Student Diversity Initiatives
A look at the institutional efforts to increase the ethnic diversity within the Jackson Community College student body

Submitted by:
The Office of Multicultural Relations
Fall 2008
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**Overview of Report**

Over the course of the past several years Jackson Community College has taken a comprehensive approach to increasing the number of students of color who enroll for classes in the institution. During the course of this time, diversity has been a very high priority for the College – it has been critically important to the Office of the President, the College’s Board of Trustees, and it is a fundamental part of the College’s strategic plan.

Below is a snapshot of Goal 2:1 of the Strategic Plan:

**Jackson Community College – Strategic Plan**

**Strategic Goal 2.1** Improve diversity of JCC student body.

Principal: Director of Multicultural Relations  
CPI: Diversity of Student Body; Next-Term Persistence of Students of Color; Fall-to-Fall Persistence of Students of Color

**Board ENDS Policy:** Access

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<td>Increase percent of students of color attending JCC to reflect the population of Jackson County</td>
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<td>Increase awareness and participation at multicultural events on-campus</td>
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2.1.3 Increase number of courses that address multicultural ADO, provide information to faculty for their use in the classroom. Identify 19 additional courses that incorporate diversity issues.

Within this report we have outlined initiatives that the college has established to increase diversity within the student body. These initiatives specifically focus on reaching out to local students of color and are in addition to our overall general institutional recruitment efforts. Below is a graph detailing the five year growth in the number of students of color who have enrolled in Jackson Community College from 2004-05 to 2008-09.

**PROGRESS**

- The number of students of color enrolled on 10th day for the fall 2008 semester is the highest ever at JCC.

- Over the last five years there has been nearly a 42% increase (194 students) in the number of students of color enrolled in the Fall semester (Fall 2004 compared to Fall 2008).

This report has been prepared by the Office of Multicultural Relations which has the primary responsibility to carry out the strategic diversity initiatives at Jackson Community College. If more information is desired, please contact the Jackson Community College Office of Multicultural Relations Director:

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A HISTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS
IN JACKSON, MICHIGAN

The Jackson Community College “A History of African Americans in Jackson” initiative is a community project which researches the positive contributions and successful stories of select African Americans (historically in Jackson, Michigan). This project is the result of the recommendations that were a part of an executive report of the African American Male Summit that was held by Jackson Community College (May 2008). One of the key objectives of the summit was to identify barriers that are impeding many young African Americans from accomplishing academic success.

One of the barriers identified by the summit was that many young African Americans are unaware of significant positive contributions that their culture has historically made to their community, state, or nation. Most history books, museums, and school curriculums aren’t very inclusive in regards to multicultural contributions. These exclusions result in many young African American youth possessing lower self-expectations as well as lower self-confidence in regards to what they are capable of accomplishing – career wise & educationally. To address this barrier on a local level, we have planned to help develop “A History of African Americans in Jackson” museum exhibit and book. Our desire is to capture as many “firsts” as possible as well as other significant contributions and accomplishments that have been made by African Americans in Jackson. The details of this initiative are below:

A History of African Americans in Jackson – Project overview

OBJECTIVE:

- To bring greater awareness to the historical contributions that African Americans have made to city of Jackson Michigan.
- To broaden Jackson’s history (make it more complete/inclusive).
- Increase the youth of Jackson’s understanding of the accomplishments of local African Americans – thus reducing stereotypes/misconceptions, and in turn raising self-esteem and personal expectations.

COMPONENTS OF INITIATIVE:

- Establish exhibit at Ella Sharp Museum
- Develop/create publication
- Establish traveling exhibit
**Areas of Focus**

- **Healthcare** (doctors, dentist, nurses, etc.)
- **Business** (stores, restaurants, executives, newspapers, gas stations, barber/beauty shops, etc.)
- **Education** (principals, teachers, staff, students, professors, etc.)
- **Public Service** (elected officials, city/county committees, NAACP, elected and nominated community boards, clubs, organizations, etc.)
- **Religion** (churches, pastors, congregations, etc.)
- **Athletics** (coaches, players, teams, middle/high schools, college, professionals, etc.)
- **Places** (places often frequented, i.e. parks, centers, etc.)
- **Events** (dinners, reunions, festivals, etc.)
- **Law Enforcement, Judicial, and Department of Corrections** (police officers, attorneys, wardens, etc.)
- **Arts**: (artistic, musicians, and entertainers)
- From Jackson to great accomplishments elsewhere
- Other significant impactful stories
- Significant visits...

**Timeline**

- July 23, 2008 Meeting between the college and museum to discuss details
- August 2008 Meeting with community leaders / potential funders
- August 2008 Committee formed
- September 2008 Initiative launched
- September 2009 Opening of exhibit - Dinner/gala/private showing
- September 2009 – January 2010 exhibit open to public
- February 2010 – Publication released
- February 2010 – Traveling exhibit available

Once the exhibit is completed (September 2009), local elementary, middle, and high school students will be sponsored to attend the exhibit presentation. There will be a traveling component of the exhibit that will be on display in the local schools throughout our county. Many of the stories that will be told (within the exhibit) will be regarding historically prominent, successful, and educated persons of color. One of the fundamental objectives of this project is to inspire local young students of color to increase their personal educational goals and expectations, and to prepare to continue their education beyond high school graduation.
Jackson Community College

**ACHIEVING THE DREAM INITIATIVE**

This is a grant- initiated initiative that is a part of Jackson Community College institutional efforts to increase the percentage of students of color who enroll and persist to obtain a certificate, to graduate, or transfer to a four year university or college.

Using data, the college locates potentially at-risk students (first-generation students, students of color, under- prepared freshman students, etc.), the students are given additional support systems and they are placed in their classes in cohorts. The details of this initiative are below:

**OVERVIEW OF THE ACHIEVING THE DREAM LEARNING COMMUNITIES**

In an effort to increase retention and academic success among at- risk student populations, special student learning communities have been established at Jackson Community College (Fall 2008). This initiative was developed after conducting a series of focus groups consisting of students, faculty, community educators and leaders, and gathering data.

Based on our data, students who require both developmental math and reading constitute one of the most at-risk groups (this combination is also the most common of our developmental class requirements).

Data gathered during the focus group sessions found that institutional support systems are essential for the success of at-risk student populations in higher education (especially for young African-American males who normally have few peers on campus). To address these factors, we have implemented pilots of “Learning Communities” where students register as a cohort in a specified section of developmental math, reading, and First Year Seminar (foundational/gateway courses among at-risk student populations at Jackson Community College). Two instructors co-teach the courses and provide a common and supportive learning environment across disciplines.

**GOAL**

Our four-year goal is to increase by 10% the rate of persistence for students enrolled in Learning Communities as compared to similar students not enrolled in Learning Communities. We also hope to narrow the gap in persistence rates within the specific identified sub- categories: students of color and male students.

**NEW INTERVENTION**

This choice of strategies was heavily influenced by our literature review. According to numerous scholars (Boylan 2002, Tinto 2005, Gabelnick, et al 1990) the Learning Communities...
model should be considered a best practice for helping developmental education students succeed in college. The literature on the correlation, if not causal link, between utilizing Learning Communities strategies and student persistence, satisfaction with college and academic success is rich. Tinto (1997) showed that Learning Communities resulted in an increase in student grades, as well as persistence. Social integration such as that fostered in a Learning Communities model is especially important for first-generation college students and minority students (ACT Policy report, 2004). Additionally, evidence from Valencia College (Phelps, et al 2008) showed that Learning Communities were instrumental in narrowing the achievement gap for students of color.

Well-designed Learning Communities promote social and intellectual connections between students as well as a sense of community among participants (Gabelnick, et al 1990), outcomes especially helpful for all students on commuter campuses such as JCC, but especially for younger or first-generation college students who may not have social support from friends or family or meet active resistance to their matriculation. The Learning Communities model that we propose includes coordinated classes centered on both teacher-selected and student-generated themes, team-taught by teachers from two different disciplines, and “block-scheduled or back to back classes” (Raferty 2005) prescriptively designed. We believe that this structure offers students the necessary connections for success.

**Block and Prescriptive Scheduling**

While the sample Learning Communities schedule (see Table 9) shows discrete blocks of time for coursework; in reality the plan will be more fluid. Since math and reading professors act as co-teachers for all three classes, they can adjust schedules to accommodate student needs and content requirements. For instance, a one-credit First Year Seminar course would be front-loaded to focus students on study skills and time management, with more time devoted to math and reading in later time blocks.

**First Year Seminar**

The inclusion of this course in the Learning Communities is based on the need to facilitate the transition to college, to foster good learning strategies, and to respond to community input that robust support systems were needed to help students persist and succeed in college. The ACT Policy report (2004) indicates that items strongly predictive of retention are academic skills time management, study skills, academic self-confidence and having an academic goal, topics which are emphasized in this course. Internal data indicate that students who have completed FYS persist from fall semester to winter semester at a rate of 81% as compared to the institutional persistence rates of 71%.

**Evaluation**

In addition to persistence data, other evaluations of this program include student attendance records, student grades, the SENSE survey, and pre-and post-tests of both academic knowledge and attitudinal issues (see Table 10).
**Leadership**

Leadership for this work will be a collaborative effort among academic administrators and appropriate departments who would work on curricular alignment, particularly from the k-12 system to the higher education system. We intend to work with K-12 districts align what is taught in math with what is expected at the college level, in order to lessen the number of students entering JCC needing developmental coursework. Our Student Services Department would be involved in prescriptive advising and scheduling. The Curriculum Committee, who oversees the integrity of the curriculum, and the Academic Council who sets academic policy, would both play a role. The President of the College sits on the Core Team and continues to be heavily invested in student success as a way to lift the literacy and educational levels of the community. The Board of Trustees, who adheres to a Policy Governance model, does not involve itself in operational issues of the College but does receive quarterly updates and represents the College in the community. The community is participating by systematically encouraging youth to think of college as a necessary future and by creating ways to foster that attitude.

**Allocation of Resources**

As a College we have incorporated into the five-year Strategic Plan (FY2009-2013) the goals and intervention strategies for our Achieving the Dream Initiative. The Strategic Plan drives our budget, thus ensuring institutional dollars to support those strategies. Additionally, the Achieving the Dream Initiative folds into our commitment to data-informed decision making using AQIP quality tools and to continuous quality improvement (CQIN).

In response to our concern for at-risk students, we are not only attempting to find new resources but we are reallocating existing resources. For instance, to bolster the number of full-time faculty involved in teaching developmental courses, we are reassigning faculty to developmental math and reading courses. We will invest in providing professional development opportunities for faculty whose teaching focus is developmental work.

The long term goal is to inculcate into the culture of the College best pedagogical practices for at-risk students’ success, robust support services, dedicated faculty who teach developmental courses, and professional development for those faculty. This culture will lead to an understanding throughout the College and community that it is the job of everyone to help our students succeed.
THE “CALL LEE” CAMPAIGN

- “Call Lee” is a partnership with a local African American newspaper “The Blazer New”
- A special “Call Lee” Ad runs in every issue and flyers are distributed throughout community
- The objective is to reach out to all citizens (special focus on those of color) and to reach those who may not be ready or comfortable to come meet with or even to call an academic advisor…..
- There is a life planning session held then next steps are taken…..

“Call Lee” Newspaper Ad

If you want to go to college “CALL LEE” ... I will help!

LEE HAMPTON • 517.796.8470

QUESTIONS CONCERNING ...
- Advising
- Financial Aid
- Registration
- Scholarships
- Continuing Education
- Career Planning
- Tutorial Assistance
- Support Systems

... CALL ME
The Jackson Community College (JCC) - College Incentive Program (CIP) is a scholarship initiative which provides selected local sixth grade students (from under represented student populations) the opportunity to attend JCC for two years tuition-free. One of the basic core two objectives of this initiative is to increase the percentage of local students of colors who enroll to Jackson Community Colleges following their high school graduation. The JCC CIP scholarship initiative is administered by the JCC Office of Multicultural Relations and, the details of the program are listed below:

**CIP Student Selection Criteria**
- Students who are a part of the school free or reduced lunch program.
- Students who have been placed in a foster home.
- Students whose family environment poses a risk (such as a single parent home).
- Students who will potentially be first-generation college graduates.

*criteria may vary slightly but all students must be a part of the free or reduced lunch program.*

**Privileges:**
- Two years of free college tuition at JCC.
- The opportunity to get an education for a high-wage, high-demand career.
- The chance to complete two years of college credits, then transfer to a four-year college or university.

**Additional Information:**
- CIP scholarships may only be used by the student who received the certificates and are not transferable.
- CIP scholarship may only be used at Jackson Community College. All other financial assistance (federal and state aid) will be used before CIP scholarships are used.
- CIP scholarships do not cover books, fees, transportation, daycare, supplies or Continuing Education (CE) classes. However, students are encouraged to work with Student Financial Services Office to see if there are resources to help with expenses.

**Responsibilities:**
- Students must contact the Office of Multicultural Relations if they have a change of address.
- Students must finish high school and obtain a diploma; completion of GED is not acceptable.
- At the beginning of their senior year in high school, or within a year before students expect to enroll at JCC they must:
✓ Complete the JCC admission process.
✓ Complete a financial aid form (FAFSA).
✓ Provide JCC with a copy of their high school diploma and transcripts.

- Students must begin classes at JCC within two years of high school graduation and before reaching age 20.
- Students must maintain a 2.0 grade point average in JCC coursework.
- Stay continuously enrolled in Fall and Winter semesters (Spring is optional).
- Students must also stay enrolled at least 6 credit hours per semester.

**Process of how Program works**

The CIP selection criterion is sent to participating schools, (all Jackson County public elementary and middle schools which have sixth grade students). The particular school is given the number of scholarships they have been allocated (based on school’s population). After the school selects the students, the students’ parents sign the parent program participation consent form (detailing the program privileges and responsibilities). The school’s list of selected students is then sent to JCC’s Office of Multicultural Relations. The selected students are sent a congratulatory letter (from the CIP program director) and are sent an invitation for them and their parents to attend the JCC CIP induction ceremony. The induction ceremony is held during the Spring of each school year at the Jackson campus of Jackson Community College. During the (graduation-like) ceremony the students are given their CIP scholarship along with the list of the program privileges and responsibilities.

**After the students have received their scholarship:**

- They receive two CIP newsletters per year (educationally informative and inspiring newsletters, which include CIP program news, updates and upcoming events).
- They are invited to selected JCC events.
- They are mentored.
- They receive personal school visits each school year.
- They are given tours of campus and they meet faculty members.

**During their senior year:**

- They have two special CIP financial aid nights one at college and one in the community.
- They are visited at school and walked through the college enrollment process.
- CIP parents’ night is held (at the college) and parents are walked thought the enrollment process and a question- and -answer session is held.

**After students enroll at JCC:**

- A special CIP freshmen orientation is held.
- Students invited to attend CIP presentation at their former high schools (to encourage student enrollment).
- Students are invited to meet with CIP director as needed (for additional support).
- Student received support letter each semester (detailing available Colleges’ support systems).
The Jackson Community College community personal letters of academic support initiative is a community-wide initiative to increase the percentage of students of color in Jackson County (Michigan) who continue their education beyond high school to higher education. This is collaboration between the College and Jackson Public Schools (over 40% students of color).

**DETAILS OF INITIATIVE INCLUDE:**

Mailing a personal letter to all high school seniors of color and their parents – articulating the following:

- Critical importance of higher education and barriers present when educational endeavors are discontinued after high school.
- The benefits and opportunities that JCC provides.
- Personal contact information and willingness and availability to meet with them and assist with the college enrollment process.

This is an effort to offer a personal sweeping approach to reach every home of high school seniors of color in Jackson Public Schools (JPS) in a personal way. For students of color, the usual college outreach/recruitment approach is to go to diverse school districts, diverse churches, and other multicultural community groups and events – however, there are those who we haven’t been able to reach (in a personal way - beyond a simple newspaper ad). We firmly believe there are still a great percentage of students of color who don’t consider higher education for the following reasons:

- Unaware of how the “going to college” thing works.
- Scored low on the college entrance test (ACT, SAT, etc.) and are unaware of college support systems for underprepared incoming students.
- Intimidated by the enrollment and financial aid process.
- Unaware of the funding available.
- Unaware of how the economic conditions are fundamentally changing and how the need of higher education has moved from the category of “luxury” to “necessity.”

With this personal letter going to all students of color in JPS, we believe (with these barriers being addressed and increased personal support being offered) an increase in the number of students of color who enroll in JCC and succeed in meeting their goals will take place.
Jackson Community College

JACKSON AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE SUMMIT

The following is an overview of the “Jackson African American Male Summit.” This summit was developed and hosted by Jackson Community College. This initiative was a part of the College’s efforts to increase the percentage of students of color in Jackson, Michigan who continue their education beyond high school on to higher education.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On May 2nd 2008, the “Jackson African American Male Summit” was hosted by and held at Jackson Community College. The total number of summit attendees exceeded 160. The attendees varied in professional background; here are a few in particular: students (high school and college), teachers, elementary, middle and high school principals, college faculty, administrators and board members, judges, law-enforcement officials, prison wardens, city and county commissioners, state and federal elected officials, mentors, clergy, business leaders, community leaders, and concerned mothers, fathers, and grandparents.

The summit focused on increasing successes and considering barriers regarding young African American males in three primary areas – Education (K – 16), Family’s Role and Penal System. National and local data show that young African American males (in general) are facing increasingly difficult times in these particular areas in our society today. Although some African American males are overcoming barriers and achieving success, studies are showing that finishing high school is becoming the exception, prison is becoming more the routine, and the vast majority is being raised without an engaged father’s role. Other studies are showing that only a small percentage of African American males are pursuing higher education with only a few of these persisting on to graduation. In an article in the New York Times, Dr. Ronald Mincy—a professor at Columbia University says, “There is something very different happening with young black men, and it’s something we can no longer ignore.”1 With these facts and conditions weighing heavy on our heart, our desire was to bring the leaders (and other interested parties) of our community together to have in-depth dialogue concerning these challenging conditions that young African American males are currently facing and to offer recommendations for corrective measures and solutions.

The summit was organized by Mr. Lee Hampton, Director of Multicultural Relations at Jackson Community College. The summit began with a welcome and a show of support from: Jackson Community College President/ CEO Dr. Daniel J. Phelan, State of Michigan Senator Mark Schauer, and United States Congressman Tim Walberg.

There were four presenters (the third session had co-presenters) and 13 moderators for the summit. Each presenter presented for 20 minutes, and then they gave a charge to the entire summit to have an in-depth group dialogue following the outlined points they were given concerning each subject. Each group was charged to identify barriers and provide solutions and recommendations. At the close of each of the three sessions, the group moderators gave an overview of their group’s findings.

The Summit core objective was to help increase the successes of local young African American males and to offer those who are working with them further possible insight on how to achieve greater effectiveness. The summit was video recorded, covered by local media, and this written report of the summit findings was compiled.

The summit lasted three and half hours. There was an hour dedicated to focusing on each of the three summit topics. The summit attendees were divided into groups of 12/15 (directed by the group moderator) and each group (after being given specific points of considerations) discussed the challenges concerning each area (Education, Family’s Role, and Penal System) and then provided detailed solutions and recommendations.

The following are excerpts from a Jackson Citizen Patriot newspaper article reporting on the summit:

**Excerpt 1:**

Elton Scott, a former prison warden (retired), said he has participated in thousands of meetings and conferences during his career, but Friday’s summit was the most productive he’s attended. “We got people thinking,” he said.²

**Excerpt 2:**

Nigel Johnson Jr., a Jackson High School junior, talked about success among black males with the definition of love. “So many parents think they buy you a pair of shoes, that’s love,” said Johnson, who is black. “But when have you come into my room and asked about my homework? Love has to be shown or given, not just bought.” Participants gave him a standing ovation – some wiping tears from their eyes – and later pointed to Johnson as an example of why they need to continue to fight for change together. It was obvious from the makeup of the room that this isn’t just a problem in the black community. As many acknowledged, it’s everyone’s problem. And participants said they are taking it upon themselves to fix it from the ground up.³

**Excerpt 3:**

“I had no idea there was this broad of support for such a narrow focus,” said Lee Hampton, JCC Director of Multicultural Relations, who organized the event. We feel that it was an overwhelming success.”⁴

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**Next Steps:**

- Make the summit executive report available to community at large. *(Completed)*
- Meet with selected community leaders who work directly with young African-American males (superintendents, police chiefs, judges, pastors, teachers, etc.) to discuss the summit’s findings and to offer support. *(Completed)*
- Develop “The History of African Americans in Jackson: Museum exhibit, publication, and traveling exhibit – in partnership with Ella Sharp Museum” (a part of the summits findings indicate that when youth are unaware of positive contributions that their culture has made to their community or country it serves as a barrier – reducing personal expectations, personal pride and self confidence. By developing The History of African-Americans in Jackson Initiative, we hope to remove many of these particular barriers. *(Completion target date of September 2009)*
- Meet with summit leaders to plan the 2009 follow-up event.

The African American Male Summit Executive Report (over 100 detailed pages with hundreds of barriers identified and several specific recommendations given) has been distributed and made available to community leaders throughout Jackson County (MI). Several of the report’s recommendations have already been implemented by schools, colleges, universities, organizations and institutions in our community that serve young African American male student populations. A report of the summit has also been covered by the national magazine “Diverse Issues in Higher Education”.
The Jackson Community College County Jail Initiative is an outreach initiative in partnership with Jackson County Court Systems. This initiative is the result of the recommendations that were given to the College at the Jackson Community College African American Male Summit (May 2008). The objective of this initiative is to reach out to local young men who have received short jail sentences (less than one year) in an effort to inform them of the benefits of higher education, the positive role it can play in the rehabilitation process, and to explain the enrollment and financial aid process and academic support services available at JCC. The details are listed below.

**MONTHLY PRESENTATIONS ON HIGHER EDUCATION (THIRD TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH 10:00AM-11:00AM) FOCUSING ON THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

- The critical importance of higher education / the part it plays in the rehabilitation process and in getting AHEAD.
- The College enrollment process explained.
- Support services available at Jackson Community College.
- Questions and Answers.

**PRESENTERS: COLLEGE OFFICIALS AND COMMUNITY PRESENTERS**

**LIST OF LOCAL LEADERS WHO WILL BE ASSISTING: FROM AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE SUMMIT**

- Mr. Charles Anderson - Retired Warden, MDOC
- Mr. Henry Grayson - Retired Warden, MDOC
- Mr. John Willis - Director, King Center
- Mr. Tony Jackson - Business Owner, State Farm Insurance
- Mr. Frank Weathers - City of Jackson
- Mr. James Hines - Local Pastor
- Mr. George Lyons - Attorney at Law
- Mr. Robert Burton - Retired School Principal
- Mr. Ron Coleman - Consumers Energy
- Mr. Eric Copeland - Assistant Chief of Fire Department
- Mr. Donque Ellis - Retired Principal
- Mr. Ed Wood - Administrative MAC Steel
The Jackson Community College “Men of Merit” initiative is a student organization which focuses on increasing retention, campus and community engagement, and academic success among the Colleges African American male student population. This initiative is a partnership between the College and community leaders - the selected community leaders are men of color who are highly successful/experts in their perspective field. These leaders voluntarily speak/present at the bi-weekly meetings and serve as mentors, provide support, and endow the students with critical insight on how to persevere, overcome barriers, and to achieve academic and life success as an African American male in the 21st century. The details of the JCC “Men of Merit” initiative are listed below:

**OBJECTIVES:**
- To develop strong multicultural male student leadership.
- To increase their engagement in the college experience.
- To increase retention rates.
- To increase academic productivity.
- To promote service learning.

**HOW STUDENTS ARE CONTACTED:**
- Staff and administration recommendations.
- Faculty are sent letters and encouraged to recommend their male students of color to participate.
- The students that are apart are encouraged to bring other students.

**THE BI-WEEKLY MEETINGS:**
During each meeting:
- Academic status and progression are discussed and students are given information in regards to tutoring and other academic support systems that are available and they are encouraged to utilize them.
- A new community leader (a highly successful male of color) is brought in to present on a topic (that is pre-selected) and a question- and- answer session follows the presentation.

**TOPICS INCLUDE:**
- Have a successful journey in higher education; enrollment, the importance of campus engagement, and how to utilize support systems, persistence, and graduation.
- Life issues (common to male college students of color): overcoming the barriers and finding success.
• Financial literacy, job interviewing etiquette.
• Business etiquette and how to secure employment.
• The power of networking.
• Strategic points of public speaking and affective communication.
• How to run a business.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:
• Elementary school visit (book reading and discuss the importance of doing well in school)
• Middle and high school presentation on “Going to College”.
• Food drive for local homeless shelters.
• Fundraisers

OTHER DETAILS:
• Students write two papers at the beginning and end of semester.
• Students encouraged meeting with staff and administrative leaders of initiative (one on one) thought out the semester.
  *Research has shown that when personal relationships are developed between students and staff/faculty, the result is an increased in retention rates.
The Jackson Community College “Raise the Bar Jackson” Initiative is an effort to raise the academic expectations and educational awareness in Jackson County (MI), especially among the first-generation college students of color whose parents work in the manufacturing industry where jobs are quickly leaving our state.

A core part of this initiative is a special “Raise the Bar Jackson” video that was created for youth (grades K-12) in our Jackson community. The video production explains the critical importance and necessity of going to college after high school graduation. This video has several presenters making the case for higher education. The presenters include well-known business owners, local prominent political leaders and educational leaders, and other distinguished national figures (NFL Coach Tony Dungy, Detroit Pistons President Joe Dumars, MSU Coach-Tom Izzo, Mayor of Jackson, local prominent leaders, etc.). Each of the individual presenters speaks directly to the local youth of Jackson, Michigan, encouraging them to prepare and to go to college.

The video is a part of an hour-long school presentation. We visit the school and are accompanied by community leaders (usually one or two). During the presentation we speak about the changing climate in the global marketplace, and how this is affecting our local manufacturing community (the presentations are altered to relate to the grade level of the particular audience). The community leaders speak about the role that education played in providing them the opportunity to have a successful career and financial stability. The video is then shown (approximately 15 minutes long). Following the video there is a question-and-answer session (addressing concerns students may have had regarding access to higher education).

The presentation is given at elementary, middle, and high schools. It is altered to fit the audience. If the audience is high school, the college enrollment and financial aid process is explained.

Many figures within the video are successful persons of color. This is an intentional effort to make a special connection/appeal to students of color with the objective to increase their participation in higher education.