

# Chapter 10

## Using a Multi-Tiered System of Support: A Proposed Model for Incoming Students at a HBCU

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### ABSTRACT

*In the K-12 setting, multi-tiered models have emerged over the past 10 years to address academic and behavioral student issues. Various models (e.g., Response to Intervention or Positive Behavioral Supports) have been developed using a multi-tiered framework in an effort to be proactive and reduce special education referrals. Key components in this framework include teacher training, universal screenings, early intervention, on-going assessment, and use of evidenced-based practice. A review of the recent literature did not yield any studies related to the application of a multi-tiered model at the post-secondary level. This chapter describes the design of a multi-tiered support model for use at the college level. This proposed model utilizes a peer tutoring/mentoring program and other college support services. It is designed to coordinate campus services and provide various levels of support for incoming students at Bowie State University, especially those with pre-existing learning, behavioral and mental health issues.*

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter proposes an innovative approach to addressing the problems faced by most incoming college students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). This approach utilizes a multi-tiered model, which provides a system of support with the ultimate goal of improving retention and graduation rates. This model is similar to multi-tiered service delivery models, which are used currently in K-12 settings. It focuses on universal screenings, prevention, early intervention, assessment, and on-going

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monitoring and evaluation at each tier (Stoiber, 2014). In order to demonstrate the efficacy of this model, the major components of the chapter will include (1) a historical overview of the multi-tiered service delivery model and how it may be adapted at the college level using a peer tutoring and mentoring program along with other college support services; (2) a review of the current common problems that students face during their college years; and (3) the application of this model to address specific academic, social-emotional and behavioral student issues.

## **BACKGROUND**

Multi-tiered models have emerged over the past 10 years in the educational arena to address academic, social-emotional and behavioral student issues. Examples of the implementation of this model come out of the K-12 literature. Various models (e.g., *Response to Intervention or Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports*) were developed using a multi-tiered framework in an effort to 1) respond to issues regarding school reform in the K-12 schools; 2) reduce referrals and minimize over-identifying students for special education services; 3) foster an atmosphere of prevention and early intervention; 4) provide all children early access to high quality instruction using effective practices; 5) incorporate the use of assessment, data collection and monitoring to drive instructional and intervention planning for emerging academic and behavioral concerns (Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act, 2006; Klotz & Canter, 2007; McKeveit & Braaksma, 2008). Knoff and Dyer (2014) describe the multi-tiered system as a framework or a model. It is not a particular program. The Multi-Tiered System of Support is described typically as an approach that incorporates strategies and supports to address the academic, social-emotional or behavioral needs of students at multiple tiers using various levels of intensity. Where the model has been implemented with integrity, it has resulted in reasonable success for the stakeholders. We anticipate that implementation of this proposed model will garner similar success at the post-secondary level.

## **MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER**

This chapter describes how the Department of Psychology at Bowie State University (BSU) is collaborating with the university community to design a unique multi-tiered System of Support model (SoS model) to address academic, social- emotional and behavioral needs of incoming freshman at this HBCU. A brief description of the model will be provided followed by a general summary of its key components. Using specific examples from this project, a description of how the model is modified to address the needs of the department will be given. The authors will delineate how academic issues such as time management, learning styles, study techniques, and test-taking skills will be addressed using the model. In the area of social- emotional and behavioral issues, the authors will describe the use of the model to address issues such as depression, anxiety, and stress.

## **Issues, Controversies, Problems**

College is supposed to be an exciting experience for most students. However, attending college can be very challenging as it poses many problems, which are often unique to each student's circumstances. These problems are rooted in academic, financial, social-emotional and behavioral factors, which students

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