



Effective Leadership: A Toolkit for the 21st-Century Historically Black College and University President

Accounting for less than 3% of U.S. colleges and universities, yet graduating over 20% of all African American students in the nation, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are a unique subset of federally designated postsecondary institutions (Conrad & Gasman, 2015; Gasman & Conrad, 2013; Gasman, Baez & Turner, 2008). HBCUs represent a significant opportunity for low-income and racial and ethnic minority students as well as communities to improve economic, social, and political capacity. Given the important role these institutions play in American higher education, it is important that they serve students well, run efficiently, and provide a positive return on investment for stakeholders. Ensuring that HBCUs are effectively led is an important step in accomplishing these goals.

This report is aimed at HBCU presidents, administrators, staff, educators, and researchers interested in effective leadership strategies at HBCUs. It is at once a toolkit, with recommendations for developing the types of leadership skills and expertise we believe are necessary for strong HBCU presidents, as well as an analysis of the complex political, social, and educational landscape faced by decision-makers at HBCUs in the 21st century. In many ways, HBCU presidents face similar challenges and require skill sets similar to other university presidents, so some of these recommendations apply universally and may seem commonplace. However, HBCU presidents also face unique situations and require particular expertise to be effective. This report delves into the specific ways in which HBCU presidents can engage with common educational leadership challenges as well as challenges exclusive to HBCUs.

RESEARCH TEAM

Levon T. Esters
Amanda Washington
Marybeth Gasman
Felecia Commodore
Briana O'Neal
Sydney Freeman
Courtney Carter
Chris D. Jimenez

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POLICY-MAKING EXPERTISE

GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL POLITICAL SYSTEM

First and foremost, an effective HBCU president requires a deep knowledge of the politics that govern both HBCUs and the communities in which they are situated. This knowledge is doubly important because HBCUs function within a political climate wherein their legitimacy is often contested. Their relationship with governmental entities at various levels is sometimes contentious, as they are not often positioned to directly shape policy and influence policy makers. In order to change societal perceptions, HBCU presidents should be politically savvy and able to raise awareness about HBCUs' role and impact in higher education.

One way for leaders to increase their understanding of the political systems in which their HBCUs operate is to identify instances where cooperation with governmental bodies would result in the realization of mutual goals. For instance, presidents could demonstrate that HBCU research agendas are consistent with national research areas of interest, including STEM and community health. Additionally, HBCU presidents can leverage their knowledge of and rapport with Black communities to establish these institutions as pathways for federal programs that seek to increase diversity in education and the workforce.

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Cooperation with local entities is not new for HBCUs, as these schools have a long tradition of maintaining strong ties to Black communities where they are located (Jackson & Nunn, 2003). Therefore, HBCU leaders are often in a good position to make productive use of their established familiarity with local politics to meet their institutional goals. Collaboration on local-level projects often looks at community economic development, and there are various types of federal assistance for these projects that are often used in conjunction with local and state level organizations. HBCUs can partner with governmental entities such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to pursue economic development for both the school and surrounding communities. For other institutional goals, HBCU presidents can look to the U.S. Department of Education, as it is the key source of federal funding for HBCUs (Toldson & Washington, 2015).

Negotiating the current political landscape involves not only knowing the programs that are available but also building the proper networks and coalitions. Collective organizing provides individual schools with more social capital in the form of resources and well-established and effective pathways. This approach, in turn, can lead to more effective advocacy on the part of HBCUs so that these schools are on the front end of shaping policy rather than being reactive (Lee & Keys 2013). Such political acumen involves knowing politicians who are advocates for HBCUs at the federal level (Devarics, 2009). It is also important to create institutional structures devoted to engaging state and federal entities that make policies (Lee & Keys, 2013).

ESTABLISH AN AWARENESS OF FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING SYSTEMS

HBCU presidents need a well-developed understanding of the multilayered funding systems that govern their institutions as well as the unique funding opportunities available to HBCUs. HBCUs receive federal funding under Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965. This title aims to 'Aid the Institutional Development' of Minority Serving Institutions with both mandatory and discretionary funding allotted through the United States Department of Education. With Title III funds, HBCUs are better able to establish resources such as career and academic counselors. Through Title III, the federal government guarantees \$85 million dollars of yearly federal funding to maintain and continue the improvement of the nation's HBCUs (FY 2014 Report).

In addition to mandatory federal funding, there are several opportunities for HBCUs to receive federal funding through competitive federal grant opportunities within the 32 federal agencies. The U.S. Department of Education, for example, invests hundreds of millions of dollars into research and programs to which HBCUs are distinctively qualified to apply (Toldson, 2015). To ensure the financial well-being of HBCUs, it is critical that HBCU presidents seek out and encourage their institutions' grants and contract teams to apply for federal funding specifically earmarked for HBCUs.

At the state level, as the 21st-century American economy becomes increasingly financially stable, a rising number of states have adopted a performance-based funding model. As in past years, many of these states have witnessed the negative impact that performance-based funding has had on historically underfunded schools that serve low-income students. It is imperative that 21st-century HBCU presidents understand the policies of their state-enforced, performance-based funding system in order to advocate for the institution's financial well-being. Each state is different and each performance-based funding system influences public HBCUs differently. By becoming familiar with state higher education funding policies, HBCU presidents can better advocate for, oversee, and support their respective institutions.

HBCUs do not operate in a vacuum and policies and practices at both the state and federal level have perpetual influence on what happens at both public and private HBCUs.

TAKE A COMPETITIVE APPROACH TO PRIVATE AND PUBLIC GRANT APPLICATIONS

Beyond dedicated governmental funding, HBCU presidents benefit greatly from being able to garner discretionary funding from private and public grant-makers. To ensure the financial health and progress of a university, the president must expand his or her purview and incorporate oversight of this task into the president's portfolio. Seeking private and public grant opportunities and becoming familiar with the skills necessary to be competitive for grant funding can help presidents increase the resources necessary to initiate and sustain programs in the university. An HBCU president can be a wonderful asset in creating partnerships with private and public industry and must use those partnerships to explore more private and public grant opportunities.

KEEP APPRISED OF HIGHER EDUCATION ISSUES AND POLICIES

In order to lead an HBCU, presidents must be up to speed on current issues in higher education, not to mention national and world issues. HBCUs do not operate in a vacuum and policies and practices at both the state and federal level have perpetual influence on what happens at both public and private HBCUs. Staying informed and ahead of these issues is critical. Presidents need to be well read and would benefit from engaging their senior level teams to follow suit. Although the day-to-day operations of an HBCU require constant management, presidents will benefit from taking the time to cultivate a deep understanding of higher education issues. A practical approach to remaining in step with current issues is assigning topical areas to cabinet members and engaging in a process of teaching each other and ensuring that everyone is up to date. This process not only leads to new knowledge but it also leads to increased innovation and creativity on the part of HBCUs.

Key Recommendations for Policy-Making Efforts:

- ▶ Partner with local, state, and federal political and advocacy organizations to pursue economic development and create social capital
- ▶ Become deeply familiar with state higher education funding policies
- ▶ Seek out and encourage institutional grants and contracts teams to apply for federal funding specifically earmarked for HBCUs
- ▶ Cultivate an understanding of current issues in higher education





It is critical that HBCU presidents put forth considerable effort to ensure that collaborative partnerships are equitable.

ABILITY TO FORM COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

DEVELOP COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS AND PREDOMINATELY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

The creation of collaborative partnerships between HBCUs, other Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), and Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) is a promising mechanism for strengthening the educational pipeline for student populations that are underrepresented in research fields of study and for strengthening the research infrastructure of HBCUs (Lloyd, 2007). Collaborative partnerships are generally established on the basis of leveraging the strengths of HBCUs' success with producing a large proportion of Black students who complete degrees in STEM without the fiscal resource base of large majority institutions (Whitaker, 2012). Thus, forward-thinking HBCU presidents who recognize the benefits of establishing partnerships enhance the likelihood that their students are better prepared for graduate education and the STEM workforce.

Numerous initiatives have been developed between HBCUs and other types of institutions that capitalize on the strengths of each institution, providing Black students more access to enhanced academic opportunities. In many cases, these initiatives have focused on community-based research projects related to health disparities among racial and ethnic minority populations. It is critical that 21st-century HBCU presidents recognize the benefits of collaborative partnerships, especially those that shape the research and discovery enterprise of their institutions. HBCU presidents who form strong collaborative partnerships with other HBCUs, MSIs and PWIs can help enhance the image of their institutions, which can lead to attracting talented faculty, staff, students, and administrative personnel.

Innovative HBCU presidents recognize that collaborative partnerships create opportunities for their institutions as well as for faculty and students that may have not previously existed. For example, partnerships that result in large federal grants and contracts being obtained can enhance the overall grants management and research infrastructure of HBCUs. Strong collaborative partnerships can also be used as a mechanism to enhance education and training opportunities for students who previously attended HBCUs. For instance, many research partnerships result in the development of bridge programs that allow former HBCU students to obtain their master's or doctoral degrees from PWIs.

It is critical that HBCU presidents put forth considerable effort to ensure that collaborative partnerships are equitable. In far too many cases, the HBCU is treated as the "little brother" in partnerships with PWIs, which often results in a strained relationship. Strained relationships can devolve into a deeper lack of trust, which makes it difficult to continue the partnership and creates barriers for future partnerships with other PWIs. Thus, it is important that HBCU presidents take an active role in seeing that partnerships are not only developed in an equitable manner but also that this equity is sustained over the lifetime of the partnership.

Key Recommendations for Forming Collaborative Partnerships:

- ▶ Outline, with senior level leadership, the expectations surrounding partnership initiatives
- ▶ Begin each partnership at a reasonable pace, ensuring that the partnership is equitable
- ▶ Commit start-up funds that can help with the establishment of a partnership and serve as a sign of good faith to potential partners
- ▶ Consider the direct and indirect impact of engaging in collaborative partnerships such that the image of the institution is not negatively affected



EXPERTISE IN CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

CULTIVATE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

University presidents who are effective leaders create opportunities for the future growth and success of their institutions. Effective leadership depends upon a number of personality traits and characteristics but most often focuses on qualities such as intellectual capacity, knowledge expertise, enthusiasm, and prior experience. However, less often discussed among the skill set needed for college presidents is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is an individual's ability to accurately perceive their own and others' emotions; to understand the signals that emotions send about relationships; and to manage their own and other's emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1990). The major components of emotional intelligence include self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy for others and social skills. Collectively, these components play major roles in how individuals recognize, connect with, and learn from the mental states of all people within the university.

Emotional intelligence is especially important in higher education leadership because the culture of academe prioritizes collaboration, reciprocity, and trust behavior (Bornstein, 2015). Most especially, a president must know how to carefully listen to problems, act with composure, and have the ability to read people (Bowles, 2013). Presidents who have problems in consistently employing emotional intelligence and maturity tend to exhibit poor management skills and sketchy ethics (Bornstein, 2015). Thus, HBCU presidents who allow emotional intelligence to aid in their decision-making stand a better chance of building consensus and enhancing the performance of individuals across their institutions and various stakeholder groups.

There is often little room for error among university presidents, especially presidents of HBCUs. Moreover, with the increased emphasis on the return on investment, accountability, and fundraising, the future success of HBCUs depends upon exceptional presidential leadership. As such, HBCUs must be diligent in their efforts to hire presidents who possess emotional intelligence. Though identifying individuals who have a high degree of emotional intelligence may prove difficult and extend the presidential search process, it must be done to help ensure that HBCUs continue to thrive.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Unfortunately, most HBCU presidents are not active on social media. On average, their rates of Facebook and Twitter usage fall well below those of other college and university presidents. Although some consider social media the province of a younger generation and do not take it seriously, social media is here to stay and has become extremely powerful for communicating messages to students, alumni, and the general public. There are myriad examples of the deep influence of social media in society today. To not be active on social media as a college or university president is to do one's institution a disservice. Social media is a tool for raising the visibility of an institution, increasing fundraising success, speaking out on key higher education issues, and communicating the ethos of the HBCU to a larger community.

The HBCU world includes some presidents that excel at using social media to promote their institutions. Dillard University's Walter Kimbrough has led the way in this area, with Gwendolyn Boyd (Alabama State University), David Wilson (Morgan State University), Michael Sorrell (Paul Quinn College), and Brian Johnson (Tuskegee University) also being active and effective on social media. These HBCU presidents serve as models within the community that demonstrate the powerful impact of social media.

An added benefit to presidents using social media is that it humanizes them. Presidents are able to share themselves—including their families—with their constituents to give a face to the issues about which they care most. Engaging in social media is a free, easy, and powerful way to change the course of an institution.



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Presently, there are ample tools available to bolster fundraising skills, which means HBCU presidents can easily develop their fundraising expertise.

DEVELOP FUNDRAISING AND INSTITUTIONAL FINANCE EXPERTISE

Few, if any, college or university presidents in the nation can afford not to have garnered expertise in the area of fundraising and finance. The president is the “living logo” of an institution and this is particularly true about HBCU presidents. HBCUs need to employ an all-campus approach to raising funds because their development staffs are small. Everyone needs to be involved in supporting the institution, from students to faculty to staff to alumni to the HBCU president.

Presently, there are ample tools available to bolster fundraising skills, which means HBCU presidents can easily develop their fundraising expertise. In 2010, for instance, Marybeth Gasman and Nelson Bowman III penned a play-by-play manual on HBCU fundraising titled *A Guide to Fundraising at Historically Black Colleges and Universities*. This guide describes how any institution can engage all of its constituencies in supporting HBCUs. Unfortunately, there are some HBCU presidents that are not using a comprehensive approach to fundraising and not employing all of the low-cost resources that can aid in the development and growth of their institutions.

Just as important as an understanding of fundraising is a deep understanding of institutional finance. It is not enough to hire a lead finance staff member. Presidents need to be up to speed on understanding and working with institutional budgets as they are fiscally responsible for the HBCU as a whole. Presidents benefit from working hand-in-hand with their chief financial officer and being able to communicate an accurate depiction of the financial strength of their institution to various constituents at a moment’s notice. Without immediate and available expertise and knowledge, HBCU presidents run the risk of being perceived as unprepared, apathetic, or incompetent when discussing the overall financial condition of their institution.

RECOGNIZE THE NECESSITY FOR INNOVATIVE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACHES

Today, the only way for HBCUs or any institution of higher education to not only survive but also thrive is to be innovative and even entrepreneurial in their approach to learning and operating. For too long, some HBCUs and their presidents have rested on their history—an admittedly venerable and vital history—but resting on it is not enough. Twenty-first century HBCU presidents have to connect the academic curriculum to new technologies and workforce development. Presidents and their teams would benefit from promoting a curriculum that teaches critical thinking skills while simultaneously teaching practical skills that ensure students acquire jobs that lead to a happy life and result in meaningful change for society.

Key Recommendations for Developing Core Skills:

- ▶ Attend professional development training to enhance emotional intelligence and encourage newly appointed board members to follow suit
- ▶ Widely engage in social media and become the HBCUs’ “living logo”
- ▶ Employ an all-campus approach to fundraising that involves everyone from faculty, staff, students, and alumni
- ▶ Establish a deep understanding of institutional finance
- ▶ Connect the academic curriculum to new technologies and workforce development



HBCU presidents need to be open to communicating with a wide variety of stakeholders across the higher education, business, community, and government spectrum. Having the ability to move in and out of various communities and to craft messages that appeal to a variety of audiences has become essential to success as a president.

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UNIVERSITY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

MAINTAIN COMMUNICATION WITH A VARIETY OF STAKEHOLDERS

HBCUs are changing rapidly based on the changing demographics of the nation and the vastly shifting higher education landscape, which is trying to keep up with technology and globalization. In order to keep up, HBCU presidents need to be open to communicating with a wide variety of stakeholders across the higher education, business, community, and government spectrum. Having the ability to move in and out of various communities and to craft messages that appeal to a variety of audiences has become essential to success as a president. Moreover, HBCU presidents must be able to communicate the unique and powerful value of the HBCU experience—one that is constantly being challenged and questioned. In a practical sense, presidents need to have a collection of data points and powerful stories available at any time. Hyperbole and platitudes don't impress, but data do, as do student stories that tug at the human heart. The combination of these two approaches, along with a solid track record, appeals to a diverse group of individuals that could potentially support HBCUs.

MAINTAIN POSITIVE HBCU BOARD RELATIONS

The board of trustees of an institution plays a crucial role in ensuring the long-term stability and strategic planning of the institution (Association of Governing Boards, 2013). Having a strong and healthy relationship with the board enables a president to forward the institution's vision, address institutional concerns with minimal disruption and turmoil, and open the door for effective decision-making (Birnbaum, 2004). The support of the board is crucial to securing donors and communicating stability to constituents. Because positive, healthy board relations are important to the HBCU presidency, those aspiring to the helm of these institutions should prepare themselves in this area.

ENSURE STRONG FACULTY GOVERNANCE

Colleges would not exist without their faculty. Faculty members play a vital role in both student and institutional success. Therefore, faculty voices are important in the institution's decision-making process. HBCU presidents who understand this well and know how to practice shared governance with faculty members will fare well at their institutions. HBCU presidents need to be familiar with and practice these characteristics of shared governance. As the number of HBCU presidents hailing from non-academic tracks has increased (13% in 2013) (Freeman & Gasman, 2014), it is vital that these individuals, in particular, are familiar with the academic side of a college or university. Yes, there are aspects of institutions of higher education that operate similar to a business, but these educational institutions are not businesses in a traditional sense. The bottom line is not about money—it is about learning. Simply put, without faculty, learning will not take place in any meaningful way. HBCU presidents must invest in their faculty. A strong learning environment leads to increased enrollment, higher retention, stronger graduation rates, and generous alumni—and strengthening these factors by ensuring strong faculty governance will increase the traditional bottom line of any institution.

MAINTAIN ORGANIZED AND EFFECTIVE SENIOR-LEVEL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

In order to ensure the future success of HBCUs, it is imperative that presidents of these institutions assemble effective senior leadership teams to help them make sound decisions. Senior leadership teams should be comprised of the most talented people presidents can attract because they are not merely there to row, but also to help you steer the boat (Healey, 2015). More importantly, HBCU presidents who are able and willing to organize senior leadership teams that are comprised of highly competent individuals can increase the likelihood that their institutions reach their full growth potential and have a long-lasting impact on student success.



Twenty-first century HBCU presidents who are able to work with their senior leadership teams to create a sense of optimism can go a long way to developing a more positive workplace environment as well as buy-in for newly developed academic initiatives.

Yet another advantage to organizing a strong senior leadership team is that it radiates positive energy throughout an organization (Healey, 2015). Because HBCUs are more likely to experience challenges resulting from lack of funding and resources, twenty-first century HBCU presidents who are able to work with their senior leadership teams to create a sense of optimism can go a long way to developing a more positive workplace environment as well as buy-in for newly developed academic initiatives.

Being a visionary leader is one of the hallmarks of a successful 21st-century HBCU president. To be a leader, however, requires a team—and to achieve a leader's vision, that team must be dependable and well qualified. As such, HBCU presidents who have the ability to create a plan for the future academic, financial, and operational growth of their institutions will fare better if they surround themselves with an effective senior leadership team that can act as both ambassadors and stewards for the leader's vision (Healey, 2015). More importantly, when senior leadership teams are recognized by faculty, staff, and students as being collaborative and high performing, the positive impact is powerful (Sanagan, 2012).

The rise of college costs, a perceived lack of accountability of higher education to taxpayers and state governments, and a heightened sensitivity of taxpayers toward ineffective and inefficient leadership in academe have contributed to the increased scrutiny on academic leadership (Bisbee, 2007). Hence, 21st-century HBCU presidents who can assemble senior leadership teams that are able to offer timely and well-reasoned advice on how to deal with new and emerging institutional challenges will be more likely to make progress toward achieving their institution's performance metrics and goals.

Key Recommendations for Fostering University Stakeholder Engagement:

- ▶ Communicate clearly and transparently with a wide variety of stakeholders across the higher education, business, community, and government spectrum
- ▶ Clearly communicate the role of the board of trustees at the institution and provide effective and consistent training
- ▶ Be aware of board selection processes and aim to achieve board diversity
- ▶ Work with the board in constructing and implementing an institutional strategic plan
- ▶ Ensure faculty members have access and the ability to fully participate in governance processes, allowing them to voice concerns and create opportunities to address them
- ▶ Form strong senior leadership teams that can act as stewards for the president's vision

UNDERSTANDING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

IMPLEMENT STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES

The matter of student success has taken on new significance for many HBCUs due to the proliferation of performance funding models (Jones, 2014). The transition from public funding based on enrollment to a funding system based on rates of progression and matriculation encourages HBCU presidents to take steps to create campuses that demonstrate the same commitment to retention and completion as they have traditionally afforded to access. Research on challenges in three interrelated areas—academic, emotional, and financial—provide direction on where to focus and examples of successful efforts.

The academic challenges all first-year students face are often intensified for HBCU students, many of whom are first-generation students from low-income families (Mercer & Stedman 2008) who are also often behind in college preparation (Harmon, 2012). Through the use of summer programs for incoming freshmen, HBCUs can intervene before students fall behind in their classes. HBCUs can encourage incoming students to use summer programs to take courses, become involved in faculty research, and collaborate with advanced students (Palmer, Davis & Thompson, 2010). Likewise, programs can be designed to assist students to test out of remedial programs (Palmer et al., 2010). Once students formally become freshmen, first-year programs help ease the transition by consolidating university resources, helping students to understand how and where to turn for help (Benitez & DeAro, 2004; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2011). Beyond circumstances specific to first-year students, clarifying graduation requirements and providing more assistance on course sequencing can shorten students' time to completion.

Students' mental and emotional health are also receiving more attention in higher education, and HBCUs' supportive cultural environment has long been effective at assisting students' transition from high school to college and beyond (Palmer & Gasman 2008). Schools can redouble their commitment to cultural sensitivity by institutionalizing outreach resources. In addition to maintaining the tradition of employing thoughtful and caring school staff, formalizing and destigmatizing assistance measures through campus tutoring and mentoring centers may help students overcome reluctance to seek help (Palmer, Davis & Hilton, 2009).

Insufficient financial resources often exacerbate academic and emotional obstacles. Palmer et al. (2009) suggest that instead of encouraging students to rely primarily on government loans for financial support, businesses can be solicited for scholarship support and faculty can recommend internships.

Key Recommendations for Implementing Student Engagement Initiatives:

- ▶ Continue commitment to cultural sensitivity by institutionalizing outreach resources
- ▶ Standardize first-year support programs for incoming freshmen
- ▶ Create a culture of support for student's mental and emotional health
- ▶ Encourage business to support and endow scholarships
- ▶ Encourage faculty to share knowledge of scholarships and opportunities for financial support





21st-century HBCU presidents who are skilled at effective crisis management are in a better position to recover from negative events that could threaten the image and future viability of their institutions.

WILLINGNESS TO SERVE AS THE LIVING LOGO OF THE UNIVERSITY

ADOPT A COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE

Without question, presidents are the figureheads of their respective institutions and in most cases are responsible for making final decisions regarding institutional priorities. Clearly, the ability to be the final decision-maker also affords presidents with a certain amount of power and authority. While the power of the presidency has remained relatively constant throughout the history of higher education, current trends in the societal expectation of leadership have changed. Although in times past, a more directive leadership style may have been met with only moderate resistance, such is not the case for 21st-century leaders in higher education. Instead, 21st-century HBCU presidents should lead their institutions with a collaborative mindset.

The challenges for HBCUs in the 21st-century have become so complex and varied that addressing them now requires the energies, management, and skills of the entire university and its supporters (Millette, 2005). As such, the extent to which HBCU presidents can capitalize on the intellectual capacity of various stakeholder groups within and outside of the university will determine whether or not they are able to make well-informed decisions on behalf of their institutions. More importantly, presidents who are seen as being collaborative are better able to build social capital among stakeholder groups, which has a recursive effect and can cultivate even stronger relationships and wider networks. A byproduct of these enhanced relationships is that decisions regarding institutional priorities are more likely to achieve buy-in and less likely to be perceived in a negative light. As a result, presidents who lead in a collaborative manner are usually afforded greater support by their external constituents and meet less resistance regarding strategic initiatives that may appear too bold.

Trust is one of the foundational elements of being an effective leader. Leadership operating with damaged trust in their relationships will find it hard to succeed because it impedes direction, motivation, the integration of multiple perspectives, and open communication (Kezar, 2004). However, HBCU presidents who are willing to adopt a collaborative leadership style are likely to gain greater support because they are seen as team players. HBCU presidents who utilize a collaborative leadership style will likely be more effective in building trust among their faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders. Most importantly, once trust is established, it is critical that HBCU presidents continue to lead in such a way that trust is not eroded. A firm commitment to a collaborative leadership style is not one that should be abandoned once the “coast is clear.” Rather, a culture of trust should remain one of the highest priorities of an HBCU president.

Becoming an effective collaborative leader takes effort and does not occur overnight. Consulting literature, attending leadership workshops, and engaging in various strategies can assist HBCU presidents in developing and enacting a more collaborative leadership mindset.

EMPLOY EFFECTIVE CRISIS MANAGEMENT

With incidents such as mass shootings, sexual assaults, fraternity and sorority hazing, and athletic scandals occurring on college campuses, university presidents need to be prepared now more than ever for handling major crises. In higher education settings, a crisis is an unpredictable event that can have a critical impact on a university's performance and generate negative outcomes (Coombs 2007). Crises can result from activities such as weather-related disasters; reputational threats resulting from criminal acts by faculty, staff, or students; lawsuits; and cyber-attacks. At some point, all presidents will face some form of crisis that threatens the image of their institution. However, 21st-century HBCU presidents who are skilled at effective crisis management are in a better position to recover from negative events that could threaten the image and future viability of their institutions.

In many ways, the survival of many HBCUs will depend on the ability to increase their endowments. A necessary step toward this goal is for HBCU presidents to commit to being active in branding, and in many cases, re-branding their institutions.

Though it is unrealistic to plan for every possible crisis event, it is imperative that when faced with a crisis, HBCU presidents address them directly and with full transparency. Unfortunately there are countless examples where college and university presidents, in general, distort facts or mislead and lay blame on other individuals in order to maintain their public image. These types of behaviors not only reflect a lack of leadership and accountability but also erode any trust remaining among the faculty, staff, students, and alumni. HBCU presidents who are proactive and engage their senior leadership teams as well as other institutional leaders in developing a crisis management plan will fare better when faced with a crisis.

Effective crisis management is not only determined by a president's ability to effectively lead and communicate during a crisis event. Rather, a comprehensive crisis management plan should be in place that outlines clear assignments for all levels of leadership and should include a review and evaluation component supported by training and coordination among all departments in the institution (Booker, 2014).

It is imperative that 21st-century HBCU presidents are prepared as much as possible for crises that may erupt at any time. Moreover, being able to lead effectively during a crisis is especially important considering the current state of 24-hour news and social media coverage and the increased scrutiny that comes with being a college president during turbulent times.

CAPITALIZE ON INSTITUTIONAL BRANDING AND MARKETING STRATEGIES

Though a president serves as the "living logo" of the university, in many instances, it is actually a strong university brand that attracts faculty, students, and donors to the institution. And like many service-oriented organizations, university presidents are facing an increasingly competitive environment in which they must find ways to differentiate their institution and tell its story (Judson, 2008). Hence, 21st-century HBCU presidents who recognize the importance of institutional branding and marketing and who are willing to make it a priority will better enable their institutions to thrive and expand their reach across the higher education landscape.

Now more than ever, HBCU presidents have no choice but to focus a portion of their efforts on building the brand of their institutions. For instance, selecting a university to attend is a complex consumer decision, and thus a strong institutional brand influences and helps simplify the selection process for students and their families (Judson, 2008). In addition to higher enrollments resulting from enhanced marketing strategies, HBCU presidents who are committed to enhancing the public image of their institutions through innovative branding approaches provide opportunities to build stronger support among current students, faculty, staff, alumni, and parents. Collectively, a strong base of support among these groups goes a long way toward creating a positive image for an institution.

Because state and federal support for colleges and universities continue to wane, this issue is even more pronounced for HBCUs. This trend, combined with the increasing costs of higher education, has created a need for innovative approaches to fundraising. Thus, HBCU presidents who approach institutional branding and marketing as a serious undertaking are likely to experience an uptick in the philanthropic support of their institutions. In many ways, the survival of many HBCUs will depend on the ability to increase their endowments. A necessary step toward this goal is for HBCU presidents to commit to being active in branding, and in many cases, re-branding their institutions.

Engaging in a branding or re-branding effort takes time and hard work but it must be done, and done exceptionally well. To aid in this process, HBCU presidents should glean ideas from current students, faculty, staff, and alumni. More importantly, gathering input from a variety of stakeholders shows that the institution values collaboration.

Key Recommendations for Serving as the Living Logo of an Institution:

- ▶ Inspire commitment, hope, participation, and action among students, staff, faculty, staff, alumni, and parents
- ▶ Be willing to act as the public face of the university in times of success as well as crisis
- ▶ Engage in collaborative leadership by soliciting input from various stakeholders, making use of your team's talents, and promoting open and transparent communication
- ▶ Enhance the public image and, ideally, philanthropic support of your institutions through innovative branding approaches



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