



Voices of Men of Color at Grossmont College

| Frank Harris III | San Diego State University | Community College Equity Assessment Lab |

Project Goals

- Create a Safe Space for Men of Color:** Establish a supportive environment where men of color can openly share their experiences at Grossmont College. Explore their perspectives on what the college can do to enhance their sense of belonging and academic success.
- Analyze Trends and Local Context:** Compare national and state-wide trends affecting men of color in higher education with the specific experiences and outcomes observed at Grossmont College.
- Develop Strategies for Institutional Support:** Formulate strategies to strengthen the college's capacity to support men of color equitably, ensuring that institutional policies and practices promote their success.
- Enhance Teaching and Learning for Men of Color:** Identify and implement ways to assist faculty in creating teaching and learning experiences that are responsive to the unique needs of men of color.
- Enhance Student Services for Men of Color:** Explore strategies to support classified professionals, counseling faculty, and other educators in delivering equitable support to men of color, ensuring they have the resources and training needed to effectively serve this student group.

Men of Color in Community Colleges



Why Focus on Men of Color?

- Community colleges serve as the primary pathway to postsecondary education for men of color, yet men of color do not experience the same success as their peers.
- Following the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment declines for Native American and Black men were 26% and 24%, respectively, compared to 13% for all community college students.
- 3-year completion rates for men of color in the 2017 entering cohort were: 22.8% for Black, 28.6% for Latino, 29.1% for Native American, and 27.5% for Pacific Islander men.
- Black (42.9%) and Native American (39.8%) men are overrepresented amongst students with GPAs of 2.5 or lower when compared to the overall community college student population (30.2%).

SOURCE: <https://www.cceal.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/ACCT8188-Men-of-Color-in-Community-Colleges-Full-Reportv2-1-1.pdf>

Why Focus on Men of Color?

Challenges experienced by men of color in community colleges:

- Chronic racism and racial microaggressions in instructional and student services
- Assumption of academic inferiority
- Assumption of criminality
- No sense of belonging on campus
- Apprehension to help-seeking
- Environmental pressures—work, family, financial, stressful life events
- Basic needs insecurities
- Disconnect between curricula and lived experiences
- Limited access to educators who understand and appreciate their lived experiences

SOURCE: <https://www.cceal.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/ACCT8188-Men-of-Color-in-Community-Colleges-Full-Reportv2-1-1.pdf>

Masculinity in Community Colleges



- Apprehension to help-seeking
- Perceptions of school as a “feminine” domain
- Breadwinner orientation
- Hyper-competitiveness

Why Focus on Men of Color?

Mission

Grossmont College serves the diverse population of our surrounding community and beyond by creating clear and accessible pathways to degrees and jobs leading to social and economic mobility for our students. We work collaboratively to cultivate an equitable student-centered learning environment, and we hold ourselves accountable for improving student outcomes through ongoing assessment, evaluation, and data-informed decision making. Grossmont College offers associate degrees; transfer preparation, including Associate Degrees for Transfer; certificate programs; career education and workforce development.



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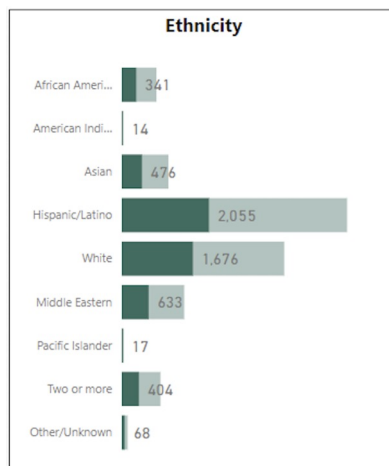
Vision

Empowered through a culture of inclusivity, Grossmont College strives to maintain our student-centered philosophy while working to support the ever-changing needs of our students. Along with ensuring student success, Grossmont College continues to advance our antiracism and equity work as we venture further into the 21st century.

Power of Diversity and Inclusion

We are committed to a climate for learning that considers diverse perspectives to be a powerful component in the education of every individual, valuing and accommodating both differences and commonalities.

Fall Enrollment



Fall 2023 Retention

Ethnicity	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2020
African American/Black	80.7%	75.5%	77.0%	81.2%	83.5%	NaN
American Indian/Alaskan Native	83.3%	75.5%	72.0%	80.6%	70.4%	NaN
Asian	88.8%	85.4%	86.1%	88.1%	90.0%	NaN
Hispanic/Latino	83.1%	79.0%	82.2%	84.7%	85.4%	NaN
White	88.0%	82.2%	85.8%	86.7%	88.1%	NaN
Middle Eastern	83.7%	85.8%	86.3%	86.9%	88.4%	NaN
Pacific Islander	77.5%	70.6%	75.0%	83.5%	79.6%	NaN
Two or more	84.5%	79.6%	84.4%	87.0%	88.3%	NaN
Other/Unknown	88.5%	83.0%	87.3%	93.3%	83.3%	NaN
Total	85.3%	81.0%	83.9%	85.8%	86.9%	NaN

Course Success

Ethnicity	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Total
African American/Black	58.2%	57.7%	54.3%	60.3%	62.9%	58.6%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	63.9%	57.1%	60.0%	50.0%	40.7%	56.5%
Asian	73.2%	75.0%	76.7%	73.7%	74.5%	74.5%
Hispanic/Latino	63.9%	63.9%	64.6%	65.1%	66.7%	64.8%
White	74.7%	70.9%	71.7%	73.0%	74.2%	73.0%
Middle Eastern	62.8%	73.6%	71.8%	70.6%	69.8%	69.9%
Pacific Islander	55.0%	60.3%	62.5%	74.1%	59.2%	61.7%
Two or more	67.9%	65.5%	67.5%	71.7%	70.0%	68.5%
Other/Unknown	70.1%	71.8%	72.6%	79.4%	66.7%	71.9%
Total	68.3%	67.7%	68.1%	69.1%	69.8%	68.6%

Participant Demographics

50 Total Student
Participants

Gender Identity

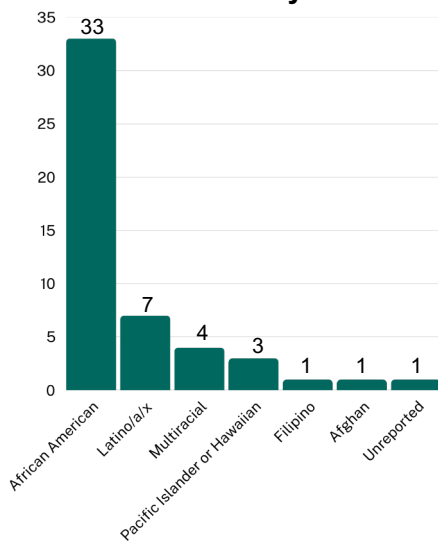
Man
47

Genderqueer/
Androgynous
2

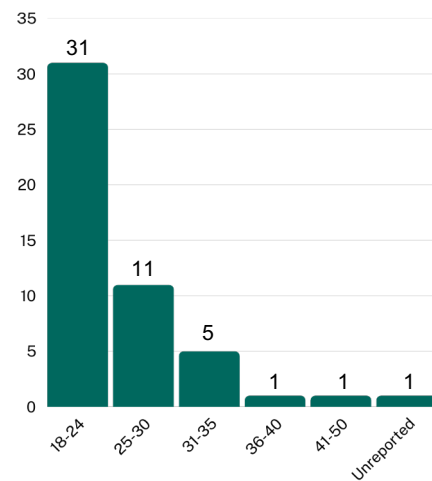
Unreported
1

Participant Demographics

Race/Ethnicity

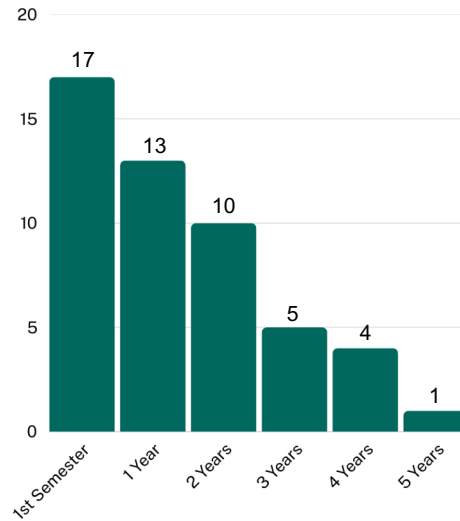


Age Range

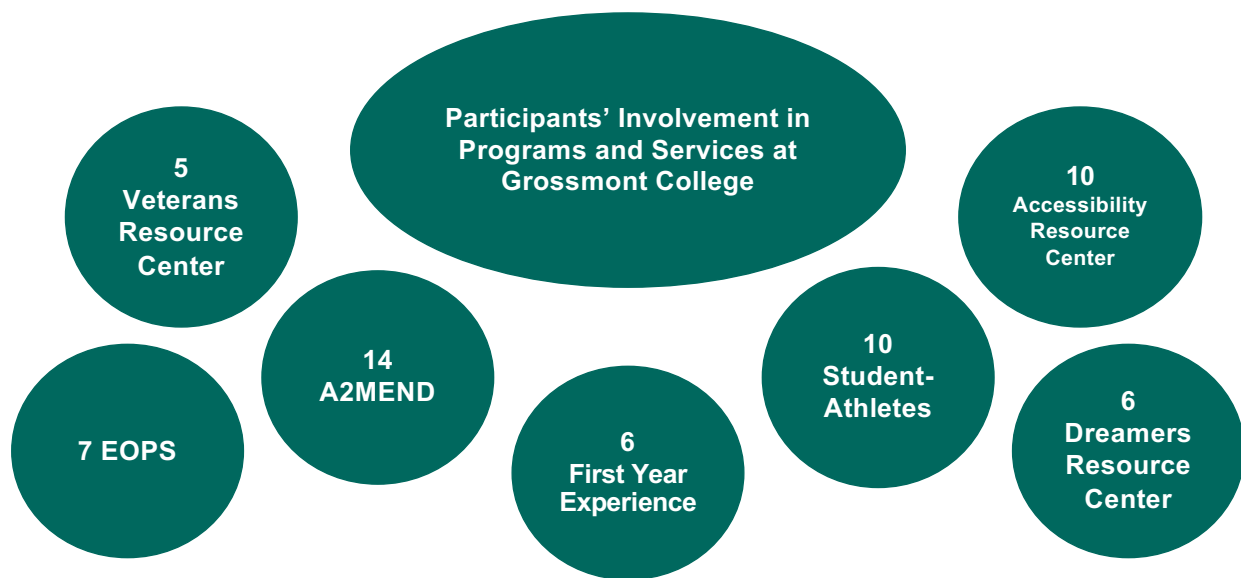


Participant Demographics

Length of Time Enrolled at Grossmont College



Participant Demographics



Participant Demographics

Major/Program of Study Breakdown:

Business <i>Business, Business Administration, Business Marketing</i>	7 students	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) <i>Computer Science, Computer Engineering, CSIS, Science, Mathematics, Biology, Forensic Science and Technology, Mechanical Engineering</i>	11 students
Health Sciences <i>Nursing, Health Science, Food and Nutrition, Exercise Science and Wellness, Kinesiology</i>	7 students	Visual, Performing & Culinary Arts <i>Theater Arts, Arts, Music</i>	4 students
Humanities <i>History, Education</i>	3 students	Undeclared	3 students
Language and Communication <i>Communication, Journalism, Media Communication</i>	5 students		
Social and Behavioral Sciences <i>Psychology, Law, Criminal Justice, Sociology & Administration of Justice, Homeland Security</i>	10 students		

All data based on self-reported info from 50 participants.

Lessons Learned (Findings)



Research Methods

- Partner with the Student Success & Equity Committee to develop recruitment strategy and focus group protocol.
- Data Collection: demographic questionnaire, 11 focus groups in Fall 2024
- \$50 gift card for each participant
- Qualitative data analysis

Salient Themes

- "Nobody Ever Told Me College was Even an Option":
Pathways to College
- "I've Always Wanted to Do Something Big":
High Aspirations and Career Exploration
- "When I Don't See People Who Look Like Me, I Wonder If I Belong Here":
Belonging and Representation on Campus
- "It's Hard to Ask for Help When You Don't Know What's Available":
Navigating Support Systems and Counseling Services

Salient Themes

- “Sometimes I’m the Only One in the Room”:
Cultivating Belonging and Confidence in the Classroom
- “We’re Taught to Be Strong and Just Push Through”:
Managing Stress and Mental Health
- “Don’t Just Say it. Put it in the Budget”:
Visions for Change – Representation, Investment, and Institutional Action



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**"Nobody Ever Told Me College was Even an Option":
Pathways to College**

"Nobody Ever Told Me College was Even an Option": Pathways to College

- "My parents were the biggest influence on me. They always pushed me to go to college."
- "I wanted to be the first in my family to get a degree. That really motivated me."



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**"I've Always Wanted to Do Something Big":
High Aspirations and Career Exploration**

“I’ve Always Wanted to Do Something Big”: High Aspirations and Career Exploration

- Real estate is where I want to be. I see it as a way to make a lot of money and be my own boss."
- "I just want a career that lets me stay close to sports. I'm thinking physical therapy or athletic training."
- "I've always loved helping people, so becoming a school counselor feels right. I want to guide kids through tough times."
- "I'm drawn to investment because I want financial freedom. It's a career that could help me take care of my family and build wealth."



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**“When I Don’t See People Who Look Like Me, I Wonder If I Belong Here”:
Belonging and Representation on Campus**

“When I Don’t See People Who Look Like Me, I Wonder If I Belong Here”: Belonging and Representation on Campus

- "More representation in leadership roles and faculty would make a huge difference. Seeing people who look like me in positions of power would inspire me and others to keep pushing forward."
- "The Griffin Center is awkward. People stare at us all the time. It doesn't feel welcoming."
- "The library has that same vibe. It feels like people are wondering why we're even in there."
- "The Village has been my safe space where I can connect with others who understand my experiences and feel supported."



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**“It’s Hard to Ask for Help When You Don’t Know What’s Available”:
Navigating Support Systems and Counseling Services**

“It’s Hard to Ask for Help When You Don’t Know What’s Available”: Navigating Support Systems and Counseling Services

- "I went to academic counseling for help with my major, but it felt like they didn't listen to my interests. They just suggested what they thought was best for me instead of asking what I wanted to do."
- "I feel like the counseling here is hit or miss. Some counselors really took the time to understand my goals and give personalized advice, while others seemed rushed and just pushed me into general education courses without asking much about my future plans."
- "I had a counseling session where the counselor just handed me a list of required courses without really talking to me about what I wanted to get out of my degree. It would have been nice if they had considered my interests and career goals a bit more."
- "When I need help with my classes, I always go to the athletic counselor. They're always there for us, and they understand the balance between sports and academics."



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“Sometimes I’m the Only One in the Room”: Cultivating Belonging and Confidence in the Classroom

"Sometimes I'm the Only One in the Room": Cultivating Belonging and Confidence in the Classroom

- "I love that my professor doesn't just lecture. We have real conversations in class, and it keeps me engaged."
- "Professors who understand our schedules and the struggle to balance everything are the ones I feel most comfortable with."
- "Group work really helps me understand the material better and learn from my classmates."



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**We're Taught to Be Strong and Just Push Through":
Managing Stress and Mental Health**

We're Taught to Be Strong and Just Push Through": Managing Stress and Mental Health

- "When I'm stressed, I pray a lot and talk things out with my girlfriend. That helps me feel better."
- "I'm really into music, so whenever I get stressed, I just put on some tunes and try to relax."
- "Spending time with my family is my go-to. It helps clear my mind and lets me recharge."



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**"Don't Just Say It. Put it in the Budget":
Visions for Change – Representation, Investment, and Institutional
Action**

“Don’t Just Say it. Put it in the Budget”: Visions for Change – Representation, Investment, and Institutional Action

- "Better parking in Lot 3 and housing on campus would make a huge difference for everyone."
- "I think if the college worked more closely with the communities we come from, there would be more understanding and tailored support for us, especially as men of color."
- "There should be more scholarships and support for students of color who are juggling sports, school, and life. Having financial and academic support in one place would make things a lot smoother."

Recommended Next Steps





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Strengthen Community and Belonging for Men of Color



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Increase the Representation of Educators of Color at GC



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Increase Accessibility of Mental Health Resources



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Support Career Development and Exploration for Men of Color



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Encourage Active and Inclusive Pedagogy



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Provide Clear and Constructive Feedback



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Utilize Motivational Interviewing In Counseling



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Strengthen Outreach to Local High Schools



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Expand Career Services with Industry Partnerships



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Increase Dual Enrollment Opportunities for Men of Color



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Promote Holistic Support for Athletes Beyond Sports



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Targeted Outreach for Veterans of Color



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Align Programs for Men of Color with the Elements of High-Impact MMIs