



# The Changing Face of Historically Black Colleges and Universities



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*“As the country moves closer to becoming a minority-majority population, several opportunities exist for HBCUs, from increased enrollments, funding, and overall attention. However, the appropriate strategic leaders and vision must be in place to take advantage of any opportunities that arise for these schools.”*

—BRIAN BRIDGES, Executive Director, UNCF’s Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute

This report—the first issued by the Center for Minority Serving Institutions,<sup>1</sup> located at the University of Pennsylvania—illustrates in broad brushstrokes where Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) fit within the shifting landscape of U.S. higher education.

We focus on three key areas: students, leadership, and fundraising. In addition to including crucial information about the diversification of HBCU student populations with respect to race/ethnicity and gender, we consider how HBCUs provide support and services for LGBT students and offer programs and classes that ensure students’ success in an increasingly global world.

We also identify some of the challenges and opportunities facing HBCU presidents and faculty. By putting the data in the broader context of U.S. higher education, we highlight where HBCUs lead their national counterparts and where they lag behind. Finally, we sketch where HBCUs stand in terms of fundraising, pointing out challenges, highlighting successes, and suggesting steps that these minority-serving institutions can take to increase their endowments.

Before turning to the facts and figures, we ask you to keep one thing in mind: In many places where these data show HBCUs lagging behind their national counterparts, the disconnect reflects less on the institutions themselves than on the tendency in the United States to invest in students who need the least help instead of those who need the most. What is striking is how successful HBCUs have been in educating traditionally underserved students *despite* the many obstacles these institutions face.

<sup>1</sup> Minority Serving Institutions include Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Asian American, Native Alaskan, and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions.

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# Historically Black Colleges and Universities: An Introduction



Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are the only institutions in the United States that were created for the express purpose of educating Black citizens. These institutions were established during the decades after the Civil War until 1964. Many were started by the federal government's Freedmen's Bureau with assistance from Whites—primarily abolitionist missionaries and Northern philanthropists, who either wanted to Christianize Blacks or train them for their industrial enterprises. African Americans, through the African Methodist Episcopal Church, also established HBCUs.

Until the mid-1960s, HBCUs were, with very few exceptions, the only higher education option for most African Americans. With the push for the integration of historically White institutions during the Civil Rights Movement, enrollment dropped at HBCUs, and their role of educating the near entirety of the Black middle class shifted. Today the 105 HBCUs enroll 11% of Black students in the United States, yet they represent less than 3% of colleges and universities in the country (NCES, 2011). These institutions are public and private, religious and non-sectarian, two-year and four-year, selective and open, urban and rural. Some are financially strong while others are struggling. In essence, they represent the great variety that we have in American higher education.

# Educating Tomorrow's Leaders: Challenges and Opportunities



*“We need to admit students from a wider range of ethnic and income groups, so that they too can benefit from best practices that will eventually lead to a more educated citizenry.”*

—MICHELLE HOWARD-VITAL,  
President, Cheyney University

## INCREASING DIVERSITY

Today, a full quarter of HBCUs across the nation have at least a 20% non-Black student body. Some people worry that the changing composition of HBCUs endangers the very aspect of these institutions that makes them unique; others argue that diversity makes these institutions stronger, by fostering mutual respect and an appreciation for Black culture among a broader population.

Here are some historical trends across racial and ethnic categories:

**BLACKS:** In 1950, Blacks made up nearly 100% of HBCU enrollment. In 1980 they represented 80% of total enrollment (Gasman, 2007; NCES, 1980).

**LATINOS:** In the past 30 years, the proportion of Latino enrollment at HBCUs has increased, especially in regions of the country where the Latino population is growing rapidly (Ozuna, 2012).

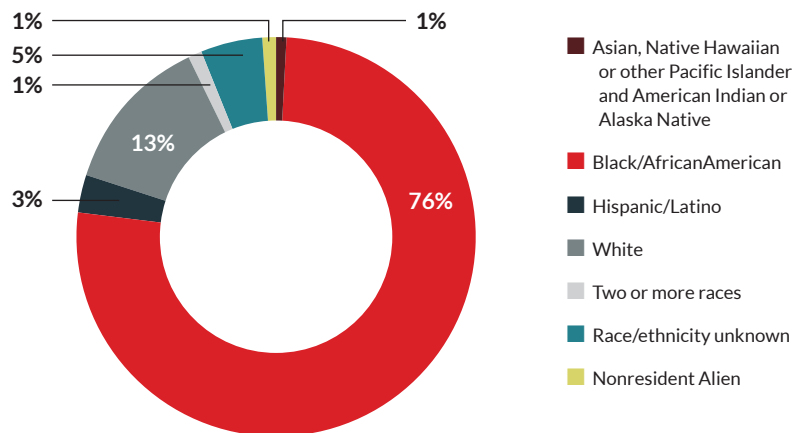
**ASIAN AMERICANS:** In 2011, total Asian American enrollment at HBCUs was 4,311, a 60% increase from 2001 (NCES, 2011).

**WHITES:** The White enrollment at HBCUs has hovered between 10-13% in the past 20 years (NCES, 2011).

### TEXAS LEADS THE CHARGE IN DIVERSITY

Latino and Asian American enrollment has been particularly vigorous at HBCUs in Texas, reflecting that state's increasingly diverse population. At Prairie View A&M University, Latino students now represent 4% of the student body, a 123% increase from 1980. Similarly, both Texas College and Huston-Tillotson University have seen proportional growth of their Latino students—by 9% and 19%, respectively (NCES, 2011). The three HBCUs with the highest Asian American enrollment also hail from the Lone Star State: Texas Southern University, Prairie View A&M University, and St. Phillips College.

### 2011 UNDERGRAD ENROLLMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY



Note: Total undergraduate HBCU population is 346,338. American Indian and Alaskan Native make up .23%, Asian, 1% and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, .04% of total HBCU enrollment (NCES, 2011).

*“The idea of college as a special and essential gateway to a successful life is lost on far too many young Black men. More Americans need to join Morehouse College in adopting the urgency to change that.”*

—JOHN S. WILSON,  
President, Morehouse College

### HBCUs PREFERRED BY BLACK MEN

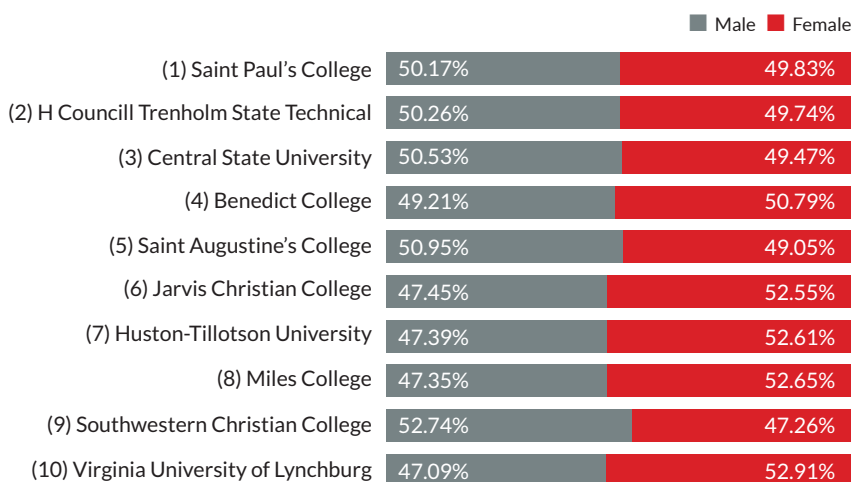
Private HBCUs with populations of fewer than 1,000 students attract the largest percentage of Black men. Although we have little data on why Black men choose certain colleges over others, some possible reasons include the existence of athletic programs, recruitment efforts focused on males, and greater availability of scholarships.

## CLOSING THE GENDER GAP

Female undergraduate students outnumber male undergrads at HBCUs at a slightly higher (3%) rate than the national average (NCES, 2011). A more significant gap appears when considering Black undergraduate male enrollment compared to Black females at certain HBCUs.

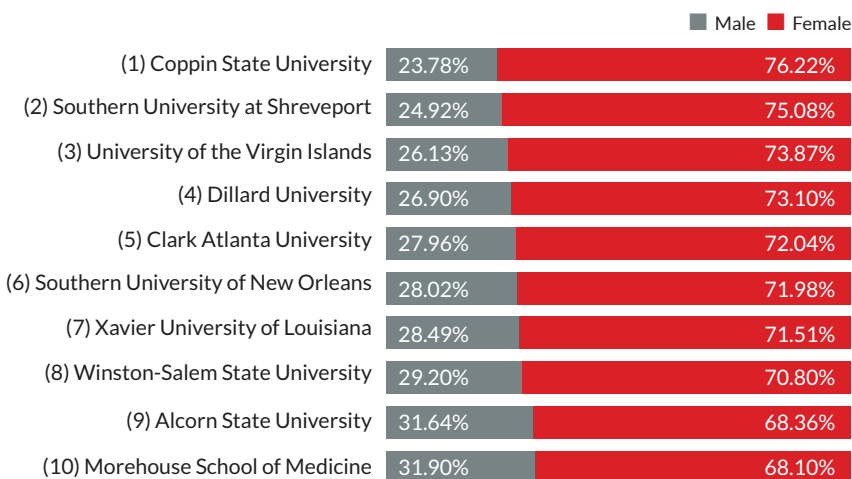
This lack of balance in overall HBCU enrollment results in a significant gender imbalance on individual HBCU campuses, with some Black colleges having female enrollments as high at 76%. Of note, though, five colleges have more men than women on their campus: Arkansas Baptist College, Edward Waters College, Concordia College-Selma, Livingstone College, and Texas College (Gasman, Abiola, & Freeman, forthcoming).

### 2011 TOP 10 HBCUs WITH GREATEST GENDER PARITY



Source: NCES, 2011.

### 2011 TOP 10 HBCUs WITH LEAST GENDER PARITY



Source: NCES, 2011.

*“Our students today are waist-high in the water of globalization. We must offer them attractive learning options to immerse them in different world cultures. In order to be the leaders this nation demands of them, they will need to speak the critical languages and understand the history of cultures and nations different from their own.”*

—DAVID WILSON,  
President, Morgan State University



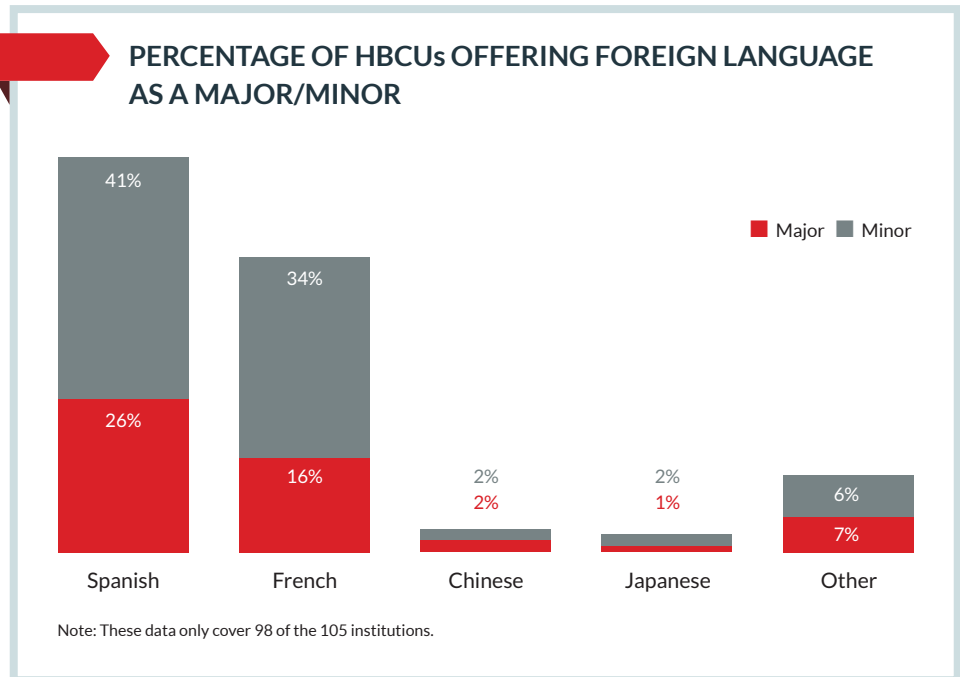
## CREATING GLOBAL CITIZENS

HBCUs play a crucial role in educating their students to succeed in an increasingly globalized world. Two ways that institutions can achieve this goal are by offering study abroad programs and more foreign language majors and minors.

**STUDYING ABROAD.** Study abroad diversifies student learning, broadens perspectives, and deepens cultural understanding (Twombly, Salisbury, Tumanut, & Klute, 2012). Currently, 58% of HBCUs offer students the opportunity to study abroad—in locations spanning every region of the globe. Unfortunately, students are not taking equal advantage of these programs: Lower income students and Black students study abroad at significantly lower rates nationally than White students and students from upper middle class families. This is a particularly disturbing statistic given that participation in study abroad programs is associated with higher graduation rates for Blacks (Institute of International Education, 2010).

How can HBCUs improve access to study abroad opportunities for their low-income students? One simple answer is by underscoring and promoting the benefits of study abroad. A more complex response involves financing, including helping students and parents identify new funding options to support study abroad.

**SPEAKING NEW LANGUAGES.** After Spanish and French, the top three foreign languages offered at HBCUs are Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic, all languages that are critical to international commerce. But merely offering a smattering of language courses isn't enough. To enable their graduates to pursue employment in a labor market that demands global competency, HBCUs must enhance their language programs by offering a greater variety of foreign language majors and minors.





*“HBCUs now stand at a crucial horizon. The manner in which they address, respond to, and begin to provide support for their LGBT populations will speak volumes not only to higher education, but also to Black communities and the larger society as a whole.”*

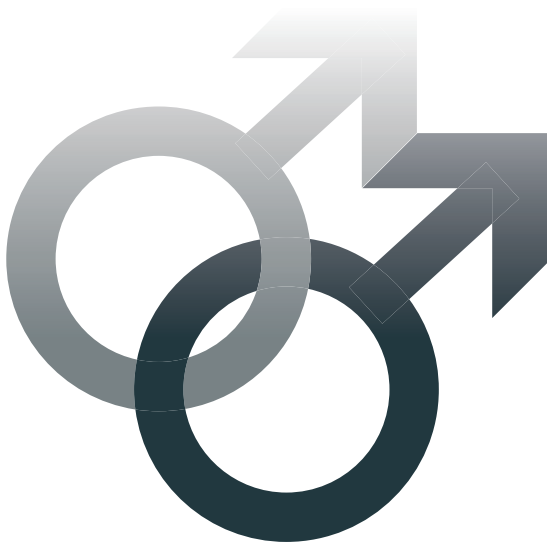
—STEVE D. MOBLEY JR.,  
Howard University '05

## EMBRACING LGBT STUDENTS

In the past, HBCUs have been slow to respond to the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) communities. In fact, some HBCUs are known for having unsupportive climates for students identifying as LGBT (Harper & Gasman, 2008). But HBCUs' attitudes toward their LGBT populations are changing rapidly, as highlighted by these examples:

- **Howard University** has had an on-campus support organization for gay and lesbian students since 1980.
- **Spelman College** has been an exemplar among HBCUs, sponsoring a national conference in 2011 on HBCUs and LGBT issues.
- **Bowie State University** opened its Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Allies Resource Center in 2012.
- **Morehouse College** is offering its first LGBT course in 2013. The course focuses on Black gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender history and will be taught by a Yale faculty member via Skype.

Overall, 21 HBCUs have LGBT student organizations.



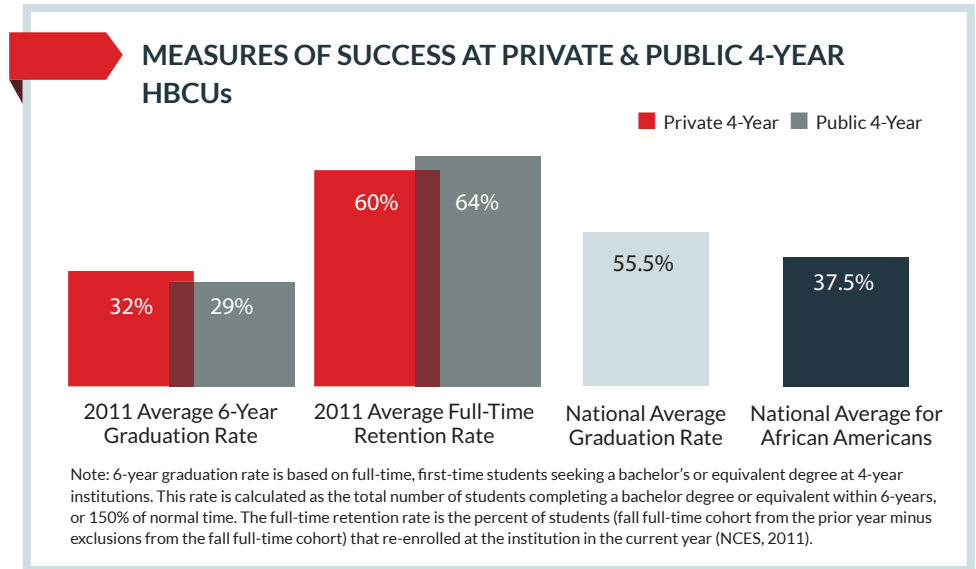
*“Retention is a sign of efficiency at colleges and universities and contributes to an institution’s public image.”*

—MICHAEL T. NETTLES,  
Senior Vice President,  
Educational Testing Service

## IMPROVING GRADUATION AND RETENTION RATES

HBCUs, on average, have a 30% graduation rate (NCES, 2011), a statistic for which they are often criticized. The raw numbers may appear damning, but they don't tell the full story.

When considering graduation rates, it's important to keep in mind that the majority, but certainly not all, of HBCU students are low-income, first-generation, and Pell-Grant-eligible (Mercer & Stedman, 2008). Students with these characteristics are less likely to graduate no matter where they attend college (Mercer & Stedman, 2008). Predominantly White institutions (PWIs) with institutional characteristics and student populations that are similar to HBCUs have similar graduation rates (Kim & Conrad, 2006). The majority of HBCUs also enroll students with lower SAT scores. More selective HBCUs—those that accept only students who are highly prepared for college—have higher graduation rates than their less selective counterparts.



## GEOGRAPHY MATTERS

Most HBCUs are in the South, where all but four states have graduation rates below the national average. When measuring graduation rates, students' backgrounds and prior academic achievements matter, as does the selectivity of the institution. The following charts compare socio-economic status, SAT scores, and other factors between HBCUs and PWIs in Mississippi and North Carolina while also considering the resulting graduation rates.

**COMPARISON OF HBCUs AND PWIs IN MISSISSIPPI AND NORTH CAROLINA**
**MISSISSIPPI**

	2010 6-Year Grad Rate	% Pell Recipients Among Freshmen	% Underrepresented Minority	Estimated Median SAT / ACT	In-State Tuition and Fees	Size (Undergrad FTE)
<b>HBCU</b>	34.9%	59.7%	94.5%	845	\$4,670.00	3,652
<b>PWI</b>	49.0%	44.8%	30%	1033	\$4,845.00	8,403

Institution	Type	2010 6-Year Grad Rate	% Pell Recipients Among Freshmen	% Underrepresented Minority	Estimated Median SAT / ACT	In-State Tuition and Fees	Size (Undergrad FTE)
Alcorn State University	HBCU	37.2%	58%	94.1%	845	\$4,498.00	2,524
Delta State University	PWI	46.5%	54%	41%	930	\$4,450.00	2,703
Jackson State University	HBCU	40.3%	78%	95.6%	865	\$4,634.00	6,158
Mississippi State University	PWI	58%	28%	22.3%	1085	\$5,151.00	13,671
Mississippi University for Women	PWI	39.4%	64%	38.6%	990	\$4,423.00	1,929
Mississippi Valley State University	HBCU	27.2%	43%	93.8%	825	\$4,877.00	2,274
University of Mississippi Main Campus	PWI	58.7%	22%	16%	1065	\$5,106.00	12,474
University of Southern Mississippi	PWI	46.6%	56%	32.2%	990	\$5,096.00	11,236

Source: The Education Trust, College Results Online, 2010

**NORTH CAROLINA**

	2010 6-Year Grad Rate	% Pell Recipients Among Freshmen	% Underrepresented Minority	Estimated Median SAT / ACT	In-State Tuition and Fees	Size (Undergrad FTE)
<b>HBCU</b>	37.6%	69.8%	85.5%	860	\$3,470.00	5,451
<b>PWI</b>	59.7%	27.5%	17.2%	1105	\$4,667.00	12,085

Institution	Type	2010 6-Year Grad Rate	% Pell Recipients Among Freshmen	% Underrepresented Minority	Estimated Median SAT / ACT	In-State Tuition and Fees	Size (Undergrad FTE)
Appalachian State University	PWI	65.9%	18%	6%	1165	\$4,491.00	14,368
East Carolina University	PWI	56.1%	25%	17.1%	1015	\$4,477.00	19,414
Elizabeth City State University	HBCU	41.5%	75%	82.1%	825	\$3,031.00	2,983
Fayetteville State University	HBCU	34.1%	76%	80.9%	855	\$3,177.00	4,693
North Carolina A & T State University	HBCU	38.3%	61%	92.1%	910	\$3,696.00	8,344
North Carolina Central University	HBCU	38.3%	72%	88.7%	845	\$3,922.00	5,698
North Carolina State University at Raleigh	PWI	72.5%	20%	11.8%	1180	\$5,475.00	23,097
University of North Carolina at Asheville	PWI	55.3%	22%	6.3%	1160	\$4,330.00	3,370
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	PWI	88.1%	18%	16.8%	1300	\$5,625.00	17,510
University of North Carolina at Charlotte	PWI	55.2%	31%	20.4%	1055	\$4,427.00	17,469
University of North Carolina at Greensboro	PWI	52.8%	40%	26.9%	1030	\$4,234.00	14,412
University of North Carolina at Pembroke	PWI	37.5%	54%	50.1%	945	\$3,736.00	5,103
University of North Carolina School of the Arts	PWI	55.9%	22%	15.9%	1120	\$5,449.00	740
University of North Carolina-Wilmington	PWI	65.9%	20%	9.1%	1160	\$4,873.00	10,855
Western Carolina University	PWI	51.2%	32%	8.9%	1030	\$4,330.00	6,600
Winston-Salem State University	HBCU	35.6%	65%	83.6%	865	\$3,522.00	5,538

Source: The Education Trust, College Results Online, 2010

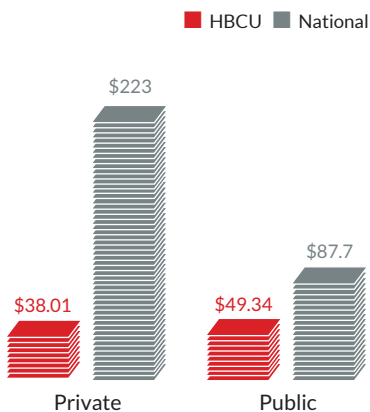
# Embracing Change: Fundraising and Leadership



*“Alumni giving starts with students. We need to start teaching students about giving back while they’re still on campus instead of waiting until they are alumni and are easily distracted by life.”*

—NELSON BOWMAN III,  
Executive Director of Development,  
Prairie View A&M University

## 2009 AVERAGE ENDOWMENT (IN MILLIONS)



Source: Gasman & Bowman, 2011; NCES 2011.

## INCREASING STABILITY THROUGH FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is the most important factor for the long-term sustainability of HBCUs. Institutions with substantial endowments and vibrant alumni giving programs are less likely to have problems with accreditation, student retention, leadership, and faculty satisfaction (Gasman & Bowman, 2011).

To strengthen fundraising operations, HBCUs can take the following actions:

- **Cultivate Black fundraisers by introducing fundraising as a career to students with an interest in the future of HBCUs.** Hire more fundraisers of color and fundraisers who understand the HBCU environment and the needs of African American alumni.
- **Teach students about philanthropy and giving back to their institution starting at new student orientation.** Unless students and alumni understand the role that they play in sustaining the institution, they will not comprehend the importance of giving back financially.
- **Form partnerships with community organizations, other HBCUs, other Minority Serving Institutions, and majority institutions.** Corporations, foundations, and other funders value partnerships because they bring together common strengths and create opportunities for creative and innovative thinking.
- **Study the changing agendas of public and private funders and make connections to these agendas.** Long gone are the days of HBCUs getting funding based on their admirable historic legacies; today funders want to see how HBCUs respond to and lead major trends in higher education.

## WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

*Over the past decade, the Kresge Foundation has made a substantial investment in HBCU fundraising, changing the landscape of many of the institutions it supports. South Carolina’s Claflin University, a school with 1,900 students, is a shining example of what investing in infrastructure can do. With an external investment from Kresge and the United Negro College Fund, Claflin increased its fundraising staff from 12 to 22 individuals. The institution’s alumni giving rate rose from 35% to 45%, and it has raised \$63 million toward its \$94 million capital campaign (Iris Bomar, personal communication, 2013). In the process, Claflin raised its national profile, ranking as one of the best small liberal arts colleges in the South as well earning a spot among the top ten HBCUs as determined by U.S. News and World Report.*



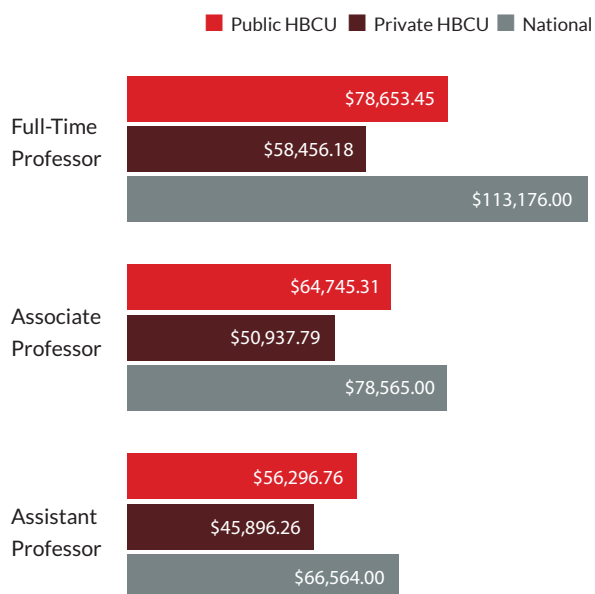
## SUPPORTING FACULTY

HBCUs boast some of the most diverse faculties in the nation, offering their students exposure to high-quality, caring teachers with varied backgrounds. These faculty members are essential to the institutional culture and should be active in leadership. Unfortunately, at too many HBCUs they have large teaching loads, are underpaid, and are left out of the leadership circle. Here are some barriers to success for HBCU faculty:

- **Workload:** Faculty, on average, teach four or more courses a semester. Because the majority of HBCU students are first-generation college students from low-income families and are often underprepared, faculty members spend additional time outside the classroom mentoring students.
- **Salaries:** Full professors at HBCUs earn a little more than half of what their counterparts earn at the national level. Salary disparities between HBCUs and the national average range between \$18,000 and \$53,000 (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2011).
- **Lack of shared governance:** Another barrier to success for faculty on some HBCU campuses is a lack of respect for faculty governance. One way to change this is for more presidents and administrators to involve faculty in institutional decision-making.

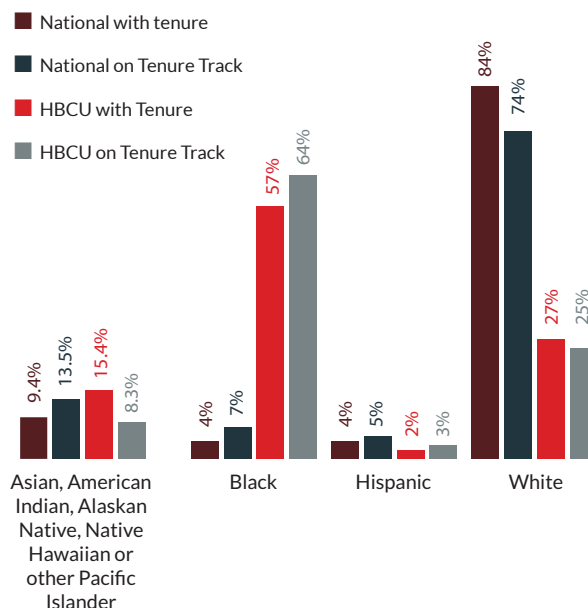
Despite obstacles, HBCU faculty members demonstrate exemplary mentoring and have long had a reputation for encouraging and empowering students interested in graduate and professional programs, especially, but not limited to, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.

### 2011 AVERAGE SALARY FOR TENURE AND TENURE-TRACKED FACULTY ACROSS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HBCUs



Source: NCES, 2011

### 2011 FACULTY BY RACE AND ETHNICITY AND STATUS



Note: Total tenured or tenure-track faculty at HBCUs is 5,694 (NCES, 2011).

“Boards are beginning to realize that they need progressive, innovative, and truly student-oriented leaders in these very challenging times. Ten HBCU presidents are 50 and under. Six of the 10 have served as chief student affairs officers as well, a sign of a new commitment to students.”

—WALTER KIMBROUGH,  
President, Dillard University

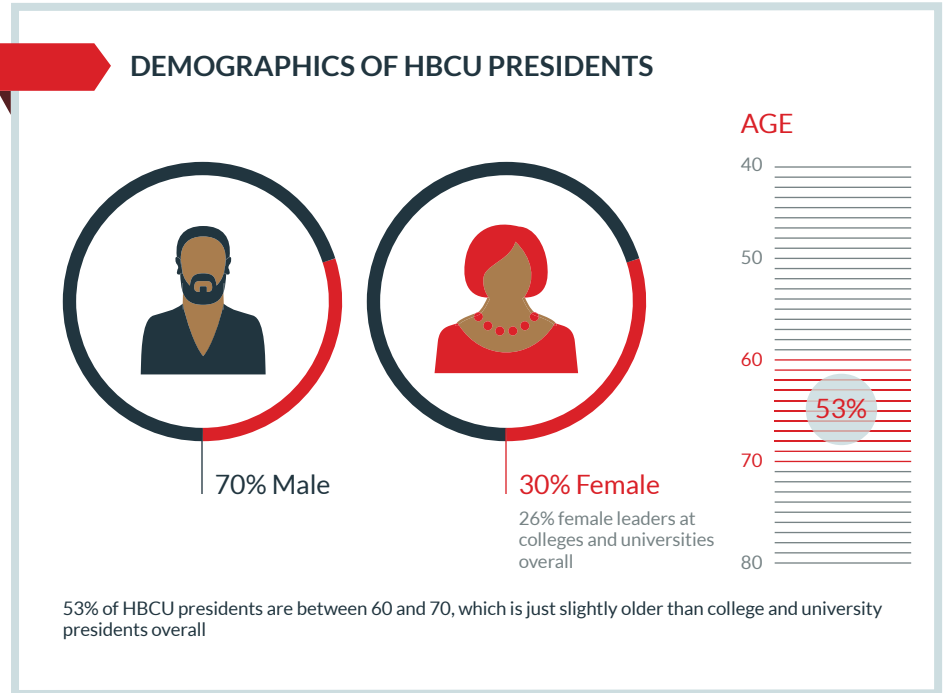
EMBRACING SOCIAL MEDIA AS A LEADERSHIP TOOL

Michael Sorrell, the president of Paul Quinn College, uses social media to increase his institution's visibility nationally, generate funding prospects, increase enrollment, and engage current students. He regularly posts on Facebook and Twitter about Paul Quinn's successes and needs. In addition, Sorrell posts about national current events, inspiring leaders, and important books for his students to read. He highlights the work of other HBCUs and their leaders and interacts with young people who aspire to be HBCU leaders. Sorrell's engagement takes a little extra time, but the payoff is huge. This past year, this small liberal arts college was featured in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Huffington Post, Dallas Morning News, and the Chronicle of Higher Education.

PROMOTING FORWARD-THINKING PRESIDENTS

As HBCUs evolve due to shifting demographics and the changing face of U.S. higher education, we look to presidents, as well as other administrators and the boards overseeing these institutions, to take on the difficult task of finding innovative ways to meet the changing needs of their students. Here are some leadership trends and highlights:

- **Reaching out beyond the circle of HBCUs when filling leadership roles.** A lower percentage (58%) of HBCU presidents secured their undergraduate degrees at HBCUs than 30 years ago (75%) (Freeman & Gasman, forthcoming; Tata, 1980). This change is most likely due to the increased access and opportunities available to Blacks at PWIs.
- **Getting older and staying at the helm longer.** On average, HBCU presidents serve 6 years, compared to 8.5 years nationally (Freeman & Gasman, forthcoming). But a cadre of HBCU presidents have served very long terms—a full 16% have served between 15 and 25 years. A long-term presidency has one major consequence that is often overlooked: When presidents are at an institution too long, staff and faculty may begin to rely too much on them. (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001).
- **Lagging behind in use of social media:** HBCU presidents lag behind their national counterparts in their embrace of social media. According to a 2011 Pew survey of 1,055 college and university presidents throughout the country, over 50% of higher education leaders were active on Facebook and Twitter. For HBCU presidents, that rate drops to 13% for Facebook, and 12% for Twitter (Gasman, 2012a; Gasman, 2012b).



# Guidelines for Success



The Center for Minority Serving Institutions plans to address many of the issues that we touch on in this document in future studies, programs, and other forms of outreach. Meanwhile, we close this inaugural report with guidelines—drawn from recent research—that HBCUs can enact today and that will enable them to continue to play a crucial role in American education.

- **Establish** targets for financial prosperity and sustainability; seek investments in fundraising and new ways to generate revenue.
- **Use** data to make decisions; when data show a need for improvement, make changes, and track performance over time.
- **Increase** performance relevant to Black males; use the unique history and culture of HBCUs to empower Black men.
- **Revamp** curricula to respond to 21st-century needs while still building on rich African American history and tradition.
- **Focus** curricula on areas of strength; create an institutional niche.
- **Emphasize** leadership in teacher preparation; the number and quality of Black teachers must increase in order to inspire and transform the lives of children.
- **Prepare** students to be leaders of their communities.
- **Advocate** for social and economic justice; be vocal about the underrepresentation of Blacks in corporate and government leadership.
- **Increase** the quality of senior-level leadership so that it contributes financially, intellectually, and socially to the institutions.
- **Create** consortia to provide stronger programs and learning opportunities, using technology to share expertise.
- **Set** collective goals for the future of HBCUs and for Black communities; take the lead in inserting Black leadership into national conversations.
- **Work** more closely with primary and secondary schools in the areas surrounding HBCUs to create seamless pipelines to higher education.
- **Tell** the contemporary story of HBCUs; the history and legacy are formidable and essential, but the real story is what HBCUs are doing today and what they have the potential to contribute in the future.

*Note on the Data: In compiling information for this report, we encountered several discrepancies in raw data provided by the National Center for Educational Statistics. Prevalent in educational research, this finding did not come at a surprise. The U.S. Department of Education compiles data on accredited HBCUs. Although there are 105 HBCUs, the data presented above is based on 99 institutions. And even within the data on the 99 HBCUs, missing institutional data and irreconcilable sums based on gender and race/ethnicity, we recognize, may not encompass the experiences of all HBCUs.*

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