HBCUs and the State: Cultivating Better Relationships for Equity

Sosanya Jones, Ed.D.
Karen Bussey
Higher Education Leadership and Policy Studies
Howard University
Purpose and Overview

• Introduction
• Overview of HBCUs Contributions to Postsecondary Education
• History of HBCUs and Contentious Relationship with State Policy Arenas
• SHEEO - Institutional Relationship
• Theoretical Framework and Use Case Examples
• Working Questions and Recommendation Formation
• Questions
The Profound Contribution of HBCUs

- HBCUs represent only 3% of all higher education institutions in the US.
- HBCUs grant almost 20% of all bachelor’s degrees earned by African Americans.
- Produce 70% of all Black dentists and physicians.
- Produce 50% of all Black engineers.
- Produce 50% of all Black public school teachers.
- Produce 35% of all Black attorneys.

(Broady, Todd, & Booth-Bell, 2017; Gasman & Nguyen, 2014; United Negro College Fund, 2015).
HBCUs & Policy: A Contentious History

- Since the Second Morrill Act passed in 1890, the support and survival of public HBCUs has been tied to state government (Boland & Gasman, 2014; Matthews, 1993).

- The relationship HBCUs and state governments has not always been harmonious, due to historically racial inequities in allocation of resources and oversight (Boland & Gasman, 2014; Ezzell & Schexnider, 2010).

- While the Morrill Act mandated states to provide land grant institutions to both maintain de jure segregation and educate black students, there was no stipulation that the support provided had to be comparable or equal to state-supported white institutions (Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009).

---

**Table II: Amounts Received During the Year 1930–1931 by Land-Grant Colleges for Negroes from Funds Appropriated Through the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions Located in</th>
<th>From Morrill Act of 1862</th>
<th>From Morrill Act of 1890</th>
<th>Per Cent of Fund from Act of 1890 received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$18,595</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>13,636</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>$8,000*</td>
<td>16,666</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>1,255</td>
<td>7,250</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>19,666</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>6,814</td>
<td>28,272</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3,125</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Carolina</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>16,900</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Carolina</td>
<td>5,754</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>10,629</td>
<td>16,666</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Virginia</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Federal oversight was needed to push state policy making toward fair and equitable, often with poor results.

The most obvious example of these results is the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which contained Title IV, a provision designed to ensure equal opportunity in federally assisted educational programs and activities.

Title IV led to the creation of the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), an office which would eventually expose the long systematic unequal treatment of HBCUs under de jure segregation.

Under OCR’s scrutiny, states were investigated and mandated to dismantle the vestiges of de jure segregation by establishing statewide desegregation plans (Dervarics, 1997).
These plans were largely unsuccessful, but eventually a private court lawsuit known as the Adams v. Richardson (1973) case led to court-mandated federal criteria for beginning the difficult task of dismantling statewide desegregation (Green, 2010).

The result of this history is a complex and sometimes chilly relationship between SHEEOs, legislative bodies, and HBCUs.
Lundy-Wagner (2015) emphasizes the need for HBCUs to take a more active role in the postsecondary policy agenda because familiarity with state policy actors raises awareness, consideration, and funding for institutions.

However, taking an active role in the policy agenda requires *participation* in the policy arena.

Gittell and Kleiman (2000) have noted that higher education institutions generally have poor communication with state policy actors (i.e. governors, legislative representatives, coordinating boards).

Due to a long history of systematic racism, chronic underfunding, and neglect, facilitating trust and loyalty between HBCUs and state government may be particularly difficult.
The Importance of the Relationship between SHEEOs and HBCUs

• SHEEOs have a tremendous role in the oversight, regulation, and success of an institution.

• SHEEOs can support institutions by playing a critical intermediary role between institutions and state policy makers (Tandberg, Sponsler, Hanna, & Guilbeau, 2018).

• HBCUs in particular need support when it comes to advocacy in the policy arena (Commodore and Owens, 2018).
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: Intermediaries and Positive Interaction

- The role of SHEEOs in supporting institutions
- The need for spaces for engagement between intermediaries and constituents
- SHEEO constituents are the colleges they represent and oversee
- Relationship building is key to positive interaction
- Cultivating empathy, respect, and dialogue for the common good

(Tandberg, Sponsler, Hanna, & Guilbeau (2018) and Orton (2012))
In 2010, LA established the Grad Act, cutting scores based on ACT benchmarks (20) to determine whether students should be placed in remedial or developmental courses.

Similarly, NC increased the minimum Math test scores for admission resulting in a negative impact for some HBCUs and MSIs within the state.

In 2016, the University System of Georgia approved the merger of Albany State University and Dalton State College even though the institutions served two different missions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Louisiana</th>
<th>Tennessee</th>
<th>SHEEO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LA’s 2018 Act 236 established the Advisory Council on HBCUs in efforts to strengthen the capacity of LA’s six HBCUs, both public and private.</td>
<td>In 2018, TN became the first state to create a Director of HBCU Success as a liaison to both public and private HBCUs in the state.</td>
<td>National and regional associations and nonprofits act as intermediaries between states and institutions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WORKING QUESTIONS

1. What do SHEEOs and their coordinating and governing boards currently do to cultivate relationships with HBCU representatives?

1. How often do SHEEOs engage in dialogue with HBCU representatives?

1. What are some of the barriers or challenges to cultivating relationships with HBCU representatives?

1. How can SHEEOs become more intentional in facilitating more robust and frequent interactions with HBCU representatives?
Recommendations
QUESTIONS?