



# Evaluation of the Hooks Academic Achievement and Mentoring Initiative

Prepared for the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change  
by the Center for Community Research and Evaluation at the  
University of Memphis

October 14, 2025

## What is HAAMI?

The Hooks Academic Achievement and Mentoring Initiative (HAAMI) is a student success initiative at the University of Memphis. Led by the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change (Hooks Institute), the program seeks to improve graduation outcomes for historically underrepresented and first-generation undergraduate students at the University of Memphis. HAAMI fosters student success and professional growth in the areas of academic achievement, personal development, and career readiness. HAAMI served 229 students from fall 2015 to fall 2024. While HAAMI was established to provide support and mentoring for African-American male undergraduate students, membership has always been open to all, with no restrictions based on demographic characteristics.

## Why did CCRE evaluate HAAMI?

Hooks Institute contracted with the Center for Community Research and Evaluation (CCRE) to conduct a rigorous quantitative impact evaluation of HAAMI. CCRE is a consultancy at the University of Memphis that support dozens of partners across the Mid-South region with interdisciplinary social science research and evaluation support in the areas of education, public health, workforce development, and criminal justice. Financial support for the evaluation was provided by the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis and the Memphis City Council.

## How did CCRE evaluate HAAMI?

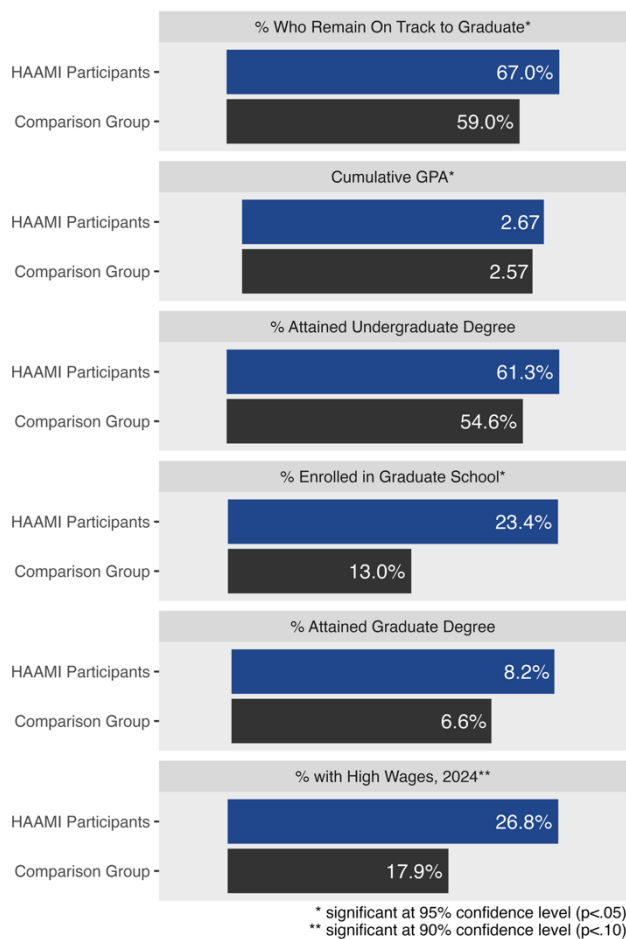
Following IRB approval, CCRE obtained data from the University's Office of Institutional Research on 8,917 Black male undergraduate students. HAAMI participants were compared to a **highly similar comparison group** of non-participating students. The comparison group was identified by statistically matching students along 21 factors reflecting baseline levels of student achievement and engagement, as well as demographics. By matching, researchers can have greater confidence that effects are **caused** by HAAMI, rather than simply associated with factors correlated with participation.



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## Did the evaluation find that HAAMI promotes student success?

The evaluation found that students enrolled in HAAMI were **more likely to remain on-track for graduation**. In the regular academic term following HAAMI enrollment, the share of students enrolled full-time during the semester (or who have already graduated) was 8% higher for HAAMI participants (84%, versus 76% for similar non-participants). This effect appears to persist for at least 5 academic terms.

In addition, the evaluation finds that students see a **spike in grade point average in the term of HAAMI enrollment which persists for the rest of their academic career**, approximately equal to a full letter grade on three 3-hour courses. Both the enrollment and GPA findings are statistically significant; in other words, there is a high degree of confidence that HAAMI was the cause of these academic improvements.

## Are HAAMI students more likely to graduate or enroll in graduate school?

61% of students enrolling in HAAMI in fall 2021 or earlier graduated, relative to 55% of non-HAAMI students. This finding, while promising, is not statistically significant ( $p = .101$ ). However, HAAMI students are significantly more likely to enroll in graduate school, either at the University of Memphis or elsewhere: **23% of HAAMI students enrolled in graduate school, versus only 13% of non-participants**. The analysis found that HAAMI participants were **136% more likely to enroll in graduate school**. This result is statistically significant.

## What do we know about the long-run impacts of HAAMI?

The evaluation looked at employment outcomes in the second quarter of 2024 for students enrolling in HAAMI in fall 2018 or before. We found that HAAMI students were **93% more likely to receive a well-paying wage** (at least \$50,000 annualized wage within Tennessee). This is a statistically significant finding. We also examined graduate school completion rates; while a larger share of HAAMI students completed graduate school versus non-participants, the difference is not statistically significant.

To learn more about the Hooks Academic Achievement & Mentoring Initiative, contact Rorie Trammel at [rtrammel@memphis.edu](mailto:rtrammel@memphis.edu) or visit [memphis.edu/benhooks](https://memphis.edu/benhooks).

The full reports are available at the CCRE website at [memphis.edu/ccre](https://memphis.edu/ccre). For questions on the evaluation, contact Principal Investigator **Jonathan Bennett** at [jrbnnett@memphis.edu](mailto:jrbnnett@memphis.edu).