



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

**Meeting of January 27, 2023, held virtually**

*A complete transcript is available*

**Advisors present**

Antoine Allen, Chair	Beverly Wade Hogan
Glenda Baskin Glover, Vice Chair	Lisa P. Jackson
Javaune Adams-Gaston	Walter M. Kimbrough
Paige Blake	William F. L. Moses
Thasunda Brown Duckett	Quinton T. Ross Jr.
Patrick Cokley	Ruth J. Simmons
Willie A. Deese	Janeen Uzzell
Monica Goldson	
Brett J. Hart	

**Advisors absent**

Makola M. Abdullah  
Taraji P. Henson  
Shevrin D. Jones  
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  
Naaem Jenkins-Nixon, Deputy Director

**U.S. Department of Education**

Melanie Muenzer, Office of the Under Secretary

**Also present**

Wayne Frederick, Association for HBCU R2s  
Jolaina Jeff-Cartier, National Science Foundation  
Alicia Knoedler, National Science Foundation



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#### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

Glenda Baskin Glover, Vice Chair of the President's Board of Advisors, called the meeting to order at 11:31 a.m. Sedika Franklin, Designated Federal Official, called the roll and established a quorum.

#### **Vote to Approve the Minutes from September 2022 Meeting**

Vice Chair Glover entertained a motion for the approval of the minutes from the September 20, 2022 President's Board of Advisors on HBCUs. After having been moved by Dr. Simmons and seconded by Mr. Deese, the minutes were approved unanimously.

#### **Welcoming Remarks from the Vice Chair**

Vice Chair Glover said that the Board must continue to advance the agenda of the Biden administration related to HBCUs, and she thanked the Board members for their work.

#### **Updates from the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity through HBCUs**

Dr. Trent, Executive Director of the White House Initiative on HBCUs, provided an update on the Initiative's work. Since the Board's last meeting Naeem Jenkins-Nixon had joined the Initiative as its Deputy Director. The HBCU Conference held in September 2022 was a great success, with over 3,000 people attending virtually and in person. The IRS hired 300 people at the conference, and other career opportunities were available to students who attended. Senior Associate Director Dr. Arthur McMahon was leading a new strategic focus on community colleges, which included a number of opportunities through strategic partnerships with employers. The Initiative also held monthly master classes with 84 scholars from 56 HBCUs. This effort was led by Management and Program Analyst Elyse Jones and featured HBCU graduates who provided the scholars with professional development. The Initiative was also looking closely at strategic partnerships to identify opportunities that could benefit all HBCUs and outlast the current administration. One of these partners, an HBCU golf consortium, had met with the commissioners of the four major golf associations, who had expressed interest in working with the Initiative's universities to establish career pathways.

The Initiative was also currently focused on the HBCU Propelling Agency Relationships Towards a New Era of Results for Students (PARTNERS) Act, which was passed in 2021 and required



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federal agencies to develop plans to outline how they would increase opportunities for HBCUs. Those plans were submitted annually to the Initiative and sent to Senate and House committees. Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator Tammi Ferguson was leading the effort to review those plans, which included data on agencies' funding actions in 2022 and their goals for 2023. Dr. Trent noted that she looked for several themes when reviewing agency plans, including: strategies that create a culture of inclusion; outreach and engagement strategies; initiatives that enhance research and development/infrastructure; initiatives to enhance student opportunities and success; and initiatives that provide technical assistance. She added that this was a powerful opportunity for the Initiative to hone in on how the federal government interacted with HBCUs, and this was necessary in order to move the needle and make a difference for their students.

Dr. Simmons commented that in certain states there was an effort to eliminate diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs and asked for Dr. Trent's thoughts about the impact of these efforts on state universities. Dr. Trent said that the question was a timely one. She noted that she had recently received guidance from the Civil Rights Division stating that under the Civil Rights Act, universities were allowed to discuss DEI and appoint DEI officers. Dr. Ross asked what funding actions the federal government could take against states that were trying to exclude DEI conversations. Vice Chair Glover added that the same conversation was taking place among land grant institutions that were not receiving the state's match of federal dollars. Dr. Trent said that she would take this question back to the Civil Rights Division, but that funding from the federal government was threatened when Title IX was violated. Melanie Muenzer, Chief of Staff in the Office of the Under Secretary of Education, added that these questions were starting to arise more frequently. She said that her office could keep an open line of communication with the Board and provide an update on this topic at the next Board meeting. Vice Chair Glover noted that it was a conversation that had larger complexities; it was not limited to DEI but included other elements such as teaching Black history.

### **Remarks from the National Science Foundation**

Jolaina Jeff-Cartier, Senior Staff Associate, and Dr. Alicia Knoedler, head of the Office of Integrative Activities at the National Science Foundation (NSF), gave a presentation on NSF's Growing Research Access for Nationally Transformative Equity and Diversity (GRANTED) Program. Dr. Knoedler noted that GRANTED was well-aligned with several of the themes



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mentioned earlier by Dr. Trent, particularly enhancing research development and infrastructure and providing technical assistance. She added that they were also aligned with the suggestion to remove cost sharing requirements on funding opportunities, and NSF recently reduced its requirements for the Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) Program.

GRANTED was focused on mitigating barriers to competitiveness and enhancing research capacity at HBCUs, minority-serving institutions (MSIs) and emerging research institutions (ERIs). It also aimed to enhance research administrative support and infrastructure, support research administration leadership, and partner with national and regional professional societies. The program had released a funding opportunity, in the form of a Dear Colleague Letter, asking the research community to submit proposals for convenings; these included workshops, symposia, and conferences that brought communities together to discuss common issues and develop solutions to help with external funding. Other goals of the program included helping to scale effective approaches and models that lowered barriers to research success being able to reach broader audiences; and taking steps to intentionally address gaps within the research enterprise.

Ms. Jeff-Cartier added that they hoped to work with the Board and the Initiative to spread the word about GRANTED, as well as to participate in any relevant Board subcommittees. Dr. Trent said that she believed that this program was a game changer and an example of the kind of out-of-the-box thinking that was needed to enhance capacity. The Initiative was planning to hold bimonthly calls with their HBCU research teams and staff where agencies would be invited to talk about their programs and to increase awareness of opportunities. She added that the Air Force recently announced the establishment of an HBCU-led University Affiliated Research Center (UARC).

### **Updates from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary**

Ms. Muenzer presented highlights from the Department of Education's recent work. Since the launch of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program, over \$24 billion in loans had been forgiven for over 2 million public servants. The Biden-Harris administration continued to fight for student debt relief for millions of borrowers, and all student loan payments would remain paused until the Supreme Court resolved its debt relief case. In January 2023 the Department released data showing the number of people in each state who have applied or were



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Meeting of January 27, 2023, held virtually**

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automatically eligible for student debt relief. Of the more than 26 million people deemed eligible for relief, 16 million were already sent to servicers, meaning that relief could be immediately provided once the Supreme Court made its decision.

The Department recently proposed income-driven repayment (IDR) reforms which would allow \$0 monthly payments for anyone making under or about \$30,000 per year, cease charging any monthly interest not covered by a borrower's payment, and shorten the time to forgiveness for low-balance borrowers. The Department received \$50 million in the FY23 omnibus to fund new MSI, TCU and HBCU infrastructure grants to help transform institutions' research capabilities. Ms. Muenzer noted that the Department awarded over \$1 billion in grants to HBCUs in FY22, and they looked forward to continuing their work with the Board.

Vice Chair Glover said that she would like to know how many students have taken advantage of the debt relief program on a state-by-state level, and Ms. Muenzer confirmed that that data was available. Vice Chair Glover asked how the Supreme Court's process impacted the debt relief program. Ms. Muenzer said that the Department was not able to do any work on overall debt forgiveness until the Court heard the debt relief case, but they were continuing their work in other areas including borrower defense and PSLF.

**Remarks from the Chair**

Chair Tony Allen thanked Vice Chair Glover for leading the first part of the meeting and noted that the Board's first report to the President would be due in May 2023. As part of the report's preparation McKinsey & Company would be working with the Board's subcommittees to outline a framework for recommendations and substantive strategies for implementation.

**Subcommittee Reports**

*Infrastructure Subcommittee*

Subcommittee Members: Dr. Makola Abdullah, Chair; Mr. Willie Deese, Co-Chair; Dr. Monica Goldson; Ms. Paige Blake.

Mr. Deese presented the Infrastructure Subcommittee's report. The Subcommittee discussed the importance of a holistic view of infrastructure. While physical and technological



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infrastructure needs were important, the true HBCU infrastructure inequities consisted of more diverse challenges such as endowments, scholarships, and faculty compensation. In FY21, the Department of Education forgave \$1.6 billion of HBCU capital debt and provided \$500 million in direct funding to support institutional capacity building. Five out of 19 states with HBCUs had increased funding for infrastructure projects: Virginia, Texas, Florida, Tennessee, and Maryland. The estimate of deferred maintenance at HBCUs was \$13 billion, and in FY20 seven of the nineteen 1890 Institutions did not receive the full non-federal match. The Subcommittee noted that while \$13 billion for deferred maintenance infrastructure at HBCUs was a good step forward, it was not sufficient to provide an equitable educational environment. Equity had to be more than equal; given historical inequities, HBCUs needed investments per student that were larger than those of predominantly white institutions (PWIs) to ensure that they did not continue to fall behind. Finally, the Subcommittee recommended that the federal government should exercise influence on state funding through federal grants and on private sector funding through tax incentives.

Dr. Simmons commented that the Subcommittee's recommendations would go far if implemented, and that the capacity of HBCUs to raise private funds had not been given sufficient attention. Mr. Deese moved that the recommendations be accepted as a platform for the report under the Infrastructure Subcommittee. Dr. Ross seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

#### *Career Pathways Subcommittee*

Committee Members: Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston, Chair; Mr. Brett J. Hart, Co-Chair; Ms. Thasunda Brown Duckett.

Dr. Adams-Gaston gave the report for the Subcommittee, which met five times between August 2022 and January 2023. The Subcommittee focused on thinking holistically about students' experiences and the best resources to prepare them for work. Mentorships and preparation programs such as Braven and Brevity allowed students to gain experience that their peers may already have, and the Subcommittee wanted to make sure that all HBCUs received these opportunities. Paid internships were key to helping graduating students enter the workforce and get jobs to alleviate the student debt burden, and this was particularly important for many HBCUs located in rural areas. Existing models such as TMCF, UNCF, and HBCU in LA could



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provide guidance in this area. Financial distress was a major reason that students failed to finish school or were disadvantaged upon graduation, and COVID relief funds had contributed to higher graduation and retention rates. The Student Freedom Initiative was one potential model to explore in reducing debt burden, and programs such as Complete College America should be supported. The Subcommittee wanted to engage McKinsey and other consultants to gather more information about the breadth of these programs.

The Subcommittee made the following recommendations: look at ways to leverage federal government incentives to support corporations willing to partner with HBCUs; look at public-private connections or collaborations to provide paid internships and work preparation knowledge; explore legislative matters that can assist with work preparation, paid internships, financial distress and debt relief; and look for financial wellness models that can be employed at HBCUs or corporations that could be encouraged to embed financial wellness as part of their internships.

Chair Allen noted that Aimee Eubanks Davis, the founder and CEO of Braven, was developing a second semester practitioner credit-bearing program at MSIs and HBCUs which created ongoing relationships between students and practitioners. He recommended that the Subcommittee invite Ms. Eubanks Davis to collaborate, and Dr. Adams-Gaston agreed. Mr. Cokley suggested that the Subcommittee also look at higher end programs such as Fulbright and explore the ways that young people were learning about mentoring and employment preparation opportunities. Mr. Deese moved to accept the framework for the Subcommittee's report to be included in the report to the President. Having been seconded by Dr. Ross, the motion was approved unanimously.

*Research Subcommittee*

Subcommittee Members: Dr. Glenda Glover, Chair; Ms. Lisa P. Jackson, Co-Chair; Dr. Ruth Simmons; Mr. William Moses.

Vice Chair Glover noted the similarities between the Subcommittee's discussion and strategies and those undertaken by Dr. Frederick and the Association for HBCU R2s, and she turned the floor over to Dr. Frederick to discuss the reports of both the Subcommittee and the Association.





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### **The Association for HBCU R2s Briefing**

Dr. Wayne Frederick, Howard University President, briefed the Board on the activities of the Association for HBCU R2s. The Association was comprised of HBCUs that had been designated as R2 institutions in the Carnegie Classification. Their goal was to elevate the research at these HBCUs so that they ultimately become R1 institutions, which had greater research opportunities for faculty and students and more opportunities for innovative programs and funding. They had received assistance from the Association of American Universities (AAU), which had reached out to R2 HBCUs and offered opportunities to participate in research. AAU's president, Barbara Snyder, had also connected the Association to foundations that may be receptive to funding their efforts.

Dr. Simmons thanked Dr. Frederick for his work on this initiative. She noted that through this project the R1 institutions in the AAU had developed a broader understanding of their responsibility to assist R2s, and this has had positive consequences. Mr. Cokley noted that the issues around research were often tied to the perception of HBCUs and asked if there was more that could be done in this area. Dr. Frederick said that HBCUs needed to make sure that their output and production speaks to that issue, and projects like the UARC would help to change those perceptions. It was also important to find spaces to highlight the hardcore academics and productive research that occurs at HBCUs.

Mr. Moses asked if the R2 group would include new and independent medical schools. Dr. Frederick said that they were not currently involved, but the Association would be happy to bring them on board. The four historically Black medical schools do have an informal consortium where they collaborate and share resources. Chair Allen asked Dr. Frederick to summarize the updated Carnegie Classifications. Dr. Frederick said that one of the things that they want to do is come up with criteria that would reward schools who do work around diversity in doctoral student production, as well as changing the way that resources were calculated. He expressed his excitement about the changes and said that he thought they would open up the opportunity for more HBCUs to become R1 institutions.

Dr. Ross made a motion for the Board to put their support for the Association for HBCU R2s on the record and request necessary funding from the federal government as recommended by





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the Board. The motion was seconded by Ms. Blake and approved unanimously. Chair Allen noted that the Board would send a letter to the Association formally endorsing their work.

### **Subcommittee Reports (continued)**

#### *HBCU Preservation & Growth Subcommittee*

Subcommittee Members: Dr. Quinton T. Ross Jr., Chair; Senator Shevrin D. Jones, Co-Chair; Ms. Janeen Uzzell; Mr. Patrick Cokley; Dr. Walter Kimbrough; Dr. Beverly Wade Hogan.

Dr. Ross gave the Subcommittee's report. He noted that all of the Subcommittees' priorities were aligned towards the preservation and growth of HBCUs, and that his Subcommittee had taken the position that funding was required for all of those efforts. They discussed the issue of deferred maintenance on campuses and the lack of available facilities for students who want to stay on campus. In addition to grants, HBCUs needed direct funding to address preservation issues. The Subcommittee recommended that the existing HBCU Capital Financing Program be reviewed and assessed to determine if more fair and equitable policies and practices, with consideration for all HBCUs, were indicated. Within this program they recommended the inclusion of a funding vehicle that would allow HBCUs to subsume other HBCUs in order to preserve them. They also recommended that President Biden continue to push Congress to fulfill his plan to fund HBCUs and to have his cabinet officials assist this effort by publicly advocating for increased appropriations, and they encouraged HBCU advocacy organizations, leaders, faculty, staff, students, and alumni to advocate for much-needed resources.

Dr. Adams-Gaston made a motion to accept the Subcommittee's recommendations. The motion was seconded by Ms. Blake and was approved unanimously.

### **Group Discussion and Next Steps**

Ms. Franklin presented a timeline for submission of the Board's report to the President, which was due for submission on May 8, 2023. The Board would have an in-person meeting on April 5, at which time they should have a semi-final draft of the report to vote on. She noted that the Board needed to discuss how this semi-final draft would be compiled by April 5 and identify key drafters of the report. Chair Allen added that McKinsey would be providing pro bono consulting support, with Ryan Golden serving as principal. While Ms. Golden would communicate with



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Subcommittee chairs to ensure that their recommendations were supported by fact patterns, the Board would still need a formal drafter and was looking to formally contract that support.

#### **Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

#### **Concluding Remarks**

Dr. Kimbrough praised the work that Senator Shevrin Jones had done around the issue of AP African American Studies classes in Florida and noted the broader underlying issue of oppressive state legislatures. Dr. Ross added that at their last meeting the Board discussed ways that they might frame a statement about these issues in their report to the President. Vice Chair Glover thanked the Board members for their participation and engagement in the meeting. Chair Allen thanked the Board and White House Initiative staff for all their hard work. Ms. Franklin noted that the Board's next meeting would take place on April 5, 2023 in Norfolk, Virginia and would be co-hosted by Virginia State University and Norfolk State University.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by common consent at 2:10 p.m.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

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Tony Allen, Ph.D

Chair, President's Board of Advisors on HBCUs

These minutes will be formally considered by the Board at its next meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.