

## “The Amazing Vanishing Black Male is Playing at a College Campus Near You”

### How Significant is the Need?

Bay Ridge College, founded in 1953, is located in Kendleton, Texas. The continually renovated college facility includes residential dormitories and other supporting buildings on an 88-acre campus located in Fort Bend County, one of the fastest-growing counties in the Nation. The campus offers a serene and structured environment away from the distractions that often derail students in urban cities.

This type of educational environment is needed to combat the “state of emergency” that exists for young men of color in many of our post-secondary institutions. The research points out:

- Every year, across the country, a dangerously high percentage of students—disproportionately poor and minority—disappear from the educational pipeline before graduating from high school. Nationally, only about 68 percent of all students who enter 9th grade will graduate “on time” with regular diplomas. While the graduation rate for white students is 75 percent, only about 50 percent of Black, Hispanic, and Native-American students earn regular diplomas alongside their classmates (Schott Educational Foundation, 2010).
- Low academic achievement, high grade-level repetition and overpopulation in special education programs were all factors that were found to impede achievement for African American, Latino and Native American males (The Educational Experiences of Young Men of Color, 2011).
- *Only about 26%* of African Americans, 18% of Latinos, and 24% of Native Americans/Pacific Islanders hold an associate degree or higher...as compared to 49% for white Americans and 70% for Asian Americans (The Educational Experiences of Young Men of Color, 2011).
- *More Black Men in Prison than in College:* A study from the Justice Policy Institute (2002). <http://www.justicepolicy.org>; a Washington, DC-based think-tank that advocates for alternatives to prison, has found that after two decades of harsh criminal justice policies, there are more black men in jail or prison than in college. At the end of 2000, 791,600 black men were behind bars and 603,032 were enrolled in colleges or universities. By contrast, in 1980 -- before the prison boom -- black men in college outnumbered black men behind bars by a ratio of more than 3 to 1, the study found. The report, “Cellblocks or Classrooms? The Funding of Higher Education and Corrections and Its Impact on African American Men,” also found that spending on education has suffered as a result of the imprisonment binge. Between 1985 and 2000, the increase in state spending on corrections was nearly double that of the increase to

higher education (\$20 billion versus \$10.7 billion), and the total increase in spending on higher education by states was 24%, compared with 166% for corrections. The study's findings were significant and tell us there has been a public policy far overemphasizing investment in criminal justice instead of in education for this population. It also tells us that the life chances of a black male going to prison is greater today than the chances of a black male going to college.

- The number of black men in college dwindled as only 35% graduated within six years from college. The graduation rate of black men is lower than that of any group. Only 35 percent of black males enrollees graduated within six years from N.C.A.A. Division I colleges in 1996, compared with 59 percent of white males, 46 percent of Hispanic men, 41 percent of American Indian males and 45 percent of the black women who entered the same year. (<http://www.bet.com>. (2008) CNN's Documentary (July, 2008): *Black in America; The Black Man*, reported:
  1. The number of Black men imprisoned is nearly one million.
  2. Black men are six times more likely to go to prison than white men.
  3. Black men who are former convicts have a 0% chance of getting a call back from a job interview.
  4. Black men with a college degree have the same employment opportunities as white men with felony convictions.
  5. White employers indicate they have a concern with how Black men dress; many employers believe that Black men are lazy, have poor work ethics, and are threatening and/or criminals.