



TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## **Evaluation of Black Male Achievers Program**

**Office of Institutional Effectiveness**

**May 1, 2014**

## Evaluation of Black Male Achievers Program

This report presents the results of the evaluation of the Black Male Achievers Program (BMA). The overall purpose of the evaluation was to determine the educational and personal impact of the BMA program on its participants.

The BMA program at Tallahassee Community College (TCC) is designed to empower and educate its black male students on the importance of the successful completion of their post-secondary education through the practices of academic, social and occupational excellence.

The BMA Program offers its members a wide variety of academic and student services along with personal enrichment activities to advance their intellectual and personal growth. The program offers an array of seminars, films and other activities that reflect, celebrate, and motivate minority men.

The evaluation of the BMA program was structured around three primary research questions that focused on BMA activities, student achievement, and student personal growth. Also of interest are the participants' reactions and suggestions about the program that can be used to improve it. The research questions are listed below:

- Are there any differences between participants and non-participants of the BMA program in their academic performance?
- What do BMA participants perceive as the benefits of participating in the program?
- How can the BMA program be improved?

### Evaluation Design and Measures

The evaluation period covered the 2012-2013 academic year. The evaluation design was based on both quantitative and qualitative data collected from black male students: Students that participated in the BMA program and a random sample from the rest of the black male student population. Comparative analyses were conducted for the BMA participants and the non-BMA participants. Fifty-eight students were identified in the TCC data warehouse as BMA participants and fifty-eight BMA non-participants were randomly selected from the black male population during the fall 2012 semester. These two groups of students were tracked from the fall 2012 to the fall 2013 using five measures: Course success rate, fall-to-spring retention rate, fall-to-fall retention rate, percentage of students who graduated<sup>1</sup> and the grade point average (GPA).

Non-parametric inferential statistical methods (chi-square) were used to test the differences between groups on course success rate, fall-to-spring retention rate, fall-to-fall retention rate, and percentage of students who graduated. It should be mentioned that non-parametric methods do not rely on the estimation of parameters (such as the mean or the standard deviation) describing the distribution of the variable of interest in the population. For GPA

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<sup>1</sup> The percentage of students who have graduated from these two groups of students as of Fall 2013. The BMA and Non-BMA participants were treated as two independent samples for this study.

analysis, a parametric method (t-test) was employed to test whether there was a significance difference between the mean GPA of these two groups of students.

BMA members were asked to complete an online survey that solicited their feedback regarding how they learned about the program and why they chose to join the program. They were also asked to identify which program activities they had participated in and the degree to which those activities positively impacted their success at TCC, and the extent to which the BMA program, in general, has helped them succeed at TCC. Finally, they were asked questions that addressed their overall satisfaction with the program and whether they would recommend it to other students. Twenty-two BMA members completed the survey. This represents a response rate of 38%.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness also conducted a focus group session with 10 members of the Black Male Achievers program on April 18, 2014. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 29 years. The average age was 22.6 years. Six of the participants (60%) identified themselves as full-time students. Four (40%) said they are part-time students.

Participants were asked to respond to the six questions listed below.

1. What impact has the program had on you as a student?
2. What impact has the program had on you as a person?
3. What program activities have you benefited the most from?
4. What is the purpose/mission of the program? (How would you describe the purpose/mission of the program?)
5. Is the program achieving its mission? Why?
6. How can the program be improved?

As participants brainstormed answers to the questions, the focus group facilitator typed their responses into a Word document that participants could view on a projection screen. After each question was answered, group members reviewed their responses and combined similar topics. Once this process was completed, participants reached consensus on the top five responses, in no particular order of importance, to each question.

Information collected from the focus group sessions and the survey were compared and integrated to answer the last two research questions (e.g., What do BMA participants perceive as the benefits of participating in the program? How can the BMA program be improved?).

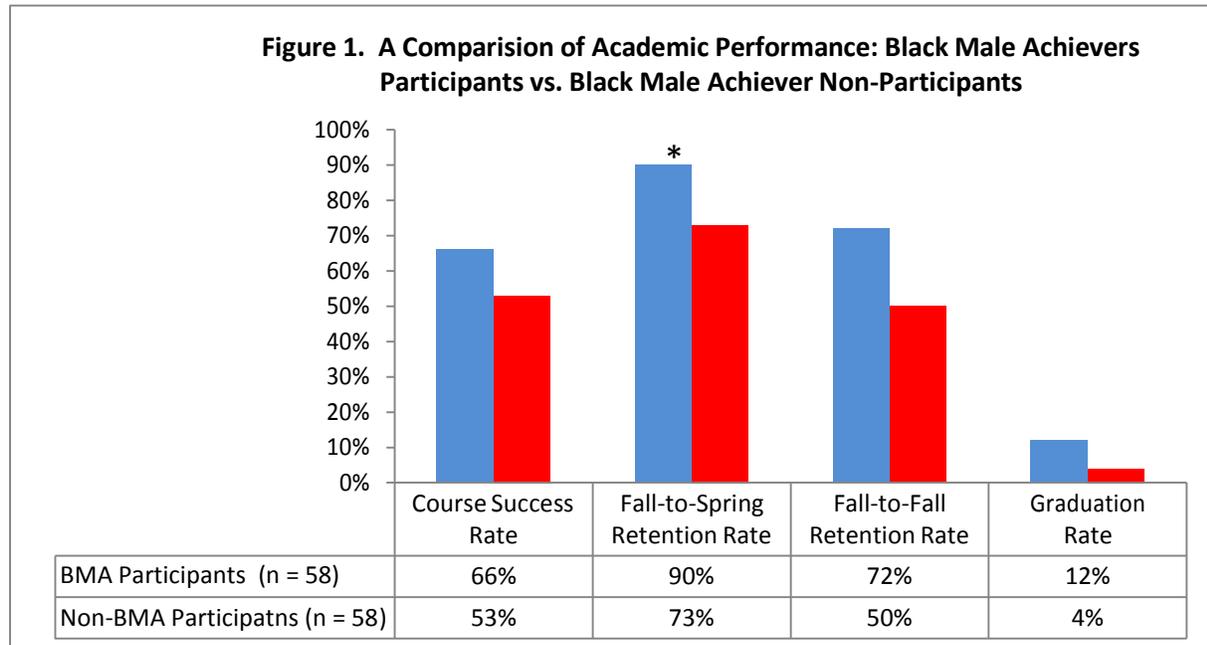
## **Results**

### **Are there any differences between participants and non-participants of the BMA program in their academic performance?**

Figures 1 and 2 below show the comparison data on academic performance of BMA participants vs. BMA non-BMA participants. As can be seen from the descriptive analyses, on all five measures the BMA participants had an edge over their non-participants counterparts: course

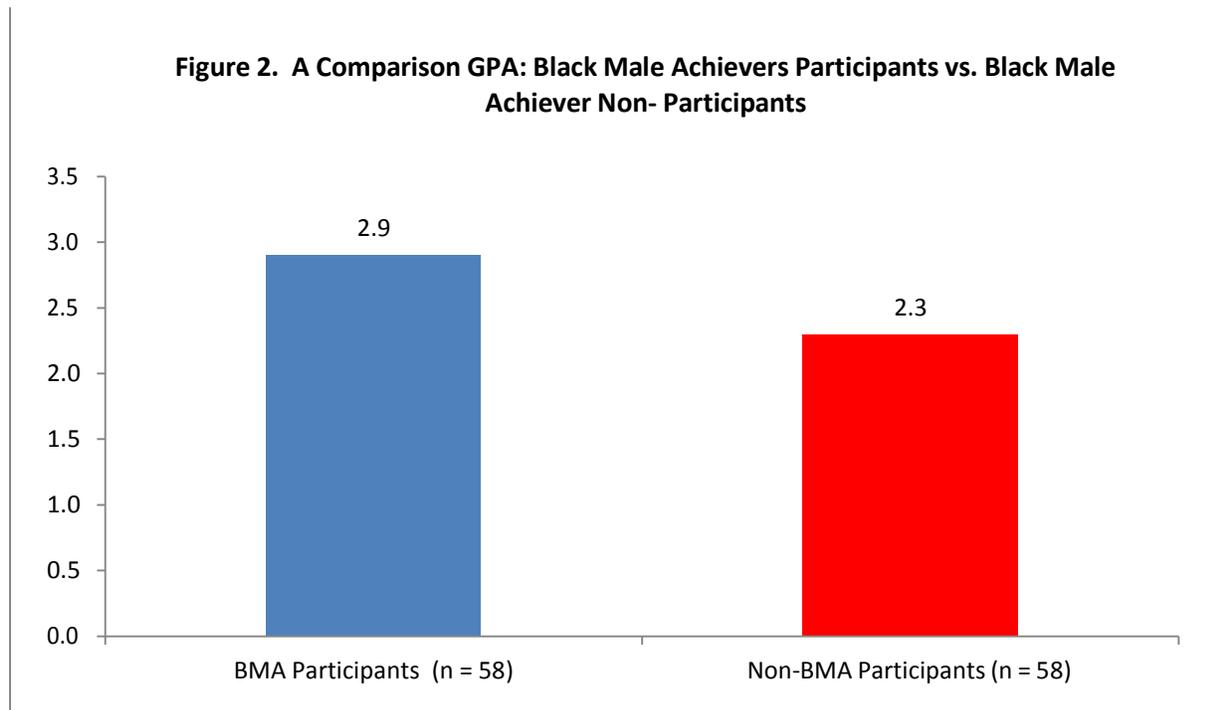
success (66%-53%), fall-to-spring retention rate (90% vs. 73%) and fall-to-fall retention rate (72% vs. 50%), and percentage of students who graduated (12% vs. 4%). Inferential analysis indicated that BMA members are retained from fall-to-spring ( $p < .05$ ) and fall-to-fall ( $p < .05$ ) at significantly higher rates than non-BMA peers. Furthermore, the analysis for course success rates, percentage of students who graduated, and GPA did not yield any statistical differences.

**Figure 1. A Comparison of Academic Performance: Black Male Achievers Participants vs. Black Male Achiever Non-Participants**



\* $p < .05$

**Figure 2. A Comparison GPA: Black Male Achievers Participants vs. Black Male Achiever Non-Participants**



## What do BMA participants perceive as the benefits of participating in the program?

Survey and focus group results indicate that BMA participants perceive the program as benefiting them. As the data in Figure 3 indicate, when asked to rate the extent does the Black Male Achievers Program helped them succeed at TCC, 77% of the survey respondents indicated “very much” and 18% indicated “for the most part.” One hundred percent of respondents agreed that they would recommend the program to other students (Figure 4), which is another indicator that members find the program beneficial.

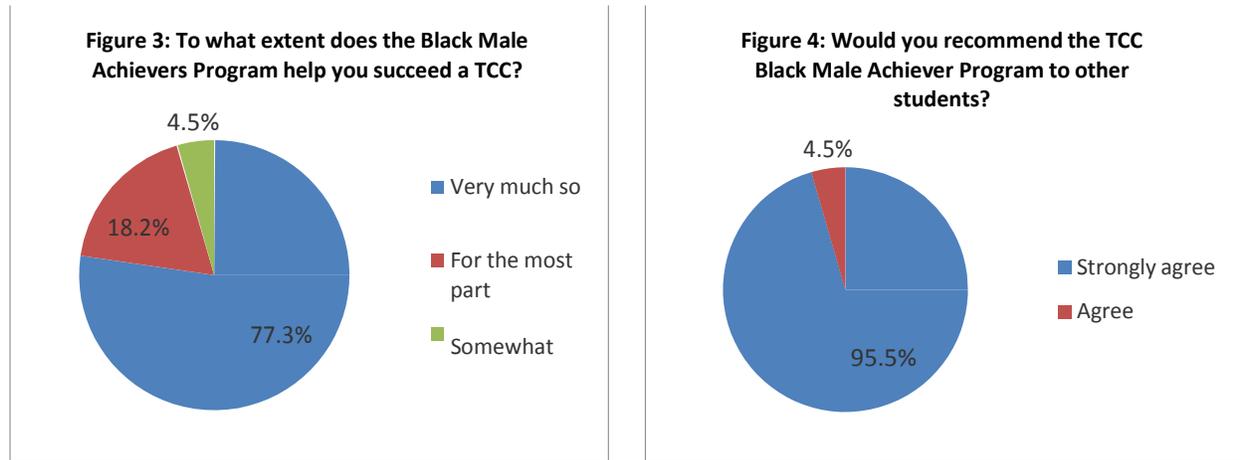


Table 1 displays focus group participants’ perceptions of the top five benefits of program participation from a student perspective and from a personal development perspective. In terms of their role as a student, focus group participants mentioned leadership opportunities and opportunities the program provides them to get involved in campus activities and organizations. Program requirements (e.g., wearing professional attire, spending six hours per week studying in the Learning Commons) are perceived as program benefits in that they support time management (although perhaps time-on-task is a more accurate term here), facilitate confidence-building, support the development of public speaking skills, and lead to improved grades. Program members appreciate the opportunity the program affords them to interact with “like-minded” male peers who serve as role models.

From a personal development perspective, BMA focus group participants mentioned behaviors that the program reinforces, including taking personal responsibility and being accountable to oneself, “listening to and responding to different people,” and professionalism. Participants believe the program has empowered them to make a difference in the world and make changes they want to see happen. They also perceive the program as instilling self-confidence and being a “life changer.”

**Table 1: BMA Participants’ Top Five Perceptions of Program Impact**

<b>What impact has the program had on you as a student?</b>	<b>What impact has the program had on you as a person?</b>
Leadership opportunities inside and outside the classroom. For example at every meeting we stand up and speak. This increases confidence. We have a presence on campus. A lot of us are involved in activities and organizations on campus. It is a requirement that we dress in professional attire. This requirement as become a lifestyle. We lead by example.	The program supports responsibility by adhering to the rules and regulations of the program. We hold ourselves accountable to ourselves. The requirements of the program become a habit and that helps us develop. We start doing things for ourselves rather than because the program says we should.
Time management – six hours of studying at the learning commons per week.	It improves our communication skills. Being able to listen and respond to different people. I have learned how to understand people. I’ve developed professional habits, such as being punctual. Dressing professional, goal setting, ambition, motivation and living life without fear.
Program impacts me as an achiever – someone who finishes what I start. It has impacted my grades. The program has motivated me and has helped me accomplish a lot.	I have motivation to make a difference. I learned this from speakers who have come in. We are developing skills to change the world. I am in the field of political science; I want to be able to change the world. The program has taught us that we have a voice and that we can make changes that we want to see happen.
As a student, being able to see my brothers and knowing that I have people around me who have the same ethnicity and outlook as me. Opportunity to interact with like-minded people.	I’ve learned how to teach myself. I’ve become self-sufficient. The program has helped me find myself. The program has taught me that it is okay to be different. I’ve learned how to think for myself. I can do anything I set my mind to. The program has taught me how to find mentors.
Being in BMA makes you accountable because you are representing the BMA group. I represent BMA and since I represent BMA, I do not want to make the program look bad.	It is a life changer. I was going down the wrong path before joining the program. It helped me get my life on track. It taught us not to set limits for ourselves. It promotes well-roundedness.

Survey results affirm program impacts identified during the focus group session. Survey respondents indicated that the program has allowed them to develop skills (e.g., leadership, communication, time management), grow personally (e.g., become more open-minded, increase

self-awareness, grow spiritually, become a better person, make good decisions), and given them opportunities to become involved in campus activities and in the community. Members also perceive the program as helping them achieve their goals. Being part of a “brotherhood” was another theme identified in the survey comments. Comments indicate the program is perceived as creating a positive environment or culture that supports individual accountability, expose members to positive role models, and allow them to stand up to peer pressure.

Focus group participants identified 14 specific example program activities from which they benefited the most. The top five (in no particular order) activities are listed below. The top five activities (1) provide students with exposure to positive role models, (2) offer students opportunities to network with professionals, (3) expose them to black history, and (4) allow them to give back to the community beyond TCC.

1. Black, Brown and College Bound Conference: We met potential mentors – people who are recognized in their area of study and field of work. We got advice on steps they took to get to their current position.
2. African American Calendar – Legislators came to campus and we got to meet them (Andrew Gilliam; the mayor of Quincy).
3. SGA forum - BMA – *Martin’s Dream is Forever*. We got together with other TCC organizations and discussed black history.
4. Went to the homeless shelter – opportunities to give back to the community/breakfast for the homeless
5. Black history meeting – We learned how to trace our roots (*Does Black History Begin with Slavery?*)

Overall, BMA members who participated in the focus group perceive the program to be achieving its mission to promote academic development, professionalism, and civic and social engagement. They cited the fact that 12 out of 68 members are graduating this May and that a majority of them are transferring to Florida State University, University of Central Florida, University of North Florida, and Florida A&M University. They attributed the program’s contribution to leadership skills as one reason why three BMA members are Student Government Association (SGA) senators, one is the current SGA president, and another is the SGA president elect for 2014-2015.

### **How can BMA participants’ suggestions and survey responses help improve the program?**

Survey and focus group results indicate several opportunities for program improvement. Suggestions the program may want to consider are provided below:

Survey results indicate that the program may want to consider encouraging more faculty, advisors, and high school counselors to increase their communication about the program when they interact with potential members. According to survey results, 53% of BMA participants heard about the program from TCC faculty, followed by an advisor (41%) and a classmate (29%). No one mentioned high school counselors as an information sources. Seven students indicated “other” as an information source and indicated they learned about the program from the program’s coordinator, email messages (they did not say from whom), friends, and during a

school function. One survey respondent suggested that the program increase advertising and promotion of the BMA program.

While survey responses generally indicate widespread involvement in BMA activities, the program may want to consider ways to ensure students with specific needs participate in activities that participants’ perceive as having a “strong” or “very strong” impact on their success at TCC. According to the survey data in Table 2, 71% of BMA members indicated they participated in small group tutoring. Of those participants, 93% felt small group tutoring had a “strong” or “very strong” impact on their success at TCC. A similar pattern was identified for one-on-one tutoring in that 71% of participants indicated they participated in the activity. Of those that participated, 87% percent said it had a “strong” or “very strong” impact on their success. The program should collect additional data to determine if students are participating in activities that support their needs. This approach may allow the program to proactively identify students, who like two survey respondents, admitted barriers that are keeping them from being as successful as they could be are “not studying like I need to” and “procrastination.”

**Table 2: Percent of Survey Respondents who Participated in Program Activities and the Percent of Participants who Indicated Activities had a “Strong” or “Very Strong” Impact on their Success at TCC**

Activity	Percent of respondents who reported they participated in the activity	Percent of activity participants who indicated activity had a “Strong or Very Strong” impact on their success at TCC
Interacting with fellow BMA students	95.2%	100.0%
Interacting with TCC faculty	95.0%	100.0%
A sense of belonging to a community	95.0%	94.7%
Specialized academic advising	90.5%	94.7%
Specialized Workshops and seminars	85.7%	83.3%
Career counseling and planning	85.0%	88.2%
Professional networking	81.0%	88.2%
Small group tutoring	71.4%	93.3%
One-on-one tutoring	71.4%	86.7%

Focus group participants agreed that the following activities would improve the program:

- Provide members with “more social networking” opportunities.
- The program should have “more funding for “bigger” figures to come on campus to make presentations.”
- Provide BMA members with opportunities to interact with campus leaders (i.e., the President, vice presidents, and deans).

Survey respondents offered the following suggestions:

- The program should “hold more outreach programs that target black men outside of TCC.”
- BMA should “take on more of a role in the community and on campus.”

Finally, one survey question asked respondents to list what barriers, if any, are preventing them from being successful at TCC. Seventeen out of 22 respondents answered the question. Eleven BMA members said they did not have any barriers or that they had conquered barriers that were preventing them from being successful (e.g., “speaking in front of people,” using TCC support services, taking responsibility for himself, learning that “anything is possible”) with help from the BMA program. Two students mentioned their financial situation as a barrier, one mentioned his work schedule as a barrier, and two people mentioned “not studying like I need to” and “procrastination.”

## **Conclusion**

The Black Male Achievers program has a positive impact on its participants. Compared to non-BMA peers, BMA members have higher course success rates, higher fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall retention rates, and higher percentage of students who graduated. However, fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall retention were the only metrics that reached statistical significance. BMA participants perceive the program to have a positive impact on them as students and from a personal development perspective. They believe that program requirements and activities contribute to their success.

One of the limitations of this evaluation study is its small sample size. The recommendation is that the program needs to expand to include more participants. The College should continue to assess the impact the program has on its participants.