no crystal stair. It's had tacks in it, and splinters, and boards torn up, and places with no carpet on the floor-Bare. But all the time I'se been a-climbin' on, And reachin' landin's, and turnin' corners, and sometimes goin' in the dark where there ain't been no light. So, boy, don't you turn back. Don't you set down on the steps. Cause you finds it's kinder hard. Don't you fall now- For I'se still goin', honey, I'se still climbin', and life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

*Langston Hughes*

The literature review consists of three components that present: (1) A description and review of Bean and Bennett's (1984) Conceptual Model of Black Student Attrition, which is used as the theoretical framework, (2) A comprehensive review of the literature addressing issues facing African-American males in regards to their academic and social integration in the college environment, and (3) An overview of retention initiatives targeting African American males, highlighting the Student African-American Brotherhood (SAAB), a support organization for African-American males.

#### Theoretical Framework Bean & Bennett's Conceptual Model of Black Student Attrition

Theories of student attrition and persistence in higher education have been investigated consistently for the past three decades. Since Spady's (1970) ground breaking research that indicated Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) scores were directly correlated to the persistence of students, researchers have studied this phenomenon to identify the variables and their relationship to each other, and how it affects the persistence or attrition of students in colleges and universities. Vincent

Tinto's (1975, 1987, & 1993) Model of Student Departure and Astin's Theory of Involvement has been widely recognized as the most comprehensive theories to address retention. However, a criticism of the models is that it does not adequately address the issues faced by minority students matriculating in a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) four-year institution (Hurtado & Carter, 1997).

In 1980, Bean developed the Model of Student Departure, which was designed as a psychological process model to explain the factors contributing to student attrition. The model examined the variables affecting attrition between males and females. The intervening variables correlated to a male's intent to drop out of college were his level of commitment to the institution, viewpoint of his role as a student being repetitive, satisfaction with the college or university, and perception of how communication is transmitted throughout the college environment. As Tinto's, Bean's research did not reflect the specific factors faced by minority students in higher education. Bean and Bennett (1984) developed the Conceptual Model of Black Student Attrition to provide comprehensive insight to the high attrition of African-Americans at a PWI. The model was originally studied with African-American students attending Indiana University-Bloomington. There were nine independent variables identified in the model which indicated the potential of an African-American student's intent to leave the college setting. The nine variables with their definitions follow:

1. Pre-college positive interracial contact - Socialization activities with other races before attending college have been viewed favorably
2. Pre-college academic performance - A student's achievement of high school curriculum (GPA and high school rank)
3. Parent education attainment - Highest grade level or degree completed by the parent

4. Collegiate positive interracial contact - Socialization activities with other races and ethnicities while attending college that is viewed favorably
5. State of ethnicity - A theory which explores the five stages of an individual's degree to openness, to human diversity and ethnic differences. The stages progress from an internalization of negative beliefs about one's ethnic group that is institutionalized within the society to individuals having a healthy sense of their ethnic identity and the ability to function within several ethnic socio-cultural environments
6. Preparedness - The ability of the student to perform college work
7. Satisfaction - The degree to which being a student is viewed positively (Bean, 1980)
8. Less trauma - Level of alienation of students experiences when confronted with unfamiliar norms, values, and expectations in a college setting
9. College GPA - The degree which the student has demonstrated an ability to perform academically at the college level (Bean, 1980, Bean & Bennett, 1984)

The research findings indicated three independent variables; preparedness, satisfaction, and less trauma, were significant to African-American males' intent to persist in college. Because of the results, Bean and Bennett (1984) recommended the following strategies to reduce African-American student attrition at the PWI:

1. Colleges and universities should partner with high schools to encourage students interested in attending college to take high level courses in mathematics and science.
2. Post-secondary institutions should support cultural diversity in and out of the classroom setting, and promote a campus environment that has *positive interracial contact* for all African-American students.
3. Moreover, mentoring is highly recommended for African-American students in their freshman year, and instructors should utilize teaching styles in the classroom to academically engage African-American students.

The recommendations support the assumption that institutions of higher education retention programs should be committed and focused in emphasizing the academic and social integration of African-American students to increase the student's

potential to graduate with an undergraduate degree. Five components were found to lend support in assisting the academic (preparedness) and social integration (campus environment) of African-American males: Preparation in high school, reading proficiency, engagement in college developmental and remedial courses, interaction between faculty-student and limited perceptions of racial discrimination. Each component has been identified as having a direct correlation with the persistence of African-American males in higher education settings.

#### Issues Addressing College Retention Academic Preparedness

African-American males do not take courses in high school that adequately prepare them for the academic rigors of college (Adelman, 1999; Anderson, 1985; Astin, 1982; Fiske, 1988; Fullilove & Treisman, 1990). Many African-American males live in urban areas in poorer school districts where advanced courses are not offered in Mathematics and Science because they have limited financial support (Payne, 1993). According to Orfield and Lee (2005), schools in inner-cities do not provide the same learning opportunities or environment for African-American children as post-secondary settings in suburbia America. Moreover, inner-city school districts have a difficult time recruiting and retaining experienced teachers who are considered to be the primary agent of educational success. Also, research shows teachers who are hired to teach in these school districts, have lower expectations of African-American males' academic abilities (Irvine, 1990). McDermott, Pitnerick and Rosenquist (1980) found that African-American students are not challenged to take courses that improve their oral and written communication skills, critical thinking abilities and reading proficiency.

Researchers found that the negative attitudes teachers and administrators have of African-American students, and African-American males, in particular, contribute to their misunderstanding of the importance of high academic standards in the high school setting (Brophy, 1983; Reed, 1988; Williams & Muehl, 1978). Although these negative factors are prevalent, African-American male students graduate from high school. Upon entrance to college, many are classified as *at risk* students because their entrance examination scores, Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) or American College Test (ACT), and GPA are lower than other students. With the first year of college being acknowledged as the most critical time for determining a student's success in college, African-American males find themselves in a vulnerable position for academic success (Tinto, 1982; Bean, 1990).

Schwartz and Washington (2002) concluded that the relationship between academic performance and retention for African-American males in higher education is strongly dependent upon their high school grades and rank (Fleming, 1984; Hood, 1992). In this study, 229 African-American male freshmen participated in a study designed to determine their persistence and academic success by using cognitive (high school rank and GPA) and non-cognitive (mentor, academic integration, social integration, college satisfaction, and coping ability) variables. Although both were found to be equally important, high school GPA and rank served as the best predictors for college success of African-American males. The two variables give a strong prediction of how well African-American male students will perform academically during their first year of college. To achieve academic success, state education boards have strongly stressed the collaboration between high schools and colleges defining objectives and

learning outcomes for high school students in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades (Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education, 2004). Rowser (1997) proposed the establishment of a pre-college program to increase the awareness of students regarding college readiness and expectations. This would further the collaboration between higher education and high schools to align high school graduation requirements with university entrance requirements.

Currently, one method being used to address the academic preparedness of African-American males in high school settings is the formation of single sex schools or classes. The environment is highly effective in creating a strong learning community for the young men. Students and teachers have found the teaching and learning to be more active, reciprocal and engaging. As of December 2006, there were approximately 13 predominantly African-American male schools across the nation that reported having success in academic outcomes (Roberson-English, 2006). Since this is an emerging trend, longitudinal data and research is limited in determining the effectiveness of this shift in elementary and secondary education for African-American males and the impact it will have on persistence of the students in institutions of higher education.

### *Reading Proficiency*

The ability to read proficiently haunts the educational success of African American males. The reading proficiency of African-American males is a concern to educators in elementary, secondary and post-secondary settings (Lee, 1951; Hunter, 1999; Hood, 1992). In *The Nation's Report Card*, White students in high school score 27% above African-American students in reading proficiency scores (Digest of

Education Statistics, 2004). Deficiencies in English usage, vocabulary, and analytical skills are direct reflections of a decreased level of reading ability. Lee (1951) studied the significance of reading proficiency of African-American students. His research showed the successful academic performance of African-Americans in English strongly depended upon the student's general reading ability. In 1955, Boykin conducted a study at Southern University where approximately 600 freshmen were administered reading tests to measure vocabulary, comprehension, speed of reading and reading composite. While the average score for students taking the tests was 55, African-American students scored 37. Furthermore, McGinnis (2002) examined the relationship between academic success and reading proficiency for African-American male eighth graders. The literacy passport test had 77 reading questions and the passing score was 250. African-American males scored 251. Once again, there was a positive correlation between the reading proficiency and academic abilities of African-American males (Hood, 1992; Lee, 1951). It appears this breakdown occurs during the elementary school years, and continues to progress throughout high school (Adelman, 1999; Hood, 1992; Lee, 1951; McGinnis, 2002). Although the problem continues to be acknowledged, few consistent strategies are known in transforming this phenomenon. Kunjufu (1995) indicated African-American males are not taught materials to stimulate their cognitive abilities. It seems focus is given to memorization, rather than developing their critical thinking skills. One strategy used by elementary teachers to strengthen the reading ability of African-American males is teaching in various styles, by using culturally relevant pedagogy into academic courses, to identify their reading styles (Rosa, 1994; Aragon, 1996). Furthermore, Hunter (1999) suggested teachers in



educational settings working with African-American males should inter-relate reading into important facets of their lives to increase their ability to apply, analyze and synthesize ideas to master the ability to read.

### *Engagement in Developmental and Remedial Education*

Research shows that African-American are reluctant to engage in developmental and remedial education at the college level (Dawson-Threat, 1997). Undergraduate colleges and universities offer comprehensive remedial and developmental education to assist students in developing the core competencies and skill sets needed to support the student's goal for achieving academic success. In the developmental courses, students learn how to take notes and tests, study and communicate with faculty to increase their potential for academic success. Success courses are instrumental in helping the transition of students during their first year of college, and have been found to be extremely effective to increase the retention of African-American males (Stovall, 1999; Glenn, 2001). Along with developmental courses, remedial classes are offered to assist students in increasing their knowledge in a particular subject matter. The most common remedial courses enrolled in are English, mathematics and reading (Boylan, Bonham, & White, 1999). At least 40% of African-American males must take at least one remedial course during their first year of college (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Harper, et al. (2004) concluded African-American males devote little time and effort to studying, reading, writing papers and preparing for class. This inattentiveness contributes greatly to their poor academic performance and reaffirms the need for remedial courses. Although, African-American males enroll in remedial courses, they

will not to attend and participate because they do not believe they need to take the course. Likewise, acknowledging they are taking in a remedial course confirms they are failing in college or *they are not smart*. Hood (1992) captured this realization by concluding African-American males are not successful in higher education because they *do not get help with tutoring when they need it*. Although the need for remedial courses has been heavily debated among educators in higher education, it appears remedial courses are expanding, rather than declining because of inadequate academic preparedness of students in the secondary setting (Moore & Carpenter, 1985; Boylan, Bliss & Bonham, 1997). The stigma and *labeling* of students enrolled in remedial courses are great among African-American males. Instead of helping the student to master the basic core curriculum, it appears to damage their academic confidence. Furthermore, Dawson-Threat (1997) found remedial courses have a negative effect on African-American males, and more evaluation is needed to determine their effectiveness. Moreover, there appears to be limited awareness by remedial course instructors of the learning needs of the students and techniques that are effective in helping them with their learning. Boylan et al. (1997) suggested cultural competency training is necessary for instructors who teach remedial and developmental courses, so acceptance and understanding of the student's deficiencies can be embraced, instead of judged.

### *Faculty-Student Interaction*

Pascarella (1980) identified faculty-student interaction as a primary factor in academic achievement, retention, persistence and graduation of students (Ugbach &

Williams, 1989; Griffin 1992). However, Carroll's (1986) findings indicate there is limited faculty interaction for African-American students in general and African-American males, in particular. African-American male students do not feel they receive the same type or amount of interaction from faculty as other students. Retention models used to retain African-American students suggest faculty involvement is a key factor to the program's success (Townsend, 1994). The reinforcement of the student's need for a supportive environment is manifested by the faculty's interaction with them inside and outside of the classroom setting. This is a serious implication because the development and strength of this relationship has been found to be crucial in the persistence of African-American students in higher education (Giles-Gee, 1989; Flowers, 2003; Watson & Kuh, 1996). African-American students who have positive and frequent interaction with their teachers have a higher potential to graduate than African-American students who do not successfully develop and maintain this important relationship (Giles-Gee, 1989; Littleton, 2003; Flowers, 2003). In his study Flowers (2003) focused on faculty student interaction by assessing 8,538 student responses to the college Student Experiences Questionnaire. A comparison study was conducted to review the interaction between African-American students and faculty enrolled in a Historically Black Colleges Universities (HBCU) with students attending a PWI. The results of the study revealed African-American students experience less frequent interaction with teachers at the PWI, than students at the HBCU which increased their motivation to persist in college to graduation. African-American males want faculty support but this desire is left unfulfilled (Lee, 1993). It appears African-American males do not initiate conversations with their professors to form academic alliances, and likewise, faculty

does not seek out African-American males to establish a better rapport. Tinto (1987) found that a student's academic integration has a greater potential to increase when faculty demonstrate concern for the student's educational success. However, when this interaction is limited or non-existent the potential for failure increases significantly.

### *Perceived Discrimination*

African-American students have long held the perception that they experience feelings of isolation and alienation when attending the PWI (Fleming, 1984; Allen, 1986). African-American students do experience academic and social difficulties integrating in the educational environments at PWI campuses because the perceived indifferent treatments they receive cause them to feel uncomfortable and unwanted in this environment (Tinto, 1982). Fleming (1984) found African-American students do not believe they are treated with dignity or respect on the majority of college campuses. Studies reveal the interaction of White students toward African-American students and other minorities as being hostile, distant, unfriendly, and in some cases, total avoidance (Asante & Al-Deen, 1984; Allen, 1988; Britt & Turner, 2002). It is reported and research supports African-American students perform better in environments where they are engaged in learning, the setting is cooperative and non-threatening (Thompson & Fretz, 1991). Because African-American students do not experience this, they feel isolated on the campuses, and continue to report feelings of isolation and insensitivity when matriculating on the PWI (Mallinckrodt, 1988; Ancis, Sedlacke, & Mohr, 2000; Flowers, 2003).

Various types of racial discrimination include White students verbalizing racial

stereotypical beliefs in classroom settings (Fries-Britt, 2002), as well as inappropriate faculty interaction in classroom settings, where teachers ask African-American students to comment on lecture topics from a *Black* point of view. Person & Christensen (1996) suggested African-American students experience a great deal of turmoil in their treatment by White students. Consequently, they feel invisible and began to harbor feelings of resentment. This results in the students becoming uninvolved in campus life, and ultimately, disassociate from the college experience.

Suarez-Balcazar, Orellana-Damacela, Portillo, Rowan, and Andrews-Guillen (2003) explored the treatment of minority students at educational institutions of higher learning. Approximately 350 students were asked to describe perceived differential treatment situation with three dependent variables. Interviewed students were asked to: (1) Describe the offensive treatment; (2) Rate the degree of the offensive treatment; and (3) Determine if the student felt that discrimination was involved. Minority students perceived they were treated with more hostility, accused of negative actions more, and treated by their professors stereotypically than their White counterparts. African-American students felt they had been discriminated against the most, with Asian Americans ranking second in their perceptions of differential treatment. In addition, African-American students believed they received more negative treatment than the other races (Hispanics, Asians). Lastly, the results indicated that African-American males perceived differential treatment in more aspects than females or males of other races.

Fries-Britt (2002) examined the experiences of 15 African-American students enrolled at PWI. Interviews from the students revealed they felt isolated, disconnected,

and alienated in these settings by faculty and staff, as well as other students. The students stated they did not perceive they were actively engaged with their professors, feel they were part of the institution's community, and believed the campus *worked against them*. Since this perception was great, their involvement continued to decrease until they prematurely departed before graduation.

Hall and Rowan (2001) concluded through focus group studies that African-American males feel discriminated against on PWI, and this contributes to their high attrition rates. Likewise, this study confirmed that racial discrimination continues to be an obstacle faced by Black males in higher education. In this study, African-American males reinforced the message that they perceive indifferent treatment is given on PWI college campuses. They identified racism to be a significant barrier to the retention and graduation of African-American males. Also, they mentioned that the negative atmosphere on the college campus served as a hindrance to them staying in college. Additionally, the students stated there were limited minority faculty and students, which strengthened their feelings of loneliness. African-American males believe racism and discrimination exist within the academic settings of colleges and universities throughout the nation and post-secondary settings do not make an effort to support their feelings of inclusiveness by means of diversity in faculty, administrators, support staff and students. Lastly, Lett and Wright (2003) reported African-American males suffer most from feelings of isolation, non-acceptance and rejection through actions of hidden racism, unintentional and intentional acts of discrimination, and this causes them to withdraw emotionally from this unsettling situation.

### *Retention Initiatives*

Cuyjet (2006) highlights nine initiatives that focus specifically on the retention of African-American males in higher education. Each of the programs establishes events, programs and activities to increase the academic and social integration of the student. The initiatives include participating in study groups, tutorial sessions, faculty-student interaction and program advising for academic integration. Likewise, social integration for African-American male students incorporates involvement, mentoring and counseling. Giles-Gee (1989) reported that initiatives that promoted faculty-student interaction with academic advising were powerful pairings to retention programs for African-American students. Furthermore, retention programs that include administrative oversight from the college and university leaders have greater leverage because data is being collected, reviewed and analyzed to determine if programs and services offered to African-American students are constructive, and if not, then changes can occur so services and programs can be augmented for the best educational outcomes.

The SAAB has used many of the aforementioned components and interventions to develop its program so that it is comprehensive in academic and social integration. In addition, it is inclusive so a broad spectrum of African-American male students can take advantage of the SAAB program. And most of all, it is adaptable, so that it can be replicated in elementary and secondary education as well as higher education. The SAAB has been successful in collaborating and partnering with various philanthropic organizations and donors to assist members with scholarships, clothing and internships through their undergraduate years in college. In 2003, the SAAB became a member of the University of Georgia's task force to determine institutional strategies that can be

implemented to retain African-American males in the multi-campus system.

### Summary

Bean and Bennett's model identified factors and provided recommendations to help stakeholders in higher education institutions confront the challenge of retaining African-American males. Since the model's emergence, researchers have concluded the same findings and recommendations (Tinto, 1987, Fleming, 1984, Allen, 1986, Harper, 2004, and Hall & Rowan, 2001). Furthermore, the literature described factors associated with the academic preparedness and campus environment which directly affect the students' intent to leave or persist to graduation. Each underlying component (high school preparation, reading proficiency, engagement in developmental/remedial courses, faculty-student interaction, and perception of racial discrimination) was a significant determinant to the overall educational success of African-American males. The body of literature supports strategies believed to be beneficial for the success of African American students attending colleges and universities: (a) Supportive programs (academic and counseling), (b) diversity training for faculty and staff, (c) hiring of African American faculty and staff, and (d) increase faculty-student interaction (Gardner, Keller & Piotrowski, 1996). Although it is difficult to integrate all of the suggestions simultaneously, higher education should be the driving force in developing a culture of academic and social inclusiveness and acceptance of minorities, especially African American males, on PWI campuses. Colleges and universities must be viewed as a place where diversity is welcomed and appreciated (Mallinckrodt, 1988). Suggested actions that should be taken by college administrators to minimize racial issues include



nurturing diversity among students, faculty and staff by providing multicultural education, cultural diversity workshops for faculty and staff, and developing a strong commitment to hire a diverse staff (Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn & Terezini, 1996; Vogt, 1997; Cabrera & Nora, 1994). Just (1999) highlighted the success of HBCU's in retaining African-American students and indicated PWI's should investigate and solicit the assistance of HBCU's in developing strategies to retain African-American students in their settings. Furthermore, professors can create inclusive learning environments by developing an academic community in the classroom setting which emphasizes cooperation and collaboration (Tinto, 1987).

The SAAB developed a program that seeks to address the factors associated with academic preparedness, satisfaction and feelings of *less trauma* in the college setting. It is imperative to study the SAAB design to determine the characteristics of the programs, identify programs and activities offered by the SAAB to increase the student's potential to graduate and examine the level of congruency of its' efforts with Bean and Bennett's model. This will increase the understanding of SAAB's intervention methods to promote the overall educational success of African-American males by addressing academic and social integration aspects of the college experience.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

If you can keep your head when all about you, are losing theirs  
and blaming it on you, If you can trust yourself when all men doubt  
you, But make allowance for their doubting too; If you can wait and  
not be tired by waiting, or being lied about, don't deal in lies, Or being  
hated don't give way to hating, and yet don't look good, nor talk too  
wise: If you can dream-and not make dreams your master; If you can  
think-and not make thoughts your aim; If you can meet with Triumph  
and Disaster and treat those two impostors just the same; If you can  
bear to hear the truth you've spoken twisted by knaves to make a trap  
for fools, or watch the things you gave your life to, broken, and stoop  
and build 'em up with worn-out tools: If you can make one heap of all  
your winnings and risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss, and lose, and start  
again at your beginnings and never breathe a word about your loss; If  
you can force your heart and nerve and sinew to serve your turn long  
after they are gone, and so hold on when there is nothing in you except  
the Will which says to them: "Hold on!" If you can talk with crowds and  
keep your virtue, or walk with Kings-nor lose the common touch, If  
neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you, if all men count with you,  
but none too much; If you can fill the unforgiving minute with sixty  
seconds' worth of distance run, yours is the Earth and everything  
that's in it, and-which is more-you'll be a Man, my son!

*Rudyard Kipling*

This research is a qualitative study using a case study methodology. This chapter contains a discussion of the use of qualitative research and the research design, data collection procedures, methods used to analyze the data and limitations of the study.

#### Qualitative Design

Qualitative methods are used in research to gain an in-depth understanding and detailed description of a particular phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). Researchers use tools such as document reviews, semi-structured interviews and observations to capture detailed data to explore multiple methods of interpreting

emerging trends. Qualitative studies work toward providing a comprehensive description reflective of lived experiences (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Qualitative studies are framed by descriptions of, explanations for, or meaning given to phenomena by the researcher and the participants. For this reason, qualitative researchers have come to value the importance of case studies (Borg & Gall, 1989; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Yin, 1984). The case study technique was used for this study because of the small number of participants who would provide detailed information regarding their experiences and perspectives of being members of the Student African-American Brotherhood (SAAB) program.

### Case Study

Borg and Gall (1989) state a case study gives a detailed examination of a *single subject* by generating subjective data to explain a phenomenon that tests a theoretical proposition or test a hypothesis. Moreover, Miles and Huberman (1984) defined case study as “a bounded context in which one is studying events, processes, and outcomes” (p.28). Overall, case studies are used to explain, describe, evaluate and explore real life interventions.

The case study used three components for the development of the study: (1) research questions, (2) unit of analysis, and (3) comparison of the data to Bean and Bennett’s Conceptual Model of Attrition for Black Students. This allows the document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and observations to help describe the characteristics of the SAAB, identify the intervention methods used by the organization to increase the academic and social integration of members, and examine the

congruency between their intervention methods and Bean/Bennett's Conceptual Model of Attrition for Black Students.

### *Unit of Analysis*

Cuyjet (2006) identified nine intervention programs that focus on the academic and social integration of African-American males enrolled in colleges and universities. The SAAB was chosen because the section written about the program was comprehensive in describing the organization's history and structure. In addition, there were few programs that had formed chapters in various higher education settings. Also, the founder was willing to be interviewed for the research and wanted more research to be conducted on the student organization.

The organization is in the initial stages of developing an evaluation tool for chapters to determine its effectiveness. After several telephone calls and interviews with the founder, SAAB was chosen as the intervention program to be studied for this research. The chapter chosen for this research is located on a university campus in the southern part of the country. The institution is a public, comprehensive research university with an enrollment of approximately 30,000 undergraduate students on the main campus where the research was conducted. It is part of a nine campus system with 80% of the student population being White, and the remaining 20% consisting of African-Americans, Hispanics and Asian-Americans. African-American males represent 3% of the undergraduate student population.

The campus is situated in the downtown area of the city. Buildings are well maintained and the lawn is immaculate. Students walk, ride bikes and skate over the

vast campus. Music can be heard in the afternoons in the square, and the general atmosphere is friendly. With this being a research institution, 90% of the faculty has doctorate degrees and the racial breakdown is as follows: 88% White, 12% minority with 2% being African-American male professors.

### *Site Determination*

The SAAB Web site covers 65 chapters. Traveling to all 65 sites was not feasible for this study, so criteria were developed to identify chapters that would provide the most comprehensive data regarding the organization's intervention methods and strategies used to assist African-American males with academic and social integration to increase their potential to graduate. The criteria used to identify the sites were chapters that: (a) were located on Predominantly White Institution (PWI) campuses; (b) had been active for a minimum of seven years with data to confirm their existence; and (c) had a minimum of 15 active members. Upon thorough investigation with the SAAB headquarters and chapters, one chapter was identified that met all of the criteria. In addition, former members of the SAAB who had graduated from the college were available to be part of the study to describe their perspectives on the SAAB's impact on their college experience while undergraduates.

### *Data Collection*

The research utilized multiple sources to collect data. Techniques included document analysis, interviews, and observations. The combination of techniques assisted in gathering information from a variety of sources, with each one revealing

different aspects of the SAAB program. The document analysis consisted of reviewing the national and chapter SAAB Web site, which contained the organizational profile, by-laws, articles of organization, organizational structure, goals of the organization, history, instructions on how to establish a SAAB chapter, and how to become a SAAB member. In addition, publications relating to the SAAB were reviewed. Permission was requested and granted by the founder of the SAAB to conduct research with the case study, SAAB chapter (Appendix A). Permission was requested (Appendix C) and granted (Appendix D) by the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board. A telephone interview was conducted with the founder of the program (Appendix B) to answer questions that was raised upon completion of the document review. For the semi-structured interviews, the SAAB President submitted the names of 23 undergraduate students and 10 former members who had graduated from the college. A telephone interview (Appendix E) was conducted with the potential participants to give information about the study and determine their level of interest. A letter was sent to the potential participants to determine if they wanted to participate in the study (Appendix F). Twenty undergraduate SAAB members and all of the former members agreed to participate in the study. Confirmation letters were sent to the participants to provide detailed information about the location and time of the interview (Appendix G). Observations took place during the five day interview period with the undergraduate and graduate participants by observing their interactions with each other and other students as they prepared to be interviewed. The interviews took place in the main library in a small conference room. There was a large sitting section where students were allowed to talk and interact. This is where participants waited before interviews. Individual and social behaviors were studied to

identify the members' patterns of behaviors (i.e., members talking to one another, and students interacting with SAAB members). Field notes were taken to capture the student's interactions, behaviors and conversations.

Before the beginning of each interview, consent forms were read, explained and signed (Appendix H). Each informant was assured his participation was voluntary. The interviews lasted approximately one hour, and each undergraduate participant received \$10.00 for his participation. All interviews were audiotaped with a four digit coding process to protect the anonymity of the participant. In addition, pseudonyms were assigned so that no student could be identified by name or institution.

Upon conclusion of the interview process, the tapes were transcribed. A professional transcribed the audiotapes verbatim omitting any identifying information. The participants reviewed the transcript for accuracy, noted appropriate changes, and returned the transcript to the interviewer. The interviewer reviewed the corrected transcripts against the audiotapes before coding and analysis.

### *Coding and Analysis*

The domains for coding were classified by the research questions, document analysis, interview questions and observations. Data collection was categorized by the domains to give detailed descriptions of events, situations, examples as well as direct quotes to represent the participant's beliefs, experiences and thoughts of the SAAB program.

Summary statements were formulated to identify patterns of responses from the document analysis, interview responses and observations. Categories were created to

ensure the data were coded accurately and captured correctly. Based upon the results, the findings were aggregated into related themes (Appendix I).

### Limitations and Delimitations

Constraints such as time, money and resources, made it unrealistic to conduct this study with a larger population. The selection of one university allowed data collection to be streamlined so the depth and breadth of the research could be accomplished, and the ability to replicate achieved without undue hardship.

The research focused primarily on African-American males enrolled in a PWI. Although there are SAAB chapters on Historically Black Colleges Universities (HBCU) campuses, the research was collected at a PWI where perceptions may differ from African-American males enrolled at HBCUs. In addition, the research was limited to 30 informants. Lastly, the data may be biased because the researcher is of the same race as the participants, but a different gender.



## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

Cuyjet (2006) identified nine intervention programs that focus on assisting African-American males with academic and social integration in higher education. The reasons the Student African-American Brotherhood (SAAB) was chosen for the study was because the organization has established chapters throughout the United States (U.S.), the founder was willing to be part of the research and the designated chapter was geographically accessible.

#### Document Analysis

The most comprehensive and easily accessible documents to analyze for the study were available on the organization's Web site. The document analysis consisted of a review and examination of the following items: organizational profile, by-laws, articles of incorporation, organizational structure, goals of the organization and instructions on how to establish a SAAB chapter, and how to become a SAAB member.

Documents analysis revealed that the SAAB's governing body is composed of nine members who act as chairpersons for the six national committees that provide the organization's infrastructure for the undergraduate chapters' operational directives. The academic committee is charged with identifying university sponsored academic support services so SAAB members can be aware and benefit from these resources. In addition, this committee is responsible for developing materials to assist with the implementation of the internal tutoring program. The personal development committee

designs education (cultural events) and developmental programs (*How to apply for an internship*) for SAAB undergraduate chapters. The service learning division supports the chapter's endeavors in participating with college sponsored and community events. The spiritual and social committee develops activities for chapters to promote bonding, fellowship and collaboration between members and with faith-based organizations. The financial affairs committee is responsible for working with chapters to secure funding for events sponsored by the SAAB. Lastly, the public relations committee ensures chapters remain sustainable on their respective college campuses.

The national chapter promotes SAAB members to incorporate four core principles as internal locus of control components to increase their academic and social integration. SAAB members are expected to expand their intellectual development by taking advanced courses in their major discipline and attending seminars and events to increase their knowledge. Also, members are encouraged to engage in expanding their leadership skills by volunteering at college sponsored and community events. Likewise, the development of self-discipline is promoted by the SAAB as members' transition into adulthood. Additionally, accountability for one's actions is emphasized as a trait for all SAAB members to achieve during their matriculation in higher education to embrace the ideals of self responsibility. (SAAB national Web site – <http://www.saabnational.org>)

The Web site lists the states and colleges where chapters are located. Thirty-five of the undergraduate chapters have individual Web sites. The chapter chosen for the study has a Web site modeled after the national Web site, which discusses the chapter's history, organizational structure, and campus and community informational resources. The most remarkable items on both Web sites were the photographs of

SAAB members participating in various events that highlighted a structured three dimensional framework to increase the academic and social integration of the SAAB members. From the Web site, it was found that the framework dimensions consist of creating a supportive and nurturing environment, encouraging members to address their academic challenges and promoting involvement in college sponsored and community events.

## Case Study

### *Demographics*

The undergraduate SAAB members interviewed for the research had varied educational experiences with the following demographic profiles: 90% of the students attended a public high school with 40% of the students in the top 10% of their high school graduating class. Moreover, 95% of the students lived in an urban setting before attending college. Lastly, 70% of the students are considered first generational students. During the summer, 40% of the students attended a summer bridge program offered at the university, which is designed to help students make the transition from high school to college.

The opportunity to interview 10 former members who had graduated was helpful to gain insight about their perception of the SAAB. The participants interviewed graduated between 2001 and 2007. Currently, six graduates work in the Student Affairs Department at colleges and universities in the area where they live.

The findings indicated three themes that resonated throughout the interviews and observations. These themes were in alignment with the findings from the document

analysis.

### Theme 1 – Supportive Environment

The first theme that emerged from the data was the belief among the interviewed members that the SAAB was committed to creating a supportive environment for them to interact with one another. To create a supportive environment for members, the SAAB emphasizes the importance of a safe haven where members form a progressive, mutually satisfying relationship. This is accomplished by the SAAB reinforcement that members view the matriculation through the university as a journey they are experiencing together. The members are asked to listen to one another when challenges arise, attend events or programs where members are featured, and provide honest feedback to one another about issues impacting their college experience. This has created a tremendous bond of trust between the members. The members believe they are cared for by the other members in the SAAB, which results in a feeling of security; thereby, increasing their satisfaction with the organization as well as the university.

The SAAB has been effective in peer interaction and mentoring between members. They mention this to be the main reason they have been retained at the university. Peer interaction lends support for the men as they matriculate through higher education. The participants perceive they have a shoulder to cry on; one who understands what they are experiencing through this component. The challenge for the SAAB has been to recruit and retain faculty to serve as mentors to SAAB members. Of the students interviewed, only four have a faculty mentor. The number of undergraduate

participants who have a mentoring relationship with university staff members increased from 5% to 10% during the years 2004 to 2006. It was evident through the interviews that members would welcome the opportunity to be mentored by a professor. Because SAAB members have identified faculty mentoring to be limited, twelve students expressed an interest in becoming teachers so they can serve as mentors to African-American male students. The students want a male professor to serve as their mentors, but they are willing to be mentored by a female professor. The SAAB has developed a facilitation script that can be used to coach their members on how to approach faculty about being a mentor, and being able to accept the faculty's response. When asked why they believe it is difficult to get professors to serve as mentors, participants stated it may be due to the professor's workload and commitments to other priorities. One member, Tom shared: "I want a faculty member to mentor me. I asked one of my professors, but he said that he did not have the time because he was involved in two committees that took up most of his extra time."

In addition, the SAAB has a mentoring program that involves undergraduate and former chapter members who have graduated from college. Each undergraduate mentor has a graduate member mentor. The members meet monthly with their mentors to keep abreast of events that impact the undergraduate member's college life. The mentoring program partners with community organizations on a monthly basis to work on initiatives that increase the bond between the mentor and the SAAB member. Members have worked on Habitat for Humanity<sup>2</sup> projects and helped civic organizations sponsor voter registration drives to increase participation in the democratic process. Participants asserted the mentoring component of the program is

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<sup>2</sup> [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org)

exemplary. Mentoring was recognized as the most effective intervention in increasing the social integration of SAAB members. The members stated having a mentor is what keeps them grounded during tough times at college. Another member, Kevin said.

I have been a member of SAAB for three years. My mentor helps me focus on my purpose, and I feel I am better prepared to deal with more things because of the people I have met through SAAB. I will graduate in December 2008 and I know I am a better student and a better man because of SAAB. I will be going to graduate school to get a MBA.

James added, "The SAAB motto says it all: *I am my brother's keeper, and together we will rise*. I know my brothers have my back and I believe I have support while I am here in college. As a freshman, it's good to know I am not in this by myself."

As members entered the section of the library where the interviews was being conducted, they would greet each other with a hug or handshake, and ask questions about family members, tests they were scheduled to take or had already taken, or activities they would be attending. Although the conversations were brief, the members seemed to be aware of what was going on in each other's lives.

As participants came to the interview, the researcher observed that the participants interacted with other undergraduates of different races. This reflected a level of cordial interaction among these ethnic groups. As questions were asked about perceived discrimination on the campus, the participants did not cite any instances, and spoke about their ability to interact with all of the various cultures represented.

Former members of the SAAB stated they were more satisfied with their college experience because of the supportive environment. They viewed it as an outlet where

they could vent their frustrations about the hardships of college life to friends who understood what they were going through.

## Theme 2 – Commitment to Academic Achievement

The second theme identified was the SAAB's commitment to the academic achievement of the members. The SAAB serves as an alternative tutoring resource for men to improve their academic success. SAAB members are encouraged to discuss academic challenges they are experiencing so they can gain access to the SAAB internal tutoring program. Eight freshmen members receive tutoring from upperclassmen in English and mathematics. All freshmen SAAB members receive academic support through the program. In all cases, tutors are upperclassmen who have successfully passed the course with a grade of B or above.

The tutoring program is designed to assist members with homework assignments, study skills and test taking. SAAB members serve as tutors to each other, whereas, a member may be a tutor to one member and need tutoring from another SAAB member in another subject area. All of the participants stated the tutoring sessions were instrumental in their academic integration to college life. The national headquarters have materials and resources tutors must review before they serve in the capacity of tutor to another member. Freshmen are not allowed to be tutors because the SAAB believes these students should focus their attention on getting acclimated to the college environment during their first year. Interviews with sophomore members revealed the tutoring helped them earn better grades in English and mathematics during their freshmen year. In addition, this helped the sophomores take second level college

courses with greater confidence for success. Tutoring is available when both individuals can schedule a time to get together during the week or on the weekends. For interviewed members, sessions usually occur after the weekly Thursday meeting.

Joseph stated:

I have a 2.8 GPA because my SAAB brother was willing to go over my assignments with me for my classes. I did not like to go to the Math Lab because it seemed like no one had time for me. My SAAB brother and I were stumped on a few problems and he suggested that we go over and ask the Math tutor. We went at a time that it was not crowded, and I got the help I needed. Now I go over to the Math Lab more often, because my brother helped me to know the better times to go and receive help. This has helped me improve my Math grade for my mid-term.

The participants stated the SAAB encourages them to receive services from the university sponsored academic services center if intensive tutoring is needed. If it is determined the member needs more assistance than what the tutor is capable of providing, the tutor works with the SAAB member to identify the best university academic resource that can help the student. The SAAB national academic committee stresses the importance of having members to sit in the *T* location in the classroom to promote learning. The *T* location refers to seats located on the front row and middle column of the classroom. According to chapter data, of the 29 SAAB members, approximately 70% participate in the academic services offered by the university at least once per week. Furthermore, 12 SAAB members have taken or are currently enrolled in developmental courses to improve their test taking skills.



In the past three years, 60% of the members have taken remedial courses during their freshman year. Upperclassmen participants stated the SAAB academic intervention program has increased their confidence to ask for assistance in academic matters. To address this challenge, the SAAB incorporates time during their weekly sessions to discuss academic challenges faced by members so problem solving techniques can be determined that may be beneficial to all members. Likewise, the SAAB wants members to feel comfortable with asking for help when they need it. This program helped members learn how to take better notes in class, study, complete major assignments timely, interact more in class and perform better on tests. Some of the members commented on their need for help. Edward said, "The SAAB has helped me to know that it is okay for me to ask for help when I need it for my homework assignments. In the past, I have felt embarrassed to ask, but now I understand that if I don't ask for help, I won't get it because no one will know that I need it."

James, in particular, talked about a mentor. "I like to go over my presentations with someone before I do one. When I do this with my mentor, I get better ideas on how to present my materials better."

Graduates interviewed stated that SAAB helped them to locate resources where they could get academic assistance when they needed it. Although it was self-reported, the men stated they graduated with an average GPA range of 2.75-3.25.

### Theme 3 – Promotion of Campus Involvement

The third theme focused on the SAAB's belief that a critical component to the members' social integration is their involvement in campus and community activities.

The spiritual and social committee supports the chapter's participation, at a minimum, of one school and community event monthly. In addition, the SAAB offers a weekly meeting session that promotes information sharing among SAAB members. The weekly meetings are intended for SAAB members to interact with one another and use the time to learn about university programs, activities, and events occurring on campus as well as in the community that will benefit the student's academic and social integration. William stated, "The weekly meetings help me stay in touch with what is going on around here. I can come and find out about resources that will help me with my education. Also, the tutoring helps me because I wasn't good in math during high school, but my SAAB brother helps me out all the time.

During each weekly meeting, a topic is presented that focuses on strategies to adapt to college life. A speaker is invited to discuss aspects of college life such as, navigating the financial aid process and how to use your time wisely to pass your classes. Also, presentations are given on developing effective study skills, test taking strategies and goal setting for personal and professional success. The agenda for a meeting can be found in Appendix J. With 80% of SAAB members taking between 12 to 18 hours per semester, this information is helpful because it keeps the students linked into the campus environment. One member, George said,

With this being my first year at this college, I did not know where I could get help for anything. At my first SAAB meeting, I knew this is where I needed to be so I could get help from people who wanted me to succeed. I now know where to get my questions answered about my financial aid, help with my classes, and learn

about events happening at the college that will help me

Each undergraduate student interviewed mentioned this resource with positive feedback. The chapter president and the SAAB advisor diligently keep current of events so members can remain well informed of campus events, new courses, regulations impacting enrollment and deadlines for registrations, etc. The findings indicated this information resource increases the satisfaction of the men's college life tremendously. Dale commented on the benefits of these meetings: "I am so uplifted when I come to the SAA meeting. I get a chance to talk about what is happening with me at the school, and other brothers can tell me if they have experienced the same thing, that way we can talk about what I should do so that the situation will improve for me."

Joseph saw other benefits stating, "During the meetings, the SAAB advisor is great at reminding us of all the academic support centers available. The times and days they are open and when they will be closed is mentioned. A lot of brothers stay after the meeting and we help each other with our assignments and projects."

All of the graduates interviewed believed that the meeting activity was the most beneficial to them. The weekly meetings helped them to remain focused on their goal in attending college. Also, they mentioned the inspirational speakers who came to give them encouragement during the sessions. Nine of the ten graduates indicated they have continued to work with SAAB serving as an inspirational speaker during the weekly meetings.

Furthermore, to assist with the promotion of cultural diversity, the SAAB headquarters mandates that university chapters participate in university sponsored

activities monthly to increase opportunities for members to interact with other student organizations. The SAAB encourages their members to co-sponsor events with other student leaders and organizations. The SAAB partners with other student organizations by creating and distributing flyers for programs, locating and reserving space for events, securing a speaker, and serving as representatives during the events. Since the interactions between various student groups support cultural diversity on Predominantly White Institution (PWI) campuses, it also enhances positive interracial activities. This appears to be an excellent setting where perceptions of disparate treatment for the members can be diminished and cultural sensitivity by all groups is encouraged.

The SAAB receives many complimentary letters from student organizations thanking them for their support and assistance. Likewise, the SAAB reciprocates by asking student organizations to assist them with their chapter functions. Seven of the SAAB members are members of other student organizations and four of the seven members have leadership roles with other student organizations. Derek shared the following:

Last spring, we helped another student organization with a Habitat for Humanity project. We helped to build a home for an older couple. It was great. It was about 30 people working on the house over the weekend. I met people from the community, neighborhood, and students on campus. I even met a guy who took a class with me. We both have the same major. We talked and I found out he was part of a study group. He invited me to come and now I am part of the study group. I am A-cing my major classes now.

Jerry added, "I was in SAAB first, but last year I joined another organization. I am the Vice-President of the organization and I am involved in planning an event that both groups are co-sponsoring."

The SAAB developed a mentoring program for 45 African-American males in high school and 15 junior high African-American male students in the local area. The chapter has a memorandum of understanding with two high schools and one junior high school. The undergraduates spend four hours per month on each campus where they meet one-on-one with the students to discuss their academic progress, social activities' involvement and personal concerns. In addition, the chapter sponsors one annual event for the students being mentored. School administrators have been impressed with the success of the program and are eager to continue the partnership. According to the SAAB President, ten high school seniors graduating in spring 2008 are submitting the required documents to attend college in the fall of 2008. The high school seniors indicated their involvement with the SAAB encouraged them to attend college after graduation. During the spring 2007 semester, the SAAB and their mentees collaborated together to sponsor a luncheon for African-American males in the eighth grade, to educate them on what to expect in the high school setting. The students are satisfied with the mentoring received by SAAB members as evidenced by their satisfaction surveys.

To gain a better point of view of what programs and activities offered by the SAAB were most helpful in working toward their undergraduate degree, the researcher asked the participants to talk about the various programs and activities by discussing what was enjoyed the most and how it impacted their college experience. The

participants identified the following programs and activities:

Table 1

*SAAB Programs and Activities*

Activity or Program	Academic or Social Integration	Number of Responses
Peer Interaction and Mentoring	Social Integration	20
Internal tutoring program	Academic Integration	19
Information Resources	Academic/Social Integration	18
Partnerships with Campus Student Organizations	Social Integration	17
Church Services	Social Integration	15
Monthly Community Services	Social Integration	13
African-American Male Summit	Academic/Social Integration	10
Faculty Mentoring	Academic/Social Integration	4

The number of responses revealed that SAAB members perceive peer interaction and mentoring to be the primary activity that helps them to persist in college. The members believe this one activity strengthens how they respond to academic challenges and increases their understanding of what it takes to get through college.

The researcher, during an observational period, heard participants discussing an event that would be sponsored off campus with another student organization. The students were creating check-lists to ensure they would not forget items for the event. They were teasing one another and being helpful as they reminded each other of important aspects of event planning.

## Conclusion

The SAAB goal is to increase the number of members who graduate with an undergraduate degree through their academic and social integration interventions. The national graduation rates for the program are 86%. The chapter's graduation rates for the past seven years have been above 80% (Appendix K). The themes identified through the document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and observations illustrate that the SAAB is a program that fosters a supportive environment, advances academic achievement, and promotes campus and community involvement. The SAAB is consistent with its stated goals by (1) developing a supportive environment where the student's satisfaction with their college experience is increased by the mentoring programs and weekly sessions, (2) incorporating a learning community which emphasizes the academic achievements of the members, as well as confronts the academic challenges faced by the members by using the member's academic strengths to help one another, and (3) promoting the ideals of student involvement by financially supporting the chapter to engage in college sponsored and community activities and events. Thereby, the organization helps the African-American male student develop a better understanding of the academic and social components needed to be successful in higher education. This study concludes all three components must be part of the intervention strategy for educational success.

Research continues to validate the importance of a supportive environment, academic commitment and involvement in college sponsored and community events being the building blocks of educational success for African-American males in higher education. The SAAB has taken an interdependent approach of each process by balancing each component to address the academic and social integration for this

population. As a result, the SAAB's graduation rate for members (86%) is higher than the national graduation rate for African-American males approximately 40% in higher education (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Replication of this framework can be used by colleges and universities as a retention strategy for African-American male students to improve the academic and social integration of African-American males so their potential to graduate with an undergraduate degree is realized.



## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

One ever feels his two-ness, - an American, A Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, this longing to attain self conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging, he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of White Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face.

*W.E. B. Du Bois*

American higher education has evolved significantly since the early 1900s. Once higher education was viewed as a privilege for the elite, but in 2008 it has emerged as a necessity for work competitiveness. The nation's social and economic health depends on the ability of its colleges and universities to educate Americans to a higher standard than before. The retention of students in higher education is critical in ensuring the country can compete in the growing global market.

As Anderson (1985) suggested, improving the college experience for students is a primary goal to achieving retention and student success. This study was conducted to explore this goal primarily for African-American male students matriculating in higher education settings. An organization designed to improve retention and student success, the SAAB, provided the setting for an in-depth look at a particular population of African-American male students. The themes emerging from the research of the SAAB's vision

of creating a supportive environment, encouraging academic excellence, and promoting campus and community involvement reflects the organization's commitment to improve the educational success of Black males in higher education.

The commitment to creating a supportive environment helps African-American males deal with the demands of college life. It functions to benefit the psychosocial needs (role modeling, counseling, and friendship) of the members. Moreover, the SAAB's internal tutoring program instills accountability and self-discipline in members as they excel academically in their college work. Lastly, the member's involvement in events and community initiatives helps them to feel they are contributing to the college's success, and expanding their knowledge in campus leadership because of their participation in the extra-curricular activities.

Undergraduate and former members feel indebted to the SAAB because of the impact it has had on their lives. The undergraduates stated they believe they are succeeding in their college experience, and are confident they will graduate with undergraduate degrees. Also, all participants plan to continue to remain involved in the SAAB after they graduate to help other African-American males integrate successfully in institutions of higher education. The SAAB has incorporated many of the recommendations identified by Bean and Bennett which has helped them to gain a better appreciation of how the college experience affects students positively.

Four statements are warranted, given the findings of the study of the SAAB program and its impact on members:

First, as colleges and universities design retention programs specifically for African-American males, it is crucial to review existing theoretical models that can serve

as the foundation of intervention strategies that benefit the intellectual and psycho-social needs of the students. Using the Conceptual Model of Black Student Attrition allowed the researcher to use their findings and recommendations as a road map to discovering the characteristics, programs and activities SAAB utilizes to increase the academic and social integration of members. The model gave direction to the research so observations and interview statements could be categorized and coded easily. It brought straight-forwardness to the process that would not have been applicable, if the model had not been applied. It was uncomplicated to determine where the SAAB's interventions fit into the model, and recognize Bean and Bennett's recommendations that were not being addressed by SAAB. SAAB's interventions and strategies reflect Bean and Bennett's Conceptual Model of Black Student Attrition with the exception of the fact that the has not conducted research to determine effective teaching methods to instruct African-American males in higher educational settings. Using this structure, a basic level of assessment or evaluation can be conducted with minimal effort and resources to ensure further inquiry.

Second, throughout the study, it was evident to the researcher the SAAB is committed to preparing African-American male students for educational success, through academic and social integration, to persist through graduation. Since 1990, the organization has grown and through the volunteerism of its members, the SAAB has accomplished creditable success. The organization has expanded its efforts to include Hispanic males and African-American females. To progress with great strides, the SAAB should appraise its current composition to clarify the best steps in developing operational guides and data collection tools for reporting requirements for

undergraduate chapters. SAAB will be able to ascertain information consistently from the undergraduate chapters so strategic planning can ensure efficient operations and project development can occur.

Third, the research concluded that faculty-student interaction is lacking for African-American males. This finding adds to the body of literature which supports the engagement of faculty and students in and out of the classroom setting. The question must be raised that if this relationship is so vital in the persistence of all students, especially African-American males, why is this topic not moving to the forefront of discussion for educational stakeholders? An honest, clear, and focused conversation may be the avenue needed to analyze approaches to address this matter with for tactical execution by college and university leaders.

Lastly, the research also added to the body of literature that supports other researcher's findings that providing a supporting environment providing a supportive environment, and promoting involvement in college and community settings should be considered essential components of retention programming for African-American males. When members talked about the unconditional support they received from the SAAB, they seemed to become energized and wanted to give example after example of how much this was appreciated and needed. Their college experience was valued more because of the supportive environment SAAB created for them. Likewise, the opportunity to be involved in college and community events helped the members develop leadership skills which are instrumental in promoting cultural diversity and sensitivity on diverse campuses. This is a finding that can not be cited enough as it relates to the persistence of African-American males enrolled on campuses throughout

the country.

### Recommendations for Future Research

The participants in the study provided important insights regarding the SAAB program. The students' perceptions are exciting topics for future research. The data gave information, not only about the impact of the SAAB's intervention strategies, but also how it left a lasting impression on their lives as they become adults.

With additional resources and time, this study can be replicated with other SAAB chapters. This will allow research to be conducted to conclude how chapters compare and contrast with each other. Also, studies can be done to evaluate how the SAAB's characteristics and intervention strategies are in alignment with other theoretical models, such as Tinto's Academic and Social Integration and Astin's Theory of Involvement. One activity that was emphasized during the interviews that may deserve further investigation is the importance of spirituality and faith to a student's academic and social integration while attending college. Many of the respondents (undergraduates and graduates) stated their faith in God's helped them to persevere through difficult times while in college. Additional studies needed are investigations to address and learn more about the various learning styles of minorities, especially African-American males, so curriculum and methods of teaching can be designed to further the education of these students.

With so many topics surrounding the plight of African-American males being negative, it is important that researchers study programs that show to have a positive impact on African-American males in higher education. The SAAB is a program that has succeeded in implementing a program designed for this purpose. This study revealed that African-American males are interested in succeeding in higher education and welcome an opportunity to begin a dialogue that is destined to increase the awareness of educational stakeholders about retaining them in colleges and universities. The SAAB began the conversation in 1990, and continues to confront one of the most complex and compelling issues facing higher educational institution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

APPENDIX A


PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH SAAB CHAPTERS

# Student African American Brotherhood



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Princess D. Jackson  
Doctoral Student  
University of North Texas

**FROM:** Dr. Tyrone Bledsoe   
Founder-Executive Director  
SAAB National Headquarters

**RE:** Permission to Conduct Research with SAAB Chapters

**DATE:** June 1, 2007

Per this correspondence, you are authorized to work with the SAAB chapters and members/advisors therein as we have discussed for your research project. On behalf of the SAAB organization, I am extremely pleased about your research and the involvement of our chapters.

Please let me know if there is anything else you need from my office to support your doctoral research project. I look forward to receiving a final draft of your study.

Thanks so much for your continued interest in the SAAB organization and best wishes!

tb

P.O. Box 350842  
Toledo, Ohio 43635  
(419) 530-3221 (Office)  
(419) 530-3223 (Fax)  
[www.2cusaab.org](http://www.2cusaab.org)



APPENDIX B  
TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What situations inspired you to establish the Student African-American Brotherhood (SAAB)?
2. What is the mission and purpose of the SAAB program?
3. Describe the collaborative efforts between high schools and the SAAB?
4. How does the SAAB program work with the institution?
5. How does the SAAB recruit African-American males into the program?
6. Identify, describe and discuss the academic support programs offered through the SAAB program.
7. How do the activities and events offered by SAAB support the following constructs for academic preparedness? (a) Critical thinking skills; (b) Technology ability; (c) Study Skills; (d) Learning skills; (e) Time Management; and, (f) academic related extra-curricular activities.
8. Identify, describe and discuss the social support programs offered through the SAAB program.
9. How do the activities and events offered by SAAB support the social integration of its members in the following areas: (a) Communication Skills, (b) Social coping skills.
10. What activities are sponsored by the SAAB to promote positive interracial contact for its members?
11. How does the organization assess the development of members?
12. How does the SAAB identify members who are progressing and not progressing well in college?
13. What actions does SAAB initiate if a member leaves the organization?
14. Describe a typical meeting of SAAB.
15. Does the organization conduct external and internal evaluations? If so, what agency carries out the evaluations and how often?
16. Identify, describe and discuss the SAAB collaborations with other student organizations to improve the academic and social integration of its' members.
17. Identify, describe and discuss the SAAB collaborations with other student organizations to foster cultural diversity.

18. Identify, describe and discuss SAAB projects and research that focus on identifying effective teaching styles for African-American males.

Interview questions - AFRICAN-AMERICAN male students

1. Tell me how your semester is going?
2. Is this the only college you have attended since graduating from high school?
3. Tell me about your educational goals.
4. Describe your occupational goals.
5. What is your major?
6. What is your current GPA?
7. What was your high school GPA or class rank at graduation?
8. Do you feel you were prepared academically to attend college? If so, why - If not, why not?
9. Do you feel you were prepared socially to attend college? How were you prepared? If not, why?
10. How many minority staff/teachers do you interact with at your college?
11. How have the interactions you have had with faculty influenced you to persist in this project and what did you gain from this experience?
12. How did you get involved in the SAAB program? What does this program offer to you?
13. How often do you attend the meetings?
14. What SAAB activities are you involved with? Which activities/programs/events help you with your academic pursuits, as well as increase your satisfaction with the university?
15. What has served as a barrier to your persistence at this university?
16. How has SAAB assisted you in staying in college?
17. Do you have anything you want to add in order to help me understand your experiences in being a member of the SAAB organization?

## Graduates

1. What was your classification when you became a SAAB member?
2. What activities offered by SAAB were most helpful to you in persisting with your undergraduate degree?
3. When did you graduate? What was your major field of study?
4. Are you still involved with the SAAB program? How are you involved? What do you think keeps you connected?
5. How did your involvement with the SAAB organization enrich your educational experiences? Academic preparedness, satisfaction with the university, and positive interracial contact with faculty and peers.

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD INFORMED CONSENT FORM

UNT<sup>TM</sup>  
UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTH TEXAS  
DISCOVER THE POWER OF IDEAS

RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER  
Office of Research Services

September 5, 2007

Princess Jackson  
Department of Counseling, Development and Higher Education  
University of North Texas

Re: Human Subjects Application No. 07-310

Dear Ms. Jackson:

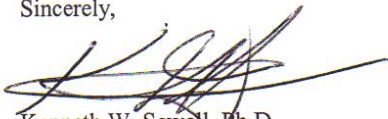
As permitted by federal law and regulations governing the use of human subjects in research projects (45 CFR 46), the UNT Institutional Review Board has reviewed your proposed project titled "A Program Committed to the Persistence of African-American Males in Higher Education." The risks inherent in this research are minimal, and the potential benefits to the subject outweigh those risks. The submitted protocol and consent form are hereby approved for the use of human subjects in this study. **Federal Policy 45 CFR 46.109(e) stipulates that IRB approval is for one year only, September 5, 2007 to September 4, 2008.**

Enclosed is the consent document with stamped IRB approval. Please copy and **use this form only** for your study subjects.

It is your responsibility according to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulations to submit annual and terminal progress reports to the IRB for this project. Please mark your calendar accordingly. The IRB must also review this project prior to any modifications.

Please contact Shelia Bourns, Research Compliance Administrator, or Boyd Herndon, Director of Research Compliance, at extension 3940, if you wish to make changes or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Kenneth W. Sewell, Ph.D.  
Chair  
Institutional Review Board

## University of North Texas Institutional Review Board

### Informed Consent Form

Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose and benefits of the study and how it will be conducted.

**Title of Study:** A Program Committed to the Persistence of African-American Males in Higher Education

**Principal Investigator:** Princess D. Jackson, a graduate student in the University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Higher Education Administration.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of the study is to describe and explore the Student African-American Brotherhood program's design, components and characteristics. With the continued low graduation rates of African-American males from four year colleges and universities, there is a need to identify exemplary programs to serve as models so other colleges and universities can glean valuable strategies in retaining this population in higher education settings.

**Study Procedures:** You will be asked to participate in an audio-taped interview that will take approximately 1 hour of your time.

**Foreseeable Risks:** There are no foreseeable risks involved in this study.

**Benefits to the Subjects or Others:** There are no direct benefits; however, this study will benefit the field of higher education by examining an intervention strategy used to assist African-American males in graduating from institutions of higher learning. Ultimately, the refinement of practice and dissemination of practice strategies to improve the retention and completion rates of African-American male undergraduates is the goal for the study.

**Compensation for Participants:** All student participants will be paid \$10.00 for their time.

**Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records:** The information gathered will be strictly confidential. No identifying information will be on material submitted for the requirements for this degree. The audio-tapes will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them; these will be heard or viewed only for research purposes by the investigator, and will be erased after they are transcribed or coded and the research is completed. Transcripts will not contain identities on participants. Consent forms with names of participants, audiotapes and transcripts will be kept in a file cabinet of which only the researcher has the key. If in the unlikely event it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review the research records, then the University of North Texas will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. The research records will not be released without the participant's consent unless required by law or a court order.



**Questions about the Study:** If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Princess D. Jackson at telephone number (817) 275-8117 or the faculty advisor, Dr. Ronald Newsom, UNT Department of Counseling, Higher Education Administration and Early Childhood Education, at telephone number (940)565-2722.

**Review for the Protection of Participants:** This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at (940) 565-3940 with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

**Research Participants' Rights:** Your signature below indicates that you have read or have had read to you all of the above and that you confirm all of the following:

- Princess D. Jackson has explained the study to you and answered all of your questions. You have been told the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study.
- You understand that you do not have to take part in this study, and your refusal to participate or your decision to withdraw will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your participation at any time.
- You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.
- You understand your rights as a research participant and you voluntarily consent to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.
- You have been told you will receive a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**For the Principal Investigator or Designee:** I certify that I have reviewed the contents of this form with the participant signing above. I have explained the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study. It is my opinion that the participant understood the explanation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Principal Investigator or Designee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPROVED BY THE UNT IRB  
FROM 9/5/07 TO 9/4/08  
[Signature]

2 of 2

APPENDIX D

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL LETTER



OFFICE OF RESEARCH SUPPORT & COMPLIANCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

P.O. Box 7426, Austin, Texas 78713 (512) 471-8871 - FAX (512) 471-8873  
North Office Building A, Suite 5.200 (Mail code A3200)

FWA # 00002030

Date: 09/20/07

PI(s): Princess D Jackson

Department & Mail Code:

Dear: Princess D Jackson

IRB APPROVAL - IRB Protocol # 2007-05-0039

Title: **A Program Committed to the Persistence of African-American Males in Higher Education**

In accordance with Federal Regulations for review of research protocols, the Institutional Review Board has reviewed the above referenced protocol and found that it met approval under an Expedited category for the following period of time: 09/20/2007 - 09/18/2008

Expedited category of approval:

\_\_\_(1) Clinical studies of drugs and medical devices only when condition (a) or (b) is met. (a) Research on drugs for which an investigational new drug application (21 CFR Part 312) is not required. (Note: Research on marketed drugs that significantly increases the risks or decreases the acceptability of the risks associated with the use of the product is not eligible for expedited review). (b) Research on medical devices for which (i) an investigational device exemption application (21 CFR Part 812) is not required; or (ii) the medical device is cleared/approved for marketing and the medical device is being used in accordance with its cleared/approved labeling.

\_\_\_(2) Collection of blood samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick, or venipuncture as follows: (a) from healthy, non-pregnant adults who weigh at least 110 pounds. For these subjects, the amounts drawn may not exceed 550 ml in an 8 week period and collection may not occur more frequently than 2 times per week; or (b) from other adults and children, considering the age, weight, and health of the subjects, the collection procedure, the amount of blood to be collected, and the frequency with which it will be collected. For these subjects, the amount drawn may not exceed the lesser of 50 ml or 3 ml per kg in an 8 week period and collection may not occur more frequently than 2 times per week.

\_\_\_(3) Prospective collection of biological specimens for research purposes by Non-invasive means.

Examples:

- (a) hair and nail clippings in a non-disfiguring manner;
- (b) deciduous teeth at time of exfoliation or if routine patient care indicates a need for extraction;
- (c) permanent teeth if routine patient care indicates a need for extraction;
- (d) excreta and external secretions (including sweat);
- (e) uncannulated saliva collected either in an un-stimulated fashion or stimulated by chewing gumbase or wax or by applying a dilute citric solution to the tongue;
- (f) placenta removed at delivery;
- (g) amniotic fluid obtained at the time of rupture of the membrane prior to or during labor;
- (h) supra- and subgingival dental plaque and calculus, provided the collection procedure is not more invasive than routine prophylactic scaling of the teeth and the Process is accomplished in accordance with accepted prophylactic techniques;
- (i) mucosal and skin cells collected by buccal scraping or swab, skin swab, or mouth washings;
- (j) sputum collected after saline mist nebulization.

\_\_\_ This study is not FDA regulated (45 CFR 46.117)

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR FOR ONGOING PROTOCOLS:**

- (1) Report **immediately** to the IRB any unanticipated problems.
- (2) Proposed changes in approved research during the period for which IRB approval cannot be initiated without IRB review and approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the participant. Changes in approved research initiated without IRB review and approval initiated to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the participant must be promptly reported to the IRB, and reviewed under the unanticipated problems policy to determine whether the change was consistent with ensuring the participants continued welfare.
- (3) Report any significant findings that become known in the course of the research that might affect the willingness of subjects to continue to take part.
- (4) Insure that only persons formally approved by the IRB enroll subjects.
- (5) Use **only** a currently approved consent form (remember approval periods are for 12 months or less).
- (6) **Protect the confidentiality of all persons and personally identifiable data, and train your staff and collaborators on policies and procedures for ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of participants and information.**
- (7) Submit for review and approval by the IRB all modifications to the protocol or consent form(s) prior to the implementation of the change.
- (8) Submit a **Continuing Review Report** for continuing review by the IRB. Federal regulations require **IRB review of on-going projects no less than once a year** (a Continuing Review Report form and a reminder letter will be sent to you 2 months before your expiration date). Please note however, that if you do not receive a reminder from this office about your upcoming continuing review, it is the primary responsibility of the PI not to exceed the expiration date in collection of any information. Finally, it is the responsibility of the PI to submit the Continuing Review Report before the expiration period.
- (9) Notify the IRB when the study has been completed and complete the Final Report Form.
- (10) Please help us help you by including the above protocol number on all future correspondence relating to this protocol.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Sincerely,



Jody Jensen, Ph.D., IRB Chair

Protocol # Approval dates: - 2007-05-0039

09/20/2007

09/18/2008

APPENDIX E

TELEPHONE OVERVIEW – STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a doctoral student in Higher Education Administration. I am conducting research highlighting the Student African-American Brotherhood (SAAB) initiative at the University of Texas-Austin. This research will be helpful to colleges and universities because the information could be utilized to develop programs to support these African-American males in their pursuit to graduate from four year institutions of higher learning.

I am requesting your participation in this study. I would like to have a face-to-face interview with you at your convenience. I anticipate the interview will be one hour in length. In addition, I will submit a copy of the interview transcript to ensure accuracy of the document.

Your name and institutional affiliation will be kept confidential. Participation is voluntary and you may decline or withdraw your consent at any time. If you agree to participate, I will need to schedule a time for the interview. The interview will be confirmed 24 hours in advance. You will be given \$10.00 for your participation in this study. Do you have any questions? Are you willing to participate?

APPENDIX F  
INITIAL LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Date:

Addressee:

Dear:

I am an African-American doctoral student in the Department of Higher Education at the University of North Texas, Denton, Texas who is conducting research to highlight the SAAB program initiative at your institution.

My research is designed to interview the SAAB Program Advisor, students who participate in the SAAB, and graduates of the SAAB program to increase my understanding of the program's objectives, characteristics and outcomes. I have developed a set of questions to ask you about your interaction and experiences with the college and SAAB program. I will be at your campus on \_\_\_\_\_, and I am willing to conduct the interviews with you at your convenience. I have made arrangements to conduct the interviews (list the following areas, or offices).

If you want to contact me directly regarding your participation or non-participation, you can reach me by completing the enclosed form and returning it to me in the self-addressed envelope or calling my phone number XXX-XXX-XXXX, to discuss your availability.

Thank you in advance and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



APPENDIX G

CONFIRMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Date

Name

Address

City, State Zip code

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. The information you share with me will help me to understand the Student African-American Brotherhood program's role in helping African-American males persist until baccalaureate degree completion.

One face-to-face interview will be conducted lasting approximately one hour. The interview will be tape recorded. In addition, I will take notes during the interview. The interview questions will focus on the persistence of African-American males attending four year predominantly White institutions. Before the interview begins, I will ask you to sign the consent form. A copy of it has been enclosed for you to read prior to the interview and I will have another copy for you to sign on the day of the interview. The consent form includes specific details about the study and the level of your participation.

Your interview is scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_. Once the interview is complete, the tape recording will be transcribed. A telephone interview may follow to clarify any data from the interview. You will be mailed a copy of your transcribed interview for your review and signature that the information is accurate. To protect your identity and the identity of the university, your name will not be used. The data collected for this study will be kept in a secure and confidential place.

Your time and assistance in participating in this interview is greatly appreciated. I look forward to the interview. Thank you again for your participation. Should you have questions about the study prior to the interview or your role as a participant, please contact me at \_\_\_\_\_ or my major professor, \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX H  
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Study: A Program Committed to the Persistence of African-American Males in Higher Education

Project Director:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Doctoral Student  
Department of Higher Education Administration  
University of North Texas  
Phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

In partial fulfillment of dissertation under the supervision of  
\_\_\_\_\_, Professor  
Department of Higher Education Administration  
University of North Texas  
Phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

Purpose of this Research Study:

The purpose of this study is to describe and explore the SAAB program's theoretical design, components and characteristics. With the continued low graduation rates of African-American males from four-year colleges and universities, there is a need to identify exemplary programs to serve as models so other colleges and universities can glean valuable strategies in retaining this population in institutions of higher education.

Procedures for this Research Study:

Participants will be interviewed and interviews will be audio taped. The interview will last approximately 1 hour and will be tape-recorded and transcribed. In order to clarify interview data, follow-up communication may be conducted by telephone, and a copy of the transcript will be mailed to the participant for review.

Potential risks or discomforts:

There is no potential physical or mental risk. Participation is limited to exchanging information through interviews.

Costs:

There will not be any cost to you for participation in this study. All student participants will be paid 10.00 for their time.

Alternative Procedures:

There are no alternative procedures. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw consent and terminate participation at any time without consequence.

### Protection of Confidentiality:

The information gathered will be strictly confidential. No identifying information will be on material submitted for the requirements of this degree. Transcripts will not contain identities of participants. Consent forms with names of participants, audiotapes and transcripts will be kept in a file cabinet of which only the researcher has the key. Consent forms, audio tapes and transcripts will be destroyed after research is completed. Confidentiality is protected only to the extent allowed by law.

### Signatures and Consent to Participate:

Federal and University of North Texas guidelines require signed consent for the conduct of research and for participation in research projects, which involve human subjects. After this study's purpose, procedures, potential risks/discomforts, and benefits have been explained to you, please indicate your consent by reading and signing the statement below.

I have been fully informed of the above described procedure with its possible benefits and risks, and I have given my permission to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant  
(print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Project Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Project Director  
(print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact \_\_\_\_\_.

APPENDIX I  
CODING AND ANALYSIS

Research Question 1: What are the characteristics of SAAB?			
Bean/Bennett's Findings	Bean/Bennett's Recommendations	Underlying Factors	The SAAB Characteristics
Academic Preparedness	High School Preparation	High School Preparation	SAAB encourages members to access college supported academic resources and services. Also, internal academic support is available, and academic challenges and successes are discussed during weekly meetings.
	Alternative Teaching Styles for African-American males	Reading Proficiency	
		Engagement in Developmental/Remedial Courses	
Satisfaction	Cultural Diversity	Faculty/Student Interaction	Supportive Environment ( peer mentoring)
	Mentoring		Encourage Involvement (co-sponsoring events with student-sponsored and community organizations)
Less Trauma	Positive Interracial Contact	Perception of Discrimination	Weekly informational meetings
			Encourage Involvement (co-sponsoring events with student-sponsored and community organizations)

Research Question 2: What programs and activities are offered by the SAAB to African-American males to increase their potential to graduate?			
Bean/Bennett's Findings	Bean/Bennett's Recommendations	Underlying Factors	The SAAB Characteristics
Academic Preparedness	High School Preparation	High School Preparation	Internal Tutoring Program
	Alternative Teaching Styles for African-American males	Reading Proficiency	Weekly information meetings
		Engagement in Development/Remedial Courses	Annual African-American male conferences
Satisfaction	Cultural Diversity	Faculty/Student Interaction	Peer Mentoring
			Weekly information meetings
			Church Services
			Annual African-American male conferences
	Mentoring		Participation in community events
Less Trauma	Positive Interracial Contact	Perception of Discrimination	Partnerships with student organizations
			Collaboration in community events



Research Question 3: To what extent is the structure of the SAAB program congruent with Bean/Bennett's Conceptual Model of Attrition for Black students?		
Bean/Bennett's Findings	Bean/Bennett's Recommendations	SAAB Output
Academic Preparedness	High School Preparation	1. SAAB collaborates with high schools to mentor African-American males to promote college-readiness.
	Alternative Teaching Styles for African-American males	2. SAAB encourages members to access academic resources and services offered by the college.
		3. SAAB offers an internal tutoring program to assist students with assignments, homework, and projects to assist with their academic preparedness.
Satisfaction	Cultural Diversity	4. SAAB encourages members to participate and partner with student organizations in college sponsored events and community projects.
	Mentoring	
Less Trauma	Positive Interracial Contact	5. SAAB promotes members to be involved in student organizations (other than SAAB) to increase interactions with students/staff/faculty of other races and ethnicities.

APPENDIX J

STUDENT AFRICAN-AMERICAN BROTHERHOOD AGENDA

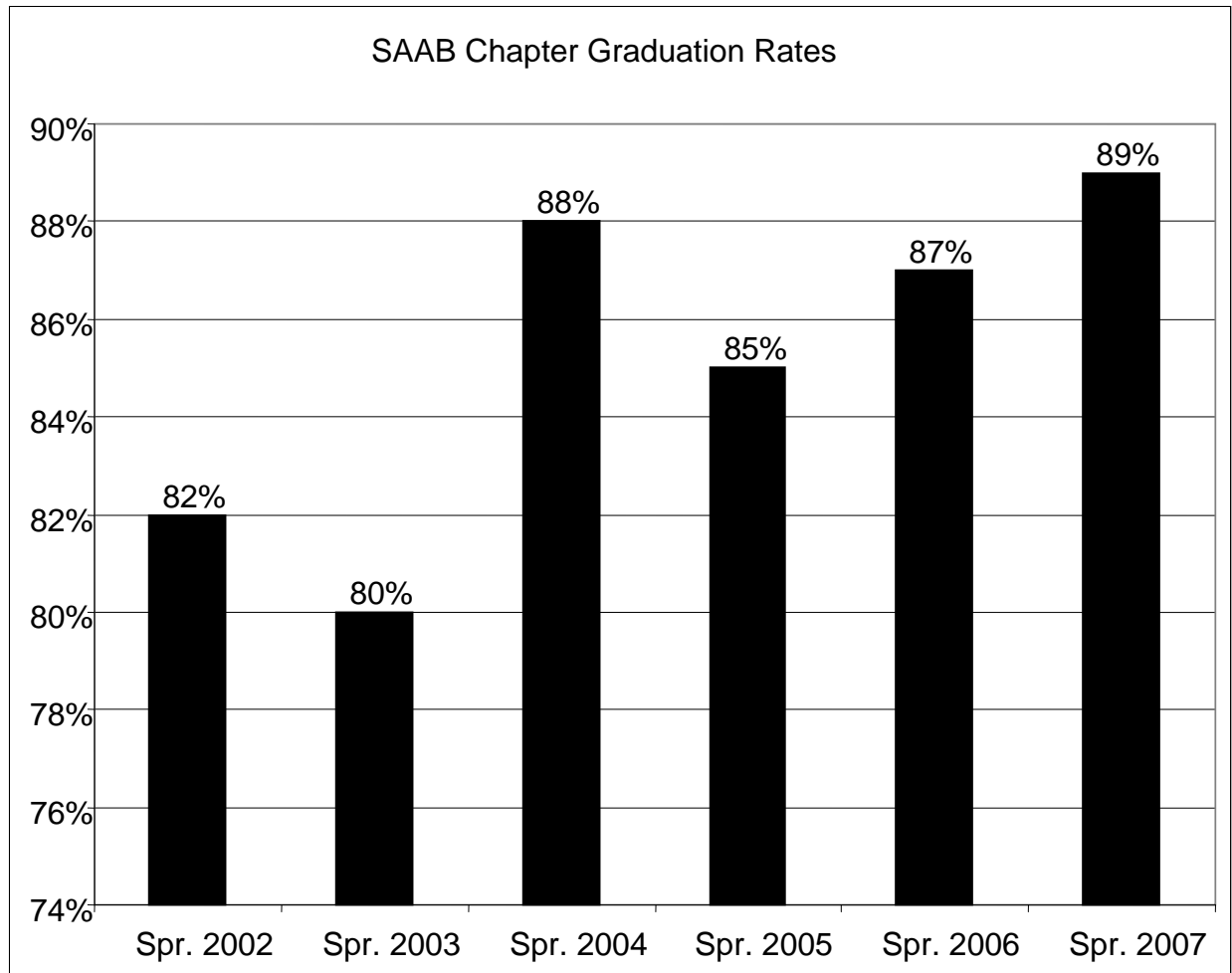
## Student African-American Brotherhood

7:30 a.m.

### Agenda

- I. Welcome/Opening Remarks
- II. Invocation
- III. Mission Statement (Recite in Unison)
- IV. Black National Anthem
- V. Introduction of Guest/New SAAB Members
- VI. Announcements
  - a. Executive Board Retreat
  - b. Big Brothers Mentors Meeting
- VII. Upcoming Events
- VIII. Teachable Moment
- IX. Reflections and Closing Remarks

APPENDIX K  
SAAB CHAPTER GRADUATION RATES



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