



America's Public HBCUs: A Four State Comparison of Institutional Capacity and State Funding Priorities

In his 2008 report entitled, *Contemporary HBCUs: Considering Institutional Capacity and State Priorities*, James T. Minor analyzed enrollment, funding, and advanced degree patterns at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and North Carolina. His findings exposed the underlying racial disparities in state and federal allocations to HBCUs. He also drew on enrollment and graduate program data to illuminate the vital function of HBCUs. In this report, we evaluate how enrollment, funding, and advanced program distribution have changed since Minor published his original findings.

We used the most recent data available from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) to shed light on enrollment, state appropriations, and completion data for HBCUs. We also drew upon current state appropriations data from state government websites, institutional websites and state education websites to procure advanced degree program information, including specialist and post-master's programs.

The following questions guided our analyses:

Have state and federal funding patterns in higher education become more equitable?

- Is Black student enrollment increasing at public Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs)?
- Have there been substantial changes in advanced degree program distribution?
- Has enrollment in public HBCUs continued to decline?
- Has the enrollment of other racial and ethnic students increased at public HBCUs?

Our findings confirm, with some noteworthy exceptions, much of what Minor concluded in his 2008 report:

- When making appropriations, state governments prioritize PWIs and flagship institutions.
- Black student enrollment in PWIs has increased but has stagnated in two states, mirroring the growth in the Black population overall.
- HBCUs do not have an adequate share in the distribution of advanced degree programs.
- The ethnic composition of HBCUs indicates the need for them to continue to broaden their reach and expand their mission.

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CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

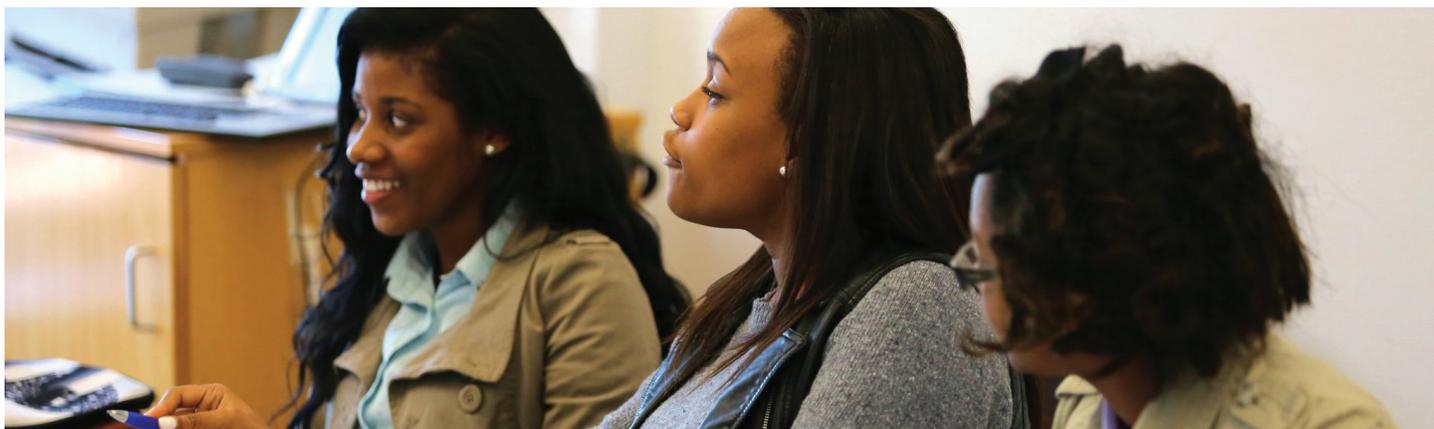
The recession of 2008 had a devastating impact on higher education across the United States, but HBCUs were particularly hard hit. Because Minor completed his report on the eve of the recession, the enrollment and funding trends he detailed were based on pre-recession data.

Given many states' diminished post-recession coffers, the "climate of accountability and efficiency" (28) noted by Minor has become a dominant theme in contemporary higher education finance. Along these lines, many state policymakers are floating the idea of allocating funding based on performance targets, such as degree completion rates and other outcomes. Although the efficient distribution of funding and quantifiable evidence of its use is laudable, policymakers and higher education leaders must recognize that a substantial number of HBCU students are from low-income families and mostly first-generation students. Such students are often unlikely to graduate, regardless of the institution they attend (Mercer and Stedman, 2008). A categorical application of performance funding could harm HBCU students by limiting state funding to their institutions. For decades, reformers have viewed performance funding as a necessary corrective to the deeply flawed enrollment-based funding formulas that have been omnipresent. More recent reforms to performance funding have included the use of metrics that measure improvement and change in ways that matter differently for different institutions. Such funding reforms may represent a more equitable approach toward HBCUs.

Disregard for the nuances of an HBCU education is common among those who advocate for their closure. For decades, assorted critics in academia, government, media, and business have called the mission of HBCUs into question. The culture of efficiency pervasive in the contemporary national education narrative serves as the rallying cry for these critics. They view HBCUs as anachronistic appendages of a racist past. Those seeking to close HBCUs fail to recognize their vast potential for the future—not just for students, but for the country as a whole. HBCUs serve as a direct pipeline to the middle class and must continue to serve this purpose.

Besides questioning the continued relevancy of HBCUs in a falsely labeled "post-racial world," HBCU critics point to undergraduate completion statistics as evidence of these institutions' inability to educate students. Such a critique fails to acknowledge that many (though not all) HBCU students come from low-income backgrounds, and such students tend to grapple with financial problems and other life stressors that have a negative impact on their academic success. Students with these characteristics demonstrate similar completion rates at all institutions, not just HBCUs. So even though the 6-year graduation rate for HBCUs tends to be below 50%, HBCUs provide these students more attention and support than they would receive at other institutions, creating a more rewarding experience (Gasman, 2013; Adams, 2013a).

It is at the graduate level that HBCU success can better be quantitatively demonstrated. As much as 40% of all African Americans pursuing graduate education in STEM disciplines completed their undergraduate education in HBCUs, even though only 11% of all African American students attend HBCUs (Gasman, 2013; Matthews, 2011; National Science Foundation, 2013).



TOTAL HBCUs IN ALABAMA, LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI & NORTH CAROLINA



STATE HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

ALABAMA. Alabama has 14 four-year public colleges and universities (since Minor's study, Troy University was consolidated into one campus); among them are two HBCUs: Alabama A&M University and Alabama State University.

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) coordinates all higher education. Its mission is to foster coordination amongst all institutions, manage student aid programs, and conduct other regulatory functions. ACHE is a 12-member coordinating board appointed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House with confirmation by the Senate (ACHE, 2013). ACHE issued "Forging Strategic Alliances: State Plan for Higher Education 2009-2014" to articulate its mission of aligning higher education with statewide goals. This document concedes that the state's education system, workforce, and overall wealth are weakened by racial disparities in higher education enrollment and attainment (ACHE, 2009).

LOUISIANA. Louisiana has three university systems. The University of Louisiana system contains one HBCU (Grambling State University), while the Louisiana State University system contains no HBCUs. The third system is the Southern University system, which is the nation's only statewide HBCU system. It includes Southern University and A&M College, Southern University at New Orleans, and Southern University at Shreveport, as well as the Southern University Law Center and the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center.

The Board of Regents oversees higher education in the state. Its full-time decision-making staff is headed by the Commissioner of Higher Education. The board also includes 15 volunteer members appointed by the Governor (Louisiana Board of Regents, 2013). As part of its constitutionally authorized mission, the Board created the Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education in 2001 and released an updated version in 2011. The goals of the Master Plan are increasing educational attainment to the average of Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) states by 2025, emphasizing the importance of science and technology, and fostering more accountability and efficiency (Louisiana Board of Regents, 2012).



ALABAMA

It is critical that HBCUs continue to attract diverse student populations. Yet HBCU efforts could be hindered by state-wide policies such as those in Alabama. In 2011, Alabama passed HB 56 (which it revised in 2012 with HB 658). The law is considered the toughest anti-immigration law in the United States. Among its many stipulations, HB 56 prevents illegal and many legal immigrants from attending public higher education institutions (Scott, 2012; ACLU, 2011). The atmosphere of intolerance casts a pall over Alabama's racial and ethnic minority communities, especially Latinos. HBCUs in Alabama have experienced a gradual increase in Latino enrollment.

MISSISSIPPI. As in Alabama and Louisiana, a coordinating board—the Board of Trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning, manages public 4-year higher education in Mississippi. Its 12 members are appointed from the three Mississippi Supreme Court districts. The Board determines policy and financial oversight for the state's eight 4-year public institutions, including three HBCUs: Alcorn State University, Jackson State University, and Mississippi Valley State University (Board of Trustees, 2013).

NORTH CAROLINA. The state of North Carolina dwarfs the other three states in population and overall enrollment. The University of North Carolina (UNC) system includes 17 institutions (UNC incorporated the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, though this institution is a high school and was not included in this study). UNC includes five HBCUs, some of which account for the largest enrollments in this study (North Carolina Central University, Fayetteville State University, North Carolina A&T University, Elizabeth City State University, and Winston-Salem State University). The UNC Board of Governors manages and creates policy for all public higher education in the state (Board of Governors, 2013).

ENROLLMENT IN THE STATES

Current enrollment data confirms what Perna et al. found in their study (2006): African American students continue to be under-represented at four-year public PWIs. This is especially true for Black student enrollment in public flagship universities. With some exceptions, Minor's 2008 findings remain relevant to the most recent enrollment context for which data is available. Total HBCU enrollment across the four states increased from 54,774 in 2001 to 63,134 in 2011. Yet this statistic belies a complex enrollment picture, as we detail below.

ALABAMA. Enrollment in Alabama PWIs increased by 36% between 2001 and 2011. HBCU total enrollment declined somewhat, despite a modest increase after 2009.

The Black student population in HBCUs declined slightly, from 8,654 in 2001 to 8,476 in 2011. Yet the actual percentage of the Black student population in HBCUs increased somewhat, from 92% in 2001 to 95% in 2011. Black student enrollment in Alabama PWIs has slowly improved, increasing from 17% in 2001 to 20% in 2011.

LOUISIANA. As Minor noted in his report, the impact of Hurricane Katrina on higher education enrollment in the state was substantial. This explains the staggering declines in 2005, especially at New Orleans institutions. Despite some small increases, the overall enrollment trend in Louisiana has been downward since 2001.

Black student enrollment in Louisiana PWIs stagnated at 17% between 2001 and 2011. More pronounced was the decline in black enrollment in Louisiana HBCUs, which dropped 20%.

MISSISSIPPI. Mississippi is the only state in the study to demonstrate growth in all enrollment ethnicity categories between 2001 and 2011. Enrollment in all Mississippi 4-year public institutions rose during this time. PWI total enrollment expanded nearly 20%, while total HBCU enrollment increased by 12%.

Black student enrollment in Mississippi PWIs increased by 48% between 2001 and 2011. In 2001, Black students made up about 20% of the PWI student population. In 2011, Black student percentage of the total student population increased to 25%. The Black student population rose 8% in HBCUs during the same period.

NORTH CAROLINA. All four-year public institutions experienced enrollment gains between 2001 and 2011 in North Carolina. Interestingly, overall HBCU enrollment grew by 42%, compared to 27% at PWIs.

The Black student population increased by 39% in North Carolina HBCUs.

LOUISIANA

Elected in 2007, Governor Bobby Jindal has articulated a higher education agenda anchored in accountability. His efforts in higher education have prioritized performance and highlighted completion. State funding for higher education has declined each year since Jindal's election. A recent Grapevine report (2013) ranked Louisiana third in the nation in cuts to higher education between 2008 and 2013 (Alabama came in fourth).



Despite this growth, the Black enrollment in 2011 as a percentage of total HBCU enrollments declined slightly, from 85% in 2001 to 80% in 2011. Yet Black student enrollment in North Carolina PWIs stalled at 11%.

Black student gains in PWIs can be attributed at least in part to desegregation legislation. As Minor (2008) noted, a primary fear of desegregation legislation was that it would incite a mass exodus of Black students from HBCUs to PWIs. While Black student enrollment did decrease in HBCUs immediately following the end of legalized segregation, enrollment patterns show that this decline has mostly leveled off and has reversed in Mississippi and North Carolina. A troubling trend is African American enrollment in Louisiana and North Carolina PWIs remaining static. Further research is warranted to explore this pattern.

ETHNICITY CHANGES IN HBCU ENROLLMENT

NCES data reveal that while Black student enrollment generally increased at PWIs, HBCUs have seen a rise in the number of other racial and ethnic groups. Nonetheless, African Americans continue to make up the majority of all HBCUs.

The national HBCU averages for racial and ethnic make-up include 76% Black, 1% multiracial, 13% White, 3% Latino, 1% nonresident alien, 5% race unknown, and 1% Asian/Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander/American Indian/Native Alaskan (Gasman, 2013).

White enrollment at HBCUs has decreased, though by varying degrees in each state. White decline in enrollment was most pronounced in Alabama (a 58% decline between 2001 and 2011; while the overall White population has increased, suggesting signs of increased segregation. In Louisiana, Mississippi, and North Carolina, White student decline in HBCUs was gradual. White student enrollment increased in those three states until 2007, but has been decreasing since. Despite the recent decline, the number of White students enrolled in Louisiana's HBCUs is actually higher in 2011 than in 2001. In North Carolina, White students comprise roughly 10% of all HBCU enrollments. At 2,763, White students are more prevalent in North Carolina HBCUs than in HBCUs in Alabama, Louisiana, or Mississippi.

The major development in HBCU enrollment is the exponential increase in Latino students.

The major development in HBCU enrollment is the exponential increase in Latino students. In every state in this study, Latino enrollment more than doubled in each states' HBCUs. In Mississippi, Latino student enrollment expanded by nearly seven times the 2001 level. Such growth mirrors the increase of Latinos and Hispanics in the U.S. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, "more than half of the growth in the total population of the United States between 2000 and 2010 was due to the increase in the Hispanic population" (p. 3, 2011).

NCES combines Asian Americans, Pacific Islander, Native Alaskan, Hawaiian, and American Indian into a single category for many of the years between 2001 and 2010. This group saw mixed enrollment changes in HBCUs. In Alabama, it declined nearly 50% and fell slightly in Louisiana HBCUs; however, this group increased by nearly 200% in Mississippi and 75% in North Carolina.

The nonresident alien category saw a surprising decline in Alabama HBCUs (86%) between 2001 and 2011. Yet in Louisiana HBCUs, nonresident alien students increased to five times the 2001 level in 2011, with much of this surge occurring in 2005, the year of Hurricane Katrina.

There is some debate over whether the shift in racial and ethnic composition of HBCUs compromises or changes their initial mission (Gasman, 2013; Minor, 2008). But it's important to keep in mind that HBCUs have a long history of educating students at a lower cost and arguably with more attentive care than many of their PWI peers. Black and Latino students are expected to make up nearly 50% of all elementary and secondary education students in the United States within the next 10 years, and we need to ensure that our 4-year colleges and universities have capacity for these students. HBCUs can aid in serving these students (Adams, 2013a).

MISSISSIPPI

The Mississippi Board of Trustees for State Institutions of Higher Learning recently released statistics indicating a slight drop in Mississippi public 4-year higher education enrollment for 2012-2013. Though enrollment rose at Jackson State University, it declined in Alcorn State University and Mississippi Valley State University. An Associated Press article quotes Higher Education Commissioner Hank Bounds attributing the declines to recent changes to Pell Grants (Amy, 2013). Alcorn's enrollment had been increasing until 2012, while Mississippi Valley State has seen steadily declining enrollment in recent years (IHL, 2013).

FUNDING

STATE FUNDING TO HIGHER EDUCATION

In keeping with the fiscal trend across the United States, all four states saw decreased state allocations. The downward trajectory preceded the 2008 recession, though state funding has plummeted since then. A slight uptick in funding in fiscal years 2012 and 2013 is promising. Yet most education finance policy experts agree that public institutions throughout the United States will likely not enjoy a return to pre-recession funding levels.

The states received some federal assistance in the form of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) funding. Although these funds provided a much-needed economic lift after the devastation of the recession, they were not intended to be long-term sources of funding (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2009; Kabaker, 2010). ARRA funding expired in 2012 (SHEEO, 2013).

The recession of 2008 led to deep cuts in state funding for most public higher education institutions, but HBCUs were hit especially hard. HBCUs are more susceptible to economic downturns because a large portion of their funding derives from tuition, and most HBCU students come from low-income households, which have fewer resources to buffer the impact of an economic downturn. Furthermore, HBCUs tend to have smaller endowments than their PWI counterparts, making them more susceptible to economic shocks (Gasman, 2009).

42 states passed reduced budgets in 2009 with drastic reductions to higher education appropriations (Adams, 2013b; ACHE, 2009). Planning documents for most of the states included in this study concede the new economic reality. As an Alabama study grimly acknowledged, "Alabama higher education faces grave challenges because of unpredictable state operating budget support" (ACHE, 2009, p. 9).

Despite the gloomy economic outlook during the darkest moments of the recession, some institutions have seen small funding increases since 2008-2009. North Carolina and Mississippi enjoyed substantial funding boosts after years of decline (though North Carolina's current governor recently warned of looming cuts). Alabama had a mixed picture, while Louisiana continued to slash funding to all higher education institutions. When parsing the funding per institution, it is clear that there has been little improvement in achieving parity between HBCUs and PWIs. Some HBCUs have enjoyed a boost in state allocations (especially in North Carolina). However, on average, HBCUs continue to be funded at a lower level than PWIs.

Underfunding HBCUs compromises their ability to attract students and to compete with more prestigious and well-resourced PWIs (Gasman, 2010). Over the past few decades, a higher education arms race broke out, with institutions spending exorbitant funds to construct state-of-the-art facilities. Many students select colleges and universities based on the condition of dorms, dining hall selections, and other facilities, as well as the reputation of faculty and history of valuable opportunities to promote their achievement after graduation. By being routinely short-changed, many HBCUs cannot compete with other institutions that can afford to offer sleek ultra-modern facilities.

A CLOSER LOOK AT STATE-BY-STATE FUNDING

ALABAMA. The Alabama legislature allocates funding directly to its higher education institutions. ACHE coordinates the budget requests from all institutions and presents them to the governor and legislature. As of FY 2012, Alabama does not use any standard funding formulas to allocate support for higher education (ACHE, 2008; SHEEO, 2012).

Following two decades of legal wrangling, the case of *Knight v. State of Alabama* was settled on October 13, 2006. In that case, the federal court found that many state higher education policies (including funding policies) were racially discriminatory and fostered segregation. The court

ordered a \$600-million, 30-year campus renovation plan. This ruling had a profound effect on Alabama State University and Alabama A&M University, enabling new programs and construction and increased need-based aid for African American students.

Alabama state funding levels were, for the most part, significantly lower in 2011-2013 than in 2008 and earlier. The University of Alabama system declined by almost \$75 million, dropping from approximately \$533 million in 2007 to approximately \$458 million in 2012-2013. Alabama's pair of 4-year public HBCUs had two different experiences. Alabama A&M University received approximately \$6.5 million less in 2012-2013 than in 2007. Alabama State University enjoyed a slight increase of roughly \$100,000 between 2007 and 2012-2013.

LOUISIANA. Louisiana relies on a complex method for allocating state funding. State general fund appropriations are provided to a state higher education board (Board of Regents, 2013). The board distributes this funding to the higher education system boards, which then disperse it to the institutions. State appropriations were previously based on a base-budget formula. In 2010, the state moved toward performance funding for all institutions (Louisiana Board of Regents, 2012). Appropriations are tied to the LA GRAD Act, which establishes performance targets. These include retention and completion rates (Louisiana Board of Regents, 2013).

Louisiana has severely cut funding to all public 4-year institutions. Louisiana State University—the largest public university in the state—went from just over \$200 million in 2007 to approximately \$150 million in 2012, a 25% drop. Yet the institutions with the largest percentage decreases are the state's 4-year public HBCUs. Southern A&M University (including Southern Law) experienced the sharpest cut, at 45%. Funding for Grambling State University in 2012 was 36% lower than in 2007, and Southern University at New Orleans received 35% less funding during the same time-frame. The only PWI in Louisiana that experienced a decrease as substantial as these HBCUs is the University of New Orleans, which saw a drop of 32%.

Louisiana's perennial disinvestment in higher education warrants further analysis. Like other Gulf States, Louisiana faces challenges in developing a more knowledge-based employment sector. Louisiana's economy, in particular, is propelled by agriculture and fuel production, sectors that rely heavily on low-skilled jobs that do not require college education. This correlates to Louisiana having amongst the lowest postsecondary education attainment rates in the country. The prevalence of low-skilled labor and historic lack of investment in higher education continues to lead to low and decreasing state support (Weerts, Sanford, & Reinert, 2013).

Another element with considerable implications for higher education funding is the unique budgetary power of the governor. During times of economic distress, the governor has the power to cut funding in any category up to 3% without legislative approval. Decreases to higher education funding over the past several years are attributable to this gubernatorial ability (Weerts, Sanford, & Reinert, 2013).

MISSISSIPPI. In 2013, the Mississippi Board of Trustees instituted what it believed to be a more equitable funding formula for allocations to public colleges and universities. A percentage of funding will cover operating costs, with smaller institutions receiving a larger amount. Higher Education Commissioner Hank Bounds noted that the change is intended to rectify the overfunding of bigger public universities. Additional funding will be allocated according to some performance targets, such as degree completion (Associated Press, 2013a).

Mississippi HBCUs were significantly affected by the outcome of *Ayers v. Fordice*. This case, which was settled by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi in 2002 (Mississippi Legislature, 2013), sought to redress the consequences of the segregated system of education in Mississippi. The court ordered the Mississippi Legislature to provide \$35 million towards funding various academic and developmental education programs, capital projects, endowments, and other program improvements (Mississippi Legislature, 2013; Associated Press, 2010). Using *Ayers* funding, each of the state's three HBCUs added graduate and professional programs. *Ayers* funding expired in 2012 (Associated Press, 2010).

Mississippi HBCUs experienced significant cuts since 2007. Alcorn State University—a research institution—saw a 32% decline in funding. Jackson State University—also a research university—saw a similarly sharp decrease of 26% since 2007. Mississippi Valley State University received less as well, with a 25% drop since 2007 (and nearly \$3 million below its 2011 total). Clearly, the revised funding formula did not bode well for public institutions. It remains to be seen how the most recent funding formula revision will affect these institutions.

The revised funding formula is expected to improve the equity of state appropriations to HBCUs. The new funding method will increase the weight of graduate and technical courses and will include some performance-based funding based on course completion (Amy, 2013; *HBCU Digest*, 2013). Because the state's three HBCUs offer graduate-level courses, they are expected to benefit from the new funding formula.

NORTH CAROLINA. The UNC system includes 17 campuses and approximately \$2.5 billion in annual funding. The North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) uses a base-budget funding formula (derived from the previous year's budget and an estimate of the following year's operating costs) and provides funding directly to the institutions. About 20% of UNC's total operating budget comes from state appropriations (UNC, 2013). UNC institutions are highly ranked and receive significantly more funding than those in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

Unlike the other states covered in this report, North Carolina weathered the recession well. State funding is higher at all public 4-year institutions in 2012-2013 when compared to 2007. HBCUs benefitted from increased state appropriations, especially North Carolina A&T State University (20%) and North Carolina Central University (28%).

Per Full Time Enrolled (FTE) student funding is revelatory for detecting discrepancies in funding levels. Though North Carolina HBCUs enjoy higher funding levels than any in Alabama, Louisiana, or Mississippi, the highest per FTE HBCU (Winston-Salem University at \$10,618 in 2011), is still nearly half that of UNC Chapel Hill (\$17,992) and North Carolina State University (\$15,558).

Governor Pat McCrory announced plans to cut over \$130 million in funding to UNC. Some legislators questioned whether or not to merge and close some institutions within the UNC systems. The increased focus in the state on program duplication and underperformance could thrust UNC's five HBCUs into the crosshairs of lawmakers eager to trim costs regardless of institutional service and mission. Governor McCrory also made clear his desire to push UNC toward performance funding (*HBCU Digest*, 2013).

FEDERAL FUNDING AND HBCUs

Federal funding to HBCUs is mandated by Title III, Part B, Sections 323 and 326 of the Higher Education Act of 1965—"Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities - Undergraduate and Graduate Programs." Title IIIB is the most substantial source of federal financial assistance to HBCUs (U.S. Department of Education, 2013; 2009). Title IIIB funding consists of grants to support a multitude of critical functions including fiscal management, physical plant construction, and academic services (White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, 2013).

Like state funding, federal funding for HBCUs has routinely been eviscerated. An almost \$30-million decrease in the FY 2011 base of federal funding budget appropriations had a chilling effect on HBCUs (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Title IIIB dollars are crucial to the fiscal health of HBCUs. They fund numerous functions vital to educating students and boosting the local economy where HBCUs are located. Title IIIB funding also enables HBCUs to compete with better-funded and better-recognized institutions (President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, 2012).

Many HBCUs also benefit from federal research funding. Yet HBCUs do not receive an equitable level of such funding when compared to other institutions (Gasman, 2010; Matthews, 2011). Federal research funding tends to be funneled to select institutions. The National Science Foundation (NSF) found that the top 100 institutions (in terms of R&D expenditures) received 80% of federal

NORTH CAROLINA

After several years of stabilized state financial support for higher education, North Carolina cut funding to 13 of 16 UNC institutions in 2013. Many of the institutions predict layoffs, including the state's HBCUs (Associated Press, 2013b). The total state allocation is \$115 million less than the previous year. In a letter sent to the UNC community, UNC President Tom Ross (2013) commented on the need for UNC to impress upon lawmakers the importance of all UNC institutions' efforts.

research funding in 2006. A 2009 NSF study determined that of 900 higher education institutions receiving R&D funding, 71 were HBCUs (Matthews, 2011).

ADVANCED DEGREE PROGRAMS

In 2009, Louisiana's Postsecondary Education Review Commission approved 22 recommendations for improving higher education. Among its recommendations was the elimination and merging of over 300 academic programs, which the Board of Regents promptly carried out (Louisiana Board of Regents, 2011). Calls for mergers and closures that disproportionately affect HBCUs reveal the tendency for uninformed lawmakers and state leaders to favor PWIs and flagships over HBCUs and other Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). Although it may be useful to identify and *equitably* eliminate duplicated programs and services, the merger or closing of institutions should be approached with strong caution. Implicit in this advice is to understand the historical commitment these institutions have in maintaining social equality for those least likely to pursue higher education due to their life's circumstances.

The governors of Louisiana and North Carolina recently attempted to close or merge HBCUs with PWIs. Arousing controversy, Louisiana's Governor Bobby Jindal sought to merge Southern University at New Orleans with the University of New Orleans and then move the new institution into the University of Louisiana System (*HBCU Digest*, 2011). While this plan did not materialize, many graduate programs were eliminated.

In North Carolina, Governor Pat McCrory threatened to end Elizabeth City State University's joint pharmacy program with UNC Chapel Hill. He cited dwindling enrollment and an inferior education. Widespread opposition prevented the Governor from carrying out this proposal. Yet the message was clear: flagship institutions overshadow smaller colleges and universities regardless of the vital purposes they serve (*HBCU Digest*, 2012).

In his 2008 report, Minor discussed the ongoing issue of program duplication and its consequences for HBCUs, arguing that the core of the problem with program duplication is that state governments favor flagship colleges and universities (Minor, 2008). With the current higher education barometer heavily favoring efficiency, many policymakers and higher education leaders are proposing to eliminate what they view as unnecessary duplicate programs. The deafening chorus of efficiency champions often drowns out a more careful analysis of the purposes of these programs. As seen in Louisiana, North Carolina, and other states, the programs usually lobbied onto the budgetary chopping block are in smaller institutions such as HBCUs.

Another aspect of the program duplication issue involves larger institutions being allowed to offer graduate programs that are already available in HBCUs. When a PWI located an hour's drive from an HBCU creates the same master's or doctoral program, it jeopardizes the HBCU by taking away its competitive edge (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2010).

The issue of program duplication stems from a more systemic problem. Program approval varies by state. In Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and North Carolina, a state-level higher education governing board decides the fate of advanced degree programs (usually in public institutions). A U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report roots it in the "political nature of program distribution" (63). The report suggested that the issue of program duplication warranted Title VI review. Each state varies as to how academic programs are approved or discarded. State legislatures often play a pivotal role, especially in states where the legislature controls the purse strings for these institutions. The Commission suggested that the current context for HBCUs losing or being unable to form new graduate programs is tantamount to the conditions that inspired the *Adams* case. In its view, these actions could be interpreted as direct violations of desegregation policies (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2010).

COMPARISONS

Alabama is representative of the growth of graduate programs in HBCUs in the past 5 years. Alabama's HBCUs gained only one new graduate program (a master's in applied technology at Alabama State University) in 2011-12. PWIs fared better, with the University of Alabama in Huntsville garnering three master's programs and its Troy location adding two graduate programs (ACHE, 2011).

Alabama and Mississippi HBCUs have roughly the same number of graduate programs as they did in 2008. Most Louisiana institutions—especially HBCUs—have fewer graduate programs than they did in 2008. There have been some changes in North Carolina, with variation in the creation and closing of HBCU graduate programs. UNC-Chapel Hill, the state's flagship, has seen substantial increases.

Graduate enrollment in all HBCUs in the states within this study is dwarfed by enrollment in PWIs. Since HBCUs tend to be smaller than many of their PWI peers (especially flagship institutions), their graduate programs are generally likewise smaller. Yet it is important to note the power of graduate programs. They attract students, prestige, and funding to an institution. Given the constant cutting of state appropriations, HBCUs depend on tuition revenue generated by these programs.

In order to increase capacity for meeting future economic and employment goals, it is imperative that HBCUs receive the attention and funding necessary to graduate underserved students, especially at the graduate level. Most of the HBCUs in this study offer graduate-level education. Advocating for increased graduate education at these institutions does not risk mission creep, as some critics allege: according to the Carnegie Classification, they are considered graduate degree granting institutions.

MOVING FORWARD

This report demonstrates the enduring importance of James T. Minor's research on disparities in state and federal funding to HBCUs. Quantitative analysis of enrollment, appropriations, and advanced degree programs of the past decade reveal the consequences of an allocation system favoring PWIs over HBCUs. The statistics are sobering, yet they are not uniformly negative. There has been demonstrable growth in some areas of enrollment, funding, and graduate programs. Data obtained from NCES reveal the strengths of HBCUs in graduating African American students, as these highlights reveal:

- Alabama's two public HBCUs awarded a total of 1,153 bachelor degrees in 2011 to African American students. This was almost 30% of all bachelor's degrees conferred to African American students in the state's public institutions (a total of 4,092 African American students received bachelor's degrees in Alabama public institutions) in 2011.
- Louisiana's three public HBCUs awarded 1,561 (out of a public statewide total of 3,949) bachelor's degrees in 2011 to African American students. This was 40% of all such degrees conferred to African American students in public institutions.
- In Mississippi, three public HBCUs conferred a total of 1,587 bachelor's degrees to African American graduates out of 3,255 in 2011. This amount was half of all undergraduate degrees awarded to African Americans in Mississippi from public institutions.
- North Carolina's five public HBCUs awarded 3,706 degrees to African American students. This was far more than the total amount for all PWIs in the state (2,507). North Carolina's five public HBCUs conferred 60% of bachelor's degrees from public institutions to African Americans in the state in 2011.

The increase in non-African American racial and ethnic groups in HBCUs warrants additional investigation. NCES categories are overly broad and preclude a necessary closer examination of enrollment patterns of Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, Native Alaskans, Hawaiians, and American Indians individually. The increase in Latino and nonresident aliens illustrates the demand for HBCUs among other racial and ethnic groups. Taken together, these increases bolster the argument for the

acceptance of an expanded mission for the nation's HBCUs. The shifting demographics and long-term trajectory confirm that HBCUs would benefit from opening their doors and welcoming the new faces that are clearly seeking an HBCU education. Additional research is also needed into the enrollment pattern of White students in HBCUs. Are most from low-income backgrounds? Do they choose HBCUs because of the price tag, the location, the opportunities, and/or the inclusiveness?

State funding mechanisms demand review and revision. Many states are moving towards funding higher education institutions based on those institutions meeting performance goals. While the trend towards rewarding efficiency and productivity is likely to grow, state governments must be mindful of the potential limitations of this funding method. Mississippi could offer a hybrid-performance funding model that does not punish institutions failing to meet performance goals. But the effects of that state's new funding formula have yet to be determined. Still, the implementation of a new funding mechanism reveals the possibility for state governments to experiment with different funding formulas that could be a boon for HBCUs and all higher education institutions.

The inequity in federal funding and research money channeled to HBCUs requires attention and redress. The White House Initiative on HBCUs has the power and potential to capitalize on the mission of HBCUs and improve the lives of innumerable students. Similarly, national organizations could do much more to contribute to and maximize the research capabilities of many HBCUs.

FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE GOVERNMENTS

STATE GOVERNMENTS SHOULD EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES TO ENROLLMENT-DRIVEN FUNDING MECHANISMS. Minor (2008) suggested North Carolina's Focused-Growth Initiative as a more equitable funding alternative. The UNC Board and General Assembly targeted \$420 million to seven institutions (including all of the state's HBCUs) to boost enrollment, facilities, and programs. The new model being employed in Mississippi could also offer a more equitable funding option.

STATE GOVERNMENTS MUST RECOGNIZE THE EFFICACY AND RELEVANCE OF HBCUs. Many representatives from assorted states continue to demonize HBCUs or question their continued existence. They must acknowledge HBCUs' accomplishments, ongoing missions, and real potential in supporting states' workforce goals if provided the appropriate and equitable support.

STATES SHOULD ASSESS PROGRAM DUPLICATION CAREFULLY. State governments must be cognizant of the importance of HBCU graduate program offerings. These should not be eliminated ad hoc during periods of economic distress in favor of similar PWI graduate programs.

STATES MUST SUPPORT HBCUs IN DEVELOPING THEIR FUNDRAISING CAPACITY. The Focused-Growth Initiative in North Carolina represents both an alternative funding mechanism as well as a means of state government allocating funding for specific improvements.

STATE GOVERNMENTS SHOULD FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN HBCUs AND PWIs. This need not be a one-sided relationship with either party assuming complete authority. Shared responsibility for graduate programs is one possibility already in existence.





FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HBCUs

HBCUs WOULD BENEFIT FROM STRENGTHENING THEIR FUNDRAISING CAPACITY, PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE LIKELIHOOD OF DECREASED STATE APPROPRIATIONS.

Key here is for HBCUs to master the art of philanthropy. A crucial strategy is to develop and nurture a climate of giving among current students and young alumni.

HBCUs SHOULD DEVISE CREATIVE AND EFFECTIVE MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGNS.

They must work to counteract the frequent negative portrayals found in major media. HBCUs should articulate and share the stories and accomplishments from the members of their communities.

HBCUs SHOULD CONTINUE TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH.

According to a Congressional Research Service report, HBCUs comprise 6% of all higher education institutions receiving research funding (Matthews, 2011).

HBCUs WOULD BENEFIT FROM FURTHER EMBRACING DIVERSITY. This report indicates a significant increase in non-Black racial and ethnic groups enrolling in HBCUs (particularly Latino students). It is important for HBCUs to not only welcome these students, but to actively reach out to them.

HBCUs SHOULD SEEK PARTNERSHIPS WITH PWIS AND OTHER HBCUs. Such relationships need not diminish the powerful role HBCUs play within their states and the nation. The joint nursing program between Elizabeth City State University and UNC Chapel Hill offers an example of such an effective partnership.

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