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# Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Sustaining a Culture of Excellence in the 21st Century

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## Abstract

Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) continue to provide a substantial role in the black community and in higher education by providing a culture of excellence. Yet, their role in higher education is the center of many academic and political debates. Defining this role has been thwarted with questions of HBCUs relevance in society, in the African American community, and in higher education. The relevance of HBCUs is neither the dilemma nor the question for higher education and HBCUs. The conundrum for HBCUs is ensuring that they are equipped with the necessary tools to address global and economic 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges. The purpose of this article is to examine existing challenges that contribute to HBCUs struggles in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in sustaining their culture of excellence. This article highlights how HBCUs are able to address challenges of accreditation, funding, and HBCU's leadership and management in the face of global and economic challenges.

## Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Sustaining a Culture of Excellence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The history of Black colleges and universities in the United States mirrors the country's longer struggle with Jim Crow segregation and centers the role of education in the fight for racial justice. While Lincoln University and Wilberforce were opened before the American Civil war, the vast majority of Black colleges in the United States were founded in the midst of Reconstruction by Northern missionary societies. Though Howard University, founded in 1867, was the first of the postsecondary institutions to be created by these northern missionaries, it was atypical in its primary focus to train Black clergymen. Most Black colleges founded during the late nineteenth century were designed to increase the number of normal schools that would train black teachers to help provide adequate primary and secondary education for the estimated one million school-aged African American children and the more than three million adults who also yearned for education (Foner, 1988; Roebuck and Murty, 1993; Williams, Ashley and Rhea, 2004).

Hampton Institute, founded in 1868, was the prototypical normal school established during this era. These initial institutions did not grant degrees and deliberately deemphasized the liberal arts. Receiving most of its funding from the American Missionary Association, Hampton's mission was closely aligned with the Freedmen's Bureau's mission of preparing the nation's former slaves for wage labor. These normal schools often presented a paternalistic vision of black-white relations with the leadership and faculty of these schools being dominated by whites. Perhaps the most famous devotee of this vocation focused education model was Booker T. Washington. Washington was a graduate of Hampton, and after spending time on their faculty, began his own normal institute in Alabama. Tuskegee would go on to become a

major force in Black education and espousing an educational philosophy centered on vocational education and practical skills. Washington was openly hostile to the liberal arts and firmly believed that “No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem.” While Washington privately aided the advancement of civil rights in the South as the public face of Tuskegee, he was concerned with appeasing the school’s southern white benefactors, even if this meant reinforcing the Jim Crow social order. Still, students at Tuskegee gained greater—albeit still limited—economic opportunities in the new South (Washington, 1969).

As Black normal schools spread across the South, the burgeoning Black middle-class helped give shape to what many scholars have defined as a “politics of respectability.” While the number of Blacks enrolled in an institution of higher education was still very small, access to education gave a growing portion of the Black community an opportunity to use college as a tool to perform a new, “respectable” public identity that could help elide racial stereotypes and aid upward mobility. Within private colleges like Tuskegee, Morehouse, and Spelman, students obeyed stringent dress codes, attended mandatory chapel services, and were forbidden from drinking, swearing or playing card games. An official chaperone had to accompany female students in public, and all incoming mail was subject to be read by university officials before a student could officially read it (Shaw, 1996).

Although many of these strict school policies were given full support by parents who wanted the best for their children, there were also several institutional problems that came under criticism following World War One. The continued practice of white paternalism, especially as it worked with local segregationists, was sharply critiqued by students and Black faculty at many historically Black colleges in the twenties. This shift in philosophy coincided with the rise in

racial consciousness, which had slowly been growing in the first decades of the twentieth century. The Niagra Movement, Garveyism, and The New Negro movement encouraged many young African-Americans to demand greater autonomy over their cultural institutions; as Black colleges were increasingly seen as spaces where Black students could develop a critical self-awareness and the next generation of Black leadership could be groomed, the overall mission of the Black college modernizes, reflecting the larger importance these institutions had in both the Black community and the United States. This political shift in the mission statement of the universities was inextricably linked to the rise of Black leadership at the top Black colleges in the nation. Most famously, a 1926 student strike by Howard students led to the election of Mordecai W. Johnson who became the institution's first black president (Williams, Ashley and Rhea, 2004).

This shift in leadership also was coupled with a larger shift in educational philosophy. This change was most clearly articulated in the work of W.E.B. DuBois (1903) in his influential *The Souls of Black Folks*, which firmly rejected Booker T. Washington's emphasis on vocational training in favor of a more well-rounded liberal arts education. As many Black colleges moved towards accreditation in the 1910s and 1920s courses centered in the classics, literature, philosophy, and sociology were introduced. Scholars like Carter Woodson, Melvin Tolson, and Sterling Brown all taught at Black colleges during the twenties and produced work that grounded the experience of black people in America with the broader humanistic experience, setting the stage for what would become African-American History and African-American literature (DuBois, 1903; Williams, Ashley and Rhea, 2004).

Despite the continued influence of segregation well into the twentieth century, historically Black colleges serves as both vibrant cultural centers where African-Americans

could define and redefine Black culture and also counter public spaces where the political challenges to the hegemony of Jim Crow would ultimately emerge. Writers like Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Countee Cullen, and Ralph Ellison all honed their craft in the Black colleges. Brilliant legal minds like Thurgood Marshall and Pauli Murray attended Howard Law School when the University of Maryland and the University of North Carolina denied them admission. The graduates of the nation's Black colleges and universities continued to give shape to an increasing Black middle class and give shape to Black intellectual life during the postwar period (Gilmore, 2008).

Ultimately, the Black college's ability to counter the societal effects of segregation produced the court decision that would forever alter their role in Black educational life. *Brown v. Board* (1954), spearheaded by Thurgood Marshall while he was the head of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, placed segregation outside the bounds of American law. As southern schools avoided desegregation for most of the sixties—the outmoded system would not be pushed into extinction without the masses of college students from Black colleges like Howard, North Carolina A&T, Tougaloo and Fisk—federal mandates were put in place by the end of the decade to force integration within secondary schools. At the post-secondary level, individuals like James Meredith at the University of Mississippi and James Hood and Vivian Malone at the University of Alabama forced the federal government to enforce *Brown*, ensuring that African-Americans would no longer be denied admission at state Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) of higher education. As historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) entered the seventies and eighties, they were no longer the sole provider of higher education for African-American students. They would be entering a new era where the role of historically Black colleges and universities in the African-American community and larger role in society would

need to be defined (Joseph, 2007). Defining this role has been thwarted with questions of HBCUs relevance in society, in the African American community, and in higher education. The relevance of HBCUs is neither the dilemma nor the question for higher education and HBCUs. The conundrum for HBCUs is ensuring that they are equipped with the necessary tools to continue providing “an unrivaled social and cultural environment to accompany its academic experience” (Atlanta Post, 2010, p.2) while sustaining a culture of excellence.

### **HBCUs Challenges & Concerns: Accreditation, Funding, & Leadership**

Historically Black colleges and universities have exceeded the expectations of their original purpose of only appealing Black people and not succeeding by providing over 150 years of access to higher education and producing a large majority of Black professionals and leaders in both the Black community and the United States (Nichols 2004). According to Nichols (2004) Allen, Epps, & Haniff (1991) note six goals of HBCUs:

1. Maintaining the Black American historical and cultural tradition;
2. Providing key leadership for the Black American community;
3. Providing Black American role models for social, political, and economic purposes in the Black community;
4. Assuring economic function in the Black American community;
5. Providing Black American role models for social political and economic purposes in the Black community to address issues between minority and majority population; and
6. Producing Black agents for research, institutional training, and information dissemination in the Black and other minority communities.

These six goals have helped HBCUs maintain their culture of excellence however in facing economic and global challenges HBCUs are forced to reassess their mission, goals, and methods to further sustain their role in higher education. For instance, historically Black colleges and universities continue to respond to detractor's position that HBCUs are not relevant. These critics suggest that, "HBCUs are academically inferior and would be better off if turned into community colleges or for profit online schools such as the University of Phoenix" and that "HBCUs were the embarrassment of the nation" (Atlanta Post, 2010, p.2). Although HBCUs are recognized for producing a significant number of graduates who later become PhDs in science and engineering and also educating a significant number of low-income students (Atlanta Post, 2010) detractors continue to negate this contribution and argue the value and relevance of HBCUs in the 21st century. Other critics would also suggest in the age of Obama, we are in a post-racial era and racism is no longer an issue whereby the need for historically Black colleges and universities are no longer an existing need. Contrary to this position,

An inherent need exists for both race and gender based organizations post an Obama election, as current political, educational, and work force climates continue to embrace oppressive attitudes and actions toward people regarding race or gender. President Barack Obama's victory may imply to some that oppressive structures and systems negatively influencing race and gender minorities are dismantled, suggesting neither race nor gender is problematic within contemporary America (Davis, Mack, Washington, & Cantey, 2010, p.1).

Specifically,

HBCU plays a critical role in ‘filling the gap’ in U.S. higher education and in moving the nation closer to its pluralistic ideal. In a true sense, the successful future of the HBCU is critical to the future of the U.S., if the nation is to finally fulfill its unique pluralistic mission and become truly American (LeMelle, 2002, p. 196).

Yet, for HBCUs to continue filling the gap in U.S. higher education, they also need to fill the existing gaps and challenges that impact sustaining their culture of excellence. For example, between 2001 and 2007 HBCUs experienced less than 2% decrease in enrollment across the existing 150 HBUCs (Henderson, 2001; Anonymous, 2010). While this decrease in enrollment is a small percentage, it does suggest that HBCUs explore what changes if any contributed to the decrease, particular as their enrollment in 2001 had increased by 26% across the 150 schools (Henderson, 2001). Along with reviewing contributing factors to enrollment increases and decreases, HBCUs and PWIs alike are reviewing their existing strategies in the face of global and economic challenges. Specifically, HBCUs existing difficulties to sustaining a culture of excellence include: accreditation of undergraduate and graduate programs, funding, and the role of leadership and management of historically Black colleges and universities.

While some HBCUs received accreditation as early as 1928, the current lack of accreditation of specific curricula and programs have shown to adversely impact HBCUs. Historically Black colleges and universities across the nation equally face challenges with curricula and accreditation. For example, while Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University, School of Business (SBI) has received significant attention over the last four decades for maintaining an exceptional school of business, yet the School of Business is not accredited. The inability to attract and retain Ph.D. level faculty along with other academic experiences has contributed to the decline of student enrollment and accreditation over the last 8 years post the

retirement of Dean Mobley in SBI. Although accreditation at FAMU's SBI is not mandatory for receiving a successful internship and later employment with a Fortune 500 company, it does contribute to the continuing debate on HBCUs ability to sustain excellence, and for some, the relevance of HBCUs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Subsequently over the last 8 years, SBI continues to work towards securing accreditation to further solidify the credibility and elite status of their program (Evans, 2009). "It is important that we have PhD educators from certified programs" said Charles Evan, associate dean of SBI. "If not, the quality of the programs will be diluted" (Evans, 2009, p.1). The quality of programs is an issue facing the sustainability and maintenance of HBCUs as most have not fully transitioned into offering a viable variety of accredited graduate programs. Although allied health, business, technology engineering, architecture and environmental sciences have been added to the set of courses available of many HBCUs, International programs are being demanded in the disciplines of Africa and Asia (Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002) and these needs are not currently met on an HBCU level.

In addition to accreditation concerns, HBCUs have challenges with funding. In the past, this issue was addressed with the Morrill Land-Grant Act in 1862 during the Civil War and the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1890. Currently, this is a challenge for HBCUs, especially private HBCUs ([http://www.collegeview.com/articles/CV/hbcu/hbcu\\_history.html](http://www.collegeview.com/articles/CV/hbcu/hbcu_history.html)). As HBCUs continue to successfully graduate Blacks in areas of high demand, such as science, engineering, and mathematics, these institutions are surviving with less funding, fewer available resources, and support in comparison to PWIs (Muhammad, 2010). This lack of support, funding, and available resources contributes to discussions of HBCUs relevancy. Funding for HBCUs has remained a challenge since inception however HBCUs have survived and in many cases thrived with grants, student tuition, and corporate and individual donations (Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002). Most

HBCUs are heavily dependent upon and supported by “Pell grants, grants-in-aid, veteran benefits, campus work aid, scholarship, Social Security benefits to dependent children, and federal loans,” and this form of funding is solely based on the local, state and federal government and the state of the economy (Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002, p.14). This form of funding is not stable as it is contingent upon government funding and opens the door for budget deficits, a reduction of faculty and staff salaries, and an overall decrease in student enrollment. Riley (2010) noted that “...Mr. Barack Obama hosted a White House reception to celebrate the contributions of the nation’s 105 black colleges and to reiterate his pledge to invest another \$850 million in these institutions over the next decade” (p. 21). Although the contribution to these institutions are significant the disbursement of these funds and sustainability of funds post federal assistance are managed and monitored by HBCUs leaders.

Along with accreditation and funding concerns, another area challenging the existence and continuation of HBCUs, is leadership. Leadership and management of HBCUs and funding are inextricably linked. Strong leadership is quintessential to the survival and progression of any institution. The question remains what can leaders of HBCUs do themselves to improve the level of funding for their institutions of higher education. Leadership within HBCUs is equally challenging as funding and therefore impacts how funding can be secured to sustain HBCUs and their academic achievements. “The selection of the president in HBCUs has been too political, with the governor, Board of Regents, and legislators playing games that are designed to select weak leaders so that the HBCU would not excel” (Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002, p.12). The selection timeframe for most HBCU presidents is six months to year compared to Historically White colleges and universities (HWCUs) where a president is identified within two months (Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002). Selecting someone within a two month timeframe has

contributed to sentiment “We don’t get the kind of leadership and attention we need” (Healy, 1996 cited in Evans, Evans, Evans, 2002, p.14). According to Nichols (2004), leadership, governance, and management in HBCU’s have been challenged by underprepared students, inadequate resources, students from low income families and increasing tuition. These challenges have contributed to the difficulties of maintaining a culture of excellence as HBCUs transition into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Next Steps for HBCUs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

In the face of maintaining accreditation, HBCU opponents would prefer to see HBCUs as “a four year community college” (LeMelle, 2002, p 192); however many historically Black colleges are gaining more attraction by becoming universities (see Bethune Cookman University and Florida Memorial University). Proponents of HBCUs are pleased with the increase of Historically Black Colleges transitioning into universities and offering graduate level programs for students. Along with offering baccalaureate degrees and graduate degrees, HBCUs can further sustain their excellence through curricula that prepare students for social, political, and economic platforms within society, offering competitive salaries for faculty, and advancing opportunities for students through technology. With regarding to implementing socio-political and socio-economic curricula, LeMelle (2002) cites the concern of former president of Atlanta University, Rufus Clement that too many colleges ignore,

“..the social and economic problems confronting the race. Too many of these institutions are not realistic in treatment of their problems. They forget that the major function of education is to prepare people for life- life as it is as well as life as we should like it to be. A course dealing with consumers, cooperatives might well find a place in the curriculum

of every Negro college....In other words, the College for Negroes has a double responsibility. It must prepare the youth for good lives as American citizens and it must also fit them to tackle their peculiar racial problems with intelligence and courage” (Rufus, 1936, p478 cited in LeMelle, p. 192-193).

The double responsibility of College for Negroes or HBCUs is as relevant now as it was in 1936, particularly in the backdrop of continuous racial and gender inequalities in the age of Obama. As HBCUs continue to tackle meeting this need, Wormely (2010) suggested that “students should focus on getting an education” and “develop their critical-thinking skills and avail themselves of opportunities to learn and prepare themselves for productive careers in a global environment” (p.16). In bell hooks’ (1994) *Teaching to Transgress*, she discusses the role of critical pedagogy in the classroom and the functionality of not only students thinking critically but the role of teachers engaging students in critical-thinking activities.

For HBCUs to maintain accreditation and create academic spaces for critical thinking and critical pedagogy, universities must also recruit and retain faculty that are able to enhance and develop these challenging and progressive spaces. Research has shown that a large percentage of African Americans with Ph.D.s teach within K-12 school systems as opposed to colleges and universities. Subsequently HBCUs have an even smaller pool to select eligible black faculty to teach on the collegiate level (Jackson, 2002). Jackson (2002) further suggested the production of eligible African American faculty for HBCUs is initiated when these institutions provide both undergraduate and graduate accredited programs. This concern is being addressed as Historically Black colleges are transitioning into universities and existing Historically Black Universities are increasing the number of available accredited graduate programs. Examples of addressing these concerns include but are not limited to, Bethune-Cookman College, which

originated in 1924 achieving university status in 2007 and Florida A&M University Department of Social Work received initial accreditation in 2002 by Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) for their master's level program. These examples reflect HBCUs commitment to a culture of excellence and advancing the mission of HBCUs.

To further sustain excellence through recruitment and retention of faculty, HBCUs must increase the number of African American Ph.D. level faculty as this helps to increase increasing the available number of accredited programs. Additionally, there is a need to attract existing African American doctoral faculty through competitive salaries. Salaries have shown to be a major factor for professionals when selecting their jobs of choice and represent the “largest item in college and universities budgets” (Palmer and Griffin, 2009, p.11). A recent research study in Maryland comparing Maryland's Historically Black and Predominately White Institutions (PWI) revealed that there are significant disparities in faculty salaries between the two universities (Palmer and Griffin, 2009). These disparities “hamper HBCU's attempts to enhance their competitiveness and compatibility with their White peers, impeding their ability to racially diversity their student bodies” (2009, p. 17). Along with offering competitive salaries, the study revealed other areas of concerns with HBCUs in comparison to PWIs, “workload, teaching responsibilities, and faculty recruitment and retention” (2009, p. 11). The findings of this Maryland study affirms to positions highlighted within this paper. First, racial inequalities are present in the age of Obama and therefore the role of HBCUs in the black community and higher education remain relevant. Second, HBCUs continue to thrive with fewer resources and services than there PWI counterparts; however, HBCUs must develop a reformed culture of excellence: accreditation, financial sustainability, and improved leadership roles to remain effective in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Sustaining accreditation intersects with faculty recruitment and retention as faculty serves multiple functions. One successful outcome of securing African American faculty in HBCUs is shaping and influencing Black students to success. Research has shown HBCUs have a significant supporting role in academic success for unprepared Black males (Palmer, Davis, and Maramba, 2010). Specifically, “participants in this study credited the university’s racial composition, support from peers, faculty and role models in helping to increase their propensity for learning and academic success” (2010, p. 85). Attracting and retaining faculty directly coincides with funding at universities. For presidents, deans and other leaders, fundraising in the form of grants, alumni development/contributions, and corporate and individual donations needs to be improved. One suggestion is to invest in the development of a strategic plan to foster alumni, corporate, and individual relationships while improving existing threats and challenges. For example, Bowie State University Strategic Plan 2007-2012 outlines their goals, strengths, challenges, and opportunities to improve their university ([http://www.bowiestate.edu/about/message/reports/strategic\\_plan/](http://www.bowiestate.edu/about/message/reports/strategic_plan/)). Similarly, Florida A&M University sent an email communication to alumni titled *FAMU Restructuring Survey*. The email advised FAMU supporters that “universities across the country are revamping their administrative and academic landscapes in light of diminishing resources and the national economic forecasts” (FAMU Alumni Relations, personal communication, January 21, 2011). The goal of the email was to solicit feedback and input by FAMU supporters related to improving the university.

Another approach is to increase graduate level funding, endowments and alumni support. As many HBCUs have more of their enrollment at the undergraduate level; however, graduate levels receive greater funding, according to state legislatures in Florida, Louisiana, and

Alabama” (Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002, p.13). This alludes to the notion that this funding formula is designed to best serve HWCUs. Whether this is the case, HBCU leaders must step up to the plate and address this issue with the intentions of improving and finding other funding sources. Also, it should be a critical objective of the institution’s development department to seek opportunities to build relationships with public officials, especially state legislators, to address the lack or minimal funding from the state to HBCUs.

While private institutions such as Spelman, Hampton, Tuskegee and Fisk Universities have larger endowments public HBCUs tend to be at a disadvantage of utilizing endowments for sustainability (Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002). Unlike other universities it is argued that past leadership at Florida A&M University has contributed to the university’s success in securing endowments, “Florida A& M University has the largest endowment of public HBCUs” (Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002, p.13). Evans, Evans, & Evans (2002) further suggested that endowment matching similar to that of HWCUs should be placed at the forefront of HBCU leaders’ agenda and efforts to increase funding (pp. 13-14). Along with increasing endowments, financial support from HBCUs alumni is essential to sustaining success. Wayne Wormley (2010) challenges alumni to contribute to their alma mater “through regular annual giving and participation in a planned giving program after graduation” (p. 20). He further states, “By remaining involved with and investing in the institutions from which they graduated, on an ongoing basis, they enhance the value and maximize the return on investment of their own earned degrees and personal human capital” (p. 20). In comparison to PWI, HBCUs continue to struggle in the area of alumni support and endowments which impacts the success of HBCUs. While the recent federal support under the leadership of President Barak Obama to HBCUs will stabilize areas in crisis such as renovations, faculty salaries, funding for students and technology

the sustainability of HBCUs are in the hands of HBCUs leaders, alumni, and the black community.

Technology is one of the driving forces in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; its advancement is unparalleled to any advancement ever experienced in U.S. history across academic disciplines. Professors are utilizing technology as a means of teaching courses, communicating lectures, interacting with students, and developing creative spaces for critical thinking. For instance, Dr. Campbell, a professor at a private PWI, utilizes YouTube to explicate lessons and lectures. He argues that through this mode of communication, students are able to come prepared to class to discuss the material and allow for a more engaging interaction and discussion (Campbell, personal communications, November 23, 2010). Another approach to sustaining and maintaining a culture of excellence is providing students with access to HBCUs through online courses. Often criticized by detractors who suggest that HBCUs should become online for profit universities, these institutions would greatly benefit intersecting multiple technological strategies with existing strategies. As other HBCUs already offer distance learning programs such as Grambling State University, HBCUs place themselves in the competitive wave of technology along with their PWIs counterparts. Grambling State University distant learning mission states,

The mission of the Office of Distance Learning (ODL) is to provide students with the delivery of quality instruction through technology which will give students (1) access to courses at the university from remote locations, (2) access to web-enhanced courses on campus and (3) support to use and access electronic learning technology

[\(http://www.gram.edu/\)](http://www.gram.edu/).

As HBCU leaders respond to changing economy, advancement of technology, accreditation, and sustaining financial resources, HBCU leaders must also “have a firm understanding of the academic enterprise, management, finances, personnel administration, information systems, and planning” (Foster, 1987 cited in Nichols, 2004, p. 222).

### **Conclusion**

Advancing the mission of HBCUs is linked to advancing a culture of excellence by making more accredited graduate programs available, increasing funding resources for sustainability, and improving the selection of leaders for HBCUs. The continued development and progress of HBCUs center upon its leaders’ and faculty’s commitment to a culture of excellence. A culture of scholarly excellence consists of a demonstrated commitment to scholarship, collaboration and academic productivity. It also includes collegiality and opportunities for professional development in a supportive environment. In terms of programming, cultures of excellence may offer research brown bags, writing or accountability groups, research grants and peer mentoring awards.

This culture of excellence must counter the negative mentoring (Wilson, 1997), lack of networks and intellectual isolation experienced by minority doctoral candidates and Black graduates of predominantly White institutions who work at HBCUs. This lack of quality mentorship and networks negatively influences the scholarship and pedagogy of HBCU faculty.

Cultures of Excellence Transform:

Rigidity → to Innovation

Isolation → to Collaboration

Mediocrity → to High Expectations

Imbalance between teaching, research and service, common throughout academe may also thwart movement towards excellence. Heavy teaching loads of 3 or more classes, coupled with a lack of accountability for writing and scholarship may place research efforts backstage. Similarly, leaderships' actions may counter long term institutional goals to move forward. Many HBCUs hold strong histories as teaching institutions. While we continue this important legacy, the importance of scholarship in informing course content, pedagogical practice and advancing knowledge should not go ignored.

Funding in attaining excellence is critical. The Knight & Sims vs. Alabama court case provided Alabama State University (ASU) opportunities to create new doctoral programs in Educational Leadership, Policy and Law (ELPL); Microbiology; Physical Therapy; as well as several master's level programs. Now in its tenth year, the ELPL doctoral program has established a strong regional reputation in the field. This exemplifies how when provided adequate resources, HBCUs can contribute to innovation and practice via support and development of its teacher-scholars. Some HBCUs continue to engage in mandatory practices and traditions of faculty and students which may reflect the paternal operations of the past. However, being competitive in a global marketplace calls these institutions to adopt best administrative and pedagogical practices, amidst maintaining rich traditions.

The phrase "talented tenth" was first used by Henry L. Morehouse in 1896 as a description for a new philosophy of Black education. W.E.B. DuBois later adopted the term for his own scholarship. Morehouse (Anderson, 1988) held:

In all ages the mighty impulses that have propelled a people onward in their progressive career, have proceeded from a few gifted souls...[A] talented tenth [must be] trained to

analyze and to generalize [via an education producing] thoroughly disciplined minds. (p. 243)

In considering this philosophy, HBCUs must determine what educational stance and pedagogies would best prepare students and render them competitive in a global marketplace.

Gardner (2006) identifies “five minds” critical to cultivate for future competitiveness in a global economy. The disciplinary mind utilizes forms of thinking related to major disciplines and professions. Lifelong learning, diligent application and constancy demonstrate this type of mind. The disciplinary mind emerges during adolescence and has the potential to continue throughout the life span. The synthesizing mind holds the ability of gaining abstract critical information from large sets of data and interpreting the information for use. It ideally begins in childhood becoming deliberate over one’s life as new information arises. The creating mind moves beyond current thought to form alternative questions, solutions or expanding existing ways of knowing. The creation builds upon one or more established fields of study. Such a mind requires a degree of cultivation of the synthesizing and disciplined minds. The respectful mind reacts sympathetically and in a constructive manner to individual and group differences. It moves beyond tolerance and political correctness in working to understand and reach out to others. The ethical mind seeks excellence in both work and as a citizen. Gardner’s multifaceted approach provides a strong model for leadership training. Leaders, particularly in the education sector, hold the capacity to positively influence minds and lives. When the economy calls for employees to retool, Gardner’s five minds promises to contribute to the retooling process and may inform the development of a culture of excellence for HBCUs. The synthesizing, creating, respectful and ethical minds together represent critical parts of a whole. That whole may be seen as ideal

educational outcomes throughout the varied educational sectors. This ideal education cultivates various key components of an educated, productive citizenry.

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