Still Striving

Challenges for Boards of Trustees of Historically Black Colleges and Universities

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The Southern Education Foundation

The Southern Education Foundation (SEF), www.southerneducation.org, is a non-profit organization comprised of diverse women and men who work together to improve the quality of life for all of the South's people through better and more accessible education. SEF advances creative solutions to ensure fairness and excellence in education for low-income students from pre-school through higher education.

SEF depends upon contributions from foundations, corporations and individuals to support its efforts. SEF develops and implements programs of its own design, serves as an intermediary for donors who want a high-quality partner with whom to work on education issues in the South, and participates as a public charity in the world of philanthropy.

SEF's Vision

We seek a South and a nation with a skilled workforce that sustains an expanding economy, where civic life embodies diversity and democratic values and practice, and where an excellent education system provides all students with fair chances to develop their talents and contribute to the common good. We will be known for our commitment to combating poverty and inequality through education.

SEF's Timeless Mission

SEF develops, promotes and implements policies, practices and creative solutions that ensure educational excellence, fairness, and high levels of achievement among African Americans and other groups and communities that have not yet reached the full measure of their potential.

SEF's Values and Principles

SEF is committed to:

- top quality work, assessment and continuous improvement to achieve high impact
- collaborative efforts that draw on the best of diverse institutions and communities in support of educational excellence
- creative problem solving
- integrity, accountability and transparency
- adaptability, flexibility and future-oriented approaches, and
- honest and intelligent advocacy to achieve results

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Foreword

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have made and continue to make an enormous contribution to African American access to higher education and achievement. Although progress has been made in opening access for African Americans to traditionally White institutions of higher education, nearly 25 percent of all African Americans who receive four-year college degrees annually still graduate from an HBCU. These data alone speak to the value and continuing relevance of these institutions.

HBCUs are an especially important part of the pipeline into the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. In 2000, 40 percent of all African Americans who received undergraduate degrees in these fields graduated from an HBCU. A recent National Science Foundation study found that African Americans who graduate from HBCUs are *more* likely to go to graduate school and receive doctoral degrees than their counterparts at other institutions. At a time when our nation struggles to find well-trained and highly talented people to meet workforce needs, HBCUs are serving the national interest in a vital way.

There are 105 HBCUs, public and private, in the United States. Of this number, 77 are located in the American South, where 54 percent of the nation's Black population resides. While HBCUs remain an important part of the nation's quilt of diverse institutions, respond to the needs and aspirations of a variety of students, and represent an important part of the answer to the legacy of the dual and race-based system of education in the South, they face many challenges in contemporary times. Many have limited endowments, aging infrastructure, and are competing with more advantaged institutions for students and faculty.

To help these important institutions respond to the many challenges they face, in early 2003, the Southern Education Foundation (SEF) initiated a study of unmet professional development needs of HBCU leaders in order to ascertain what constructive role, if any, an external agency such as SEF might play. A public charity, SEF has a long history of support for and engagement with higher education institutions that address the needs and aspirations of African Americans and other underserved and low-income groups in the South. SEF's mission is to advance creative solutions to education issues and needs so that all students have fair and enhanced access to quality education opportunity without regard to race, class or location. Since its founding in 1867, SEF has mounted a number of efforts to respond to issues affecting HBCUs. See *www.southerneducation.org* for a listing of recent initiatives and an historical timeline that documents some of SEF's achievements and contributions since its founding.

Following extensive reviews of pertinent literature, interviews with HBCU presidents and other leaders, research into discrete topics of interest, dialogue with a cross section of educators and policymakers concerned with equity and excellence in education, and convenings of a diverse and expert advisory committee, SEF initiated its "Investing in HBCU Leadership Initiative" with the support of the Charles Stewart Mott and Andrew W. Mellon Foundations. The threshold aim of the effort was to help HBCUs in the South become more conversant with new Principles of Accreditation promulgated by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas about how to meet reaffirmation requirements and the sharing of best practices. This effort was undertaken because SEF's research showed that a number of HBCUs have lost their accreditation status and, as a result, been forced to close their doors. The effort was designed to ensure that HBCU leaders have an accessible forum for helping each other prepare for reaffirmation success.

Since the program began, SEF has utilized a variety of means to help HBCUs respond to accreditation requirements:

- convenings on discrete subjects such as measures of financial stability, institutional effectiveness and the role of institutional accreditation liaisons;
- small grants to aid in reaffirmation review preparation in a targeted way;
- travel/study awards to ensure that HBCU faculty and leaders have opportunities to attend conferences and other events to prepare them for reaffirmation; and
- research on issues of prioritized interest.

In 2005, the Project was renamed "The Center to Serve Historically Black Colleges and Universities" (Center to Serve) to emphasize SEF's aspiration to build capacity among HBCUs in selected areas.

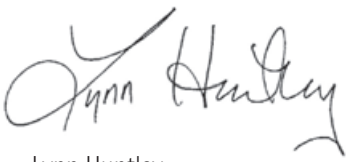
Recently, SEF has begun to focus attention on governance concerns, specifically the role and duties of Trustees in helping the institutions whose policy they set respond to and prepare for reaffirmation. SEF invited presidents of selected HBCUs to nominate "exemplary trustees" to help guide SEF's exploration of ways in which it might be helpful to Trustees and the institutions that they serve.

In the fall of 2005, SEF convened an "Exemplary Trustees Working Group." Participants in the meeting discussed a wide range of important issues, including the duties of boards and trustees, board responsibility in the accreditation process, strategies for problem solving and board effectiveness. SEF was privileged to have the help and leadership of Dr. June Hopps, a distinguished educator who served as Chair of the Board of Trustees at Spelman College, as a resource to and member of this illustrious group.

At SEF's request, Dr. Hopps authored the stellar monograph that we present in this volume. Drawing on her rich experience in leadership in diverse venues and deep knowledge of HBCUs, Dr. Hopps raises vital issues of practice and challenges us all to think deeply about the duties and responsibilities of Trustees. Her ideas and messages are powerful. Her paper sets, we believe, a vital agenda to help strengthen these cherished institutions.

We thank Dr. Hopps for the quality of her mind, her scholarship, her good spirit and her willingness to lead and to serve. She is an exemplar of excellence and an inspiration.

SEF is also deeply appreciative of the generous support and visionary leadership of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation for the opportunity to help HBCUs help themselves.



Lynn Huntley

President

The Southern Education Foundation

Spring, 2006

Overwhelmed and Under Resourced, But Still Striving

Challenges for Boards of Trustees of Historically Black Colleges and Universities

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Summary

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), institutions founded prior to 1964, have served as a bridge to transforming human capital in African American communities in America. As a result, African American communities, states, the nation and indeed the world have benefitted. In spite of these successes, many boards and the HBCUs they serve are faced with internal and external challenges that pose threats to their integrity and survival into the 21st century. Among these are clarity of mission and purpose, institutional leadership, governance, human capital development and resource development. Contextual changes emanating from new environmental, faculty and student realities, as well as responsibilities of boards within the framework of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation standards, are discussed.

Introduction

> *"Had it not been for the Negro schools and colleges, the Negro would to all intents and purposes have been driven back to slavery."*
>
> (DuBois, 1935, p.6)

For over 150 years, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have dotted the higher education landscape of America. Established, in part, because of the denied access to traditionally White institutions (TWIs), but *primarily* due to the thirst for higher education and social mobility by descendants of former slaves, HBCUs have played a critical role in the evolution of American society. HBCUs have helped to prepare a leadership class that challenged the assumptions of this nation's founding fathers, fought to preserve the nation's sovereignty when attacked by internal and external enemies, and sacrificed to make America better for themselves and other marginalized groups (e.g., women, seniors, Native Americans and physically challenged). Thus, HBCUs served as bridges of social mobility for African American communities and of social reform for the American society. Built with the overwhelming desires, thoughts, dreams and hands of former slaves, supported by enlightened northern industrialists and philanthropists, the Freedmen's Bureau and northern missionaries, and battling the most ardent racist opposition, these bridges today include some 105 institutions. They have affected the lives of millions of people around the world (Anderson, 1988; Jackson, 2002). Their alumni include former and current leaders and presidents of other countries, a U.S. Supreme Court Justice, ambassadors to foreign nations, U.S. cabinet members, U.S. congresspersons, Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners, highest ranking military officers (e.g., generals, admirals), corporate leaders, scientists, physicians and other health-care providers, scholars, lawyers, educators, journalists, social workers, teachers and more important, agents of social change, who play (and have played) essential roles in the nation's social fabric (Jackson, 2003; Mixon, 1995; Willie & Edmonds, 1978). Their manifest function has been that of educating one of the nation's most vulnerable groups, within an antagonistic social, cultural and political environment, both prior to and after the Civil War, that has perpetually sought to undermine their core mission, orchestrated institutional racism as a strategy of destruction, and allocated only minimal resources, thereby undermining their capacity for delivering quality education.

Trustees of HBCUs have been, and continue to be, faced with a principal and unique task of guiding these institutions through such troubled waters. Guidance in this context requires boards with vision, clarity, knowledge, skills and relationships to move these institutions into the future, while at the same time understanding their historical

and contemporary core mission in the landscape of American higher education. Today, more than ever, HBCUs are confronted with a broad range of challenges that, if not carefully considered, will undermine their future viability.

Although the oldest HBCUs, Cheney State (founded in the 1830s), Lincoln and Wilberforce Universities (founded in the 1850s), were established in the North well before the Civil War during the antebellum period, most of these institutions were located in border and southern states. They were founded after the First Morrill Act (1862, land grant college program) which was intended to facilitate education for all, but particularly for African Americans. It was the second Morrill Act (1890) that solidified a segregated education system by mandating states with dual programs (i.e., one black–one white) to develop land grant institutions for both groups. Thus, several land grant programs and (nineteen) non-degree courses of study were established.

Given the location of HBCUs, knowledge of the SACS Commission on Colleges accreditation standards is critical for providing the necessary leadership and oversight. Attributes and responsibilities of trustees and paths to effective participation in the accreditation process will be explored. But first, I will reflect briefly on the history and relevance of these institutions in the American landscape.

The Case for Historically Black Colleges and Universities

From the beginning, the history of HBCUs has always manifested questions relative to their existence, purpose and relationship to American social structure. Both during and after the holocaust of slavery, relations between Blacks and Whites and among Whites themselves regarding the juxtaposition of the constitutional status of blacks and the moral position of the country have not only been adversarial, but explosive. Among the many points of contention, education of Black children has always been paramount. When over four million slaves received their freedom, questions about their basic education surfaced. At that time, only 28 blacks were recorded as having earned a baccalaureate level education (Brown & Davis, 2001). As African Americans moved into power, albeit briefly, during Reconstruction, it was no surprise when they developed the first universal public education system, supported by taxation, in the South (Anderson, 1988). The euphoria of this profound change was short-lived; southern planters with substantial ideological support carried out their long-standing opposition to universal education for ex-slaves and poor whites, thereby maintaining control of labor and livelihoods of unlearned workers. Coupled with the "black codes," their views prevailed well into the 20th century. Nonetheless, over time night schools became day schools, day schools became industrial (or trade) schools, industrial schools became normal schools, and normal schools became colleges. Still, the impact of African American educational institutions on the social structure of this country, particularly in the southern states, continued to be plagued by questions regarding purpose, resource allocation and political/environmental support. W.E.B. DuBois suggested that:

> *Any formal education for slaves or the children of slaves not only awakened widespread and deep-seated doubt, fear and hostility in the South, but it posed, for statesmen and thinkers, the whole question as to what the education of Negroes was really aiming at, and indeed, what was the aim of educating any working class.*
>
> (DuBois, 1930, as cited in Foner, 1970, p.56)

It is fair to say that HBCUs were developed to be holding institutions that would keep Blacks from pursuing access to TWIs as well as to placate the Black population (Evans, Evans, and Evans, 2002, as cited in Nichols, 2004). Hence, from the beginning, curricula for the education of Blacks were politicized as tools to reinforce patterns of racial stratification.

Front and center, the industrial versus classical curriculum debate crystallized this tension. Booker T. Washington, the famed educator and founder of Tuskegee Institute, advocated the industrial curriculum (a.k.a. Hampton-Tuskegee Model) that focused on rudimentary "training" for Blacks. On the other hand, W.E.B. DuBois, the first African American to receive a PhD from Harvard, preeminent social scientist and co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), advocated the classical curriculum that focused on enlightened science, art and language as critical to Blacks. He believed the classical curriculum embodied the higher learning critical to propelling African Americans forward socially, economically and politically. The Hampton-Tuskegee Model of industrial education posed less threat to adherence of the social contract on racial stratification and consequently was embraced by many, Blacks and Whites alike (Anderson, 1988). The classical curriculum had the potential of placing the education of Blacks in the South on par with Whites, and in time, challenging inequality of the social structure. This debate at its core raised the question of the future of the Black race as well as race relations.

Both leaders were products of their educational environment. B.T. Washington was a graduate of Hampton Institute with its industrial curriculum and DuBois a graduate of Fisk College with its classical curriculum. Often overlooked, however, was their agreement regarding education of Blacks; both agreed that an industrial curriculum was imperative for the masses. Tensions only arose around how the Black Leadership (or the Talented Tenth) should be educated. Although Washington won the battle, as evidenced by financial support and the sheer number of HBCUs emerging from the model he advocated, DuBois won the war as many colleges later changed their curricula to also reflect a classical tradition (Anderson, 1988).

In addition to under-capitalization and resource discrimination, hundreds of writers and scholars have not only "taken pride" in echoing claims of African American intellectual inferiority, many have and some may even continue to question the purpose of any education for the race (Mays, 1971). Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, longtime President of Morehouse College, explained that:

> *Writers pounced on the Negro colleges, not with the purposes of helping them, but rather, it seems, of destroying them....White liberals and white conservatives alike have participated in this tragedy....One white educator said on the Morehouse campus that Negro colleges should stop striving to be excellent institutions, but instead should settle for mediocrity and send their ablest students to white colleges.*
>
> (p.192)

Today, several goals particular to HBCUs have been identified as follows:

- the maintenance of the Black historical and cultural tradition;
- the provision of key leadership for the Black community, given the important social role of college administrators, scholars and students in community affairs (i.e., HBCUs function as a paragon of social organization);
- the provision of an economic function in the Black community (e.g., HBCUs often have the largest institutional budget within the Black community);
- the provision of college graduates with a unique competence to address the issues between the minority and majority population groups; and
- the production of Black agents for specialized research, institutional training and information dissemination in dealing with the life environment of Black and other minority communities (Brown & Davis, 2001, p.32).

Income and earning power are linked to years of education received. HBCUs provide access to this valued commodity, by reaching out to students who were once ignored by TWIs. Although HBCU enrollment represents a small num-

ber, about 390,000 (e.g., circa 14%) of all African American college students in the nation, data suggest they are contributing significantly to the nation's need for educated Americans. HBCUs also have become critical to strengthening the social, economic and political power of African American communities, as well as exerting an increasingly significant impact on the nation's success in occupations, professions and businesses (Wenglinsky, 1996).

The Contemporary Context for Boards: Select Environmental, Faculty and Student Realities

Responsibilities of trustees loom larger than ever, facing as they do a bold new context that came about after brazen fraud, profiteering and tax write-offs, coupled with failed oversight of leadership in both profit and non-profit organizations. Sarbanes-Oxley was enacted partly in response to these tragic deficits in governance and oversight. The law posits that trustees must be conscientious about tending to institutional issues and legal obligations. Audit committees have become extremely important under this Act and are obligated to make certain that financial reports and annual audits are conducted by reliable, viable accounting firms and made available to all trustees (Price, 2005). Transparency is important, but equally vital is the capacity to read and interpret major reports with a critical eye for analysis.

Establishing a conscientious, conversant, competent and committed board to address the context of HBCUs is no easy feat. A combination of several attributes is critical: authentic commitment to the institution, meaning a capacity for attending meetings and working diligently on committees; expertise that strengthens talents of senior managers in areas such as finance and investment; a global view with and an antenna for grasping significant new trends; personal wealth and connections; and financial acumen (Price, 2005). HBCUs are by no means monolithic; they need boards with unique and varying talents and the expertise to understand the subtleties and nuances of a particular campus.

Overall, a new context that may well be tougher than that of the post-slavery, post-Brown eras is now facing HBCUs and boards. At the crux of this change is a transgenerational transformation in the culture of Blacks. Their culture has always been under assault and destruction due to the persistence of racism reinforced by a system of economic exploitation. These dynamics left many individuals and families weaker, struggling to survive, while at the same time being vulnerable to accumulated trauma responses, ongoing stress, tension and further disruption. The results are manifest, in part, by African Americans' position at the wrong end of most social indicators: poverty, single parent homes, unemployment, crime, incarceration, health care, mortality/morbidity, drop-out rates and standardized test scores. Within this shocking context, the new realities confronting HBCUs and predominately Black institutions embody a number of challenges regarding the environment, students, faculty and alumni.

Environmental Realities

GOVERNMENT ACTION. A little more than a generation after HBCUs were singled out for financial support in 1965, resource reductions are surfacing on both the federal and state levels (Melton, 2001). Although student interest in HBCUs has and continues to grow, government financial support is decreasing. The inability of HBCUs to keep up with TWIs has placed additional pressure on them for financial growth. One analysis, near midnight of the 20th century, showed that HBCUs' expenditures increased about 21.4% in contrast to 26.6% for other institutions, while during that time frame, enrollment at HBCUs was two times as great as revenue (Wenglinsky, 1996). This was compounded by the fact that state allocation per full-time equivalent student also declined (Melton, 2001).

President Bush's proposed $2.57 trillion budget is not kind to education. An examination reveals that one-third of the programs slated for elimination are in the Department of Education. Those facing the knife are the Perkins Loan Program, the Learning Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP) and others that encourage and assist lower income students (i.e., Upward Board, Talent Search) in preparing for access to college (Selingo, 2004). Other programs are projected to receive small or minimal increases: Pell Grants, 5.6%; aid to HBCUs, less than 1% (+0.8); and the same amount is requested for Hispanic serving institutions; and *no* increase for the Minority Institutions Service and Engineering Improvement Program. The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institute of Health (NIH), agencies that supply the largest amount of dollars for research, are targeted for small increases (Burd, 2005 & Chronicle of Higher Education, Government and Politics; The Budget, 2005). Although Congress must act on the administration's budget proposals, the signals are not great, especially for those students who come from families earning $50,000 per year or less. Record numbers of students expect to seek employment; in fact, nearly half of college freshmen indicated that they might have to work (Farrell, 2005). These demands drastically limit time for thoughtful reflection and analysis (i.e., critical thinking) and for creative and artistic pursuits.

Although Andrew Carnegie's appeal in *The Gospel of Wealth* (1889) called for generous sharing of assets, some troubling signals are on the horizon in efforts to repeal estate taxes. Proposed changes in the tax code pose a threat to colleges, universities and other not-for-profits via removing the need for tax shelters and thus an incentive for giving. We know this because after the first Bush tax rollback, philanthropic dollars fell quite significantly (Strom, 2005). Similar donor behavior can be predicted for the future.

Faculty Realities

A UNIQUE COMMITMENT. The success of HBCUs has been largely due to the dedication and commitment of the faculties to address many of the deficits created by racism. Race-conscious faculties have understood that many students, including the most talented, arrive at college with poorly developed skills and are inadequately prepared for college success. They understood that these deficits stemmed from generations of race-based underfunding of education and denial of access to well-financed institutions. This was justification for the unstinting gift of their time and commitment to improve the lives of their students but more importantly, the race. The gratification experienced when their students demonstrated great capacity and won top competitive awards for entry into the most prestigious universities in the world was their earthly reward. If such a unique commitment can no longer be made, will a predominately non-Black faculty be so invested? Will sufficient numbers of top faculty be attracted to institutions educating these new youths where salaries and perks are substantially less than those at TWIs? Will the new faculty consist of those who could not find employment or make tenure at TWIs? *Note:* Salaries at HBCUs are 20% lower than those at other institutions (Provansik, Shafer & Snyder, 2004).

CULTURAL RELEVANCE AND HEALTHY IDENTITY. Nurturing healthy identity has been a role well played by faculty; they must continue to do so. Faculty must help youth develop a working set of survival skills that are culturally centered, and help them understand the contradiction in their status – equal but at the same time unequal, privileged but at the same time excluded, first-class citizens, while also second-class citizens. W.E.B. DuBois referred to this challenge, as having a "double consciousness." Faculty must help students understand that knowledge of one's societal context and development of the inner strength needed to sustain a positive outlook in the face of challenge and contradiction are critical survival skills. Enhancing them is a major function of the HBCU environment and cannot be easily replicated at predominately white institutions. Through this process, institutions, along with the profound commitment of faculty, can and do encourage students to learn resilience and to develop the

capacity of supporting one another. In the end, solid, lifelong friendships and professional/occupational networks are outcomes that HBCU graduates celebrate, a phenomenon not often shared by Black students on White campuses. The cultural relevance of HBCUs and the significance of their role in enhancing cultural identity is manifest in the fact that Blacks attending HBCUs report that these campuses are more "culturally congenial" than White campuses (Brown & Davis, 2001; Lamont, 1979).

Student Realities

MERGERS. In *United States v. Fordice* (1992), the court required that remnants of segregation end at all schools. Will predominately Black institutions capitalize on this new market potential? If they are able to, will that reduce the slots traditionally available to and intended for Black youth? Or, will there be expansion to accommodate a new group of students of color? Will such expansion allow for programs that continue to address the deficits created by discrimination and inadequate self-preparation that still cripple Black students? Of note is the fact that several predominately Black colleges are already in various phases of transformation. For instance, in Bluefield State College in West Virginia, out of over 3,500 students, 299 (less than 1%) are Black; Tennessee State University in Tennessee already has an enrollment that is 20% non-Black.

COMPETING STUDENTS–COMPELLING NEEDS. Schools are facing prospects of another transition. The rapid growth of new immigrants will change the demographic of student enrollment at some HBCUs. Owing to immigration, it is estimated that in fifty years the population will increase from 288 million to 400 million (U.S. Census, 2005). Major growth of the Hispanic population is observed in seven southeastern states (i.e., Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Louisiana and Alabama), where many Black institutions are located. These HBCUs will face pressure to expand their mission to serve this growing cohort of students or new institutions will be created to fill the void.

FEMINIZATION. College campuses all across the nation are experiencing questions related to growing gender disparity in student enrollment. HBCUs are no different. For the past forty or more years, women have constituted a greater proportion of enrollment than men. At the turn of this new century women represented 61% of enrollment (Provansik, Shafer & Snyder, 2004) and the percentage of male students has shown consistent decrease. This trend triggers concern regarding opportunity and availability for marriage partners and the development of young families for building the middle and upper classes, and providing the next generation of leaders. What is suggested is that HBCUs develop the necessary outreach and recruitment strategies, even prior to the secondary school years, so that males might be brought to higher education. Again, greater demands will be placed on already overburdened institutions.

ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM. Intellectualism has a poor rap. Post-Civil Rights era youth, born in and since the eighties, "Reagan babies," may have little knowledge of and commitment to African Americans' ongoing struggle for equality and justice. They have been exposed to, and some identify more closely with, the values and beat of gangster rap than Martin Luther King, Jr., and the drum beat of peaceful social change. Too many have been nurtured in an environment where violence is glorified, misogynist entertainment is praised (Alridge, 2005), and correct English is seldom heard or spoken. Youth have abilities, capacities and talents, some blazingly smart, but what incentives are in place to detract from such an intellectually impoverished environment and promote the need to study hard, become a scholar, develop solid marketable skills, and communicate appropriately in English and/or another language?

Opportunities for Trustees to Engage in the Accreditation Process

The success of HBCUs is instrumentally related to their capacity to meet standards set forth by SACS. Organized as a regional peer-oriented accreditation body to oversee the quality of education, SACS monitors the overall integrity of elementary, secondary and post-secondary education in the South. Standards are driven by principles of accreditation that monitor mission, governance and administration, institutional effectiveness, educational programming and faculty development. More recent demands by SACS that all colleges meet expectations is a most fortunate development giving greater assurance that youths of color are held to the same standards as other students. The organization's objective critiques should place boards of both public and private sector institutions on notice that oversight should be guided by these principles. Until recently it was questionable whether the same expectation was held for HBCUs as for other institutions (i.e., SACS did not even include HBCUs in the accreditation processes until 1928, nearly two decades after W.E.B. DuBois called for a protocol to address academic review, Anderson, 1988).

Mission

No task is a greater challenge for boards than the development, maintenance and/or review of the institution's mission. Boards not only chart the direction of the institution, but also provide a review of missions relevant to the existing geo-political, social and economic environment. If boards neglect this role, it is likely that the institution will suffer from "mission drift," a development which might jeopardize members' capacity to navigate existing threats. Sensitivity to the uniqueness of HBCUs is important. Although some may view board membership as an honor and serious business, others may view this role as a civic/political stepping stone or worse, a ceremonial role. Communication of a clear mission to all constituencies or estates is vital in moving the board's vision to reality.

Governance and Administration

HBCUs, like all other institutions, are challenged with the necessity of building an effective governance system where fiduciary responsibilities are shared by all board members. Building cohesion is never easy in diverse, pluralistic group/organizations owing to differences among members in terms of wealth and connection to resources, e.g., national/international corporations, foundations and government; education and professional/business attainments; race and gender. Such diversity can threaten this needed cohesion. Although many types of knowledge, skill, and talents, are essential for effectiveness in board activity, members themselves may tend to marginalize those without wealth, power and connections to both, assigning them to committees that are less influential at a given time. These assignments are most likely to be in keeping with the traditional system where wealth and privilege are concentrated in the hands of Caucasian males (Taylor, 2005).

Moreover, growing pluralism can be a new and challenging experience to those who must learn to share decision-making at a time when they are at the pinnacle of power in their own world (owning the company, running a division of the corporation, at the height of national/international reputation in professional/business achievement). Nonetheless, there is a growing, sophisticated genre for new board prospects, including African Americans and other people of color and women, with new wealth, records of achievement and influence, as well as younger people who are closer in age to students. They all must be welcomed and thoroughly engaged in participatory roles.

Board business takes place through committee structure. Therefore, leadership must be vigilant in bringing all voices to the table, eschewing the temptation of silencing members who question key actors, presidents and administrators. Those who ask challenging, even uncomfortable questions, play an important role keeping discussion open, mitigating against the tendency of self-congratulatory practices. They should be assigned to key committees, namely budget and finance, audit, board affairs, investments, academic affairs and student life. Expertise is needed on all committees, and boards may need to recruit for higher levels of specific knowledge (i.e., audit, investment, academic affairs).

The charge of each committee should be carefully explored, well crafted and frequently reviewed. The accreditation process is a good impetus for establishing goals, objectives and monitoring systems. It will also crystallize where inquiry must be directed to administrators, helping them and the trustees remain focused on targeted standards first, and the necessity of moving well beyond *minimum* to excellence in implementation. In other words, it should be no surprise to trustees when a standard is found to be addressed marginally or not at all.

Recruitment and orientation of new members to the board who bring different thoughts, ideals, energy, resources, money and connections are critical. African Americans have made and continue to make major gains in professions, academia, business, corporations, foundations, sports and post hip-hop entertainment. The latter, entertainers, have resources and trustees should find ways to engage them early on so that they can be socialized into a culture of giving to HBCUs and other institutions relevant to their experiences. This function might be more appropriately assumed by national and regional organizations like the United Negro College Fund and the Southern Education Foundation. It would constitute a major shift if more of these individuals could be encouraged to move away from the audacious conspicuous consumption, so often facilitated by quickly earned but substantial wealth, into civil society and civic responsibility. This action must not only be judiciously, but carefully managed and nurtured. It should happen since a substantial resource is not being tapped for the expansion of educational options for needful youth.

Leadership: Selection of President

Selection, evaluation, compensation, closure of a president's tenure and succession planning constitute the most critical decision-making responsibilities of trustees. Presidents, now and in the future, must be politically savvy individuals who, in short order, can develop an excellent grip on the overall institution, including curricula, financial affairs (i.e., planning, budgets and audits) management and information systems, human resource administration, enrollment planning, alumni and public relations. Fund-raising is paramount and in turn dictates that exceptional communication skills and self-presentation are required skills of a president. Solid capacity for selecting and building a strong executive team is also an important expectation since the president involved in fund-raising and friend-raising activities will need to be away over 60% of the time. In addition to these higher level executive functions, trustees need to appoint individuals who can also serve critical roles as *chief dreamer* and *chief strategist* (Price, 2005). However, all of these attributes pale in comparison to the primary requirements of honesty, integrity and common sense.

How in the world do trustees find such individuals? By searching, searching and searching harder. National recruitment organizations are skilled in bringing talent to the table and thereby facilitating board decision making in this regard. Selecting a president is facilitated when there is an environment of trust; where an open, pre-determined process is set in place such that faculty, students, administrators and staff, alumni and friends feel involved and engaged in the selection process. The appearance and realistic pursuit of open, fair proceedings with appropriate

consideration to due diligence and vetting are critical in setting the stage for constructive relationships among all estates of the institution. When the rules are broken, unnecessary friction becomes a part of the environment. Informed faculty, alumni and students may require precious time for additional communication and conflict management. In some instances, the hiring of an external public relations group to handle inquiries from the press and maintain goodwill may be required. Boards, too, can become uneasy over these selection processes and outcomes.

Presidential evaluation and compensation is an opportunity for the board (usually via sub-committee) to strengthen executive performance through a process of candid critique and dialogue. Presidents should be expected to present a full record, including successes and failures, of their initiatives. This activity should occur on an annual basis. Boards should not expect that faculty/staff be evaluated, if they do not hold the president to the same standard. Evaluation criteria and procedures are available from many educational associations and consulting firms that specialize in executive placement and compensation. The latter should always be tied to specified performance indicators that have been set forth by the board. At least two issues must be kept in mind: The need (1) to keep executive compensation in proportion with that of faculty and staff and (2) to avoid allowing the executive leadership to gain control of the selection process of board members. The first is a recipe for creating disgruntled faculty and staff, and the second holds the potential for manipulation and abuse of power. What is at stake is the needed independence of the board as well as the integrity of the entire enterprise.

Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional effectiveness is monitored by a series of internal and external indicators, such as school and/or departmental accreditation. Internal factors include faculty, staff and technology. Difficulties in attracting top faculty, fund-raising or internal disputes can, at times, detract from the capacity to prepare students for industry-expected credentials. One example is the recent loss of accreditation of the College of Education at Fort Valley State (GA) where the student success rate in passing the National Teacher Exam (NTE) was significantly below national standards. Morris Brown College (GA) is another institution that is currently struggling to regroup after a devastating accreditation process.

External factors include allocation of public resources and endowments. Since endowments are underdeveloped at HBCUs, there is a greater dependence on government coffers as well as higher vulnerability to policy makers who might not share enthusiasm for their presence. Just as their resistant predecessors, contemporary public policy makers express similar opposition to HBCUs through resource allocation. This practice undermines capital development and upkeep of facilities which compromises the institution's capacity to effectively compete for top students, faculty and staff. Louisiana, for example, after years of utilizing different funding formulae for public HBCUs (e.g., Grambling State and Southern Universities), as compared to public TWIs, was challenged in a class action suit. As a result, the state was placed under federal consent decree to enhance facilities at HBCUs and reduce program duplication (Lam, 2001).

Human Capital Development

Like all colleges and universities, the development of students' human capital is paramount. With their abundant resources (e.g., scholarships, programs, facilities), some TWIs are providing more access for students and are aggressively recruiting many of the most talented African American students. Of late, HBCUs have begun to assertively recruit high-achieving students (Roach, 2000). In the last 20 years, a number of HBCUs (i.e., Florida A & M, Spelman, Xavier, Morehouse, etc.) have been recognized as major institutional rivals seeking to recruit the nation's

highest achieving Black students. As well, six HBCUs (i.e., Xavier, Morehouse, Howard, Spelman, Hampton and Oakwood) are ranked among the top 10 colleges placing African American students in medical schools (Stewart, 2001). Therefore, these select HBCUs are recognizing their niche, and seeking to compete with major TWIs with more resources for the best and brightest Black students. HBCUs also are servicing students at the lower end of the academic preparedness continuum by offering: (1) access to these students who may otherwise not gain access to TWIs; and (2) remediation for students who need extra preparation. By developing this human capital, otherwise ignored by many TWIs, HBCUs contribute directly and indirectly via helping to enhance development of the nation's underdeveloped human capital in challenged communities and providing them entry to the middle class. Boards, however, need to remain cognizant that the expansion of community and technical colleges, where curricula are centered around remediation and skill development, could become a strong threat to HBCUs' existence (Dyer, 2001). In the end, HBCUs need to act with awareness of these threats at both the upper and lower end of the student spectrum.

Educational Programs

Changes in the labor market require principal consideration of educational programs that provide students with necessary skills for the workplace. Students are consumers who are looking for programs that not only provide those skill sets, but allow them to be competitive in the global marketplace. For example, the efforts of Xavier University (LA) in preparing students for entry into the health sciences are well recognized (Stewart, 2001). Still, limited program offerings at most HBCUs hinder their ability to compete for the best students, faculty and new resources. Although such institutions should maintain a tight hold on traditional educational programs, venturing into niches such as health care, management/computer information systems, international studies and others is good marketing strategy. At the same time, closing these initiatives should be considered if students do not demonstrate substantive interest through course selection. In fact, institutions should place more attention on providing alternative models of education (i.e., distance learning, satellite campus and weekend college) in an effort to provide greater access to potential students who are older, employed, and/or for those who desire to complete their collegiate education.

Public and private HBCUs have different constraints in developing new educational programs. At public HBCUs, new program offerings are controlled by state boards, who may weigh their impact on other university-wide systems such as TWIs. Given disparities of resource allocation, HBCUs are less likely to receive approval for new and innovative educational programs. Boards have to understand that competition for resources, at the highest level of the state, holds significant implications for institutional justification over time. Private HBCUs have more control and flexibility in charting new educational programs. Still, such decisions must be carefully weighed against market demand, consumer interest, institutional capacity, faculty expertise, cost and impact on other programs.

Faculty Recruitment, Development and Enhancement

Recruiting, developing and nurturing faculty requires strategic planning, commitment of adequate resources and determination to recruit the best talent available. Academic leaders are faced with a small pool of those with terminal degrees who would traditionally serve HBCUs at a time when current faculty are reaching retirement age (some earlier because of incentives), as well as competition from TWIs interested in this limited and important human resource. For example, as late as 2000, only 1,656 (or 6%) of the 27,888 PhDs earned were granted to African Americans. The preponderance (680) was awarded to those in education, including those serving elementary and

high school systems. In the critical area of physical sciences, there were a sparse 84 degrees and only 14 in the core discipline of mathematics (Taylor, 2005). The correlative issue to those earning terminal degrees and probably entering the pool of applicants for positions in higher education is that of those exiting faculty roles. Attractive incentives for early retirement, coupled with normal patterns, heighten the urgency for planning and action. One potential outcome will probably be that others, mostly Whites and Asians, will fill positions at HBCUs. If these groups develop sway and stronger influence on HBCU campuses, will the core mission of these institutions be preserved?

Equation for Faculty Excellence

To offset a troublesome future, boards must make certain that their institutions expect *excellence* in faculty development and performance. What is required?

DEVELOPING AND NURTURING HUMAN CAPITAL. One way of facilitating an institution's mission is to develop human capital in keeping with the goals of scholarship/research, teaching and service. Because of their context and need to serve many students from challenged, if not disadvantaged backgrounds, HBCUs have placed emphasis on teaching and service. Although there is a need for these foci in the future, the scale will need to shift, sooner rather than later, to include research and scholarship and at a larger number of institutions.

DEVELOPING COMPETITIVE REWARD SYSTEMS. Closing the salary gap between HBCUs and TWIs must become a high priority for boards. Faculty salaries will need to reflect the market relative to a discipline, rather than a discipline in the context of HBCUs. Release time for research, scholarship or creativity in performing arts, as well as start-up funds for laboratories, research, post-doctorate opportunities (i.e., teaching and research) and international study must also be a part of the competitive package. Opportunities for participation in learned conferences and visitation to highly ranked institutions (i.e., faculty exchanges) should not only be available, but encouraged. This is one way to help faculty gain greater self-confidence. Greater national and international academic exposure will enhance awareness that even the better endowed institutions (i.e., Hampton, Spelman, Howard, Morehouse) are poor in contrast to their white counterparts. For example, Howard University reported an endowment of $308,972,000 in 2000 and ranked 140th on the list of top college and university endowments; Harvard University reported $18,844,388,000 and led the endowment ranking. Spelman College ranked fifth among endowments of women's colleges with $219,754,000; Wellesley College headed the list with $1,253,385,000 (Yates, 2001). This recognition should make life tougher for boards. They must raise endowments in order to compete more effectively in all academic programs.

ENCOURAGING MERITOCRACY. Merit awards enhance faculty performance and must be reflected in salaries and bonuses when distinguished accomplishments are secured. Everyone likes to feel that hard work and great performance are valued. Faculties expect *fairness* in ranking systems (e.g., promotion, tenure) that lead to greater competitive prizes/awards as well as annual increments. While administrators may wish to opt for across the board increments/salary adjustments in an effort to appease the masses, this practice will undermine motivation for enhanced faculty performance and stymie the institution's reputation in the academic community in the long run.

FOSTERING IDENTIFICATION WITH AND AFFINITY FOR HBCUS. Boards need to inform themselves regarding faculty, student, alumni and staff attitudes about the institution with an idea of getting a feel for the thinking of these critical and valued estates. Knowing these groups, not just the elected or selected few, but the large mass is critical. Boards ought to be wary of reports from faculty, staff and/or students selected *exclusively* by executives and administrators.

Raising the Bar

HBCUs are national treasures that have enriched this country. Many have managed to survive, and some have even excelled, during harsh and exceedingly difficult times. Now, boards must focus on building stronger institutional development capacity. Larger percentages of graduates need to be targeted for greater contributions (Field, 2001). Many have benefitted from their education and moved beyond the middle class to upper level financial rewards and perks. There is a group of first- and second-generation millionaires who can step up to the financial table. Although HBCUs have not received their just rewards from government, foundations, philanthropists and corporations, a push for genuine financial ownership must be nourished in the culture of these institutions. *It is a sure way to preserve their legacy.*

Going forward, HBCUs must demonstrate that they are capable of standing with the best of the best. Having the confidence and expertise to compete with top institutions, moving away from minority set-aside grants/programs and demanding resources based on merit will be a true sign of maturing institutions. This is a compelling way to gain the respect and status required to reduce their impecuniousness. Likewise, it is a compelling way to undo their unfortunate history of overwhelming problems and insufficient resources. They must aim not only to survive, but thrive at the highest levels of academia. Some have clearly moved in this direction, but more must be encouraged to follow. Boards should demand no less and remain mindful that excellence, though elusive, is what students and communities need and deserve. Today, there are slightly more than 100 HBCUs, which represents a decline of more than 100 since their birth over a century ago. *This fact constitutes both a story and a warning.*

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SPECIAL NOTE: Special gratitude is extended to Professors Tony B. Lowe, University of Georgia, Athens, GA; Ollie Christian, Southern University, Baton Rouge, LA; and Elaine Pinderhughes, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA; for their invaluable critique and Ms. Jillian Nelson, MSW, University of Georgia Graduate Research Assistant, for her assistance.

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