

**IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING ISSUES FACED BY NEWLY COLLEGE  
PRESIDENTS OF HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
(HBCUs)**

**DR. DORIS SPOONER HALL, PH.D./DMA/ED.D.**

**ALABAMA A&M UNIVERSITY  
NORMAL, ALABAMA**

# **Identifying and Addressing Issues Faced by Newly College Presidents of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)**

## **Abstract**

This paper was a research to identify the challenges encountered by newly college presidents of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The information gathering method utilized by presidents of Historically Black Colleges and Universities to identify challenges, and finally, to present the strategies the participants employed to address the identified challenges. The information garnered from the identifying, strategizing, and addressing of challenges will provide meaningful insight for future presidents, thus easing the difficult transition period the large number of new college presidents will be facing in the near future.

The findings from this project demonstrated that newly college presidents of Historically Black Colleges and Universities seek information in both formal and informal manners. They prioritize challenges utilizing data driven decision making and intuition based decision making. Many of the strategies are diverse in nature to address challenges. Moreover, a common theme among the diverse strategies was towards a collaborative problem solving approach. Each college president of the Historically Black College and University exhibited a high level of self-awareness relative to their leadership style.

## **Introduction**

Historically Black College and University (HBCU) presidents are faced with a cadre of complex and challenging decisions the instant they accept a presidential position (Miksa, 2009). New HBCU presidents do not have the time or luxury to gradually learn the fundamentals of a college presidency. Rather they have to immerse themselves into their position, provide leadership, and make decisions that immediately have a major impact upon the college. Presidents must be able to identify, prioritize, and strategize solutions to a variety of challenges, or administrators, faculty, and support staff will quickly lose confidence in their ability to lead and make decisions. The purpose of this paper is to identify the challenges new community

college presidents encounter, how these challenges are prioritized, and the strategies used to address them at the beginning of their presidency (Miksa, 2009).

In order for new college and university presidents to identify challenges they encounter, they must have a sound sense of the history of HBCUs. In addition, they must also have a thorough understanding of their role as the chief executive officer of the college or university. Included in this substantial presidential knowledge base is recognition of the political, cultural and organizational structure through which presidential power flows. This vast array of accumulated knowledge, theoretically, empowers new college and university presidents to deal effectively with all of the challenges they encounter. Since they are new to their presidential position, where do they develop this vast knowledge and understanding of the college or university presidency? However, a more basic and pertinent question revolves around how a new president gains the relevant information regarding their new institution. This research will provide valuable information and insights to answer this question thereby assisting new college and university presidents (American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 1986).

### **The Role of the College and University Presidents at an HBCU**

In 2001, the American Association of Colleges and Universities administered a leadership survey to college presidents. Christopher Shults (2001) provided an executive summary of the leadership survey. He stated, “Presidents believe that the skills they need in the future will remain constant but that there will be more emphasis on the ability to be flexible, to understand technology, and to seek business-and industry partnerships” (p. 1). Several HBCU presidents concur with this view and list the following nine characteristics: (a) learning from the past while embracing the future; (b) enriching the inward journey; (c) leading from the center to enhance values; (d) making connections to enhance vision; (e) looking broadly for talent;

(f) providing continual leadership opportunities through succession planning; (g) keeping faculty in the mix and involved; (h) forging business and industry connections and partnerships; and, (i) not forgetting students in preparing the future workforce (Shults, 2001).

In addition, an HBCU president also must have a firm understanding of the role they assume. This role, much like the college system itself, has gone through a great deal of transformation over the past one hundred years. At the beginning of the college movement, presidents were focused on growth. Their main task was to construct buildings and enroll an ever increasing number of students. The time has now passed when presidents can only focus on growth of the physical campus and the student body. Now presidents have to focus on their four primary roles of fundraising, building trust, vision, and relationship building. The fundraising role is to supplement the dwindling federal and state funding. The building trust role is to develop trusting relationships with internal campus constituents. The vision role is to provide direction for the college. The relationship building role provides a means to reach out to the community which the college serves in order to ensure it is providing the education residents want and require (Goldstein, 2006).

### **Retirement Issues Faced by New HBCU Presidents**

The growth explosion managed by presidents during the 20<sup>th</sup> century had many positive effects on the colleges and university systems. The growth explosion has also put a major strain on the leadership that moved the colleges and universities into its current leadership crisis. Christopher Shults (2001), researcher for the American Association of Colleges and Universities, concurs that people who helped opened the doors of college and universities as leaders and presidents of the era, helped transform this unique system of invention are now on the brink of retirement. This view is supported by an April, 2007 article in the *Chronicle of Higher*

*Education*, where Wheeler (2007) concludes that “nearly 45 percent of colleges and university presidents are expected to retire by 2010-2012” (p. A46).

These retirements at the presidential level are causing a leadership crisis in the colleges and university system. Retirements are not the only cause for the current leadership crisis within the presidential ranks of colleges and universities. Stress related to the pressure of the position has caused presidents to leave and future leaders to rethink their career. James W. Selman (1989) of Auburn University’s Department of Vocational and Adult Education states, “Stress is a natural outgrowth from essential responsibilities associated with leadership roles of college and university presidents” (Selman, 1989). Unfortunately, many presidents do not recognize the high level of stress associated with their positions, nor do they fully appreciate the potential damages related to stressors, and have not developed appropriate coping attitudes (Selman, 1989). James G. March (2003), professor emeritus at Sanford University, and Stephen S. Weiner, retired executive director of Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and former member of the Board of Governors of California College, provide another perspective of the stress faced by college administrators. They stated:

Our recommendation is that anyone who wants to be an administrator should leave his or her innocence behind. The job is not one that produces friends. Because much of the leadership of any institution is bound up in enforcing rules and denying requests, any administrator who wants a friend should buy a dog (p. 11).

Presidential retirements and job stress are factors enhancing the leadership crisis. The natural solution is to actively recruit new presidents. Unfortunately, this solution has been harder to implement than one would think. Finding qualified candidates to fill the open positions has become more difficult. In a November 21, 2005, article titled “Finding Leaders in All the New Places,” from the *Community College Week*, author Ann Farmer interviewed Barbara Viniar,

executive director of the Institute for Colleges and Universities Development, a State University of New York/Cornell University partnership. Viniar said, “Whereas 80 to 100 applicants used to respond to each advertisement for a college or university president, now only 40 to 50 applicants are applying” (p. 2). This is forcing Boards of Trustees to search in other places for college presidents. In Ann Farmer’s article, Viniar states, “search committees are now extending their reach to increase the application pool, among the most likely new target sectors is the military” (p. 2). The article went on to give an example of a person coming from the banking industry to become a college or university president.

The number of presidents leaving HBCUs is increasing and the applicant pool of new presidents is shrinking. Therefore, retaining new presidents is a key to maintaining quality leadership within the HBCU system. As they assume their first presidency, these new presidents often experience immediate job “over load” while attempting to understand the college or university strengths, weaknesses, problems, and organizational structure/culture. Many newly hired presidents do not have a chance to gather constructive information to make accurate decisions; therefore, they rely on individuals and personnel in the organization to give information, which is sometimes a pitfall to failure. At this point, many presidents desire to retire, but feel the pressure of replacements for such leadership positions. Lastly, many presidents are faced with seasoned faculty and staff retiring from positions.

### **Higher Education Has Become a Marketplace / Issues Faced by New HBCU Presidents**

Driven by factors such as changing demographics, the advent of technology, escalating costs of a college education for both institutions and students has added to the marketplace. In addition, shrinking governmental subsidies, massive influx of students seeking a college education in order to positively impact lifetime earning potential has added to the marketplace in

HBCU (Komivesk, Woodward, & Associates, 2003). Moreover, HBCUs are engaged in a competition for their share of the education market, competing for students not only in terms of academic programs, prestige, and reputation, but also on the quality of student service delivery and value of student experiences outside of the classroom (Hill, 2009). Newly elected college and university presidents are challenged with the above statements. To add to the challenges is to manage the increase or decrease enrollment funnel of students, such as: prospects, inquiries, applicants, accepts, confirmations, and those students that enroll officially (Cronin & Horton, 2009).

Tinto (2000) stated,

With apologies to Will Rogers, I have never met a college or university that didn't like highly engaged, highly prepared, higher-ability students. In addition, to raising SAT or ACT averages, graduation rates, graduate school placement rates, and scores on graduate and licensure examinations, colleges and universities recognize that these students turn into successful, influential alumni and lifelong friends of the institution. Faculty members say students who feast on learning and come well-prepared to class are just more fun to teach. How do you attract more of these students (and their hyper involved parents)? The answer is to start early (p. 11).

Higher education is a marketplace, and in a competitive environment in higher education, HBCUs have made recruitment and retention of students a priority. Many campuses have combined previously independent operating units related to recruitment and retention into formal units called enrollment management (Komives, Woodard, & Associates, 2003). The goal is to insure that critical areas for recruitment and retention, such as admissions, records, financial aid, student research, and marketing, are working together to create a comprehensive plan to enroll more students, to shape the composition of the class, to reduce attrition rates, and to develop appropriate publications and services for interacting with the college or university. Enrollment management can report to student affairs, but more often than not, the reporting line will be to the provost, executive vice president, or the president. It is an issue at various times, to direct the

enrollment management at the college or university to become a member of the professional organizations of enrollment management which include the National Association for College Admission Counseling and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers.

Fundamental to any successful enrollment management program is developing and implementing an annual enrollment management plan. The purpose of enrollment planning is to help the institution gain more control over its enrollment future by developing the capacity to achieve new and returning student goals through improved marketing, recruitment, and retention efforts (Bensimon, Gade, & Kauffman, 2007).

The public wants the cost benefit analyses that reveal the relative value of the institution. Dissatisfaction with higher education goes beyond the general public and is often more implicit and explicit. Student retention to graduation, except for transfers made necessary by programmatic needs, is the single best indication of student satisfaction for those whose goal is a degree. Given that definition, anything less than 100% retention indicates an array of problems. Tinto (2000), the most frequently cited scholar on student retention, contends that engagement (or academic and social integration as he has called it), is positively related to persistence. He notes that many students discontinue their undergraduate education because they feel disconnected from peers, professors, and administrators at the institution (Tinto, 2000). In addition, no institution can satisfy everyone, nor should it try (Komives, Woodward, & Associates, 2003).

### **The Changing Faculty and Staff / Issues Faced by New HBCU Presidents**

Relationships between college and university faculties and their presidents are often contentious, and recent studies suggest that many HBCU campuses may be characterized by an



uneasy peace between professors and chief administrative officers. For example, only 57% of a national sample of full-time faculty was reported as satisfied with the quality of their chief administrative officers and only 54% with the relationship between HBCU administration and faculty on their campuses (Russell, 2007). Similarly, 60% of the faculty respondents in a 2003 national survey identified their campuses as autocratic, and 64% believed the administration to be only “fair” or “poor” (Thorn, 2002). A comparable study conducted five years later indicated that only 49% of the faculty and staff respondents believed that their institutions were being effectively managed (Mooney, 2006). The tendency of faculty and staff to criticize presidents has led some observers to comment that “faculty and staff members almost universally discount the performance of their current presidents at a rate that must be 25 to 75 percent below that of other observers” (Zeiss, 2003).

On the contrary, there have been presidents at HBCUs that have rated highly with faculty and staff from the public and private sectors. These presidents have led institutions differently and have taken different actions. Their predecessors did not have high faculty support. Faculty felt that progress had stalled under the predecessor, morale was low, and they had great expectations about what the new president would be able to do. Faculty expressed a hope for strong leadership and deferred criticism during the early part of the new president’s term. The succession process was accompanied by faculty perceptions of increased campus well-being (Mooney, 2006).

Although the approaches of these new HBCU presidents varied from highly consultative to somewhat directive, they were all seen as seeking input from the faculty and supporting faculty and supporting faculty participation in governance. These presidents spent a great deal of time and energy in learning about their new institution and what the faculty expected of them.

This sometimes took the form of campus visits prior to their formal appointment, meeting with every faculty department, interviewing every faculty member, or identifying the faculty leadership and consulting with them (Zeiss, 2003).

These presidents were all seen as action-oriented, although their actions took different forms. In some cases, they took dramatic steps to restructure the institution, to change senior administrators, to develop strategic plans, or to take charge of marketing and community relations activities. In others, they were seen as devoting extraordinary time and energy to specific problems seen by the faculty as important, such as fund raising or recruitment. These presidents were seen as supporting and having confidence in their faculties. In return, faculty saw the president as committed to the institution and to faculty well-being (Zeiss, 2003). HBCU presidents are faced with many faculty and staff issues, and one way to resolve some of the issues will be through faculty senates and staff senates working collaboratively.

### **The Changing Student Body Is an Issue Faced by New HBCU Presidents**

The education market is becoming consumer driven, and consumers are growing in numbers (O'Donoghue, n.d.). The introduction of corporate profit universities as virtual universities, and the traditional brick building universities have started to become concerned about prospects. The embracing of multimedia technology as a communication tool will flourish more than ever in the future. The demographics are expected to significantly change. In addition, the university future is outside the traditional classroom and traditional campus (Drucker, 1998). There has been an increase in global competition between educational establishments. Also, there have been changes in student demand and characteristics. Higher education will be facing three challenges which will be bestowed on HBCU presidents such as: admissions and affordable

prices; flexible delivery, so that students can learn when, where, and whatever rate becomes suitable; and, content and outcomes must be provided for degrees (O'Donoghue, n.d.).

The greatest factors influencing the changing student body in higher education for the future that new presidents of HBCUs must identify and address are social, technological, economic, educational, political, lifestyle, and environmental factors (Goldstein, 2006). Within the next seven to twenty years, the demographics of the population of students will change. The number of foreign born students in the United States has tripled to more than 33 million people or 12 percent of the population. Between now and 2020, the non-Hispanic school age population will shrink causing decline in numbers in higher education admissions. Also, an increasing older student body that pursues work and school simultaneously will increase. The number of college age persons has grown rapidly between 2000 and 2010, but will grow slower afterwards (Center for Student Success, 2005).

### *Social Changing of the Students*

Changing in demographics and student consumer behaviours have significantly made many differences for many administrative services of an institution. Several participants believe that institutions that react well to the changes will have comparative advantage. HBCU presidents will have to become more attuned to student needs and priorities (Scarafiotti & Cleveland-Innes, 2009). The Council of Higher Education (2009) has recognized the most important issue for student affairs is the increased importance of attention to special needs populations. Also, higher education must prepare to manage diversity and better prepare students. The Council advocates that higher education administrations and faculty should help students understand how the world affects them, and how students understand and consider international diversity of the country (The Council of Higher Education Management

Association, 2009). In addition, social demographics for the future will show where large increases in Latinos students will flux the campuses, there will be a need for support systems to enhance learning, and there will be a need for continuous remediation courses for the future students (Goldstein, 2006).

In the next five to twenty years, technology will make rapid advances (Goldstein, 2006). Library holdings will be online even more, classroom courses will be less significant to students, the changing student will have more lap-tops, demanding outlet lockers for recharging, tables instead of desks in classrooms, and fewer computers for labs (Goldstein, 2006). The student body will be forced to protect stored data and other systems in the future. Students will need back up capacity, and disaster recovery protocols. Moreover, they will cause campus communication to change, relying more on text messages, emails, and other electronic media. Also, the changing student body will force privacy and security issues that are changing with the shift to paperless processes (Hudzik, 2009). Presidents will be faced with learning delivery system changes such as missions that support technology. Students will expect 24/7 support and real time tutoring, greater diversity of the student body will include diverse learning styles and year round schooling, which will be mandatory in the future. Also, more workers will want to get degrees online as part-time students now and in the future (Florida State University, 2007).

#### *Student Readiness Changing of the Students*

HBCU presidents will be faced with issues of the changing student body in terms of student readiness for higher education. The number of 18-24 years old students without a high school diploma is approaching one million (The RP Group, 2005). There is a lack of college readiness in Mathematics and English courses, and there will be more drop-outs because of

ineligibility to enter four year institutions. The changing student body will have to be involved in early outreach to parents and students (Scarafiotti & Cleveland-Innes, 2009).

#### *Educationally Changing of the Students*

Educationally, presidents will be faced with accountability and assessment. The focus will be more on performance and quality concerning students. Education must prepare students for the global economy, to research and do scholarly activities for a knowledge driven economy and society. Moreover, new learning must be provided for students in new ways (Florida State University, 2007).

#### *Economical Changing of the Students*

Economically, HBCU presidents will be facing their worst nightmare, pressures, decision making skills, and stressful times. The changing student body will force continuing pressure from government, many budget constraints affecting the mission of various colleges and universities. The federal grant monies will diminish, and universities will be challenged to do more for more students without an increase in resources (Center for Student Success, 2005). In addition, states will increase tuition and fees for students in the future (Goldstein, 2006). The future is indefinite, leaders at universities will be in turbulent decisions, and forecasting will be highly difficult (Florida State University, 2007). President Obama has increased Pell Grant funding to a maximum of \$5,500 per student with stimulus and budget funds. However with this increase, there are many HBCUs expect enrollment rates to keep shrinking as families and students struggle in the economic downturn (Goldstein, 2006). Every college and university is asking the question: What will the school enrollment be next year? Not because of a change in institution, but because families are really being hit by the economy everyday. For instance, Spelman College President Beverly Tatum said, “Many students want to come, but will they be

able to afford to come?” Since 2004, \$238 million in federal funding has been earmarked annually for HBCUs. In the last two years, those institutions benefited from an extra \$85 million each year under the College Cost Reduction and Access Act. When that program ends in May 2010, the institutions may feel the squeeze even more (Goldstein, 2006).

According to Clark Atlanta University President Carlton Brown said, “We are under resourced, and we try to keep our costs as low as possible. That means that our margins are always very tight” (2011). In the Atlanta area alone, Morehouse College laid off 25 adjunct professors, Spelman College is eliminating 35 jobs next year, and Clark Atlanta University’s budget will decrease with 70 professors and 30 staff members eliminated. Many HBCUs have been furloughing faculty and staff, eliminating faculty/staff, and eliminating positions to cut cost and expenses, which are all issues and challenges faced by presidents of these colleges and universities (Goldstein, 2006).

In addition, to the frustrations of the economy, appropriations from the State level, and other donations, and contribution existing at the lowest level than ever before, presidents must think and accept whether higher education will be the next bubble to burst. According to Joseph Cronin and Howard Horton (2009), the public has become all too aware of the term “bubble” to describe an asset that is irrationally and artificially overvalued and cannot be sustained. The dot-com bubble burst by 2000 was one, and more recently the overextended housing market collapsed, helping to trigger a credit meltdown. The stock market has declined more than 30% in the past year, as companies once considered flagship investments have withered in value (Cronin & Horton, 2009). Is it possible that higher education might be the next bubble to burst? Some early warnings suggest that it could be because of tuitions, fees, and room and board at dozens of colleges now reaching \$50,000 a year, the ability to sustain private higher education for all but

the very well-heeled is questionable. According to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, over the past 25 years, average college tuition and fees have been on the rise by 440%, more than four times the rate of inflation and almost twice the rate of medical care. Presidents of HBCUs warned that low-income students will find college unaffordable (Cronin & Horton, 2009). Consumers who have questioned whether it is worth spending \$1,000 a square foot for a home are now asking whether it is worth spending \$1,000 a week to send their kids to college. There is a growing sense among the public that higher education might be overpriced and under-delivering (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2009).

#### *Lifestyle Changing of the Students*

The lifestyle of the student will change because of the economy, but there are certain styles of their life expectations that students believe a university should be able to provide which consist of safety, demand for computer based supports and activities associated with technology assisted education, more campus experiences with food courts, gyms, residence halls that look like apartments, and places like Starbucks (Center for Student Success, 2005).

#### *The Environmental Changing of the Students*

The environment of the changing student has impacted the HBCU presidents facing challenges of no control. Global climate change will have a huge impact on the life of students. Energy sources and alternative, reduction in carbon emissions and greening initiatives will have impacts on new HBCU presidents (Florida State University, 2007).

### **Identifying and Addressing Issues Faced by New Presidents of HBCUs Involving Student Characteristics**

Without students, institutions of higher education do not exist. HCBU presidents must be aware of student and how they are serviced, because this can become an issue. How can you service students if you do not understand who they are and what they represent? According to

Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea (2008), “Student engagement is simply characterized as participation in educationally effective practices, both inside and outside the classroom, which leads to a range of measureable outcomes.” Today students are the most diverse group ever seen in higher education. At least 44% are minorities, and 57% are women (Spanier, 2009). Female degrees outnumber men in all levels except the doctorate (Rhodes, 2006), and 30% of the families are headed by a single parent (Spanier, 2009).

Benchmarks are vastly different from prior generations such as, terrorist attacks, Virginia Tech shooting, Hurricane Katrina, and Fort Hood mass shootings. These students are considered the “plug-and-play generation” that requires 24/7 accessibility to technology, 95% have cell phones, and 85% use social networking sites (Spanier, 2009). Presidents must be aware that these students are more career oriented, more financially challenged, more come from the middle class families than ever before (Roach, 2008), more students study at home or take degrees abroad, and more working adult students that are returning to school (Hudzik, 2009). These students are more sexually active than prior generations, many are taking psychoactive medications, and more graduate with a high financial aid debt with half graduating on time (Rhodes, 2006). Presidents must face the issue of providing mental-health services on campus, and be more health conscious (Hoover & Wasley, 2007).

HBCUs new presidents must be aware of the expansion in the number of high school graduates that the United States has been experiencing since the 1990s peaked in 2007-08 which will become more stable in most of the United States with some exceptions. States such as, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, Texas, and Utah will have explosive growth of over 20%. In addition, Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, and North Carolina will have rapid growth of 10 to 20% (Wiche, 2008). By 2025 global demand for seats is projected to double reaching annual



enrollments of 200 million (Hudzik, 2009). The changing composition where most states are experiencing a shift in the racial/ethnic composition with rapid increases in the Hispanic, Asian/Pacific, Black non-Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska native graduates will be a change in student body for most colleges and universities. Presidents must identify the rapid change and address these issues to accommodate students for success through various vice presidents and related offices. In addition, White non-Hispanic graduates will decline by 11%, and schools and post-secondary institutions must examine the changing demographics in order to adopt policy solutions that will fit its needs and conditions (Wiche, 2008). More than 500,000 international students were enrolled in U.S. institutions in 2004 which is one-fourth of the number of international students worldwide. Moreover, 206,000 American students studied abroad in 2004-2005 (Rhodes, 2006).

### **Challenges Ahead for HBCU Presidents**

The presidents of HBCUs will be challenged with finding an administration that is productive enough and dedicated to staying abreast of changing student characteristics. In addition, an administration that is willing to promote teaching methods and strategies for problem-solving, teamwork, and collaboration. Almost 50% of students are academically under-prepared and lack basic skills in reading, writing, or/and math. Other challenges will be to have the funds for professional development to attend conferences, workshops, and conventions to stay aware of the new skills that are required in a changing global world. Also, to cultivate teachers and students who value diverse ideas, beliefs, world views, promote inclusive student learning, integrate technology into teaching and learning (Sorcinelli, 2007). Remaining competitive in a global, knowledge based economy, and meeting the learning needs of a diverse student body will be challenges as well (Sorcinelli, 2007). Students will set the educational

agenda, and 90% of the fastest growing jobs require a postsecondary education in which two thirds of the high growth, high wage jobs created in the next decade will require a college degree, while only one-third of Americans will have a college degree (Rhodes, 2008).

In addition, there will be legal issues dealing with individual privacy versus public accountability, technology, intellectual property protections, security, computer laws, terrorism, employment laws dealing with age, sex, disability, race, and pensions (Commentary, 2004). There will be challenges dealing with economic pressures, academic freedom, aging work force, and greater transparency (Commentary, 2004). HBCUs face many challenges ahead and its ability in preserving and enhancing the educational quality of higher education for a rapidly changing student body, faculty, and staff which will determine if these colleges and universities can remain competitive in a global world, and presidents of these HBCUs will have to identify, address, and face the issues to maintain stability, productivity, and remain viable.

### **Decision Making/Faced By HBCU Presidents**

Throughout each day, colleges and university presidents make numerous large and small decisions, facilitate organizational actions, and formulate institutional direction. Because the concept of decision making is so elemental to the president's position, it serves as a predominate building block of the conceptual framework for the study. However, new presidents have little time to understand many of the variables, including the culture of a college, in order to make sound decisions at the beginning of their presidency.

Poor decisions at the beginning of one's presidency could have a long lasting effect. This research provides those assuming their presidency with insights from others who have recently gone through this transition process.

### *Data-Driven Decision-Making*

The concept of data driven decision making (DDDM) was utilized by educational leaders during the 1800s. Noted education writer Denis P. Doyle (2003) give Abraham Lincoln credit for starting the DDDM model “President Lincoln began the modern practice of collecting education data at the national level 150 years ago” (p. 3). Jeffrey C. Wayman (2005), assistant professor in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Texas, Austin, states, “The use of data to inform school practice may seem new...but this concept has received varied attention in school research literature for more than 30 years” (p. 296).

Noted college and university improvement consultant Mike Schmoker (2009) argues convincingly for the use of data driven decision making,

You cannot fight what you cannot see...Data makes the invisible visible, revealing strengths and weaknesses that are easily concealed...[Data] will never be totally accurate or reliable, but in the hands of conscientious professionals, they promote successful, goal oriented effort. We cannot afford to indulge in a sophomore scepticism that absolves us of the responsibility to look at and act on information that tells us how well or not we are doing (p. 37).

The applicability of DDDM within the paradigm of decision making for the HBCU president is undeniable. A driving force behind the applicability as well as the need for useful pertinent information is the increased level of accountability facing colleges. Frankie Santos Laanan (2004), faculty member in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Iowa State University, states, “In the early 1980s, the concern for measuring educational effectiveness surfaced as a major new focus for all higher education including colleges and universities” (Laanan, 2004, p. 58).

The basic concepts of collecting data, assessing the data, developing a plan for improvement based on the data, and evaluating the plan to determine its effectiveness are consistent themes throughout the paper on DDDM. Data driven decision making relative to

higher education, particularly HBCUs reveals two distinct paradigms: one is a focus on student learning and/or achievement; and the other a larger scope used for decisions relevant to the institution as a whole. Dennis P. Doyle, a nationally recognized education writer and consultant, articulates the first paradigm. He is the co-author of *Winning the Brain Race and Reinventing Education*. Doyle (2003) states, DDDM is,

the process of collecting student data—academic performance, attendance, demographics, etc.—in such a way that administrators, teachers, and parents can accurately assess student learning. They can then make decisions based on the data to improve administrative and instructional systems to continually promote student achievement (p. 1).

Doyle's (2003) definition focuses solely on student achievement. A new college president's focus cannot be so narrow in scope; rather they need data on a variety of sources from the college to make a wide-range of decisions. HBCU presidents have lost in decision making many times because of control, as it is very important to control cash, take control of capital expenditures, control of costs, control of others who are making decisions and why, and be aware and be attentive of all control systems.

### **Conclusion**

Historically Black College and University Presidents will be as good as the people they hire for positions, according to Ray Kroc, founder of the McDonald's restaurant chain. As a rule, it is usually the leader who selects the members of a team. This is an important responsibility that should be performed carefully, thoughtfully, and systematically. The leader must be able to match the skills of potential team members with the job to which the team is assigned. The people whom the leader is considering for selection should be "team players." Team players in the workplace function together and build on each other's strengths and achievements. They focus on a common goal. In organizations that utilize work teams, individuals don't succeed (or fail), teams do. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century this has been the most difficult task and challenge for HBCUs

presidents to identify and face in position. Many presidents have become destroyed because of weak chains. Fulfilling the role of a new college and university president can be daunting without insight into the position. The knowledge gleaned from this paper will provide insight for those whom are assuming presidency for the future, identifying and addressing challenges faced by new presidents of HBCUs.

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