



# White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities

CONTRIBUTIONS BRIEF 2017-20



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## White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Re-established in Executive Order 13779, the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Initiative) is housed in the Executive Office of the President. Led by an executive director designated by the President, with staff and budget allocation provided by the U.S. Department of Education, the Initiative is charged with implementing Executive Order 13779.

### **Watchword: HBCU Competitiveness**

The Initiative's guiding North Star is HBCU competitiveness: The ability of institutions to successfully compete for federal and nonfederal investments to meet student needs and promote community prosperity.

# Letter From the Executive Director

## The Power of With

As executive director of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Initiative), I am pleased to take this opportunity to express profound thanks to valued federal and nonfederal partners, and to the national community of historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) stakeholders.

In the English language, there are few words more powerful than “with.” Quite simply, every contribution the Initiative has made since 2017 reflects collaboration with you. And this “power of with” led to improved performance and exceptional productivity in every area of the Initiative’s responsibility.

The Initiative’s watchword — HBCU competitiveness — defined our purpose. During our term, we dedicated ourselves to helping HBCUs successfully compete for top opportunities in public and private sectors while providing education and economic experiences that can lead to improved standards of living for the students, people, and communities they serve. We worked with you to crack open some of America’s best areas of opportunity, further aligning HBCU actions with national priorities. More than being proud of our record, we are grateful and humbled by the confidence and trust our partners and stakeholders placed in us. Together, we have activated the incredible “power of with.”

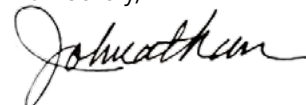
The following pages highlight many contributions, achieved in partnership with you, and include several historic “firsts” in more than 40 years of HBCU executive orders and initiatives. More importantly, the pages salute you — the partners and stakeholders with whom we collaborate every day, including (but not limited to) President Trump, Secretary DeVos, Executive Office of the President, White House Domestic Policy Council, Office of American Innovation, U.S. Department of Education, HBCU Capital Financing Program, Chairman Taylor and the

President’s Board of Advisors on HBCUs, Secretaries, Administrators and the Federal Interagency Working Group, HBCU presidents, chancellors, administrators, and students, and nonfederal public, corporate, and philanthropic entities.

Also, there is no better place than right here to affectionately shout out the Initiative team — Arthur, Sedika, Tammi, and Elyse, with support from Dr. Haynes. Perhaps our finest hour was during this global pandemic, as the team fully retained cohesion and remained accessible and helpful to partners and stakeholders. Leveraging the “power of with,” the team impressively pivoted to online engagement with you to deliver numerous, quality programs and projects.

In closing, and expressing the gratitude with which I opened, I want to thank our partners and stakeholders once again for demonstrating the “power of with.” Stewarding your Initiative since 2017, my view is unchanged: There is no viable path to enduring pandemic recovery and shared prosperity without ever-greater contributions from America’s HBCUs. Not only are they national treasures, but HBCUs are also national assets worthy of investment, providing returns to our nation that cannot be replicated or replaced.

Sincerely,



**Johnathan M. Holifield**  
Executive Director  
White House Initiative on Historically Black  
Colleges and Universities  
White House Domestic Policy Council



# The Initiative Way

To guide the implementation of Executive Order 13779, the Initiative codified an agile and iterative approach toward a leadership framework: The Initiative Way. This new federal scaffolding operationalized and institutionalized the Initiative's theory of change, further enabling sustained collaboration with federal and nonfederal partners to improve conditions for HBCU competitiveness.

## An Initiative – Not a Program

The distinction is crucial. The Initiative sits outside of day-to-day federal program functions, neither awarding grants nor contracts, and working across the entire federal government to accelerate agencies into action on HBCU competitiveness. Like a federal HBCU skunkworks project, the Initiative is a small group of professionals with a limited budget allocation (\$130K), empowered by Executive Order 13779 to be policy, program, and project entrepreneurs, turning over rocks and exploring new opportunities to advance HBCU competitiveness.

## Organizing the Work: Three Primary Lanes

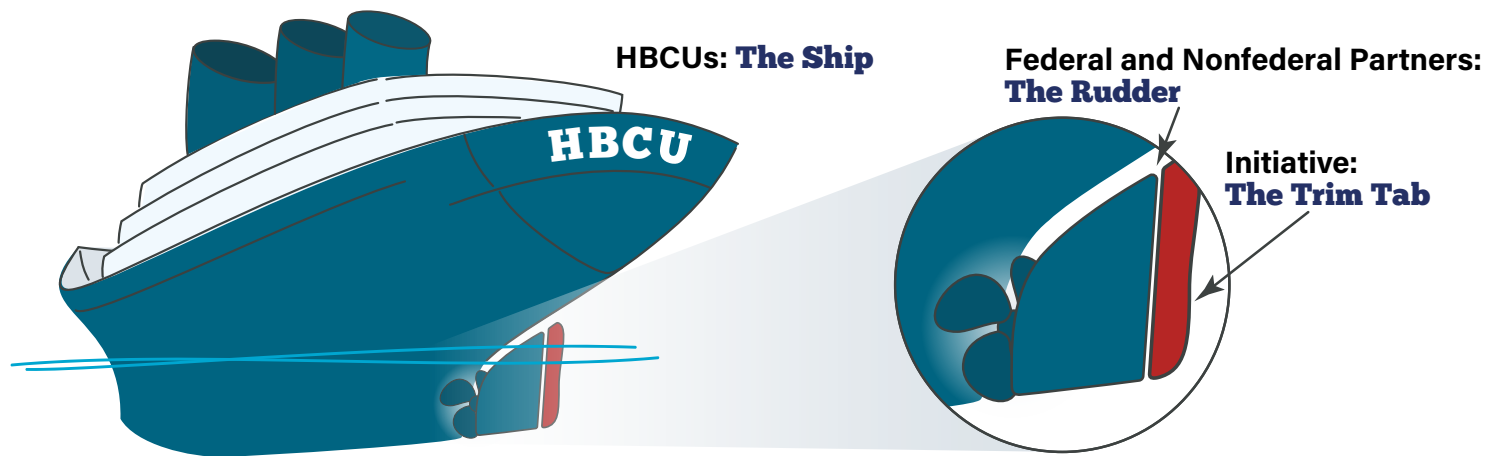
The day-to-day work of the Initiative is organized into three, interrelated workflows:

- **Programs** are ongoing activities to improve performance more gradually in a targeted area. As sustained, longer-term interventions, the Initiative and/or its partners can own accountability for program delivery.
- **Projects** are distinct, finite-duration, discretionary actions to improve performance more quickly in a targeted area. As focused, shorter-term interventions to accelerate achievement of specific goals, the Initiative and/or its partners can own accountability for project delivery.
- **Policies** are influential actors' expressions of important HBCU objectives and priorities. Actors can be public (e.g., local, state, and federal) or private (e.g., for-profit and nonprofit).



## Trim Tab Action

The Initiative creates more favorable conditions for HBCU competitiveness, providing the high-leverage leadership to turn important HBCU objectives in the desired direction. The Initiative is the functional expression of R. Buckminster Fuller's small trim tab. As illustrated, exerting high-leverage action to turn the ship's rudder, the small trim tab helps to ultimately turn the large ship in the desired direction.



## Facilitating Quality

### PUSH OUT - CONNECT UP - PULL DOWN

Daily, the Initiative seeks to help HBCUs share in a new, tri-fold dynamic, working with federal and nonfederal partners to:



“Push out” sources of top opportunities to HBCUs.



Promote recognition that HBCUs provide the U.S. unique competitive advantages and encourage partnerships with institutions to “connect up” to sources of top opportunities.



Enable HBCUs to “pull down” ever more value from sources of top opportunities.

# Federal Scaffolding

With actionable imagination, the Initiative built the supporting federal scaffolding required to safeguard HBCU success for years to come. This internal infrastructure projects the primacy of federal HBCU leadership, providing needed guardrails to align the federal government to continuously strengthen the role of HBCUs in delivering on agency goals and objectives.



## Federal HBCU Competitiveness Ecosystem (Ecosystem)

Effectively implementing Executive Order 13779 depends on the ability of multiple, interconnected actors to efficiently work together. Codified in the *Framework for the Development of a Federal HBCU Competitiveness Strategy*, the Ecosystem aggregates disparate and disconnected federal assets, then makes productive connections that lead to impact results. The Ecosystem is the “soft connective tissue” through which the Initiative enables execution against the goal of HBCU competitiveness. Fielding and responding to myriad inquiries from throughout the federal and nonfederal sectors, the Initiative is the keystone that helps make the right connections and the glue that holds them together.

## Federal HBCU Interagency Working Group (IWG)

Anchoring the Ecosystem is the IWG. Re-established in Executive Order 13779, the IWG is currently composed of 34 federal agency partners, including “liaisons,” the senior officials appointed by agency heads to provide overall coordination with the Initiative and leadership on agency HBCU policy, and “representatives,” who serve as the Initiative’s primary points of agency contact for day-to-day work. The IWG is the supporting “hard infrastructure,” enabling the Initiative to sustain collaborative execution against the goal of HBCU competitiveness. As the “hub” of the IWG, the Initiative preserves a norm of ongoing cooperation through strong, flexible, linkages or “spokes,” that deeply link together federal agencies.

## **HBCU Interagency Competitiveness Clusters (Clusters)**

Clusters are a subset of the IWG. Flexible and interconnected, Clusters are collaborative structures through which federal and nonfederal leadership can more effectively implement Executive Order 13779. Capitalizing on common agency interests and the specific passion for select priorities, Cluster goals are to:

- Create efficiencies within the Ecosystem and IWG to increase impact and reduce redundancy of effort.
- Provide high-leverage, collaborative leadership to advance HBCU competitiveness.
- Increase HBCU opportunities within agencies.

## **HBCU Intra-agency Working Groups (IAWGs)**

Another IWG subset, IAWGs are the primary vehicles for coordinating the implementation of Executive Order 13779 within agencies. Spanning a wide range of cross-disciplinary, offices and functions, IAWGs bring together disparate, internal agency assets to work in a coordinated manner to advance HBCU competitiveness.

## **Framework for the Development of a Federal HBCU Competitiveness Strategy (Framework)**

For the first time, recognizing the potential of HBCUs in meeting the principal missions, goals, and objectives of agencies, the Initiative led development of the Framework with the White House Domestic Policy Council, presenting the government-wide vision for helping HBCUs better align with, contribute to, and realize value from agency strategic goals.

## **Agency Guidance and Reference Brief for Implementing the Framework (Guidance)**

The Initiative developed Guidance to strengthen agency compliance with Executive Order 13779 and improve implementation of the Framework. Agencies are encouraged to review the Guidance when developing new or retooling existing HBCU competitiveness plans, as well as when proposing and carrying out HBCU-related activities.

## **Federal HBCU Competitiveness Strategy (Strategy)**

For the first time, the Strategy aligns federal HBCU plans, goals, and metrics with principal missions of agencies. The federal government-wide HBCU Strategy is informed by the goals and practices set forth in the Framework and serves as a valuable, guiding North Star for federal and nonfederal engagement on the national goal of HBCU competitiveness. Importantly, the Strategy establishes the foundation, i.e., the floor, not the ceiling, of federal HBCU leadership.



# Policy Contributions

The following Initiative policy contributions are the result of advice, advocacy, and engagement with influential actors to express important HBCU objectives and priorities. Actors can be public (e.g., local, state, and federal) or private (e.g., for-profit and nonprofit).

- Provided policy advice to the President of the United States, Secretary of Education, White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC), National Security Council (NSC), President's Board of Advisors on HBCUs (PBA), Council of Economic Advisers (CEA), White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council (WHORC), White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), White House Office of American Innovation (OAI), Congress, and federal agencies on implementing Executive Order 13779, improving conditions for HBCUs to compete for federal and nonfederal investments.
- Introduced and inculcated HBCU competitiveness throughout the federal government, translating the concept into new presidential policy and federal law.
- Obtained White House authorization to establish the Federal HBCU Strategy and Competitiveness Policy Coordination Committee. For the first time employed the primary tool for interagency coordination of national policies to inform the President's decisions, resulting in the federal HBCU strategy Framework.
- After 40 years of HBCU executive orders lacking compliance accountability, originated and recommended the policy innovation to enshrine in federal law Executive Order 13779. Earning sweeping, bipartisan support in both houses of Congress, the HBCU PARTNERS Act for the first time requires HBCU reporting to Congress, decisively ensuring full agency compliance. This act is shaped to codify HBCU competitiveness in federal statute; provide HBCU alignment with U.S. education and economic competitiveness priorities; require government-wide HBCU strategic planning; and strengthen HBCUs through robust public, private, and community partnerships.
- Recognized four federal HBCU priority areas: Education; 21st Century Infrastructure (Broadband); Economic Development and Competitiveness; and Academic Research Enterprise.



- Liaised throughout the administration and within the U.S. Department of Education to provide the largest ever HBCU federal investment: \$2.5B+, 2017-20; including permanent \$850M of support to HBCU STEM programs (FUTURE Act); \$100M+ for scholarships, research, and centers of excellence at land-grant HBCUs (Farm Bill); an additional year to obligate Title III funding, preserving \$80M for HBCUs; support for congressional Title III program investment increases of 94M; \$30M to enable 13 schools with financial difficulty to restructure to fulfill loan commitments; \$322M to four HBCUs to eliminate hurricane relief loan obligations; \$930M for HBCUs to address global COVID-19 pandemic (CARES Act); and \$1.3B to discharge loans made to HBCUs under the HBCU Capital Financing Program (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021).
- Partnered with U.S. Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration to launch the Minority Broadband Initiative, incubating the concept in the Initiative's Smart HBCU Cluster and proposing the creation of a new office, enshrined in federal law. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 established the Office of Minority Broadband Initiatives, providing \$285M in grants to HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions to ensure equitable broadband access, deployment, and adoption across HBCU campuses and rural America.
- Gained administration recognition in the federal HBCU strategy Framework that "while HBCUs have established traditions and programs as reflected in their statutory definition, they are race-neutral institutions providing agencies considerable latitude for purposes of developing competitiveness plans." Reasserted that the full arsenal of federal actions is available to HBCUs, including continued and renewed agency use of HBCU competitive preference points and set-asides.
- To improve federal contracting with HBCUs, Initiative's Contracting Competitiveness Cluster achieved the inclusion of HBCUs in the OMB memorandum "Buying for America." For the first time, OMB encouraged agencies to work with their small business directors on strategies to increase contracting with HBCUs.
- Collaborated with U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration to develop a new HBCU engagement policy. For the first time embedded HBCU objectives in regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies' content guidelines and recommendations.
- Cultivated White House support to establish National HBCU Colors Day, proclaimed by the President of the United States, encouraging all Americans to proudly don institutional colors and observe the week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that acknowledge the countless contributions HBCUs have made to our country
- Collaborated with the U.S. Department of the Treasury and General Services Administration to improve HBCU contracting competitiveness, leading to the landmark agreement to increase HBCU contracting with agencies via GSA schedule contracts.
- Joined with the National Science and Technology Council, the Committee on STEM Education, and the OSTP to develop and publish the federal five-year STEM education strategic plan, required by the America COMPETES Act. Co-led the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Writing Team that incorporated HBCUs throughout the national plan.
- Partnered with the OSTP to create the privately funded pilot project Increasing Competitiveness and Engagement of HBCUs in America's Research Enterprise.

- Worked with the OSTP to prioritize for the first time HBCUs in the federal research and development budget priorities. Notably, science and engineering (S&E) support to HBCUs increased 3.8% in FY 2018, the first increase in four years; and support to HBCUs for research and development, the largest S&E component, increased 5.4% to \$247 million in FY 2018.
- Served on the White House Urban Affairs and Revitalization Policy Coordination Committee, embedding HBCUs in the Executive Order Establishing the Opportunity and Revitalization Council (Opportunity Zones Executive Order).
- Partnered with NSC, OAI, DPC and the Department of State to develop and announce the administration's intent to create the U.S.-Africa Institute for Epidemic Preparedness and Innovation, anchored by HBCUs as principal partners.
- Developed and published fresh models to link HBCUs to local and state competitiveness priorities and Opportunity Zones. Established Executive Order 13779 and other federal actions as instruments of local competitive advantages to attract additional federal and nonfederal support through HBCUs.
- Originated a landmark HBCU review with the CEA, the agency charged with offering the President domestic and international economic policy advice. Performed the first presidential-level assessment of the educational, economic, and strategic advantages HBCUs provide the nation.



# Program Contributions

The following Initiative program contributions are the result of ongoing activities to improve performance more gradually in a targeted area. As sustained, longer-term interventions, the Initiative and/or its partners can own accountability for program delivery.

- The Initiative convenes and facilitates the IWG to promote interconnectivity and HBCU competitiveness through federal agencies. Convening monthly, the IWG plans, measures, and reports information; collaborates and coordinates cross-agency efforts; and informs the Initiative of agency activities and policy and program developments. Chaired by the Initiative's executive director and facilitated daily by its intergovernmental affairs coordinator, IWG highlights include:
  - Creating an onboarding program for new agency partners
  - Achieving the highest ever number of agency participants (34)
  - Receiving the most ever agency HBCU plans (32)
  - Producing several publications to inform HBCU alignment with agency education and economic competitiveness priorities
  - Organizing the IWG into the following 10 Clusters, flexible, interconnected, and collaborative structures through which federal and nonfederal leadership can more effectively implement Executive Order 13779: STEM; Human Capital; Campus Safety and Resilience; Economic Competitiveness; Humanities, Arts, Culture and History; Contracting Competitiveness; Public-Private Partnerships; Smart HBCU; International Affairs; and National Security.
- Convened White House Summit on HBCUs to connect administration senior officials with the HBCU community, civic, nonprofit, and business leaders, and stakeholders to discuss critical issues and identify solutions.



- Revived and restructured the Annual National HBCU Week Conference, further strengthening the nation's premiere gathering of HBCU stakeholders:

- For the first time, featured a historic address from the President of the United States
- Annually featured Secretary of Education engagement
- Focused the annual conference on advancing HBCU competitiveness:
  - ▶ *2018 HBCU Competitiveness: Aligning Institutional Missions with America's Priorities*
  - ▶ *2019 Enhancing HBCU Competitiveness: Student Achievement. Quality Partnerships. Institutional Performance*
  - ▶ *2020: The Perfect Decade to Accelerate HBCU Competitiveness*
- Added dynamic mobile event app capabilities; drew record number of registrants; attracted high-ranking administration and broad federal agency and nonfederal participation; instituted themed conference tracks, more than doubling the number of conference sessions; increased in-person attendance 30% over recent average; and pivoted to the first virtual conference in 2020, increasing attendance 55% over in-person, recent average.
- Launched the following new Initiative awards:
  - ▶ *Annual Excellence in Innovation and Competitiveness Awards*, recognizing public and private partners, and students, faculty, and administrators at HBCUs who demonstrate commitment and notable contributions to the Initiative and the innovation and competitiveness of HBCUs.
  - ▶ *Annual Federal Agency Innovator Awards*, recognizing exceptional individuals within federal agencies. Agency Innovator Awards highlight federal agency liaisons, representatives, and delegates to the IWG, who passionately believe in the mission of HBCUs and bravely face the challenges and overcome the barriers within the federal sector to ensure HBCUs have a seat at the table.
- Unlocked new fields of opportunity, such as Data Science and Esports Workshops. The latter led to the launch of The Yard: HBCU Esports Alliance.
- Installed new offerings, including the Federal Agency Meet and Greet, Nursing Mentorship and Training Workshop, Student and Young Alumni Career Fair, HBCU Industry Day Event and Matchmaking, Hacking the HBCU Experience (Hackathon), and federal cultural funding opportunities for HBCUs.



- Retooled and relaunched the student recognition program HBCU Competitiveness Scholars—high achieving students nominated by the president or chancellor of their institution, based on academic achievement, community service, entrepreneurship ethos, or “go-getter spirit.” The Initiative’s highest student recognition, nationally highlighted by the White House and U.S. Department of Education and at the Annual National HBCU Week Conference, Competitiveness Scholars learn and share proven and promising practices that strengthen prospects for career and life success:
  - 2018 recognized 63 students from 54 HBCUs
    - ▶ All Scholars attended and were recognized during the Annual National HBCU Week Conference.
    - ▶ Scholars participated in eight conference sessions designed to improve leadership and professional development skills, including “Hacking the HBCU Experience,” working collaboratively with National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Scholars problem-solved (hacked) real-world challenges at their institutions and presented creative solutions to the conference.
  - 2019 recognized 45 students from 34 HBCUs
    - ▶ All Scholars attended and were recognized during the Annual National HBCU Week Conference.
    - ▶ Scholars participated in six conference sessions designed to improve leadership and professional development skills, including working collaboratively with NASA. Scholars hacked real-world challenges at NASA and presented innovative solutions to the conference.
  - 2020 recognized 47 students from 33 HBCUs
    - ▶ All Scholars attended and were recognized during the Annual National HBCU Week Conference.
    - ▶ Scholars participated in three conference sessions designed to improve leadership and professional development skills during the 2020 virtual Annual National HBCU Week Conference and have attended five virtual master classes, delivered with federal and nonfederal partners.



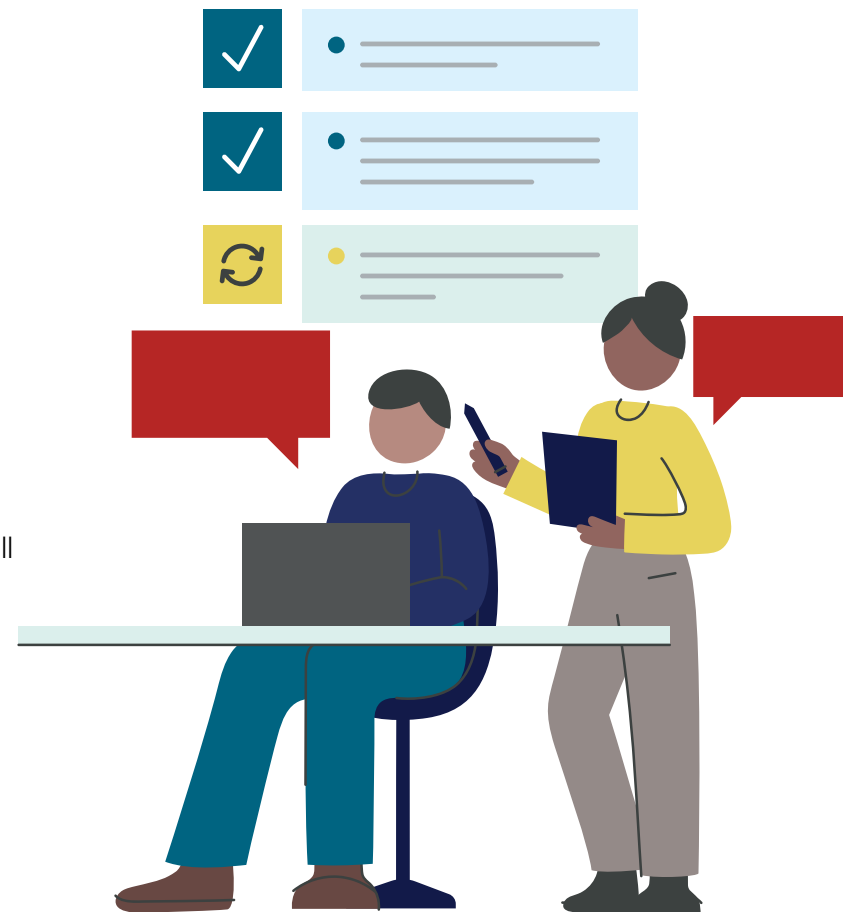


- *President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (PBA)* is re-established in Executive Order 13779 to advise the President, through the Initiative, which coordinates all activities pertaining to strengthening the educational capacity and competitiveness of HBCUs.
- *National HBCU Advocacy Organization Quarterly Meetings with the Secretary of Education.* In support of the Secretary of Education, the Initiative coordinates the agenda and briefing for quarterly meetings with the chairman of the PBA and the chief executives of National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, Thurgood Marshall College Fund, and United Negro College Fund, to sustain ongoing dialogue on subjects relevant to HBCUs and the students and communities they serve.
- Fostered robust outward and internal government, institutional, and stakeholder-facing communications, more than doubling the online information network to 31,300+ subscribers.

# Project Contributions

Initiative project contributions are the result of distinct, finite-duration, discretionary actions to improve performance more quickly in a targeted area. As focused, shorter-term interventions to accelerate the achievement of specific goals, the Initiative and/or its partners can own accountability for project delivery.

- Partnered with White House Coronavirus Task Force and national HBCU advocacy organizations to inform and ensure the distribution of over 500,000 rapid COVID-19 tests to HBCUs.
- Joined with White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to host at Florida A&M University the virtual regional webinar “Enhancing the Security of America’s Research Enterprise” for research institutions in Florida, Mississippi, Georgia, and Alabama.
- Led the White House policy coordination committee to create the first federal HBCU strategy Framework linking HBCU performance to U.S. education and economic competitiveness priorities; mandating minimum four-year agency HBCU plans; aligning agency HBCU planning, goaling, and measuring with the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010; and assigning agency HBCU reporting to Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
- Convened the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Postsecondary Education, Office of the Under Secretary, and Federal Student Aid with chief executives of the leading national HBCU advocacy organizations to strengthen the administrative and financial capacity of HBCU and mitigate future risks to full participation in Title IV student aid programs.
- Forged a nonpartisan partnership with The Heritage Foundation to create the first HBCU Working Group and the inaugural Historically Black Colleges and Universities Forum, nationalizing the imperative of HBCU competitiveness and proposing original models to increase nonfederal investments and support.
- Visited 16 of 19 states with HBCUs, participating in numerous events in support of the field and further instilling the Initiative’s watchword: HBCU competitiveness.





- Catalyzed and participated in 12 regional and state HBCU competitiveness convenings with federal agencies (Executive Office of the President, U.S. Department of Education, Small Business Administration, Economic Development Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Energy) to leverage federal assets to ignite the creation of local and state HBCU competitiveness strategies and replication of federal leadership at state and local levels:
  - *South Carolina HBCU Economic Impact and Competitiveness Conference*, Benedict College, Columbia, South Carolina, with Allen University, Claflin University, Clinton College, Denmark Technical College, Morris College, South Carolina State University, and Voorhees College.
  - *Louisiana HBCU Competitiveness Convening*, Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana, with Xavier University, Southern University and A&M College System, and Grambling State University.
  - *Alabama HBCU Competitiveness Convening*, City Club, Birmingham, Alabama, with the Governor of Alabama, Governor's Office of Minority Affairs, Alabama Department of Commerce, Alabama Department of Labor, Alabama A&M University, Alabama State University, Stillman College, Lawson State Community College, and Tuskegee University.
  - *HBCU Competitiveness: Student Outcomes and Community Prosperity Through Inclusion and Innovation*, Grambling State University, Grambling, Louisiana, with the Economic Development Administration, the Small Business Administration, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
  - *Tennessee HBCU Success Day on the Hill, Nashville*, joined with the Governor of Tennessee, State of Tennessee Office of HBCU Success, state legislators, American Baptist College, Fisk University, Lane College, LeMoyne Owen College, Meharry Medical College, Tennessee State University and Knoxville College.
  - *Arkansas HBCU Summit*, Little Rock, joined with Congressman French Hill to host the Governor of Arkansas, the Mayor of Little Rock, Arkansas Baptist College, Philander Smith College, Shorter College, and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.
  - *Atlanta HBCU Competitiveness Campaign: Igniting Local HBCU Strategy*, Atlanta, Georgia, with the U.S. Department of Education, Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College and Spelman College.
  - *North Carolina Education Leaders Meeting*, North Carolina A&T State University, Greensboro, with Secretary DeVos
  - *Leveraging HBCUs: White House North Carolina Opportunity Now Summit*, Charlotte, with President Trump, the Executive Office of the President and federal agencies
  - Rethink School Tour: Partnered with Secretary DeVos and the U.S. Department of Education to host convenings with:
    - ▶ West Virginia State University, Institute and Charleston
    - ▶ Kentucky State University, Frankfort
    - ▶ Harris-Stowe State University, St. Louis, Missouri

- The Initiative's Human Capital Cluster conducted multi-agency campus HBCU recruitment events at Spelman College, Lemoyne Owen College, Benedict College, Allen University, North Carolina A&T State University, Elizabeth City State University, and during the 2019 HBCU Week National Annual Conference.
- Joined with the Department of Veterans Affairs Acquisition Academy and Coley & Associates, Inc. to facilitate a half-day, interest mapping session with the IWG. Discovered areas of common agency passion to inform the creation of Clusters, flexible, collaborative structures to implement Executive Order 13779 more effectively.
- Supported the Department of Energy Office of Economic Impact and Diversity's *Equity in Energy Engagement & 2020 Summit Planning Meeting at Texas Southern University*, connecting businesses and educational leaders in the Houston area with officials from the Department of Energy for discussions on STEM enhancement, supplier diversity, workforce development, technical assistance and access.
- Partnered with the National Institutes of Health's (NIH's) Office of Acquisition and Logistics Management to launch the *Path to Excellence and Innovation Program* to empower HBCUs with the knowledge, resources, and skills needed to compete for and win contracts from the NIH.
- Joined with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (P&R) — the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense on such matters as force readiness and management; education and training; and military and civilian personnel requirements — to host the first virtual roundtable with HBCU presidents and chancellors. Complementing the Initiative's longstanding engagement with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, P&R exploration opens new doors for HBCUs to support the extraordinary human capital needs of the Department of Defense.
- The Initiative's Contracting Competitiveness Cluster launched the *HBCU Contracting Competitiveness Academy Pilot*, a cohort of 19 HBCUs self-identified to participate in a year-long, virtual, institutional capacity-building academy with federal agency partners (Department of Energy, NIH, General Services Administration and Small Business Administration) to improve capabilities to successfully compete for federal contracts.
- Hosted the inaugural, virtual *National State of the Initiative Address* to stakeholders.
- The Initiative's Human Capital Cluster conducted 18 virtual career development sessions with several agencies, providing pathways information and insights to hundreds of HBCU students.
- Partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement to provide guidance on HBCU 1890 land grant-anchored ecosystem-building. Conducted a national technical assistance workshop with HBCU liaisons, strengthening their role in implementing Centers for Community Prosperity with HBCUs in rural and underserved communities.
- Fostered a new partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, aligning on inclusive national competitiveness, and, for the first time, convened with 40 HBCU presidents to twice engage in candid dialogue about business and the future of education.
- In partnership with Peace Corps, the Initiative observed the first HBCU College Signing Day at the U.S. Department of Education, celebrating students committing to pursue their education at HBCUs, alongside HBCU alumni.
- Initiated with the Council for Higher Education Accreditation the historic convening of chief executives of Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, Higher Learning Commission, and Middle States Commission on Higher Education to explore accreditation standards and practices that might strengthen the role of HBCUs in higher education and society.

- Created national thought leadership and publications to inform HBCU alignment with U.S. education and economic competitiveness priorities:
  - *Federal HBCU Competitiveness Strategy, Fiscal Years 2021–22, Agency HBCU Competitiveness Plans.* For the first time, developed a federal HBCU strategy to serve as a valuable, guiding North Star for federal and nonfederal engagement on HBCU competitiveness, establishing the foundation, i.e., the floor, not the ceiling, of federal HBCU leadership.
  - *Framework for the Development of a Federal HBCU Competitiveness Strategy.* For the first time, presented the government-wide vision for helping HBCUs better align with, contribute to, and realize value from agency strategic goals.
  - *Agency Guidance and Reference Brief for Implementing the Framework for the Development of a Federal HBCU Competitiveness Strategy.* Pioneered innovative concepts, providing technical assistance to federal agencies.
  - *Reports on Executive Agency Actions to Strengthen the Capacity of HBCUs to Compete for Federal and Private Sector Opportunities.* Provided the HBCU field the comprehensive performance review of agency implementation of Presidential Executive Order 13779.
  - *Revitalizing America Post COVID-19: Roadmap to Activate HBCU Revitalization Ecosystems for an Inclusive, Competitive and Enduring National Economic Recovery.* Proposed comprehensive strategy to mobilize HBCU in service of the U.S. recovery.
  - *Federal Agency Partner Directory.* For the first time, delivered to the HBCU field detailed, point of entry and outreach contact information to facilitate substantive relationships with 32 agencies.
  - *Statements of Agency Priorities Brief.* Provided the HBCU field the first government-wide detailed statements of 32 agency priorities to improve alignment with national goals.
  - *Concepts for Agencies to Explore — Strengthening Agency Plans: Creating More Favorable Conditions for HBCUs to Compete — White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities FY 2018.* The webinar and publication provided technical assistance and coaching across federal agencies to improve HBCU planning, grant and contracting opportunities and other support.
  - Models to link HBCUs to local and state education and economic competitiveness priorities and Opportunity Zones. Established and leveraged Executive Order 13779 and other federal actions as instruments to achieve local competitive advantages and attract federal and nonfederal investment through HBCUs.



- National virtual engagements and webinars to inform HBCU alignment with U.S. COVID-19 pandemic priorities:
  - *Listening. Learning. Sharing. Call with HBCU Leaders and Stakeholders: Dialogue on Challenges for the 2020 School Year*, with the White House Coronavirus Task Force, Department of Health and Human Services, and U.S. Department of Education
  - *Timing and Approval of HBCU Capital Financing Program Deferments Under the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act*, with Acting Director Brooke Rollins, White House Domestic Policy Council, and U.S. Department of Education
  - *EDA and HBCUs: Cultivating Strategic Engagement for Regional Economic Development – Atlanta, Austin, and Philadelphia Regions*, with Economic Development Administration and National Association of Development Organizations
  - *Improving HBCU Competitiveness in the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs*, with Small Business Administration
  - *HBCU Stakeholders Q&A on the CARES Act* with U.S. Department of Education
  - *CARES Act Economic Development Investment and HBCUs*, with Secretary Carson of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, Minority Business Development Agency, and National Telecommunications and Information Administration
  - *HBCUs and Federal Contracting, Featuring Administrator Jovita Carranza*, with Small Business Administration, U.S. Department of the Treasury, General Services Administration, and Department of Energy
  - *HBCU National Competition: Women's Business Centers*, with Small Business Administration
  - *HBCU Student and Faculty Town Halls: Leading and Learning During COVID-19; Best Practices for Distance Learning; and Telecommunication Resources During COVID-19*, with U.S. Department of Commerce



# Initiative Leadership 2017-20

## Leadership

**Johnathan M. Holifield, JD**

Executive Director

**Arthur P. McMahan, Ph.D**

Senior Associate Director

**Sedika Franklin, MBA**

Associate Director

**Tammi Fergusson, MS**

Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator

**Elyse Jones, MPA**

Management and Program Analyst

Student Engagement and Outreach

## Advisor

**Leonard L. Haynes, Ph.D.**

Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary

U.S. Department of Education

2017-20

## Federal Detailee

**Francine Alkisswani, Ph.D.**

National Telecommunications and

Information Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

2018—20

## Pathways Interns

**Nya Wheeler**

Pathways Intern 2019–20

Morgan State University

**Cameron Lewis**

Pathways Intern 2019-present

Postgraduate: University of Phoenix

**Mark R. Washington, Jr.**

Pathways Intern 2019-present

Oakwood University

## Student Volunteer Interns

**Alexandria Maloney** — 2017-19

Morgan State University

**Thea Celestine** — 2017-18

Morgan State University

**Keadrick Peters** — 2017-18

Howard University

**Keila Foster** — 2017-18

University of Maryland Eastern Shore

**Ashley Sexton** — 2017

Howard University

**Sadiyah Malcolm** — 2018

Howard University

Members of the HBCU Initiative Leadership  
Photo courtesy: Leslie Williams, U.S. Department of Education

