

President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Meeting of May 24, 2022

U.S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue SW, Barnard Auditorium

Washington, D.C. 20202

A complete transcript is available

Advisors present

Antoine Allen, Chairman
Glenda Baskin Glover, Vice Chair
Makola M. Abdullah
Javaune Adams- Gaston
Paige Blake
Thasunda Brown Duckett
Patrick Cokley
Willie A. Deese
Monica Goldson

Brett J. Hart
Beverly Wade Hogan
Lisa P. Jackson
Shevrin D. Jones
Walter Kimbrough
William F.L. Moses
Quinton T. Ross, Jr.
Ruth J. Simmons
Janeen Uzzell

Advisors absent

Taraji P. Henson
Christopher E. Paul

White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through Historically Black Colleges and Universities Staff

Dietra Trent, Executive Director
Sedika Franklin, Designated Federal Official
Elyse Jones, Outreach and Engagement Coordinator

U.S. Department of Education

Miguel Cardona, Secretary
James Kvaal, Under Secretary
Michelle Asha Cooper, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Higher Education Programs

Call to Order and Roll Call

Tony Allen, Chairman of the President's Board of Advisors, called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. Sedika Franklin, Designated Federal Official, called the roll and established a quorum.

Welcoming Remarks

The following individuals gave welcoming remarks:

- Tony Allen, Chairman
- Glenda Baskin Glover, Vice Chair
- James Kvaal, Under Secretary, Department of Education
- Dietra Trent, Executive Director, White House Initiative on HBCUs
- Miguel Cardona, Secretary, Department of Education

Review of the Charter

Sedika Franklin noted the authorization of the President's Board of Advisors (PBA) comes from Public Law 116-270, the HBCU PARTNERS Act, as well as by Executive Orders 14041 and 14048, both signed by President Joseph R. Biden in September of 2021. The PBA is governed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

The purpose of the PBA is to advise the President, through the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity Through HBCUs (the Initiative), on strengthening the educational capacity of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Ms. Franklin discussed the duties of the PBA and its obligation to provide an annual progress report to the President.

The PBA is required to meet at least every six months. Ms. Franklin asked for comments on the frequency and location of meetings. The members were in favor of meeting more than twice a year, and many noted the potential impact of meeting on the campus of an HBCU, with some offering to host on their own campus. There was a suggestion to meet virtually to maintain the level of engagement.

Member Goldson made a motion to meet four times a year, with three in-person and one virtual. Member Adams-Gaston seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Ms. Franklin noted that the charter has a duration of two years and will expire April 8, 2024, unless the President continues it through appropriate action. She also reviewed membership, compensation, subcommittees, and recordkeeping requirements.

Discussion of Strategic Priorities

Dr. Trent, Executive Director of the White House Initiative on HBCUs, provided a high-level discussion of the Initiative, beginning with the history of HBCUs themselves. The Initiative's primary mission is to eliminate barriers facing HBCUs to strengthen their ability to equitably participate in federal programs. A second goal of the Initiative is to ensure that HBCUs remain viable and have the resources to do so for generations to come.

The history of the Initiative goes back 42 years. There have been some changes over the years, but especially under the current administration, as can be seen in the name change, which reflects greater reliability on HBCUs to do what they do best. Executive Order 14041 makes it clear that it is the mission of the administration to support HBCUs and emphasizes the federal

government's accountability to HBCUs. Another change is that the executive director now has reporting lines to both the Secretary of Education and the White House.

Dr. Trent discussed the authorities under the PARTNERS Act, which requires all federal agencies to submit an annual plan to the Secretary and Congress on efforts to provide greater opportunity for HBCUs. There is also an interagency working group that meets on a monthly basis to coordinate efforts across the federal government. The group is organized into clusters, such as the campus safety and resilience cluster made up of the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security, which came together around the issue of the HBCU bomb threats.

Member Uzzell asked about the STEM initiative. Elyse Jones, Outreach and Engagement Coordinator for the Initiative, said about 11 interagency working group members are part of the STEM cluster. Member Duckett asked whether cyber and the issue of ransomware are incorporated into the campus safety and resilience cluster. Ms. Franklin noted that initial programming on campus safety will focus primarily on the bomb threats, but noted that there have been conversations about cybersecurity threats.

Highlighting the administration's commitment to HBCUs, Dr. Trent noted there has been a \$5.8 billion investment, \$3.7 billion from the American Rescue Plan and \$1.68 billion for capital finance debt relief. She also discussed the transformative impact of the President's proposed FY 2023 budget.

Member Jones asked about the possibility of federal support to address aging campus infrastructure. Michelle Asha Cooper, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Higher Education Programs, said one vehicle to address infrastructure needs is the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF). Guidance has just come out to allow institutions receiving special allocations to use the funds for infrastructure support, and a webinar will be held to help institutions understand the process. Member Cokley followed up regarding capital improvements to address accessibility, and Dr. Cooper responded that it is a recognized and important part of the conversations they've been having. Member Ross proposed direct funding to institutions in this area, given that some state legislatures will use federal aid as an offset to decrease state funding levels. Dr. Cooper agreed and stated they have been looking into the issue of historical funding support that states have not been providing.

Dr. Trent provided an update on some recent items that have been in the news, including the recent rash of bomb threats against HBCUs, student loan debt cancellation, and the October 21, 2022 deadline for the limited waiver for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program. Michelle Harrington noted how easy it is to submit a PSLF application under the waiver. The only information that needs to be provided is which public service organization the applicant worked for. Work is being done to make the process automatic for federal and state employees and those in the military.

Chairman Allen discussed the recent incident involving Delaware State's women's lacrosse team being pulled over and searched in Liberty County, Georgia. Other members of the PBA expressed their support for the Delaware State team and thanked the Chairman for his response and leadership.

Other topics covered included National HBCU Conference Week, September 20-23 at the Washington Hilton, and the HBCU Scholars Program.

Regarding the recent bomb threats, Member Abdullah noted that although the recent threats have gotten a lot of publicity, there have been numerous bomb threats at many institutions for the past four or five years.

Group Discussion

Chairman Allen led a discussion around the following proposed strategic priorities:

- Correct infrastructure inequities
- Federal research support
- Broadening financial support for students, particularly from low-resource areas
- Increasing targeted support for smaller HBCUs

Vice Chair Glover discussed the racial inequality around infrastructure construction and maintenance. Member Duckett asked about the challenges facing smaller HBCUs and the possibility that some might be forced to close in coming years. Chairman Allen noted the recent closing of Lincoln College, which he attributed to ransomware and the significant impact of COVID on already declining enrollment. Although there was been increased funding through CARES and the American Relief Fund, it was in some ways replacement revenue for what HBCUs had been experiencing since before the pandemic.

Regarding infrastructure, Member Deese suggested the technological side may pose the greater long-term threat and stressed the need to not fall further behind continuing technological advances. Members also discussed the need for a commitment to not let any other HBCUs close down. Member Deese raised the issue of compensation disparities compared to predominantly white institutions (PWIs) and the need to be able to attract and retain faculty. Vice Chair Glover talked about the historical lack of state matching funds and the important need to address the issue with the states.

Regarding the proposed strategic priority 4, Member Ross suggested including the two-year feeder institutions. Member Jackson talked about the role the private sector can play and pointed to the Propel Center and other work done by Apple. Member Abdullah talked about the need for human resource infrastructure under priority 1, and Member Cokley reiterated the need for disability access infrastructure.

Member Goldson suggested strategic priority 3 should include things like corporate internships and graduate placement, and strategic priority 4 should be expanded to ensure that both smaller and larger institutions do not fail and close. Member Moses said strategic priority 1 should have a focus on environmental sustainability and resilience, particularly in regard to the physical plant.

Vice Chair Glover discussed strategic priority 2 with regard to how HBCUs can receive more research dollars as well as the Carnegie research classifications. Research dollars can lead to greater sustainability. Eleven HBCUs are in the Carnegie R2 classification, and there needs to be work to understand how to help them move up to the R1 level. There was also discussion about strengthening the pipeline of students into graduate level research fields. Member Simmons discussed efforts that have been underway to get other research universities to recognize the benefits they have enjoyed as a result of the way that HBCUs have been held back. The AAU has been working with a group of HBCUs to try to help them move up to the next level of research, and they are working to help stand up an independent organization of R2 HBCUs.

Under strategic priority 1, members supported the inclusion of physical, technology, and energy efficient infrastructure. There was a motion to accept correcting physical, technological, and energy efficient infrastructure needs as strategic priority 1. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

For strategic priority 2, members supported the addition of looking at faculty capacity as it relates to competitiveness, private research support, and advancing institutions' research categorizations. A motion was made to accept strategic priority 2 with those additions. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

With regard to strategic priority 3, members supported adding paid internships and other industry placements and programs, including mentorships; career services more broadly; and collaboration on certifications. Member Ross made a motion to broaden strategic priority 3 to include financial and career pathways support. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Under strategic priority 4, members proposed changing it to increase targeted support for all HBCUs with a specific focus on smaller institutions, including private and two-year institutions. A motion was made and seconded to accept that change as strategic priority 4, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Public comments were provided by:

- David Sheppard, Thurgood Marshall College Fund
 - Expressed the hope that there would be opportunities to weigh in and share insights outside of public comment as the PBA forms its subcommittees and addresses its priorities
- Lezli Baskerville, National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
 - Proposed having a discussion about minority-serving institutions more broadly by inviting related groups dedicated to Hispanic and Asian-Pacific Islander institutions
 - Discussed potential ways to address the lack of mandatory state matching funds for HBCUs
- Lodriguez Murray, UNCF
 - Urged members to stay focused on a few key areas and welcomed the opportunity to make a more formal presentation at any future meetings

Concluding Remarks

Chairman Allen proposed the next meeting be held in Washington, D.C. during National HBCU Week, September 20-23, with subcommittees having met before then. Member Ross made the motion. It was seconded and approved unanimously.

Adjournment

Chairman Allen requested a motion to adjourn, which was made by Member Ross and seconded. All were in favor, and the President's Board of Advisors adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

Tony Allen, Chairman

Date