



Reimagining Challenges and Opportunities for BMOC's:

COVID-19 Pandemic, Social Justice Reckoning and Beyond

My son...

*I wish you the strength to
face challenges with confidence
along with the wisdom
to choose your battles carefully.*

*I wish you adventure
on your journey, and may
you always stop to help
someone along. Listen to
your heart and take risks
carefully. Remember how
much you are loved.*

I am so proud of you! Arthur unknown

My Story!

Sharecroppers





SLAVERY by another Name

Sharecropping

After the Civil War, former slaves sought jobs, and planters sought laborers. The absence of cash or an independent credit system led to the creation of sharecropping.

Sharecropping is a system where the landlord/planter allows a tenant to use the land in exchange for a share of the crop. This encouraged tenants to work to produce the biggest harvest that they could, and ensured they would remain tied to the land and unlikely to leave for other opportunities. |

- Black Americans in this period continued to live in poverty
- sharecropping kept them in *de facto* slavery
- 1915 - boll weevil wiped out the cotton crop
- white landowners went bankrupt & forced blacks off their land



Why are we here?

- Why do you work in this space?
- What do you hope to get from this conference?
- Are you here because you are asked to be present? It's part of your duties, so you are here meeting your responsibility?
- Do you have the passion for this work?



Group Norms to Conference By

- Assume good intent.
- Lean into discomfort.
- Practice mutual respect
- Seek out the voices that are not present or represented
- Practice humility and empathy
- Support each other as a family, community member
- Brevity is best. Allow others to share
- Attempt to ensure that every one has had a chance to share
- Kindness is the best gift
- Ensure that every ends or leaves the conversation in a good space



Working with Intention

Most of us have been guilty of fantasizing or talking about ‘the day’ when the pandemic is over.

As leaders, it is imperative that we are leading intentionally and not just talking about what we intend to do. That means leading firstly ourselves with purpose, clarity and confidence and then leading our people – and not just the outcomes. Failing to do so not only see’s us risking disengagement, misalignment, conflict and productivity but also sees our own leadership credibility called into question.

Living and leading intentionally doesn’t mean that we always have to be pushing, striving or seeking out the next big thing. Let’s face it; we would be exhausted if we did those things 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. Sometimes taking time out to re-energize and re-engage needs to be an intentional act. What we do need to do is get crystal clear on what we want and why and to then start closing the gap between intent and action. It means being realistic about how we do it and what offers the most impact.

We are at a very serious point in the evolution of education and how we integrate people of color in to the dramatically changing economy, especially our young men of color. If we don't get this right, we run the risk of





AGAINST ALL ODDS

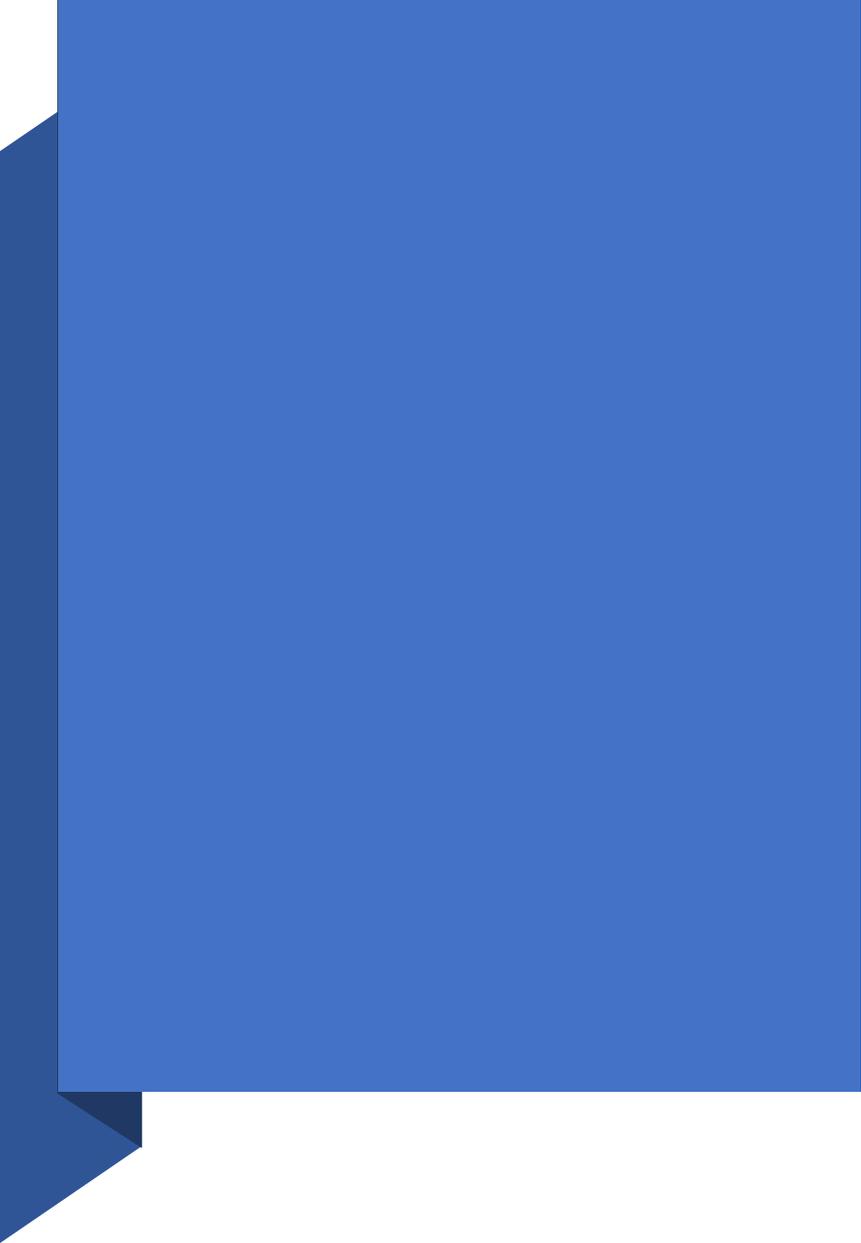
We must Increase high school graduation, college access, retention, and graduation rates among young men of color!

The aphorism "a rising tide lifts all boats" is associated with the idea that an improved economy will benefit all participants and that economic policy, particularly government economic policy, should therefore focus on broad economic efforts.



Here's the challenge for Higher Education:

For the first time we are preparing students for a future we cannot clearly describe.



As COVID-19 wanes, employers are accelerating the use of robots. Where does that leave workers?

WASHINGTON — As the U.S. economy rebounds from the COVID-19 pandemic, employers are turning to greater use of automation, including robots, rather than calling back workers or hiring new ones in many cases.

By Don Lee, Staff Writer, Los Angeles Times; MAY 4, 2021



The Missing Men: The gender gap among college students only worsened during the pandemic. Is it a problem colleges are willing to tackle?

George Wilson knew remote learning was not for him. So when his classes went online because of the coronavirus pandemic, Wilson, a then-45-year-old furnace operator in Ohio, did what thousands of men nationwide did last year — he stopped out.

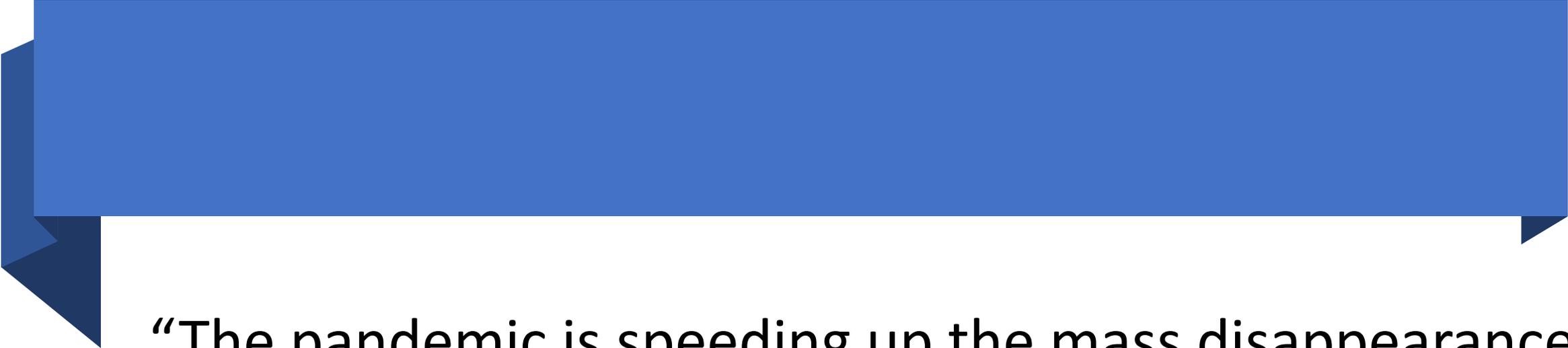
On campus, “I’m a machine,” said Wilson, who is pursuing an associate degree at Lakeland Community College, in Kirtland, Ohio. “I don’t have that same drive at home.”

Wilson is part of an exodus of men away from college that has been taking place for decades, but that accelerated during the pandemic.

And it has enormous implications, for colleges and for society at large.

By Kelley Field

Chronicle of Higher Education, July 1, 2021



“The pandemic is speeding up the mass disappearance of men in college.

The decline in enrollment has been seven times as steep among men as among women.”

Jon Marcus, January 19, 2021

<http://hechingerreport.org/the-pandemic-is-speeding-up-the-mass-disappearance-of-men-from-college/>

Colleges nationwide face rapid decline in male enrollment — but ASU bucks the trend

Martine Garcia, a first-generation student at Chandler-Gilbert Community College, was surprised when he was asked a few years ago to be president of a new school club.

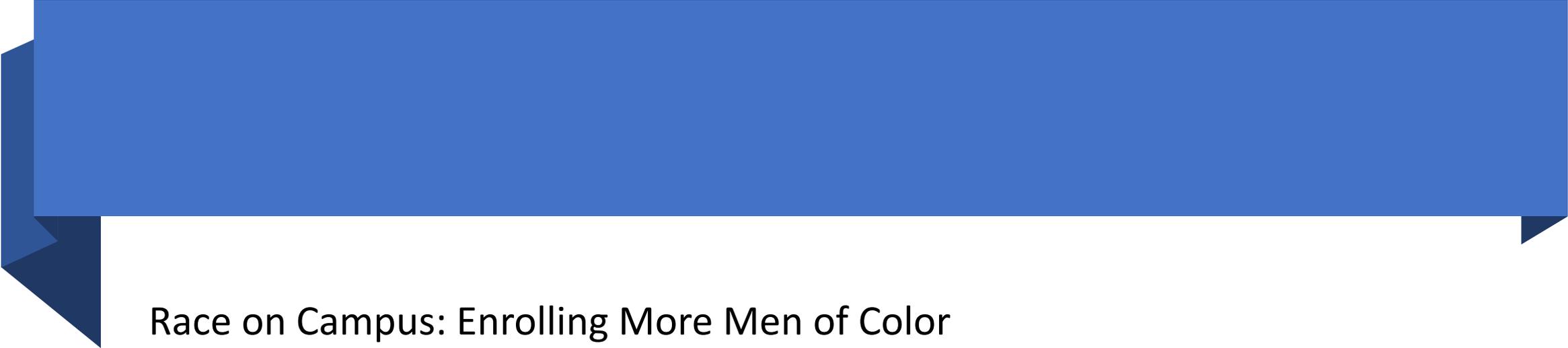
He hadn't been particularly involved on campus, and the invitation to head the Male Empowerment Network, a support and mentoring group for minority male students, didn't really make sense.

“My immediate reaction was, ‘Why is this person helping me? What do they want?’” Garcia recalled.

But he soon learned he's part of a shrinking group when it comes to higher education: Men.

A generation of young men are disappearing from colleges — a trend accelerated by the pandemic. In Arizona, the trend is most visible at Maricopa Community Colleges. Arizona State University, however, has been able to buck the trend so far with a 5% increase in male enrollment in the 2020-21 school year.

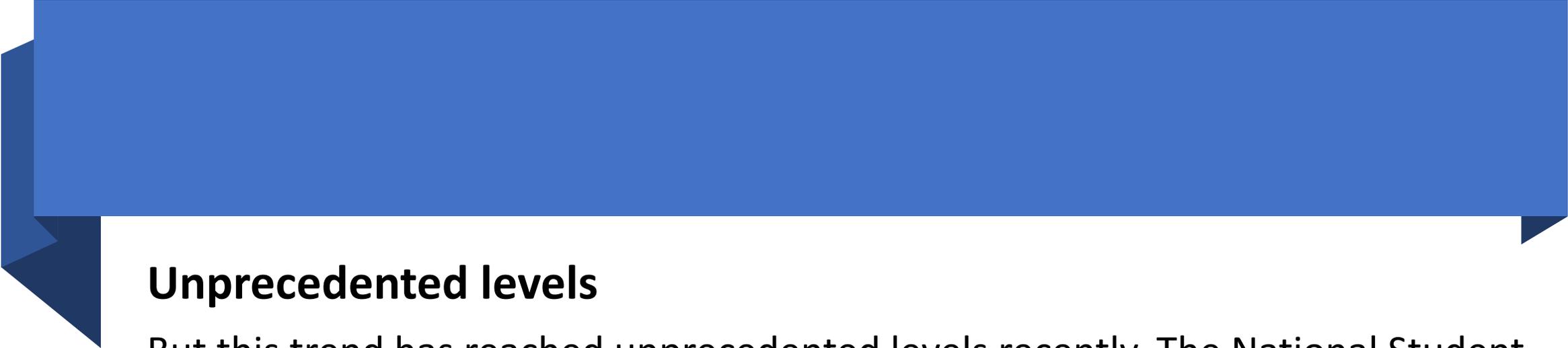
The gender gap at colleges has been slowly growing for decades, according to the Department of Education. Women outnumber men when it comes to both enrolling and staying in college.

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Race on Campus: Enrolling More Men of Color

Last spring, men made up just over 40 percent of the nation's undergraduate students — an all-time low. The enrollment declines were especially pronounced among Black and Latino men at community colleges. This week, our Katie Mangan examines what one university system is doing to stem the flow.

Katherine Mangan, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 4, 2022

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Unprecedented levels

But this trend has reached unprecedented levels recently. The National Student Clearinghouse reported that women made up 59.5% of college students, while men made up 40.5% at the close of the 2020-21 academic year. This is a major shift in the collegiate population, which men historically have dominated. And it's happening across all ethnic and socio-economic groups.

Universities have always been conscious of under-enrollment for men of color, such as Garcia, and have created outreach programs to boost enrollment and graduation. But the downward trend is also prominent among white males, whose enrollment declined 13.4% from 2019 to 2021, according to clearinghouse data. Enrollment by Black men dropped 14.8% and by Latino men 10.3%, the data says.

The future of work

We are beginning to get a glimpse of the future of work as we observe the dramatic impact of the growing forces of automation, robotization, artificial intelligence and the gig economy.

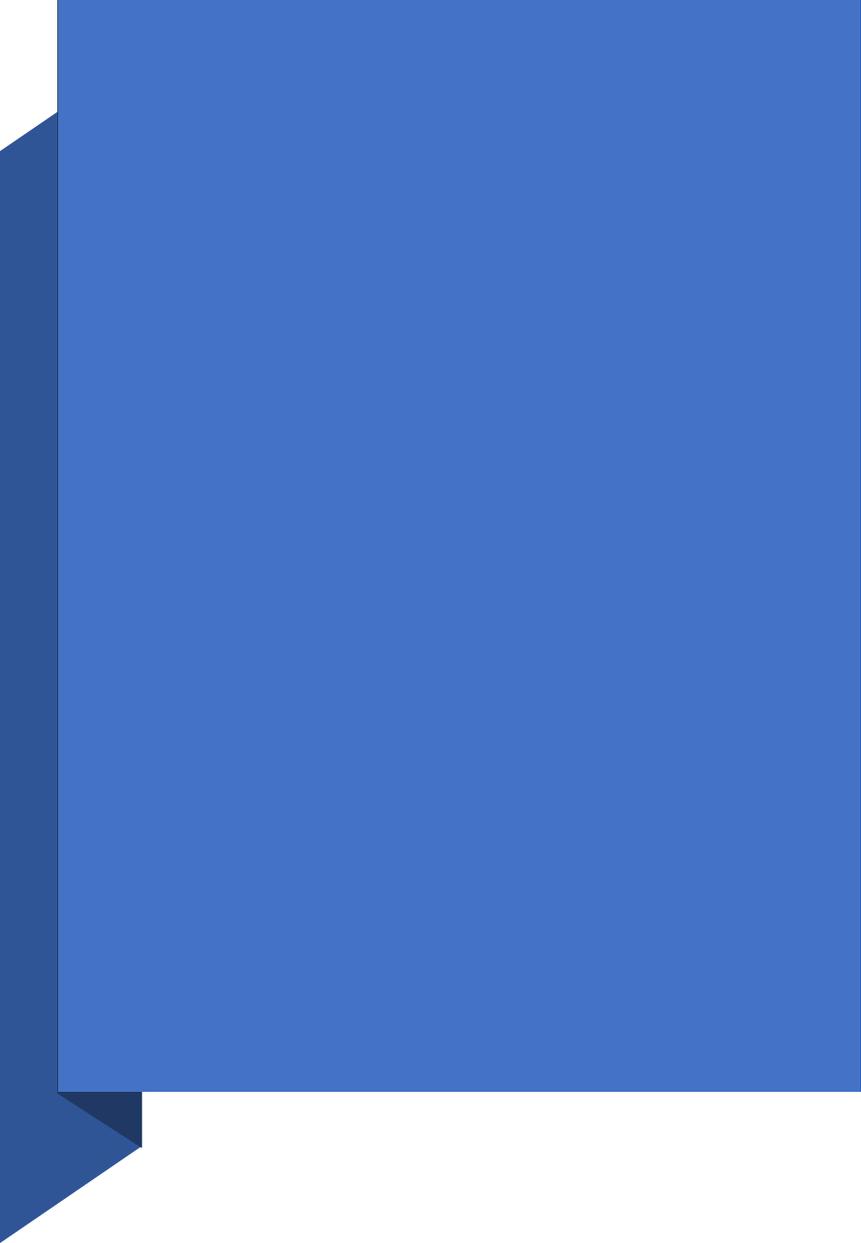
Companies such as Apple, Google, Microsoft, and others are no longer requiring bachelor's degrees for their new hires. They are hiring based on skills, not a degree. New and disruptive pathways for youth to acquire those skills must be developed.

Leaders in Boston and major cities must take on the task of eliminating the wealth gap with a greater sense of urgency. If not, Boston and other cities will cement an underclass of urban people who may never recover. Not another lower class, but an unskilled underclass of people. The underclass of the future as described by sociologists such as Dennis Gilbert (*The American Class Structure in an Age of Growing Inequality*; 2018) would be the most disenfranchised socio-economic demographic with the least access to resources America has ever seen. Most people in this class would not have jobs, let alone qualify for a space mission.

In a very short time, the loud promises, the sense of urgency to create long delayed systemic change in response to and following the murder of George Floyd has faded. Coming out of the pandemic and the social justice protests, many urban youth are confused, angry, and bewildered. Some increase in crime may have its roots in their financial despair. We are headed for a social crisis. When it happens before us, we can be shocked, but we shouldn't be surprised.

Stay Woke!

Don't be asleep thinking that the voting rights conversation is all about voting. We have a new set of gangsta's that are trying to keep their hold on the wealth gap.

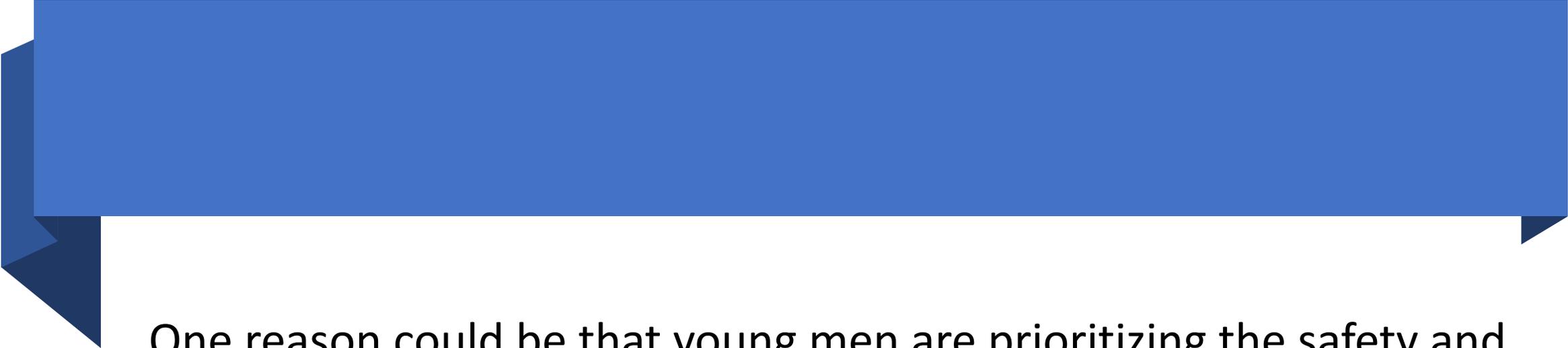


KEY TAKEAWAYS

Robot adoption will likely be a critical determinant of productivity growth and has the potential to reshape global supply chains.

Improvements in automation technology such as robotics are poised to bring more automated manufacturing production work to developed countries, rather than offshore it to lower-wage countries.

Policymakers should support—rather than resist—the development of the next production system.



One reason could be that young men are prioritizing the safety and happiness of their families in a time of uncertainty, she said.

“They’re being faced with the harsh reality that they’ve got to make money to help the family out. They’ve got to be working at this point,” Sierra said. “And then you throw upon that that going to college is expensive and that you’re going to end up in a hole before you even start your life.”

Strategic Planning

Understanding the Nature of the Risks

Facts about young males in school—

- More likely to be suspended or expelled—
- More likely to drop-out—
- More likely to be placed in special education—
- More likely to be missing from honors, gifted and advanced placement
- More likely to be under-represented among school personnel (except as custodians, security guards and disciplinarians)

Strategic Planning--Schools

Understand the societal patterns facing young men of color

- Black males are the only segment of the US population with a declining life expectancy
- Young males of color are more likely to:
 - Be arrested, convicted, incarcerated, and executed
 - Be unemployed and discriminated against in labor market
 - To suffer from colon cancer, heart disease, HIV/AIDS
 - To be murdered or to become a victim of violence
 - To be denied the right to vote
 - To be under-represented in professional careers, over-represented in military, sports and entertainment

Strategic Planning--Schools

What Schools Can Do to Promote Success

- Demystify school success
- Teach study skills, organization
- Show them what excellent work looks like
- Use discipline to build character and personal responsibility
- Punitive vs. preventative strategies
- Teach code switching
- Speech, dress, demeanor
- Code of the streets vs. the code of the school

Strategic Planning

Open the gym or other facility for young men come in early to get cleaned up

Consider purchasing/renting a house nearby for young men who need a positive environment with other men

Mentoring program—get every man connected to an adult professional or another man on campus

Strategic Planning

Draw on Cultural Resources

Draw upon positive family, peer, community socialization

Traditions, rituals and practices

Reinforce and teach pro-social values

Implement rituals that reinforce positive values and build community

Incorporate positive elements of popular culture

Strategic Planning

Create Positive School Cultures•

Create a school culture that– Challenges stereotypes –
Excellence

Focuses on values and norms – Urban Prep: more
powerful than culture of the streets

Adopt rituals and practices that reinforce core values

Town hall meetings

Student conduct panels

Strategic Planning

01

Cultivate
Agency:
Influencing the
choices that
students make

02

Educate them
about their
history and
culture - Paul
Robeson
Institute

03

Provide
opportunities
for community
service, activism
and leadership
development -
Urban Arts–
Utilize
community-
centered
problem-posing
curriculum

04

Channel the
energy, don't
crush it –
Sports, music,
art

05

Teach boys to
understand
their emotions
and to deal
constructively
with the anger –
Emotional
intelligence

Strategic Planning

Build a safety net to support boys of color

Extended Learning

Health and Nutrition

Family engagement

Community partners

We must re-imagine higher education
for our young men.

- We are not going back to some of the old ways of expecting men to show up on our doorsteps. We may have to fight for them.



Michael Collins is a vice president at JFF. He recently took the helm of a new JFF initiative to directly address the ways in which postsecondary education and training systems can help members of vulnerable populations advance economically—with a special focus on Black learners and workers.

In this new role, he will lead the development and implementation of a strategy that will serve as the foundation of a JFF effort to influence the practices of educational institutions, workforce organizations, intermediaries, associations, states, systems, and philanthropy.

Before joining JFF, Michael served as assistant commissioner for participation and success at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, where he collaborated with state and federal officials, educators, and other stakeholders to develop pre-K to postsecondary education policy.

Earlier in his career, he taught English in San Antonio, Texas.

Michael is chair of the board of the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center and is a member of the boards of the National Student Clearinghouse and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. He also serves on the Guttman Community College advisory council and on the steering committee for the Scaling Partner Network convened by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.



Jobs For the Future (JFF)

“Young people today need a multiplicity of pathways from education into careers— not just the options created more than a century ago.”

Recent Activity: JFF VP Joel Vargas in Inside Higher Ed: “Report: How to Blur the Line Between High School and College”, STEM Early College Expansion Partnership, Why 12th Grade Must Be Redesigned Now—And How

Joel Vargas; Vice President, Programs; JFF; California

Strategic Planning

1. Point person

- Someone has to be responsible for this work

2. Professional development with faculty and staff

3. Develop internal and external partners

4. Blur the lines between high school and college

5. Blur the lines between apprenticeships, job training, etc.

Strategic Planning

Staffing

Social worker

Community partnerships

- Barbershops
- Parishes, churches
- Latino Leaders Luncheon
- African American Leaders Luncheon

Engagement framework

Financial/material support

- open the gym early in the morning so young men can clean up before starting class
- consider creating off campus housing for young men to be with other young men in a living community

Status protections

Environmental protections

Anti-racism; anti-discrimination; safe space

Human development, education, training of interest to student

Social inclusion/respect/belong



Culture

Recommendations

- › Identify First Generation Students
- › Improve Pre-College Preparation
- › Increase Student Engagement



Identify First Generation Students

- › Survey students to learn about their backgrounds and assess their postsecondary goals
- › Help to form early aspirations and plans for college
- › Early outreach to students and parents with information about the importance of postsecondary education



Improve Pre-College Preparation



- › Provide information about the gateway courses to college
- › Broaden exposure to and engagement with the college environment (i.e. web tours, promoting college visits)
- › Test Prep
- › Volunteer services & enrichment programs
- › Mentoring

Increase Student Engagement

- › Connect learning and life
- › Get creative to make the experience:
 - Relevant
 - Fun
 - Challenging
- › Promote critical thinking and team work
- › Create incentives for students





MY BROTHER'S KEEPER



My Brother's Keeper 2016 Progress Report

Two Years of Expanding Opportunity
and Creating Pathways to Success



wh.gov/mbk

US Higher Education needs to increase college access programs like:

The College Advising Corps which works in public high schools by placing “near-peers”, recent college graduates in public high schools to provide the support that these students need.

College Advising Corps works to increase the number of low-income, first-generation college, and underrepresented high school students who enter and complete higher education.



