



AFRICAN AMERICAN
LEGISLATIVE DAY

2007

FEBRUARY 12TH 2007



Washington State Commission on
African American Affairs

Special thanks to Reco Bemby of Bemby Consulting

Reco has been a special blessing to African American Legislative Day 2007 and the Commission. He has brought special expertise, a team of dedicated professionals, and great energy to this event. Thanks, Reco and thanks to your team!

Special thanks to Gerita Cochran

Gerita researched the information about Historically Black Colleges and Universities and has been a caring and loyal Commission volunteer for over a year. She also provided advice, guidance and creative recommendations to enhance the youth program. Thanks, Gerita!

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Youth Program Agenda for Monday, February 12, 2007

Doors Open 8:45 9:00 to 9:30	Student Transportation Arrival – Washington Center for the Performing Arts, 512 Washington Street, Olympia 98501 Mini-Education and Career Fair Kiosk & Displays (Lobby)
9:30 to 9:45	Participants are seated in Theater
Event Begins 9:45 to 10:00	General Session Begins (Spoken Word Artist provides narration) Digital Media presentation of first African Americans in Government
Emcee(s)	Participants are organized in Representative Districts by seat assignment
Program Begins 10:00–10:15	Legislative Overview CIVICS 101 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of a Legislative Day is explained • The concept of a public policy topic is introduced
Entertainment	Dance Performance Break
Digital Democracy Activote 10:15-10:30	Activote technology overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic voting exercise hosted by Ernst Communications • Voting will be conducted using the Promethean Activotes system. • The results of the voting will be shown on the theater projection screen. Choose the Highest Ranking African American Official Below A. Condoleezza Rice, B. Barack Obama, C. Clarence Thomas
Education Town Hall Forum Activote 10:30-10:45	Department of <u>Education</u> Program Students vote for priorities using Activote technology Topics: In your opinion what ranks as the highest priority? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. WASL Testing B. Teacher Salaries C. Smaller classroom size
Health Town Hall Form Activote 10:45-11:00	Department of <u>Health</u> Program Students vote for priorities using Activote technology Topics: In your opinion what ranks as the highest priority? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. STDs, HIV & AIDS B. Diabetes, Asthma and related chronic diseases C. Health/Fitness & Nutrition
Incarceration Town Hall Forum Activote 11:00-11:15	Department of <u>Corrections</u> Program Students vote for priorities using Activote technology Topics: In your opinion what ranks as the highest priority? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Inmate Safety B. Re-entry of offenders back into the community C. Build more prisons to adequately house inmates
11:15-11:30	Closing Remarks – Participants Transition to March



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Historically Black Colleges and Universities



There are more than 100 historically Black colleges and universities in the United States today. These institutions of higher learning, whose principal mission is to educate African Americans, have evolved since their beginning in 1837 when their primary responsibility was to educate freed slaves to read and write. At the dawn of the 21st century, along with graduate and post-graduate degrees, historically Black colleges and universities offer African American students a place to earn a sense of identity, heritage and community.

Segregation Era

Before the Civil War (1861-1865) the majority of Blacks in the United States were enslaved. Although a few free Blacks attended primarily White colleges in the North in the years before the war, such opportunities were very rare and nonexistent in the slave states of the South. In response to the lack of opportunity, a few institutions of secondary and higher education for Blacks were organized in the antebellum years. Cheyney University in Pennsylvania, founded in 1837 as the Institute for Colored Youth, has the earliest founding date of an HBCU, although for most of its early history it offered only elementary and high school level instruction. The first great expansion in Black higher education came after the war, however, during the widening opportunities of Reconstruction (1865-1877).

Private Institutions

The years between the Civil War and World War I (1914-1918) were an era of tremendous growth for American colleges and universities. Higher education spread primarily through institutions financed by public taxes, particularly the rapidly expanding land-grant colleges established by U.S. Congress in the Morrill Act of 1862. These land-grant institutions, coupled with a growing system of state colleges, marked the emergence of a distinctive style of American higher education: publicly supported institutions of higher learning serving a broad range of students as well as the cultural, economic, and political interests of various local and state constituencies.

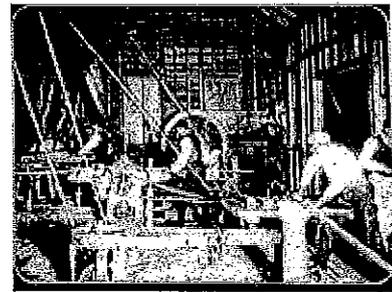
African American higher education took a different path. From the Reconstruction era through World War II (1939-1945) the majority of Black students were enrolled in private colleges. Northern religious mission societies were primarily responsible for establishing and maintaining the leading Black colleges and universities. African American religious philanthropy also established a significant number.

Given the virtual nonexistence of public education for Blacks in the South, these institutions had to provide preparatory courses at the elementary and high school levels for their students. Often they did not offer college-level courses for years until their students were prepared for them. Nonetheless, the missionary aims of these early schools reflected the ideals of classical liberal education that dominated American higher education in general in that period, with its emphasis on ancient languages, natural sciences, and humanities. Blacks were trained for literacy, but also for teaching and the professions.



With the end of Reconstruction and the return of White rule in the South, however, opportunities for African American professionals became scarcer. Consequently many Black and White leaders turned toward industrial training. The proponents of industrial training, whose most public spokesman was Booker T. Washington of the Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) in Alabama, argued that African Americans should concentrate on the more practical arts of manual labor to better suit them for the work that was available.

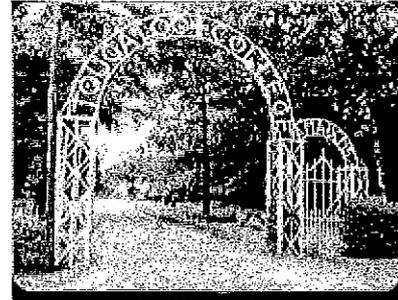
Meanwhile, Harvard-trained scholar W. E. B. Du Bois was charting another path. Du Bois paired the liberal and scientific ideals of the missionaries with a conviction that Black life and culture should be a primary topic of Black thought and investigation. Du Bois criticized Washington and his allies for downplaying intellectual ambition and for appeasing Southern White leaders. Du Bois's criticisms gained influence in the following decades, and by the end of World War I, Black leaders had largely turned against Washington's educational theories. The increased militancy of Du Bois and others led to student protests in the 1920s against the White administrations at Fisk, Hampton, and Howard. As a result of such protest, Mordecai Johnson was named the first Black president of Howard in 1926.



Claffin University wood shop
(Library of Congress)

Public Institutions during Jim Crow

Private missionary colleges figured so heavily in the overall scheme of higher education for African Americans because various states virtually excluded Blacks from publicly supported higher education. Of the 17 Southern states that mandated racially segregated education during the Jim Crow era, 14 simply refused to establish land-grant colleges for African American students until Congress required them to do so in the 1890. But the institutions they established were colleges in name only. Not one met the land-grant requirement to teach agriculture, mechanical arts and liberal education on a collegiate level.



Courtesy Tougaloo College

Black Institutions and Desegregation

With the founding of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) in 1944, Black colleges and universities enlisted the support of corporate philanthropy and the donations of thousands of individuals. African Americans also continued to press for equality in public higher education their efforts encouraged by the Supreme Court decision in *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* in 1938, which forced Southern state governments to concede more resources for the improvement of African American higher education than at any time since the Reconstruction era.

During the early 1950s, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) turned its efforts from educational equality to school desegregation. Its work culminated successfully in the *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950) and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) desegregation decisions, although these decisions had little direct effect on Black colleges.

This success in the courts sparked a new optimism about the future of African American higher education. But during the last four decades of the 20th century, that optimism was tempered by the endurance of old problems. Private colleges and universities had not built up a solid financial base. At the start of new millennium, raising money remains the major challenge for a Black college president or chancellor. Private Black colleges are struggling to keep their funding sources viable and to fight off financial starvation in an increasingly competitive environment. Public Black colleges are fighting to obtain their fair share of state support, and this struggle is greatly compromised by inaction and resistance from state legislatures.

In 1992 the Supreme Court ruled in *United States v. Fordice* that patterns of racial segregation still remained in Mississippi's public university system, nearly 40 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*. The slow elimination of segregation has in general had mixed blessings for Black colleges and universities, as integrated White institutions have drawn Black students and support away from the traditional Black schools. But after stagnating enrollments in the 1970s and 1980s, the student population at HBCUs rose 25 percent between 1986 and 1994, an increase greater than the average for U.S. colleges and universities.

Source: "[Colleges and Universities, Historically Black, in the United States](#)" by James D. Anderson at Africana.com

For a list and links to All Historically Black Colleges and Universities Go To: <http://www.ed.gov/about/inits/list/whhbcu/edlite-list.html>

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"It's out there where trees don't care what race you are, but they still share their shade; water doesn't care what kind of income level you come from, but it still provides life; and believe me mosquitoes don't really care who you are, they still suck your blood."

– Juan Martinez, Youth Coordinator, Building Bridges to the Outdoors



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