

**BACKGROUND**

The White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Initiative) is excited to announce the release of the 2020 HBCU Competitiveness Scholars application! The competitive scholar program, a student recognition program designed to honor current HBCU students for their competitiveness, i.e., successfully preparing to compete for top opportunities that improve standards of living in their communities.

The term "competitiveness" embodies our nation's best education and economic opportunities. The HBCU Competitiveness Scholars will help form the next generation of leaders who exhibit and champion HBCU excellence. The Initiative will select Scholars for their:

* Academic Achievement: established classroom performance;
* Civic and Campus Engagement: proven leadership to make a positive difference at their institutions and in their communities; and
* Entrepreneurial Ethos: demonstrated character to pursue new opportunities, despite limited resources, i.e., the “go-getter” or competitive spirit.

For the specified academic school year, Scholars will serve as representatives of their respective institutions and communities to the Initiative. The Initiative will provide outreach and engagement opportunities for Scholars, as well as, information and resources that they can take advantage of or disseminate to their respective communities.

To inform their experience, Scholars are expected to carefully assess their personal and career aspirations, as well as the needs of their institutions and communities, to help determine the best ways the Initiative and its partners might provide support.

It is essential that the Initiative continue to engage the next generation of leaders who are expected to make meaningful contributions to society. Their growth and development are crucial to the success of our communities, our nation and our global competitiveness.

**RECOGNITION PROGRAM DETAILS**

Students will be recognized by the Initiative for one academic school year. During that year, Initiative staff will provide Scholars outreach and engagement opportunities, along with, career and professional development opportunities of which they can take advantage of and shar with their fellow students.

All recognized Scholars will be invited to attend the Annual National HBCU Week Conference in Washington, D.C. In addition to being invited to our annual conference, scholars will also be invited to participate in some regional events and monthly webinars. More importantly, recognized scholars will become a part of the Initiatives network, forever having access to our opportunities, federal partners, resources and staff.

Through this recognition, scholars are encouraged to build stronger relationships within their institutions, with regional and community-based organizations, as well as, government and private sector entities affiliated with the Initiative under our Executive Order mandate. Selected Scholars will learn from each other and share proven and promising practices that support new opportunities for all young people.

**ELIGIBILITY AND RULES**

The nominee must submit a completed nomination, including an unofficial transcript, a student interest essay, resume and a signed institutional endorsement commitment letter. The nominee must be a **current** undergraduate, graduate or professional HBCU student in good standing at an accredited institution and must be enrolled in good standing for the entire 2020-2021 academic school year.

The nominee must work with their institution’s leadership to complete and submit the nomination package by the established deadline. Only complete nomination packages approved by HBCU President or Chancellor will be reviewed by the Initiative for final processing. Only **completed nominations** will be accepted.

**HOW TO APPLY**

Students may nominate themselves as a competitiveness scholar to their institutional leadership, but it is up to the institutional leadership, President or Chancellor to determine which nominee packages are submitted to the Initiative. The WHIHBCU will accept no more than two nominees per school. Although each HBCU is allowed two (2) nominees, The Initiative has the authority to only select one (1).

The HBCU Competitiveness Scholar nomination form must be submitted and endorsed by the President, Chancellor or designated surrogate. A designated surrogate is someone delegated by the HBCU President or Chancellor to complete the submission requirements.

All nominations must be submitted electronically. Nomination components are outlined below:

# Part A: COMPLETED ANDSIGNED NOMINATION FORM Part B: UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

**Part C: ENDORSEMENT COMMITMENT LETTER** *{completed by President, Chancellor or designated surrogate)*

President or Chancellor must provide a signed written nomination attesting to the nominee's current performance, potential for a leadership and institutional endorsement commitment. A designated surrogate is someone delegated by the HBCU President or Chancellor to complete the submission requirements.

**Part D: STUDENT INTEREST ESSAY** *(To be completed by the nominee)*

In 500 words or less, the nominee must briefly describe their:

* + Academic achievements;
	+ Demonstrated civic and/or campus engagement;
	+ Proven entrepreneurial ethos;
	+ Personal and career aspirations/needs;
	+ Institutions' and communities' aspirations/ needs; and
	+ Ideas how the WHIHBCU and this recognition support those aspirations/needs.

**SCHOLAR BENEFITS**

# \*National Recognition

• Scholars and institution names cited in official press release issued by the Initiative and U.S. Department of Education.

• Recognition Ceremony at Annual HBCU Week National Conference.

• Student name and institutions will also be posted on Initiative website.

# \*Invitation to Annual HBCU Week National Conference

* Scholars will be invited to attend workshops designed to help them model promising and proven practices related to the spirit of engagement, competing in the 21st century, entrepreneurship, innovation and career development.
* During the conference workshops and offsite convenings, recognized scholars will have opportunities to engage with their peers, public partners and private organizations from a wide range of disciplines.

# \*Acknowledgement Letter

* Scholars will receive an acknowledgment letter signed by the Initiative Executive Director.
* Scholars will also receive a plaque certificate signed by the Initiative Executive Director.

# \*Invitation to Regional Meetings and Virtual Convenings

* Scholars will be invited to Initiative hosted events and meetings in their region. These events provide students with the opportunity to articulate their contributions and needs during the events while also serving as opportunities to network with partners and stakeholders.
* Scholars will be privy to a series of virtual events designed to connect students at HBCUs with non-profit organizations, industry, federal agencies, and young professionals to explore career development opportunities and identify challenges and solutions for HBCU students preparing to enter the 21st century workforce.