

2024-2025 Impact Report



**Empowering Men of Color
in Higher Education**

WHO I AM & WHY I DO THIS WORK



Gerrel Sayles is a proud first-generation college graduate who earned his B.A. in Sociology from California State University, Long Beach, and a Master of Science in Higher Education from California State University, Fullerton—debt free. His work in education is deeply personal, shaped by navigating higher education without clear representation or guidance. As a Black male educator, Gerrel is driven by a commitment to be the mentor, advocate, and voice he once needed—grounding his work in authenticity, access, and purpose.

Gerrel’s pathway into education began at the community level through youth mentorship with City of Long Beach after-school programs, summer camps, and travel basketball. That foundation led him into college access and student success work across K–12 and higher education, including roles with the USC College Advising Corps, Long Beach City College, and Building College Success—where he now serves as Director of the College Access Program. Across these spaces, Gerrel has led equity-centered initiatives supporting students from access through persistence, while also serving as an admissions evaluator with UC Berkeley and facilitating programming for foster youth and Men of Color.

Through SOUL by Sayles, Gerrel translates these lived and professional experiences into culturally responsive services that center identity, purpose, and belonging. His work spans workshops, facilitation, program development, and assessment focused on college access, student success, leadership development, and holistic well-being—particularly for Black students and Men of Color, while remaining inclusive of all learners.

At the core of SOUL by Sayles is a belief that education should affirm identity, honor lived experience, and create space for reflection, dialogue, and growth. Gerrel’s services are intentionally designed to be engaging, meaningful, and accessible—supporting traditional, adult, and nontraditional students alike. This work is more than programming; it is purpose-driven, soulful work rooted in representation, service, and lasting impact.

GERREL DAVON SAYLES, M.S.ED

FOUNDER & Chief Soul Officer

WHY THIS WORK MATTERS

Young men of color across the educational pipeline are navigating:

- Rising mental health challenges
- Deep experiences of isolation and disconnection
- Pressure to “perform strength” instead of express emotions
- Limited access to culturally relevant leadership spaces
- A need for belonging, mentorship, and intentional community

While grounded in the experiences of men of color, this work is intentionally inclusive and accessible to all students seeking growth and empowerment.





HOW I FACILITATE TRANSFORMATION

Pedagogical Approach Blends:

- Identity-centered learning
- Reflective dialogue + discussion-based instruction
- Culturally responsive, theory-informed strategies
- Lived experience woven into content
 - Pop culture metaphors that resonate (Fresh Prince, Pixar Soul, GTA, barbershop language)





SOUL Framework Integration

Every service is rooted in: SOUL

S — Storytelling

Identity , Reflection, Discovery

O — Opportunity

Navigation, Affirmation, Agency

U — Unity

Empowerment, Community-Building, Accountability

L — Leadership

Purpose, Transition, Strengths

Signature SOUL Flow

Identity → Dialogue → Reflection → Action Plan

Students move from

Story → Meaning → Leadership → Next Steps



WHAT I DO SERVICES:

1. Workshop Facilitation & Program Development

Designing and delivering dynamic sessions rooted in storytelling, identity exploration, purpose, and reflection. Workshops include but aren't limited to:

- Identity Development
- Purpose Exploration
- Mental Well-Being and Resilience
- Leadership Identity and Strengths
- Transition and Career Pathways
- Cultural Wealth and Belonging



2. Identity Exploration & Empowerment

Helping students understand who they are and who they are becoming.

Key elements:

- Narrative Ownership
- Identity Mapping
- Values Clarification
- Defining Purpose
- Navigating Cultural and Academic Spaces

Notable Programs:

I Got SOUL, Empowerment Circles, Barbershop Talks, GTA, and the Leadership Series



3. Student Development & Emotional Intelligence

Providing tools to enhance:

- Self-Awareness
- Emotional Regulation
- Communication Skills
- Growth Mindset
- Resilience
- Mental Well-Being

Students learn how to navigate stress, transitions, and academic pressures with clarity.



4. Holistic Student Support

Supporting students through:

- Postsecondary Planning
- Financial Literacy Basics
- Career Exploration
- Backwards Mapping and Goal-Setting
- Leadership, Identity, and Transition

Applicable across K–12 education, higher education, youth- and people-serving organizations, nonprofit spaces, and practitioner-focused professional development.





5. Men of Color Engagement & Empowerment Circles

One of your signature offerings:

- Brotherhood and Unity
- Safe dialogue & Vulnerability
- Cultural Pride and Confidence
- Leadership Development
- Healing-Centered Conversation
- Skill-Building for Academic and Life Success

Students consistently say:

“Every man needs this experience.”



A²MEND

6. Speaking & Advocacy

Providing conference talks, and panel discussions on:

- Identity & Belonging
- Men of Color in Education
- Leadership Development
- Storytelling as Empowerment
- Mental Health + Emotional Intelligence
- Educational Equity and Community Uplift

EXPERIENCE:

- 500+ attendees at CSU YMOC
- A2MEND practitioners
- Multi-campus student audiences
- Guest speaker for the NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education Men & Masculinities Knowledge Community (MMKC)



7. Professional Development for Educators & Practitioners

You equip educators with:

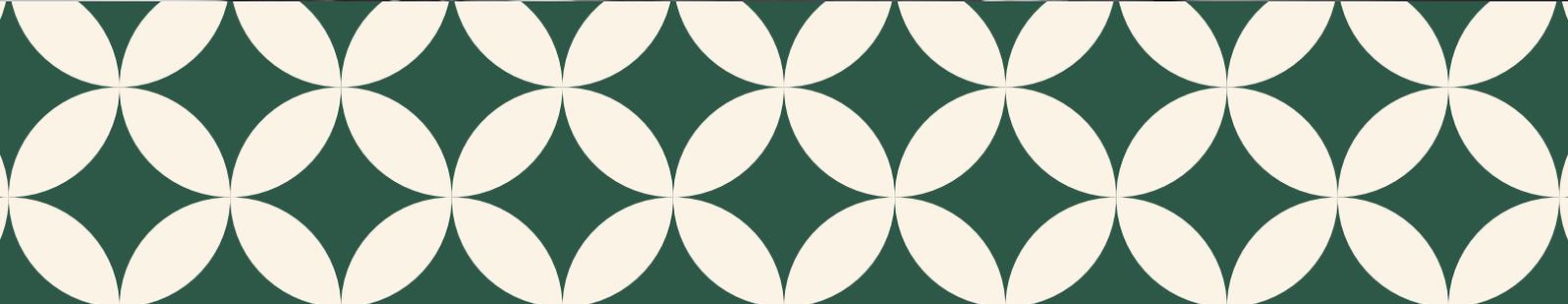
- Identity-based advising strategies
- Culturally responsive facilitation
- Tools for supporting boys & men of color
- Narrative-based student engagement
- The Barbershop Model of facilitation
- Program design + assessment strategies



8. Custom Programming

Every partnership is tailored, examples:

- Multi-session series
- Leadership retreats
- Practitioner + student combined trainings
- Men-of-color initiative consulting
- Climate-building experiences
- Custom curriculum



IMPACT OVERVIEW



Overall Reach & Scope

- **Total Individuals Served: 110+**
- **Institutions Impacted: 15+**
 - Community Colleges
 - CSU Campuses (CSUF, CSULB)
 - Jane Addams Elementary
 - Educational Foundations & MSIs



Program Types Delivered:

Empowerment Circles

SOUL: Purpose & Identity Workshops

Building Emotional Intelligence

GTA / Identity & Transition Workshops

CSUF Leadership Series (RESET x L.E.A.D.)

Practitioner Capacity-Building Workshops



EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE & METHODOLOGY

Across all programming, participants engaged in:

- Storytelling & Narrative Reflection
- Empowerment Circles / Barbershop-Style Dialogue
- Research-Backed Frameworks
 - Community Cultural Wealth
 - Double Consciousness
 - Identity & Transition Theory
- Reflective & Action-Planning Tools
- Culturally Responsive Media & Facilitation



PROGRAM QUALITY & SATISFACTION (5-POINT SCALE)

Student-Facing Workshops:

- Overall Experience: 4.9 / 5
- Discussion Quality: 4.8 / 5
- Presenter Effectiveness: 4.95 / 5
- Ratings Below 4: 0

CSUF Leadership Series:

- Overall Session Rating: 5 / 5
- Leadership Identity Growth Indicators: 4.8 / 5
- Likelihood of Applying Learning: 100%
- Facilitation Rating: 5 / 5

Practitioner Workshops:

- Overall Facilitation Rating: 4.8 / 5
- Agreement on Core Capacity-Building Outcomes:
 - 90% Agree or Strongly Agree

Preparedness to Create Safe & Affirming Spaces: 4.6 / 5



LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES (5-POINT SCALE)

Student Outcomes (Self-Reported)

- Increased Confidence & Self-Worth: 61%
- Stronger Sense of Belonging & Brotherhood: 54%
- Emotional Awareness & Expression: 38%
- Purpose, Identity & Reflection Clarity: 42%
- Motivation & Hope for the Future: 47%

Leadershipison## Leadership Outcomes (CSUF Series)

- Confidence Identifying Strengths: 4.8 / 5
- Understanding Leadership Meaning: 4.9 / 5
- Cultural Identity Influencing Leadership: 4.6 / 5
- Belief in Leadership Potential: 4.8 / 5
- Clear 90-Day Action Steps Identified: 4.6 / 5

Practitioner Capacity Growth

- Confidence Supporting Black Male Students (Pre): 3.8 / 5
- Confidence Supporting Black Male Students (Post): 4.7 / 5
- Net Confidence Increase: +0.9
- Intent to Implement Immediately: 85%



THE ROAD AHEAD: 2026 VISION STRATEGIC VISION FOR 2026



SOUL by Sayles Education aims to expand its reach by building sustainable, long-term partnerships across California and beyond.

Goals for 2026:

- Partner with 10 new institutions across:
 - UC system
 - CSU system
 - California Community Colleges
 - Elementary & middle schools
 - Nonprofits and youth-serving organizations
- Expand Empowerment Circles in community college men-of-color programs
- Offer leadership series for high school → college transitions
- Provide practitioner training statewide
- Publish annual impact reports
- Build summer programming experiences
- Grow digital presence via the website + Instagram launch
- Train facilitators to scale the SOUL model



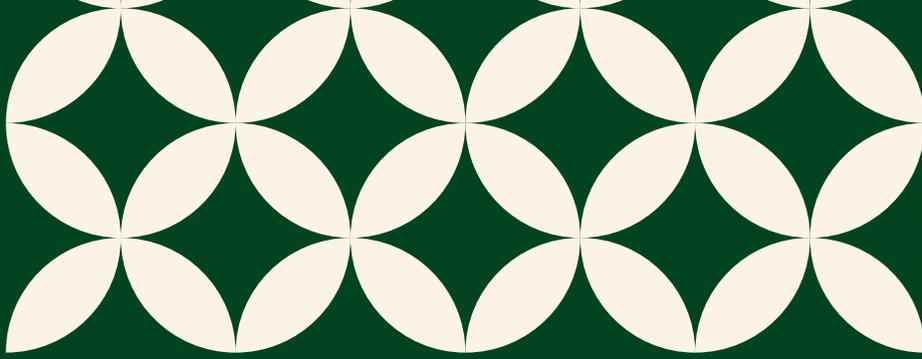


WHY PARTNER WITH SOUL by Sayles

Partners receive:

- Custom curriculum
- Facilitated student spaces
- Practitioner workshops
- Pre/post assessments
- Impact summaries
- Data-driven recommendations
- Scalable programming tailored to campus climate
- Consistent, relatable facilitator who brings culture, theory, & heart





Call to Action:

Let's build intentional spaces where men of color feel seen, supported, & ready to lead

NOW BOOKING FOR Spring/Fall 2026!

www.soulbysayles.com



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Email: info@soulbysayles.com
- Socials: [@soulbysayles](https://www.instagram.com/soulbysayles)/[@gerrelsayles](https://www.instagram.com/gerrelsayles)

