

PROMISING PRACTICE

Academic Recovery Program for Students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

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Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

This promising practice article explores the implementation of an academic recovery program along with supplemental programs at a small liberal arts Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in the southeastern United States, Miles College. Miles is an open-enrollment institution, where most students are Pell Grant eligible, first-generation, or coming from underserved high schools. With this combination of factors in mind and the vulnerability of this population, academic support services were designed to address student needs more proactively in a holistic manner rather than only addressing academic concerns. Components of this program included an early alert program, an academic recovery program, professional tutoring, peer tutoring, and academic coaching.

As universities and colleges strive to return to a sense of normalcy in a post-COVID environment, questions of student acclimation back into a more rigorous academic space while continuing to deal with the aftermath of COVID-19 remain. Although there is

no generalized experience, students may have various levels of trauma, including losing loved ones, housing insecurity, food insecurity, and other detrimental impacts. The students today faced social isolation during the pandemic, with the most vulnerable experiencing the highest levels of stress (Winston, 2022). These physical and mental stressors in their worst form wreaked havoc upon the students' social and emotional well-being, with effects including depression, sleep disturbances, suicidal tendencies, obesity, higher blood pressure, and a higher risk of heart disease (Winston, 2022). These stressors were further exacerbated by the financial strain many families faced, as well as barriers to technological access often faced by low-income families. Black and Latino groups saw higher rates of food insecurity, housing insecurity, and unemployment (Winston, 2022). Black and Latina women faced unemployment rates twice as high as their White counterparts. Already present disparities between communities heightened during the pandemic, creating further barriers for underserved populations. By implementing high-impact practices, postsecondary institutions can address these barriers, particularly HBCUs, as they have historically served underrepresented student populations in higher education. In creating academic recovery programs that offer both breadth and depth, students can engage with faculty, staff, and their peers, should the institution provide peer-to-peer learning.

With this background in mind, it is critical for postsecondary institutions to become places in which to provide students with a safe atmosphere that is conducive to their learning. Given the high number of historically underrepresented populations attending HBCUs, these institutions are uniquely positioned to provide this type of supportive atmosphere to those impacted by historical inequities that were only exacerbated by the trauma of COVID-19. Two methods utilized to create such a space are social and emotional learning (SEL) and trauma-informed teaching (Paunesku, n.d.). Paunesku's theory of transformative SEL posits that through creating more equitable learning spaces, we as educators can more meaningfully create productive learning environments in which students can achieve academic success and become lifelong learners. Within these trusting and collaborative environments, students have not only their academic needs addressed, but also their concerns related to their personal lives. Ayre and Krishnamoorthy (2020) examined the impact of trauma on school performance, which can manifest

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through lower academic performance, poor memory recollection, decreased emotional control, and lower reading levels. Research has further shown that the most effective manner for many students to learn is within a group setting with their peers, which is one of many reasons why group tutoring and Supplemental Instruction remain so popular and impactful (Conway & Mutisya, 2018). New systems of social support can then offset some disruptive behaviors students experienced when beginning college.

These high-impact practices are particularly critical for students with higher needs who are typically identified as first-generation or Pell Grant eligible. Following COVID-19, there have been serious impacts on the population at large, and particularly for college-aged students. With these shifts, students need systems of support previously only needed for students with higher needs. Mental health data on college students shows increasingly more students fall into the high-risk category; colleges now need more intensive programs offering specialized support.

Institutional Background

Miles College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC). Many students are from underserved high schools that have limited access to the same funding and resources as other college-bound students. The student population at this institution has more high-risk factors typically associated with low retention and persistence rates because the majority are first-generation and come from families of lower socioeconomic status. In 2022, 94% of those enrolled were Black or African American, with 79% receiving some type of federal or Pell Grant. First-Generation and Low-Income (FGLI) students typically face more challenges entering college, which at times can lead to requiring more targeted and intensive intervention programs (Winston, McCann, & Onofrei, (2022).

Implementation of Programs

The full implementation of the Academic Recovery Program took 2 years, and changes were made to better address issues facing students. The process began in the fall of 2022 under the academic recovery coordinator (ARC), who oversaw four academic recovery coaches, three of whom were faculty members and one who was an academic advisor. The ARC spearheaded this effort and served as the central hub of information. Upon receiving a list of students on academic warning and probation from the registrar's office, the ARC took on the bulk of the students on the list and split the remaining students amongst the four academic recovery coaches. Students on academic probation or who did not meet SAP requirements were to meet with their coach every week, and those on academic warning were to meet every other week.

Students not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) were to meet with the ARC every single week, and all students were required to attend 4–6 hours a week of study hall and tutoring activities. During this first semester, faculty members who had students who were not meeting SAP requirements on academic probation or academic warning were not asked to report back information on how students were doing in their classes. It was in the spring of 2023 that this information was requested to produce accurate reports and to create more transparency with faculty about the program.

During this first semester, each academic coach updated their own spreadsheet. Staff members who participated were academic advisors with a background in social work and case management. It was at the end of the academic year that efforts were made to provide more meaningful professional development and streamlined communication about the academic recovery programs and efforts being made. Progress was inconsistently reported, so only a handful of those on campus received such reports.

At the time of the implementation of the program in fall 2022, there were no trained peer tutors employed; a handful of students did provide tutoring voluntarily, but they were not required to go through any type of meaningful training. There were tutorial spaces open on campus, staffed by faculty and staff. All data on tutorial usage was gathered through a QR code, which the ARC would look through once a week to pull information about those in the academic recovery program and their usage of tutoring. At this point in the program development, tutoring data were gathered and analyzed during the semester as it pertained to those in academic jeopardy, as outlined further in Table 1.

In the spring of 2023, trends showed that students' GPAs were positively impacted by attending tutoring and meeting with their academic recovery coach. During the spring of 2023, a pilot of the Early Alert Program was rolled out, in which faculty were asked to send in information on students in their courses who were in academic jeopardy or showed signs of needing additional support. Data showed that students who were in academic jeopardy benefited more from tutoring than those who were not in academic jeopardy. Mile's 'mini-mester', or shortened winter semester for SAP students that took place in December, also had an overall positive impact on ensuring student retention. There was an overall increase in GPA for those who attended tutoring and for those who met with their academic recovery coach, as indicated by the information below. This increase was seen both by students who were in academic jeopardy and those who were not. In comparing attendance in study hall versus tutoring, tutoring was shown to have a more positive impact on overall GPA; however,

this does not correlate with student persistence and attrition rates.

The Early Alert Program was a new program that softly launched in the spring of 2023. This program was an attempt to synchronize efforts across campus and reduce redundancy. The objective of the program was to improve the academic performance and success of our students by addressing academic and personal challenges they were facing. In its initial implementation, the form was sent on the 4th, 8th, and 12th weeks of the semester to faculty only, specifically requesting information about students already identified as being in academic jeopardy. The ARC contacted all students flagged by emailing them directly, and, for those in academic jeopardy, students' coaches were also contacted. At the time of this program, the institution was utilizing a software system that allowed faculty and staff to send students text messages from a web-based application; therefore, students who had numbers on file were also texted. If students did not respond to the initial outreach, another attempt was made a week later by the ARC. As shown in Table 1, there was a consistent trend of GPA increasing with programmatic interventions, and tutoring showed a positive correlation with program participation and tutoring.

Program Components

Over the summer of 2023 and beginning the 2023–2024 academic year, the Academic Recovery Program and accompanying components were streamlined. During this time, under the supervision of the director of academic success, a list was compiled of services and programs under the umbrella of the Academic Success Center (ASC), including the creation of a mission statement. The statement read:

The Academic Success Center seeks to advance educational equity and create lifelong learners by providing much-needed academic assistance to our students. We provide one-on-one tutoring, peer-to-peer tutoring, academic coaching, and career readiness skills, and our teamwork ensures students are successful not only here at Miles College, but as they enter the professional world. (internal document)

Services and resources provided by the ASC included resource booklets, ASC workshops, academic coaching, academic recovery, an alert program, and peer tutoring. The resource booklet contained contact information for various units on campus, academic resources, a calendar of campus events,

housing resources, ROTC program information, finding employment, career prep services, food insecurity, on-campus pantries, ADA and accommodations, health center resources, sexual misconduct resources, domestic violence resources, alcohol and drug use resources, FAFSA resources, IT documents, and LGBT+ resources. Spanish versions were available for the resource booklet, as well as the accompanying tutorial booklet, which contained information on study habits and academic success resources.

The academic coaching program was a joint effort by the director of academic success and the director of retention, designed to help students increase their learning skills' effectiveness inside and outside the classroom. Sessions included one-on-one meetings with professional staff in which students addressed how to better study, be successful in their schoolwork, and overcome common factors inhibiting student success. The director of academic success oversaw these programs and collaborated with the director of retention as well as other directors and faculty members across campus to fully implement and communicate these programs to various campus constituents. All other programs were built around the Academic Recovery Program to provide increased support to students struggling academically and served as the main centerpiece of the ASC. In creating programs to serve this student population, more students in academic jeopardy were flagged early and increased academic support was provided to a wider array of students than previously seen on the campus.

The Tiered Academic Recovery Program (TARP) was designed to help students with a GPA below 2.5 who were on academic warning, academic probation or

have had their SAP appeal approved. The goal was to return students to good academic standing, and the program promoted effective academic practices and behaviors. Students on academic probation had two semesters to return to good academic standing before they were in danger of suspension. As a way for academic success coaches to better understand students' needs, students participating in TARP were required to take the Academic Readiness Inventory. This survey uncovered internal and external causes for student struggles. The list of those who were in academic jeopardy was shared with faculty program coordinators and advisors, as both had close working relationships with students

Services and resources provided by the ASC included resource booklets, ASC workshops, academic coaching, academic recovery, an alert program, and peer tutoring.

Table 1
Impact of the Academic Recovery Program: Fall 2023–Spring 2024

	Spring 2023		Fall 2023		Spring 2024	
	Not meeting satisfactory academic progress	Academic probation or academic warning	Not meeting satisfactory academic progress	Academic probation or academic warning	Not meeting satisfactory academic progress	Academic probation or academic warning
Average number of meetings	2	1.2	3.9	.12	5.22	.55
Average time spent tutoring	8.8 hours	3.5 hours	4.6 hours	1.4 hours	6.6 hours	.22 hours
1+ hours tutoring	.23	.24	.63	.27	.89	.4
2+	.19	.17	.74	.27	.89	.79
3+	.24	.30	.79	.27	.96	.4
4+	.16	.25	.79	.36	1.2	.4
5+	.16	.25	.70	.4	.97	.4
6+	.24	.33	.78	.2	.97	.4

and could assist with their academic planning. The coordinators and advisors were tasked with meeting with their identified students throughout the semester, as well as directing them to necessary resources as outlined in the resource booklet.

The Academic Readiness Inventory (see Appendix) was a 17-question instrument that was developed to rate the level of students’ academic need. Through this instrument, advisors focused more meaningfully on what students’ goals and aspirations are, constantly bringing students back to think about why they want to be in college while also acknowledging that they are facing systemic and historical inequities that students at other colleges may not be facing. With this information, advising sessions addressed the most pressing concerns for students while also reminding them of why they are completing their college coursework. The Academic Readiness Inventory categorized the students’ needs and appropriate resources. Meetings were then scheduled based upon the level of students’ needs. The levels in the tiered program were cumulative, as Level 1 included students who struggled with academic readiness, time management, stressors, SEL (social and emotional learning), fixed mindset, and those in need of tutorial assistance. Students at Level 2 were those also struggling with financial health and wellness, ADA concerns, fitting in, and mental health. Students who scored Level 3 were those facing issues with housing insecurity, food insecurity, and intimate partner violence.

These levels were critical in understanding which resources a student needed. If a student dealt with a major life event but was otherwise doing well academically, they may not have needed the same level of support as a student who was facing chronic issues and needed continuous support. This metric was included within the students’ Academic Success Plan, all of which were individually reviewed by the

director of academic success. All success plans indicated classes that students had to repeat to improve their GPA and degree progression, which is particularly critical for students not meeting SAP requirements. Furthermore, professors received emails at the start of the semester about students who had not met SAP requirements, and if those students fell behind, faculty members were asked to tell the students’ advisors so that further action could be taken. This part of the program was done via the Early Alert Program because it was a more efficient way to track this data than email alone.

The Early Alert Form was sent out by the director of academic success during the 4th, 8th, and 12th weeks of the semester, which was then jointly reviewed by the director of academic success and the director of retention. The directors contacted each student individually and provided them with recommended next steps. The students whose names were submitted were then followed up with in the following week to ensure they completed the recommended directives. At-risk behaviors included but were not limited to class attendance, missing assignments, missing tests, showing up late to class, or having a grade of a D or an F. This form had a checklist of items for faculty or staff to indicate behaviors a student was displaying, so when a student was contacted, they received individualized attention and assistance. If a student was referred to any of the tutorial services on campus, the director of academic success pulled this information to see if the student attended. If the student had an issue with class attendance or completing assignments, the director of academic success and the director of retention reached out to the faculty member after a week to see if there were any improvements in the students’ academic habits in their classroom. If a student did not follow these directives, one of the directors would contact them again via phone and email to see why the student had not completed the recommendations.

Tutorial spaces across campus included the following: Metacognition Lab, Humanities Lab, Writing Center, NSM (Natural Science and Math) Drop-In Center, and peer tutoring. The Metacognition Lab hosted a quiet atmosphere for students to study, accompanied by computers, tables, couches, and whiteboards. The Humanities Lab provided study space for students where tutoring was available for humanities-based subjects by the director of academic success. The Writing Center was staffed by the director of the Writing Center, who not only provided direct assistance to students but also hosted workshops throughout the year dedicated to various topics such as citations, how to research, and the utilization of AI in writing. The NSM Drop-In Center was staffed by faculty from the NSM department who each hold two hours of office hours in this space every week. Peer tutoring was held on the main floor of the LRC (Learning Resource Center). In the LRC, the peer tutors had drop-in availability for any students requiring assistance; open hours were held in the late afternoon and evening, as this was often when faculty members were teaching. The combination of this robust academic support system allowed students to continuously find help on campus for a variety of concerns, whether it be content-specific help, assistance with studying, starting a research paper, or procuring more information about other systems of support on campus. This collaborative network allowed information to be disseminated across campus regarding the diverse needs of students and for students to be easily referred to the support they needed.

The peer tutor program fell under the auspices of the director of academic success, with the stated goal:

The purpose of tutoring is to help students become independent learners. Tutors meet individuals on a short- or long-term basis to clarify and review concepts taught in class, describe processes, and help students build up their academic skills. Tutoring is a supplement to what is taught in class. (internal document)

The goals of the tutoring program are summarized as follows:

1. Reinforce the students' understanding of the material.
2. Share study skills or other tips for success.
3. Help students maximize or improve their academic skills.
4. Listen and respond to the academic needs of the students.
5. Enhance College's reputation for learning, discovery, and engagement.
6. Enhance retention and graduation rates of students.
7. Assist with Academic Success initiatives, including doing in-person announcements in

general education courses during weeks 2, 6, and 10.

Qualifications included two recommendations from faculty members at the college; candidates had to be in good academic and disciplinary standing with a minimum GPA of 3.0. They needed to have a willingness to develop rapport with faculty in the academic area that they tutored, presentation and communication skills, content knowledge, and the ability to follow through on responsibilities. The benefit of utilizing faculty recommendations was to have an initial check for the student's content knowledge in the area they wished to tutor in and to gain an understanding of the student's performance in the classroom to ensure they would be modeling appropriate behavior. The inclusion of faculty also assisted with buy-in across the campus for the tutorial program and an increased willingness of faculty members to promote tutorial services in their classrooms. Once applications were vetted, selected candidates were then asked to sit in an interview with the director of academic success, the director of the writing center, and a student who was already in a position of peer leadership at the school. During the interview, students were asked what skills they had related to the job, how they would develop rapport with students, how they would use communication skills to resolve conflict, how they would get students to engage with their work, their level of involvement, their time management skills, and other such questions. If a student were chosen for the role, they would sign a tutor contract and be required to go through a comprehensive training program.

The Peer Tutoring Program was designed on the basis that students need a system of social support, particularly during times of transition when behaviors and other patterns of living are subject to drastic change, such as entering college for the first time, particularly for first-generation students. Tutors worked with students to overcome limiting beliefs and to provide them with the necessary tools to be independently academically successful. Training was split into three primary sections: metacognition, stress and anxiety, and content-specific tutoring strategies. The training slides utilized were broken down into the following categories:

- Introduction to peer tutoring
- Goals and expectations
- Role of the tutor
- Center procedures
- Ethics and confidentiality
- Tutor contract
- Tutoring Do's and Don'ts
- Characteristics of successful peer tutors
- Role of the tutee
- Fostering positive relationships

- Conducting the tutoring session
- Opening the session
- Middle of the session
- Ending the session
- Tutoring strategies: difficult scenarios, active listening, questioning techniques, communication, motivational strategies, learning strategies, building independent learners, barriers to student success, and students with disabilities
- Metacognition: time management, Bloom's taxonomy, note taking, test prep, taking exams, multiple choice exams, study skills, activating prior knowledge, survival strategies, study cycle, learning preferences, reducing anxiety
- Subject-specific tutoring

Results from implementing this style of tutor training saw students more likely to confide in and develop trusting relationships, which then transitioned to being more willing to accept assistance from professional staff on campus. There was a layer of relatability to talking with someone who had gone through or was going through similar struggles, as this helped to negate other factors that often prevented students from attending tutoring, such as intimidation, fear of judgment, and shame. There was an increase in tutorial usage across campus, and a positive correlation was seen between students who attended tutoring and increases in their GPA.

The "Conducting the Session" portion of the training was the area in training in which holistic methods were most meaningfully addressed. The "Opening the Session" portion of training directed tutors to not just determine the tutoring goal and identify tasks, but to assess student needs and diagnose academic roadblocks. About two-thirds of training time was spent during training discussing how to teach others time management skills, study skills, and other skills associated with metacognition. While there certainly were students struggling with the content, the feedback received from tutors and professional staff in these areas provided deeper insight. It was found that students came to tutoring more due to academic difficulties happening prior to entering the classroom or issues outside of the classroom that prevented them from achieving optimal performance in the classroom. Students were further taught active listening techniques, to listen to verbal and non-verbal skills, and other strategies that increase tutees' motivation to continue their focus on their studies.

Tutors worked with students to overcome limiting beliefs and to provide them with the necessary tools to be independently academically successful.

For tutors to remain familiar with content covered during training, observations were conducted, and peer tutors were provided with a tutoring handbook. This handbook outlined all the material covered during tutor training so peer leaders would be able to continuously reference materials and could provide concrete examples to students during sessions.

Tutors were frequently observed during their sessions; a Likert scale was utilized to analyze whether peer tutors were following the tutoring model or not following the model, and they were rated similarly on their skills as associated with conducting the tutoring session. Before receiving feedback, the tutor was asked to analyze what they thought went well and what they wanted to improve upon. There was a lead tutor for the Spring 2024 semester, an education major, who was tasked with observing tutorial sessions and providing timely feedback to their peers. Prior to the spring of 2024, there were volunteer peer tutors in various spaces across campus, as well as professional staff in each of the tutorial spaces. In the spring of 2024, there was an official peer tutor launch with ten tutors and one lead tutor. The data listed below shows the impact of the tutorial services offered as well as the overall impact of the Academic Recovery Program.

The reasons for visits in the fall of 2023 broke down into the following percentages: 30.7% for the band study hall, 24.9% for tutoring, 20.7% for required academic recovery tutoring, 12% for computer use, and the rest of the visits spread out over other categories. The space used in fall 2023 was 37% utilized by the writing center and 31% by the Metacognition Lab; the rest was split between the Humanities lab, NSM Center, and the LRC main floor.

The feedback received from the tutorial center in Spring 2024 saw no rating lower than a 3 on a scale of 1–5. The ratings (out of a total score of 20) are as follows: Humanities Lab 19, Metacognition Lab 18.62, Peer Tutoring 17.66, Writing Center 17.26, and Drop-in NSM Tutoring 17. Outside of the data gathered on student usage of tutoring, there was a particular focus on the tutoring impact on first-year students, as 48% of first-year students utilized tutoring. Of those who used tutoring, 81.1% persisted from the fall of 2023 to the fall of 2024, with 18.9% not persisting. First-year students had an average of 5.55 visits, with an average of 6.69 hours spent. For those who did not utilize tutoring, 57.9% persisted while 42.1% did not persist; thus, there was a correlation between those who utilized tutoring and persistence, although

we cannot prove direct causation due to the number of mitigating factors. At this college, there was a retention issue, particularly for first- and second-year students, which is why the first-year population was particularly studied, as this was one of the most vulnerable populations at the school. The success of the tutoring program for students who utilized it, particularly first-year students, highlights the impact and success of the program. By providing organized and systemic support through peer holistic support and by providing peer tutors with the resources necessary to direct students, the holistic tutoring implemented proved to be a high-impact practice.

Effectiveness and Impact

From fall 2022 to spring 2023, there was a 37% increase in the number of students on academic warning and a 26% decrease in the number of students on academic requirements. From fall 2023 to spring 2024, there was a 52% increase in those not meeting academic warning, a 63% decrease in those not meeting academic probation, and a 15% decrease in those not meeting requirements for SAP.

Changes in Fall 2024

Over the summer of 2024, further changes were planned for the program. Most notably, students on academic warning or academic probation, who had SAP appeals approved, or who were returning from a semester of suspension were required to register for a no-credit course entitled Academic Recovery and Success. This course was scheduled to be taught jointly by the director of academic success and the director of retention, during which time students came together with their instructors to explore, apply, and build confidence in recovering academically and pushing forward to their next semester. Due to FERPA considerations, students were in this class anonymously. Within the course, weekly assignments were given that required students to do weekly check-ins with their instructors. The weekly meetings were intentionally designed to provide a safe space for students to discuss and build connections across campus so that they may have a supportive network to utilize should they need academic, social, mental, or financial support. This course's purpose was to help students work through their academic recovery with guided resources and one-on-one assistance as they learned to develop resiliency, develop good study habits, and take ownership of their academic journey. Topics in the course included financial wellness, mental and emotional health, physical wellness, study habits, time management, creating study plans, goal planning, and other relevant topics.

Challenges Experienced

One of the main and continuing challenges faced was due to financial constraints; because the

college in question was a small, private liberal arts school, there were fewer funds available to provide support for such meaningful programs. There were also no funds to hire additional staff, so the rollout of the program was based entirely on staff already embedded across the campus and doing this valuable work. Unsurprisingly for a campus-wide collaboration project, it was difficult initially to have buy-in from all units, despite the small size of the campus. Ultimately, the success of the project relied on the social capital of those leading the initiative. The academic recovery coordinator and later director of academic success started as a full-time faculty member and, during the initial rollout in 2022–23, was still teaching a full course load on top of their work with students in academic jeopardy. Having a fellow faculty member initially take the lead on this project helped with getting faculty members on board with the project. There was trust and respect built into the relationship, as there was a mutual understanding of the faculty workload.

Upon demonstrating the success of the program with limited resources in the first year, further resources were diverted to the project in the second year, as there was a meaningful impact on students' academic performance. Thus, institutional backing of the program became a business decision, as maintaining student enrollment in a tuition-dependent institution is one way to move towards further financial stability. Through the proven success of the program, funding for the peer tutoring program was approved. Prior to COVID, there had been peer tutors available. After the return to campus post-COVID, students would voluntarily help other students. Upon the full implementation of the Peer Tutoring Program, there was then sustained training and financial backing provided. Faculty members were also asked to hold two office hours a week during which they provided tutoring. These office hours were part of an ongoing practice but were further reinforced with the implementation of the Academic Recovery Program, as this became a focus of the provost's plan for improvement.

Those involved in the administration of the program actively met with stakeholders on campus to foster trusting relationships. Instead of waiting for those members to come to them, they approached stakeholders directly to explain what the program was, the expectations, and what assistance was needed. This process also took place over the course of several months and was not easygoing; often, there were different opinions about the best way to approach students, territoriality, and, at times, resentment. As this relationship was strengthened, some of these issues diminished. However, there was still ongoing negotiation between what those administering the academic recovery program saw as the responsibilities of faculty, auxiliary leads, and athletics in providing care to students and what those in these positions saw as their

work. One manner utilized to work past this was direct in-person communication with the faculty members, as well as trying to find ways to make the process as simple as possible for them.

Uniqueness of Program

All elements of the program described are drawn from programs implemented at other institutions of higher education; however, the effectiveness of this program over a relatively short period of time and its cost certainly do make it unique and worthy of study. Although collaborative projects and programs are typically difficult to employ and require strong leadership as well as collective buy-in, the benefit of this program is its flexibility and collaborative aspects. Having a program leader who had a teaching load along with other duties to begin program implementation created respect amongst fellow faculty and this assisted with buy-in. The program staff's proactive approach to engaging stakeholders also contributed greatly to the collective buy-in through the college. Most institutions operate on limited budgets, so the cost-effectiveness of this program is critical; however, to implement peer tutoring, there needs to be a financial component. In 2021-2022, Miles utilized volunteer-based tutoring, but this led to the burnout of the tutors themselves, particularly when tutoring began to interfere with their own academics. While there is, of course, concern about staff and faculty burnout for taking on these additional roles, institutional leadership should be mindful to reduce workloads elsewhere and acknowledge the work being done. Ideally, there should be financial compensation, and financial compensation did eventually happen once the program proved effective. Part of the success of the implementation of the program was that those who participated were consistently thanked and acknowledged for their hard work and dedication.

Recommendations

While most colleges and universities already have student academic recovery programs in place, there are ways to improve upon these programs better to address the ever diverse and increasing needs of students. The first step towards successful academic recovery program implementation is to perform a programmatic review of any existing programs to determine what is working and what is not working. Academic student success practitioners must receive and gather feedback not just from students who have been

part of the program but, also from any faculty or staff who have assisted in any way. This would involve further analysis of which practices have proven to have a high impact, which would mean potentially removing those that are not. As the student population continues to change and evolve, it is likely that what works for one generation of students will not work for the next, and institutions must evolve with those students to better address their needs instead of focusing on what might or might not have worked in the past.

Academic recovery programs should also focus on the creation of individualized success plans that may be shared with those across campus, while of course adhering to all federal guidelines and regulations. Some students may require more tutoring hours, whereas others may need financial assistance.

Providing such individualized assistance can help students feel they are more than just a number within the college system and that they are being treated as individuals with unique needs, which is critical for retention. Just as important as the creation of student individualized success plans, however, is having professional staff or student tutors follow up with students to track progress on their individualized plans.

Often, no matter the campus size, large or small, students have a tough time navigating resources that are available on campus, and those often in dire need of such services do not independently seek them out. Thus, requiring students to use these services as part of their requirements for being in academic jeopardy is a way to ensure they are seeking out necessary assistance. Additionally, the creation of a resource booklet with information on services that students may need is recommended; having this be readily accessible

across campus allows for decreased gatekeeping of knowledge as well as continuous collaborative input on ways to improve the booklet.

One of the key aspects in the implementation of academic recovery programs is cross-departmental collaboration. Gathering and reporting on students' needs cannot be done within a single department on any campus; there needs to be input and feedback received from units on campus. Those who already have close connections and relationships with students can utilize these connections to provide further support without students having to build entirely new relationships. If a student already has trust and respect for a staff or faculty member on campus, this person can provide necessary information to whoever is directing academic recovery programs. Collaborative efforts

One of the key aspects in the implementation of academic recovery programs is cross-departmental collaboration.

are of further importance regarding sharing any type of information and updates across units; for example, any academic recovery program would need access to grade information, the college's Learning Management Software (LMS), and tutoring information. Sharing this information would allow for more informed guidance for students when they meet with an academic coach successfully, as that person would have a clearer picture of how the student is doing.

All elements of the program described are drawn from programs implemented at other institutions of higher education; this program is meant to meet the needs of this population. It is difficult to say if any program in higher education is truly unique, given the constant tweaking and changes necessary to address the ever-changing student demographics, but the effectiveness of this program over a relatively short period of time and its cost certainly do make it unique and worthy of study. The further benefit of this program is the flexibility and collaboration aspect; collaborative projects and programs are typically difficult to employ and require strong leadership as well as collective buy-in.

Most institutions operate on limited budgets, so cost-effectiveness is critical. Yet implementing peer tutoring requires a financial component. Utilization of volunteer-based tutoring in Miles's academic recovery led to the burnout of the tutors themselves, particularly when tutoring began to interfere with peer tutors' own academics. When asking professional staff and faculty to take on additional roles to work with students in academic recovery, institutional leadership should be mindful to reduce workloads elsewhere and to consistently acknowledge and thank staff and faculty for their hard work and dedication. Ideally, there should be financial compensation, and financial compensation did eventually happen once the program proved effective.

The program piloted at Miles College was intended to be an intensive intervention program for Miles College's student population. However, given the rising needs of college-aged students, it is recommended that this program be duplicated and replicated at other institutions to increase academic engagement and retention for populations who are high-risk. HBCUs are uniquely positioned to address historical inequities in education; despite being founded as a way in which to uphold the doctrine 'separate but equal,' HBCUs have proven repeatedly their economic impact, political and intellectual impact, and their role in shaping future civically engaged leaders and scholars.

A final recommendation for institutions that are implementing or refining existing academic recovery programs concerning student tutor training, would be to incorporate social and emotional learning basics into the training process. In no way does this imply tutors should be expected to be counselors,

but instead, they are provided with the language and resources to point students in the right direction. The resource booklets provided tutors with the tools to provide timely and necessary recommendations for their peers. After learning tutors skills associated with initiative-taking advising and counseling services, peer tutors were better equipped to listen to, respond to, and direct students to resources or, if necessary, report concerns to appropriate staff. It is also important for higher education practitioners to check in on our tutors; they are students first, and their emotional and social well-being plays a major part in their ability to succeed academically and personally. Academic recovery staff must address these concerns and be available to answer questions. Because tutors would be on the front lines of assisting students, this would also be a chance for them to relay any concerns directly to their supervisor, who would be more able to address these problems in a professional manner. Part of the success of such a program would mean having a culture of collaboration across the campus, as faculty are a critical part of the deployment of tutorial services, and other departments' willingness to collaborate with academic success on a comprehensive resource booklet would mean quicker references to necessary services.

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Appendix

Academic Readiness Inventory

1. What are the usual causes of stress in your life? (Check all that apply.)
2. How stressed do you feel during the academic year (1 being the lowest, 5 being the highest)?
3. How do you usually experience stress (in the situations selected from the list above)? Please describe in a few words the physical sensations and the feelings you encounter when you call yourself feeling stressed.
4. Have you experienced any of the following in the past 6–12 months? (Check all that apply.)
5. What are your personal methods to relieve stress (select all that apply)?
6. Is writing essays and papers relatively easy for me? (True/False)
7. Do you have a system for taking notes? (Yes/No/Maybe)
8. Do you have a system for preparing for tests and exams? (Yes/No)
9. Do you know your academic strengths? (Yes/No/Maybe)
10. Do you know which academic tasks give you the most difficulty? If yes, please describe
11. If I don't understand something in class, I typically feel comfortable asking a question. Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree
12. Are you able to ignore difficulties and focus on the task at hand? (Yes/No)
13. Are you able to complete all the steps of a project/assignment in a timely manner? (Yes/No)
14. Do you know what you want to get out of college?
15. Why did you come to college?
16. I would be willing to give up extracurricular activities to make good grades. (true or false)
17. I think I can succeed in college. Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree

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