

Professional Education at Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Past Trends and Outcomes

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Professional Education at Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Past Trends and Outcomes edited by [Boykin et al. \(2017\)](#). This monograph addresses an area commonly neglected from the literature surrounding the contributions of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the United States and the training and development of Black professionals through their professional programs. This text highlights the connections between the development and status of professional education programs and future research and practice. The authors provide a thorough analysis of information surrounding the social supports, identity development and doctoral student socialization patterns present within professional education programs at HBCUs, while emphasizing issues of race, oppression and marginalization.

The first chapter within this monograph offers a contextual foundation for the volume by incorporating trend analysis of the current body of research surrounding racial and ethnic minority students in doctoral programs. The authors discuss the history of HBCUs in the United States, asserting the need for increased research surrounding doctoral programs at HBCUs that do not serve the purpose of pitting these programs against those of predominantly white institutions (PWIs). More research is needed that highlights the factors that contribute to the capacity for HBCUs to make significant societal contributions through the continued acknowledgement of the relevance of HBCU institutions.

Chapter 2, “Historically Black Colleges’ and Universities’ Role in Preparing Professional Students for the Global Workforce,” examines links between HBCUs, workforce diversity and twenty-first century academic institutions. The authors highlight the importance for HBCUs to demonstrate the ways that they contribute to the higher education landscape from a student services perspective, a scholarly perspective and a policy perspective. This chapter concludes by highlighting the role played by HBCUs in developing future professional programs and equipping the nation with ways of recruiting and training talented graduate students from diverse backgrounds.

Chapter 3, “Securing the Future: Creating ‘Social Engineers’ for Societal Change at Historically Black College and University Law Schools,” provides a historical context of the development of Black law schools at HBCUs as a result of the denial of Black applicants to



law schools at PWIs. Despite being recognized for educating the majority of Black lawyers, and their longstanding commitment to social justice and racial uplift, the relevance of HBCUs are continuously questioned by some people. The authors of this chapter highlight the ways that HBCU law schools produce Black lawyers who are equipped and prepared to advance the Black community through continued pursuit of civil rights.

In Chapter 4, “Factors for Effective Recruitment, Development, Mentorship and Retention of Education Doctoral Students,” the authors contextualize the ways in which HBCUs are positioned to address the disparities in representation of people of color in the teaching profession by facilitating the recruitment, development and mentorship of education doctoral students. Through the social, financial and academic support available to Black students who attend education graduate programs at HBCUs, increased opportunities for these students to overcome oppressive barriers, including marginalization, neglect, sexism and racism, are made available that are often not provided at PWIs.

Chapter 5, “Historically Black Medical Schools: Addressing the Minority Health Professional Pipeline and the Public Mission of Care for Vulnerable Populations,” discusses the role of Historically Black Medical Schools (HBMS) within the context of Historically Black Health Professional Schools in providing quality health care to minority communities both in the United States and abroad while training Black medical professionals. The authors highlight several barriers that impact the ability for HBCUs to successfully train health professional faculty. Some of these barriers include: heavy teaching or administrative responsibilities, limited faculty development programs, limited administrative support, few experienced researchers and limited resources to support implementation of training program recommendations. By equipping HBCUs with leaders who possess the specific skills, perspectives and resources needed to fulfill the missions of these institutions, HBCUs can be positioned to maintain quality healthcare and teaching programs, establish effective partnerships with research institutions that contribute to the mission of HBCUs and develop a culture of excellence and responsibility.

In Chapter 6, “Staying in Focus: Research Self-Efficacy and Mentoring Among HBCU Professional Doctorates,” the authors use findings from a study highlighting the perspectives of professional doctoral students on the impact of mentorship on research training at HBCUs. The study demonstrates how, although research training was not a primary focus in practitioner-based programs, exposure to research opportunities was available and participants consistently identified confidence in their ability to engage in research, pursue research opportunities and use the knowledge gained in their future work.

In Chapter 7, “Social Work Education and Cultural Competence: The Role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities,” the authors highlight contributions HBCUs have made to the field of social work. HBCUs provide curriculum and coursework that reflect the challenges impacting Black communities in the United States and equip students with the skills and knowledge to ameliorate these unique challenges present in different communities of color. The authors articulate how programs at HBCUs can be used as a blueprint for social work programs at traditionally white institutions in the United States and abroad to prepare social workers, who speak to the mission and core values of the field.

Chapter 8, “Mentoring Experiences of Graduate Students in HBCU Professional Programs,” makes a significant contribution to an understudied body of research by exploring socialization and mentoring experiences of graduate students who attend HBCUs and are enrolled in practitioner-based terminal degree programs. The findings from this phenomenological qualitative study establish the following key components of mentoring: mentoring reflects a relationship between individuals, is a learning partnership and is a

process defined by the types of support the mentor provides, including emotional, psychosocial, instrumental and career-related aspects. The study also highlights the ways that HBCU faculty fulfill the socialization and mentoring needs of HBCU graduate students, while also exceeding the expectations of their mentoring role through their demonstrated investment in the students. This chapter explores how the components of mentoring relationships between faculty and graduate students at HBCUs can be used to strengthen personal and professional mentoring experiences of graduate students throughout the academy.

Chapter 9, "Beyond Respectable: Why Earn an Advanced Degree from an Historically Black College and University," contributes to the body of knowledge regarding the graduate and professional student experience for Black students at HBCUs by providing critical information collected from a study conducted with ten graduates of professional programs at HBCUs. Throughout the chapter, the authors indicate the challenges and opportunities related to student decisions to apply to and attend an HBCU, describe misperceptions and challenges associated with HBCU advanced degree programs, assess HBCU quality and examine experiences with HBCU faculty. By highlighting the voices of recipients of advanced degrees from HBCUs specifically, the authors effectively inform academia about the significance of these institutions and delve into both the strengths and challenges associated with graduate study at HBCUs.

Chapter 10, "In Excess of Legitimate Need: Title III and the Development of Graduate and Online Degree Programs at Morgan State University," contributes a noteworthy perspective to the knowledge about the development of graduate programs at HBCUs by highlighting how in the absence of adequate state funding, Morgan State University successfully increased their enrollment and established graduate and online programs. In this case study, the authors describe how a coalition of Morgan and other HBCU alumni collaborated to file a suit against the Maryland Higher Education Commission. The lawsuit required that they honor the commitments outlined in their 2000 Partnership Agreement between the state and the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights to avoid duplication of programs and to provide funding to enhance Maryland's HBCUs. Through a five-year Title III grant, Morgan developed its online degree programs and enrollment from non-existent to consisting of ten online programs and 3,000 enrolled students. The authors indicate the importance of highlighting narratives related to the development of programs at HBCUs, such as Morgan, and their contribution to American higher education.

The final chapter of the text concludes this highly impactful monograph by providing a recap of the salient themes throughout the text related to the graduate and professional programs at HBCUs as well as the experiences of Black graduate and professional students at HBCU and HBCU advocacy. Specific contributions and societal advancements made in the fields of law, medicine, education and social work made by HBCUs are also discussed. The authors highlight the critical role played by HBCUs of training Black professionals and making professional degree attainment available to Black students. Throughout this chapter, the necessity for future research to focus on institutional and programmatic efforts at HBCUs is discussed. Moreover, the authors call for a deeper examination of the impact of professional education at HBCUs and action within strategic planning and policy toward developing student bodies that accurately reflect the cultural landscape and have the resources to accommodate those students.

By providing a comprehensive synthesis of the research trends of the past few decades and offering insights into future areas of investigation, the work of Boykin, Hilton and Palmer serve as one of few sources that contribute to the developing literature on

professional education at HBCUs. Through the use of relevant and interesting case studies and using a wide array of data sources, readers are provided with the tools to critically analyze and reflect upon the contribution of professional education at HBCUs in higher education and society. The book may benefit from adding more comprehensive and quantitative studies to illustrate a wider array of viewpoints on the contribution of HBCUs. Despite this suggestion, this monograph proves to be a must-read and valuable resource for practitioners, researchers and professionals throughout American higher education.

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Reference

Boykin, T.F., Hilton, A.A. and Palmer, R.T. (Eds) (2017), *Professional Education at Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Past Trends and Future Outcomes*, Routledge.