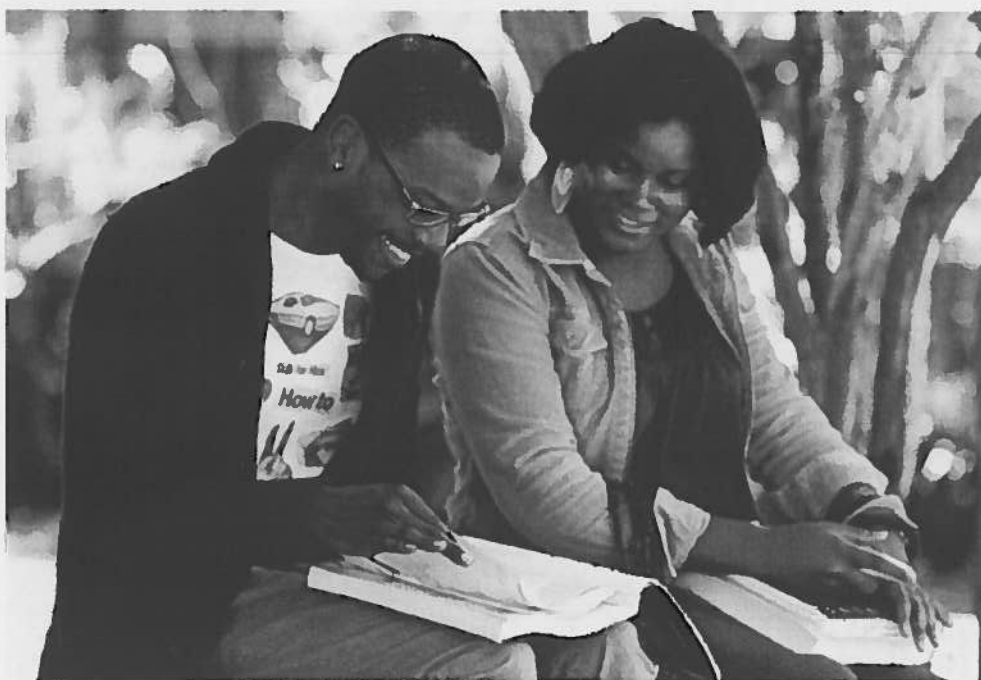


- Stanton-Salazar, R. D. 2011. "A Social Capital Framework for the Study of Institutional and Their Role in the Empowerment of Low-Status Students and Youth." *Youth & Society*, 11(43), 1066–1109.
- U.S. Department of Education. 2014. *Definition of Hispanic-Serving Institutions*. Accessed from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/ldueshsi/definition.html>.
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. 2009. *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS) [Computer File]*. Washington, DC: Author.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

One of the important milestones in the history of higher education in the United States was the creation of minority-serving institutions (MSIs) (Brown 2001). These schools consist of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), and tribal colleges and universities (TCUs). Brown, Donahoo, and Bertrando (2001) noted that the creation of these institutions,



Historically black colleges and universities, which currently number more than 100, while not serving as many students as they did in the 1960s, still send large numbers of students to graduate school and into careers such as teaching, law, medicine, and engineering. (Mike Maple/ZUMA Press/Corbis)

specifically HBCUs, was important in the history of the United States because it represented recognition of the country's commitment to providing educational opportunities for the underrepresented population. This has not always been the case and, in fact, was contrary to the early years of higher education in America. This entry will highlight the importance and relevance of HBCUs.

Prior to the Civil War, white slaveholders resisted efforts by blacks to educate themselves (Swygert 2004). Even in the North, where slavery was almost nonexistent, white inaction toward the education of blacks had much the same outcome (Freeman 2005). As a result, the first of many HBCUs was born in the years before the Civil War. Cheyney State was founded in 1837, followed by Lincoln University of Pennsylvania and Wilberforce University in Ohio, specifically to provide for the educational needs of blacks (Brown 2001; Fleming 1976; Williams and Ashley 2004). The number of such institutions expanded substantially after the Civil War, with more than 200 being founded in the South in the five years immediately following 1865 (Brown 2001). The Freedmen's Bureau, established in 1865 by the federal government to improve the plight of the formerly enslaved, refugees, and poor whites, was involved in the creation of many of these institutions (Fleming, Gill, and Swinton 1978). Private black churches, Northern missionaries, and private philanthropic organizations as well as individuals also played major roles in the birth of HBCUs (Brown, Donahoo, and Bertrando 2001). In addition, legislation introduced to strengthen HBCUs proved to be the springboard needed to further develop the landscape of these institutions. This action did not level the playing field but did provide access to resources that expanded the infrastructure and quality of services delivered.

THE ROLE OF HBCUs

For blacks, HBCUs have been the door to higher education and to middle-class America. They have a tradition of providing access to African Americans who otherwise might not have been given the opportunity for a college degree (Swygert 2004). Despite history showing the impact of HBCUs on the education of blacks in this country, an imbalance remains between these institutions and their white counterparts (Swygert 2004). The issue of disparate funding between HBCUs and predominantly white institutions (PWIs) has been the subject of litigation in America's courtrooms for years (for example; *United States v. Fordice* 1992). Brown and Ricard (2007) recognize a well-documented history of underfunding and inadequate resources for HBCUs, yet they continue as major contributors to the higher education of blacks in the United States. Despite the unequal and separate patterns, HBCUs achieve success and continue to persist in the twenty-first century. Not only do HBCUs compete by doing more with less, but they also embrace people from different academic and cultural backgrounds.

Black students who attend HBCUs may be at a disadvantage when compared to their white counterparts at PWIs in preparedness for college (Harper 2007). According to Harper (2007) students enrolled in HBCUs are more likely to be from single-parent families and to be first-generation college students. Despite the challenges studies suggest, HBCUs produce students who have similar academic outcomes when compared to PWI graduates with respect to standardized writing, mathematical reasoning, and science assessments (Harper 2007).

Other research suggests that students attending HBCUs are more academically motivated and are more likely to achieve professional aspirations when compared to black students at other institutions (Harper 2007; Wenglinsky 1996). The studies referenced above highlight the fact that HBCUs admit students of all academic backgrounds and succeed in addressing academic deficiencies (Harper 2007). HBCUs continue to play a critical role in educating not only black students but all people of color. HBCUs rely heavily on the federal government, private sector, and organizations for major financial support. Even though HBCUs receive some funding from the private sector and other organizations, it is imperative that grants in the form of aid and Title III dollars are increased to provide resources that will allow students to compete in the global marketplace (Harper 2007).

TITLE III OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965

In general, HBCUs are defined as, "Black academic institutions established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and still is, the education of Black Americans" (Roebuck and Murty 1993, 3). The National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education has also designated some institutions that were established after 1964 as HBCUs (Roebuck and Murty 1993). The year 1964 represents a historical marker because it was the year that the Civil Rights Act was passed.

HBCUs have opened and closed over the years and there are varying counts of exactly how many exist today. There are at least 99 HBCUs in the United States (Knight et al. 2012). Garibaldi (1991) counted 104 HBCUs in 1990 while Wenglinsky (1996) says that there are 105 HBCUs in 19 states and the District of Columbia, and Roebuck and Murty (1993) report that there are 109. No matter whose count you use, it should be obvious that the number of HBCUs has declined significantly from the 200 reported just after the Civil War (Brown 2001) and still constitute less than 4 percent of American colleges and universities (McDonough, Antonio, and Trent 1997).

Whether out of the spirit of philanthropy, necessity, or fairness, the reason HBCUs were created in America and have survived for, in many cases, more than 140 years, is that they filled a void in this country (Swygert 2004). Historically, minorities were denied access to white institutions because of segregation laws

that were prevalent at the time most HBCUs were created (*Sweatt v. Painter* 1950; *Hawkins v. Board of Control* 1950). Less than 3,000 black students in the United States were enrolled in higher education by 1915, and most of them were men (Allen and Jewell 2002). HBCUs are an integral part of America's educational history; they have marked their place in the history of this country for African Americans.

THE IMPACT OF FINANCIAL AID

The federal government has long acknowledged that quality education for all Americans is a right, not a privilege (Brown 2001). Not only has the federal government involved itself in the protection of freedoms granted to citizens by the U.S. Constitution but it has also involved itself with promoting certain behaviors among its citizens. Such was the case with encouraging Americans to seek higher education in a national attempt to remain competitive with other nations in technology (Brown 2001). The first financial aid to college students came about as a result of a private citizen (McCormick 1972). In 1643, Lady Anne Radcliffe Mowlson, a private donor, provided what is widely believed to be the first scholarship, funding students at Harvard University (McCormick 1972).

Congress followed the lead of Lady Mowlson many years later. In 1862, Congress passed, and President Abraham Lincoln signed, the Morrill Act, named for its sponsor, Representative Justin Smith Morrill of Vermont. The act created what are known today as "land grant colleges" by handing over federal lands to states to set up colleges that would offer courses in engineering, agriculture, and home economics, among other academic subjects (de Gruyter 1992).

With the movement for nationwide education reform came an increase in funding for secondary and postsecondary education. The additional funding provided for more federal support for research and graduate education. Cohen (1998) stated that there was a new thrust in the nation to encourage more students to study science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), which in turn, led to more financial aid and more favorable student loan terms. The opportunity for people of color to pursue graduate education and beyond is paramount and provides access to a higher quality of life experience.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

HBCU graduate and professional schools began to flourish as more African Americans and other people of color sought to further their education as a means to achieve middle-class status (Allen and Jewell 2002; Freeman 2005; Lovett 1990). For more than four decades, HBCUs were the largest contributors to diversity in virtually every field of study. However, that trend began to level out as

more financial aid became available and many universities implemented special outreach programs to entice students of color to enroll in their programs ("Stepping Up" 1958).

The Higher Education Act of 1965 attempted to stabilize the nation's HBCUs with a provision known as Title III that provided special funding to qualified colleges and universities. Title III has since been expanded to include community colleges and funding for strengthening historically black graduate and professional schools. This helped open the door for more people of color to continue their education beyond the four-year undergraduate degree (Katsinas and Opp 2001). "HBCUs represent just 3% of the nation's institutions of higher learning, [yet] they graduate nearly one-quarter of African Americans who earn undergraduate degrees and have led the increase in the number of African American doctoral degree holders" (Knight et al. 2012, 227). HBCUs also graduate 75 percent more of their African American students than other schools do and they will continue to be critical in the academic and professional development of students of color (Knight et al. 2012).

According to data obtained from the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (2014) and National Center for Statistics, there are 100 (51 are public and 49 are private, not for profit) HBCUs in 19 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, which makes up only 3 percent of all institutions of higher learning. Moreover, 9 percent of all black students attend HBCUs and HBCUs graduate 20 percent of all African American students who obtain bachelor's degrees. In addition, HBCUs are responsible for graduating 50 percent of all African American public school teachers and professionals (Thurgood Marshall College Fund 2014). HBCU enrollment increased by 45 percent between 1976 and 2011 from 223,000 to 324,000 compared to overall enrollment of all universities during the same time, 11 million to 21 million respectively. In 2011, other people of color and whites made up 19 percent compared to 15 percent in 1976. Among black students, the percentage has fallen from 18 percent in 1976 to 9 percent in 2011 (Thurgood Marshall College Fund 2014). Stricter eligibility requirements for federal student aid and Pell grants were noted to have prevented low-income students from enrolling at HBCUs, forcing them to delay their education. Declining state support and the rising cost of education make it more difficult for students to access higher education; we must continue to advocate for increasing access and support for HBCUs.

The role of HBCUs is paramount in the lives of not only African Americans, but all people of color. HBCUs have provided equal opportunity for minorities to pursue higher education at the undergraduate and graduate levels and in professional schooling. These experiences are life-changing pursuits and help to develop a more educated society as a result of the challenges experienced during the civil rights era. The civil rights movement opened the doors of PWIs and predominantly white universities to offer an education to minority students. Some policy

makers have challenged the relevance of HBCUs, arguing that they serve no purpose in an integrated system of higher education (Knight et al. 2012); however, research notes that HBCUs will continue to do more with less simultaneously educating people of color and providing the opportunity to achieve the American Dream in the twenty-first century and beyond.

Isiah Brown and Adriel A. Hilton

See also: Ethnic Studies; Racism in Colleges and Universities; Perspectives and Debate Section: Have Minority-Serving Institutions of Higher Education Outlived Their Usefulness?

FURTHER READING

- Allen, W. R., and Jewell, J. O. 2002. "A Backward Glance Forward: Past, Present, Future Perspectives on Historically Black Colleges and Universities." *The Review of Higher Education*, 25(3), 241–261.
- Brown II, C. M. 2001. "Collegiate Desegregation and the Public Black College: A New Policy Mandate." *The Journal of Higher Education*, 72(1), 46–62.
- Brown II, C. M., Donahoo, S., and Bertrando, R. D. 2001. "The Black College and the Quest for Educational Opportunity." *Urban Education*, 36(5), 533–571.
- Brown, M., and Ricard, R. 2007. "The Honorable Past and Uncertain Future of the Nation's HBCUs." Accessed January 1, 2015. http://www.nea.org/assets/img/PubThoughtAndAction/TAA_07_12.pdf.
- Cohen, A. 1998. *The Shaping of American Higher Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- de Gruyter, W. 1992. *American Universities and Colleges*, 14th ed.
- Fleming, J. 1976. *The Lengthening Shadow of Slavery: A Historical Justification for Affirmative Action for Blacks in Higher Education*. Washington, DC: Howard University Press.
- Fleming, J., Gill, G., and Swinton, D. H. 1978. *The Case for Affirmative Action for Blacks in Higher Education*. Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of Educational Policy, Howard University Press.
- Freeman, K. 2005. *African Americans in College Choice: The Influence of Family and School*. New York: State University of New York.
- Garibaldi, A. 1991. "The Role of Historically Black Colleges in Facilitating Resilience among African American Students." *Education and Urban Society*, 24, 103–112.
- Harper, B. 2007. "African American Access to Higher Education: The Evolving Role of HBCUs." http://academic.csuohio.edu/harper_b/African_American_access.pdf.
- Hawkins v. Board of Control*, 350 U.S. 413 (1950).
- Katsinas, S. G., and Opp, R. D. 2001. *Title III: A Crittically Important Federal Initiative Supporting Rural Community Colleges*. Chapel Hill, NC: MDC, Inc. www.mdcinc.org/rcc/titleiii.pdf.