

Grant Final Report Form

Principal Investigators (PIs) are required to submit final reports within **60 days** of their EIA grant end date. A delinquent report may jeopardize or delay future Network funding. The information you provide helps us improve and justify the continuation of this grant program. The Network may also contact PIs for longer-term impact reporting and may request permission to use elements of these reports in Network activities (Conference sessions, Academy sessions, etc.) and communication both within the CSU system and to external stake-holders.

Summary Grant Information	
Grant Title:	Brothers for Success
PI Name:	Carolina Alfaro
PI Campus:	California State University, Stanislaus
Grant Start Date (month/YYYY):	June 2022
Grant End Date (month/YYYY):	December 2023
Final Report Submission Date:	February 29, 2024

Major Outcomes

1. Summarize your project's outcomes against the original goals proposed for advancing equitable student learning, engagement, progression, and completion.

The Male Success Initiative, over this grant period was successful in developing and implementing the 1st year mentorship program, Brothers for Success. The Brothers for Success Peer mentoring program trains student mentors to support 1st year male identifying students, ensuring a successful transition into the university. With this grant, MSI was able to hire on two peer mentors, a 3rd year computer science student, and a 1st year education counseling graduate student. The peer mentors each mentored 6-7 students for the 2022-2023 school year. The peer mentoring program consisted of one-on-one monthly meetings between the peer mentor and 1st year students, where the 1st year students would get support in the areas of academics, mental and physical well-being, job searches and best practices to balance work, school, and life. Each mentor connected with the mentee and decided on where to meet and what activities they would participate in. As a compliment to the peer mentoring the two peer mentors also led a monthly Brother's for Success monthly group check-in. The monthly check-ins supported the 1st year student mentees and was also open to all male identifying students and allies on campus. The monthly check-ins supported on average 25- 30 students monthly and was a critical space for male identifying students to build community with one another.

As part of the comprehensive nature of our brother for Success Mentorship Program, MSI, held a monthly Circulo de Hombres and Brother to Brother healing circles open to their mentees and other Chicanx/Latinx and Black male identifying students respectively. These circles became a safe space where male identifying students could practice purposeful vulnerability, to share their experiences navigating higher education and life as a male identifying student of color at Stanislaus State. Each of the circles averaged 12 participants at the monthly circles. These Circles were led by our student mentors with the support of a faculty representative for each group that would support moving the conversations, and keeping the space safe for all students to openly share their experiences and get supports.

As mentioned in our interim report, the Male Success Initiative Program Coordinator left for new opportunity at the beginning of 2023, this major change caused some slowdown of the mentorship program, but we were able to see it through into the Summer 2023. After not securing a new program coordinator by the start of the Fall 2023 semester, it was decided to pause the one-on-one mentorship portion of the program. The mentors continued to hold the Circulo de Hombres and Brother to Brother Healing Circles, and now with a new Program Coordinator in place, plans to restart the full program in the fall of 2024 are being worked on.

2. Comment on additional outcomes not directly associated with the project (partnerships formed, additional funding support gained)

One of the biggest outcomes that came from this project is the identification of strong advocates for the mentorship work and in support of creating safe spaces for our healing circles. Dr. Paul Wright, professor of sociology supports the facilitation of the Brother to Brother Healing Circle, geared towards Black Male Identifying students. Dr. Juvenal Caporale, professor of ethnic studies supports the facilitation of the Circulo de Hombres, geared towards Chicano/Latinx Male Identifying students. Both professors have been strong advocates for the work of MSI, supporting the peer mentors to facilitate the conversations and more importantly to protect the spaces for students. A great example of this was when Dr. Paul Wright had to step in and make the space students only. The reason for this is that some faculty and staff who were in the meetings began to take over the space and created a dynamic where young people felt powerless and intimidated to share. Some folks unintentionally tried to provide solutions to student issues being raised, when students just needed a space to be heard. By calling out some actions and creating a more intimate and student-centered space, the conversations started to flow, trust shared, and students continued to show up to the spaces.

3. Specify any unanticipated project developments (i.e. unanticipated barriers or unexpected wins)

The biggest unanticipated barrier that was faced was the departure of the Male Success Initiative Coordinator. The coordinator's departure at the beginning of 2023 slowed the momentum down of the mentorship program. While our peer mentors and our department director were able to finish out the school year, the needed planning and training stalled as the search for a new coordinator continued into the summer and fall. The result of this as mentioned above as the decision to pause the peer mentorship portion of the program for the 2023-2024 school year.

An unexpected win is that with even the pause in the peer mentorship program, those who were mentees in 2022-2023 school year are still engaged in the MSI program and participating in different clubs and organizations on campus. There is a strong interest by many of the past mentored students to be a mentor when the program resumes in the Fall of 2024.

4. If applicable comment on any longer-term outcomes, you anticipate from your Equity in Action Grant funded project. Also, please estimate anticipated achievement dates (month and year.)

The Male Success Initiative looks to restart the full Brothers for Success program in the Fall of 2024. This will include a reimagined peer mentor training program, peer mentorship program for 1st year and transfer students, monthly brothers for success group check-ins, and our monthly healing circles, Circulo de Hombres and Brother to Brother. We are also planning to include ongoing supports for 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and Graduate student supports. The Peer Mentor training and program developments will be complete by June 2024.

Assessment and Communication

5. Describe efforts to communicate and disseminate project outcomes with your campus.

This being the first year of the project, we were able to get feedback from participants and from the peer mentors. We provide a report every semester to the department of Student Affairs on all our activities. We have also connected with the Stanislaus State communications department, who have written stories about our students who participate in MSI and the impact our has been having. We also share our stories and events through our social media platforms.

6. Provide a summary of your assessment activities and results, where available.

For this project, collected registration sign ins for every Brothers for Success monthly check-in and every Bother to Brother and Circulo de Hombres gathering. We also collected an evaluation of the Brother to Brother and Circulo de Hombres after each semester. As part of the Peer Mentorship program, we also documented every contact that our peer mentors made with their mentees throughout the year. We documented when the met, what the focus of the meet up consisted of a summary of the meet up, mentee take aways and what type of activities they did together.

Results

Brother to Brother/Circulo de Hombres:

- 50% of the Brother to Brother and Circulo de Hombres participants, strongly agreed that participating in the circles helped them to be more vulnerable and open about themselves to others.
- 75% of the Brother to Brother and Circulo de Hombres participants strongly agreed that engaging in conversations about identities, backgrounds, and experiences as men of color has added value to their lives.
- 75% of the Brother to Brother and Circulo de Hombres participants are very likely to recommend these spaces to other students.

When asked what describe the importance of holding spaces like brother to brother and circulo de hombres, some students said:

“Being supported and understood by faculty and peers has helped me so much more in touch with my emotions and grow my maturity.” - Circulo de Hombres Participant

“Very nice, it’s nice to talk to like-minded individuals in my peer group, especially ones that understand the life of a black man in America because we are black. I am quite glad the University made this happen along with everyone involved.” - Brother to Brother participant

When asked what could help MSI develop these programs better, some students said:

“Personally, I would’ve loved to meet biweekly” - Brother to Brother participant.

“Meeting more than once a month might also help the program reach more students in need of these conversations” - Circulo De Hombres Participant.

“Make it feel less like therapy”- Circulo de Hombres Participant

“Better Food”- Brother to Brother Participant

Peer Mentorship Program:

- There were a total of 15 1st year male identifying students of color that were mentored in the 2022-2023 school year.
- Each Peer Mentor met with their mentees 8 times over the school year, an average of one time a month.
- The focus of mentor meetings included, Academic check-ins, overall, well-being and socializing.
- Some students take aways throughout the year included:
- Getting support on how to talk to professors about questions they have in class.
- How to make an appointment with their advisor.
- Getting connected to the tutoring center.
- Getting connected with Career and Professional Development Center and with Student Jobs.

Lessons Learned

7. As you reflect on the strategies and activities implemented during this grant, which were successful?

Overall, we feel the strategies used in developing our peer mentorship program were successful. We were able to identify two peer mentors and provide them with training to understand how mentor students. This training included developing a mentorship manual that provides key information about the Male Success Initiative and the Brothers for Success mentorship program. We also provided training on how to develop one-on-one mentor sessions agendas, including key questions to ask your mentees during your check-in session. The strategy used in connecting with other campus departments and resources to identify 1st year male students and gaining access to them to discuss their needs and develop the mentorship program also proved to be successful.

8. By comparison, what strategies did you find were unsuccessful?

Being this our first time implementing the program, there weren't strategies that were unsuccessful, but more so there are additional strategies that we would like to incorporate. One strategy is to bolster our training for peer mentors. The peer mentors felt that they could have benefited from learning more about the art and theory of mentorship. We are currently in dialogue with other mentorship programs on campus to understand what their mentor training includes in the hopes to add more to our program.

Another strategy that we would like to add is developing a reflection module to support our peer mentors to better track conversations, content, and next steps with their mentees. Our Peer mentors suggested creating a session reflection form that will take parts of our reporting guide to be able to document the conversations and topics covered but feel adding ways to identify next steps and to-dos for the next session for both the peer mentor and mentee.

Finally, we would like to think about how to continue to incentivize our participants for being part of the program. With this grant we were able provide hospitality for our monthly brothers for success meetings, and our monthly healing circles. We were also able to provide peer mentors and mentees with MSI peer mentorship shirts.

Moving forward we are looking to develop the resources to be able to support students mentored in the program to earn a book scholarship at the completion of the mentorship program. In the spirit of creating a pathway for students to go from being mentored to becoming a mentor themselves, we are committed to developing the resources to send students completing the mentorship program to attend a mentorship conference to further build their skills to be a peer mentor. This will position students to be able to become a paid peer mentor or intern with the Male Success Initiative at Stanislaus State.

9. Given your experience with the Equity in Action Grant Program, what changes would you recommend to better support you toward your goals?

The support provided by the Equity in Action Grant program has been great. Having the re-occurring grantee connection sessions was helpful for our campus. Also, having someone dedicated to answer all our questions and concerns along the way helped us achieve many of our goals.

10. What can the CSU Student Success Network do to help our campus in its efforts to identify, understand and disrupt inequities in our system?

While this grant has helped alleviate some of the inequities for our students, our experiences demonstrated that there is a need to continue to identify and research some of the disparities in the educational resources specific to our men of color. Despite challenges faced during and post-pandemic, there's a recognition of the need for more comprehensive services to address the multifaceted needs of our students.