



LEADERSHIP OF HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

A what not to do Guide for HBCU Leaders

Johnny D. Jones



GREAT DEBATES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

LEADERSHIP OF
HISTORICALLY BLACK
COLLEGES AND
UNIVERSITIES

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Guide for HBCU Leaders

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*I appreciate my Family and Friends. This book is for all the
new Historically Black College and University leaders that
will serve the people and not want to be served.*

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from Mississippi Valley State University. He received a Master of Education in Recreation and Leisure Management in 1998, from Springfield College and graduated with a Doctorate in Education in Leadership and Policy in 2002 from Berne University International – West Indies. He went on to complete a second terminal degree in Education Administration and Supervision at Jackson State University in 2013. Dr Jones completed the Management Development Program at Harvard University in 2007. Dr Jones has served as director, evaluator, PI/Co-PI of numerous grants related to education and community projects.

Dr Johnny D. Jones was born and raised in Mississippi. Dr Jones enjoys spending time with family, teaching, researching, learning, golfing, fishing, cooking, and educating citizens. He has worked with youth organizations, school districts, colleges and universities, and nonprofit organizations to enhance educational endeavors for youth. He is passionate about educating students of color and helping them to matriculate through higher education to obtain a degree.

FOREWORD

As I sit to write this Foreword for Dr Johnny D. Jones' book about modern and future leadership for America's over 100 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), I reflect on the current times of Presidential impeachment with the widely referenced background of the President's photographic imagery with dozens of HBCU presidents in the Oval Office joining in the celebration of signing documents on behalf of African-Americans and HBCUs. Many have criticized this occasion and others have been disappointed with the results. The most common argument is that non-African-Americans, including the President of the United States, should do more on behalf of the over 400 years of contributions from African-Americans – especially HBCUs, given the proportion of African-Americans who enroll and graduate from HBCUs. While this is a sound argument to make, Dr Jones has positioned the book's readers to ask themselves, what can African-Americans do at HBCUs to not only recognize the historical contributions but also contribute to the sound management and leadership of HBCUs so they become maintained, sustained, and strengthened over the next 4 years, 14 years, 40 years, 100 years,...400 years. Dr Jones' book is timely in the regard. Many of the challenges at HBCUs are related to shortsighted or nonstrategic vision, failed or less than forthcoming shared governance, and solvent leadership and

stewardship of institutional finance and other resources – including institutional accreditation. I encourage readers to take seriously the case studies presented by Dr Johnny D. Jones. In fact, we need more books like this one written by Dr Jones so that all of us walk away with an understanding of lessons learned for leadership, strategies for positive change, and better practices for progress. The incubation, the integrity, and the institutionalization of HBCUs continue to emerge in social media, literature, and national conversations. All of America – African-Americans and non-African-Americans – must take responsibility for holding society’s structures, systems, and socio-political leadership accountable for anchoring, cementing, and grounding the future of HBCUs. And yes, we must also have those who manage and lead our HBCUs to be equally accountable – particularly in matters relative to visioning, sharing, and managing resources that make HBCUs viable as an important part of the American higher education system.

Joseph M. Stevenson, PhD

INTRODUCTION

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have been a staple in the higher education community since the early nineteenth century. However, due to critical issues higher education facing regarding funding, accreditation, enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, we are witnessing many of our smaller colleges are closing their doors. HBCUs have faced these challenges since their existence, and they continue to chart their path forward aggressively. However, as these HBCUs explore innovative ways to compete in this global competitive higher education marketplace, it is imperative that the future leaders of these unique institutions of higher learning pay attention to past mistakes as they prepare themselves to be the next leaders.

Our HBCUs are in trouble, and we have too many leaders that are taking on the greatest responsibility of leading these institutions they are unprepared, titled hungry, dealing with micromanaging governing boards, president's practicing unethical, illegal, and humiliating behavior, and robbing students of their chance to enhance their lives. The opportunity to lead an HBCU is an honor. Based on the history of

these great institutions, HBCUs have provided a platform for many people contributing to the advancements of society. Some of these well-educated folks have added to all areas of society, arts, sports, technology, science, and health. These modern-day hero alums of these great institutions of higher learning consist of Janice Bryant Howard, Marcus Carey, Derick Pearson, Lonnie Johnson, Earl G. Graves, Oprah Winfrey, Samuel L. Jackson, Spike Lee, Robert Hayes, Ashley Ambrose, Decon Jones, Stacy Abrams, and Andrew Gilliam, to name a few.

It is imperative that new leaders continue to take ownership of providing a platform for students to understand their culture, appreciate the history that people died for you to attend college, and navigate these institutions of higher learning with the upmost ethical respect. The only way this will be accomplished as a future leader if you get out of your way. Working at an HBCU is a journey of excellence. People attend these colleges and universities each year, entrusting their lives to complete strangers, hoping and praying that the choice they made to attend an HBCU will provide them with an education that will allow them to contribute to society as they better their quality of life. Too many HBCU leaders take their position for granted. They abuse the power and responsibility of being a servant leader. So many of the false leaders of HBCUs spend much time wanting to be catered too, like a king or queen, instead of leading the institution. Yes, the people of the United States elected Mr Barack H. Obama as the 44th president; what a great accomplishment! Having his lovely family in the White House was a significant accomplishment for many African-Americans and HBCU leaders. However, that shouldn't equate HBCU presidents immediately begin to refer themselves to as the first in everything. Some of the most embarrassing examples I witnessed, people being introduced as the First Partner, First Gentleman, the

First Under Forty President, many of the self-given titles were people with no substance. What a shame! I refer to these self-title accolades as the Bow-Tie-Charlie Syndrome. As a young man gathering my education, my grandmother always preached to me about being humble. She stated,

...grandson, it is good that you are going to school for your bachelor and master's degree, but remember, common sense is the best education. A person without common sense is an educated fool. Just because you dress up in a suit, doesn't mean you have substance, substance comes from the brain.

With that being said, we are experiencing many Bow-Tie-Charlie leaders at our HBCUs and on the board of these excellent institutions of higher learning. Get off your high horse, as an HBCU leader your job is to serve, serve only. A great colleague of mine, always said,

If you are planning to work at one of our beautiful American negro schools, be prepared to work, work, work, we make brick without straw and turn rocks into diamonds, we work here,

and he was right. The question is, are the future leaders prepared to work and to help maintain or create a new innovative competitive edge for our HBCUs? If not, they are in the way.

This book is about positioning for the future and is primarily written for stakeholders and stewards in the academic communities of HBCUs who are interested in maintaining and sustaining the existence of HBCUs by focusing on future-forward thinking concerning what students learn, how faculty teach, and how the campus embraces futurism based on historical foundations of the institution. In terms of a thought process for the book, I recommend this sequence. First, read

through the entire book to get acquainted with the reasoning and rationale for using the case studies. Second, identify how futurism and future studies can be institutionalized at the HBCU institution to build on its history and empower leaders with creating a positive future for HBCUs. Third, adapt, modify, and refine the HBCU leadership framework based on specific needs, demands, forces, counterforces, culture, and climate at HBCU institution. Fourth, identify how complementing history can be institutionalized in the HBCU campus culture, environment, climate, and ecology. This book will also help future HBCU leaders with descriptive case studies that will help them to navigate their path to quality leadership at perspective HBCU institutions.

All character names and institutions are fictional; however, the cases are based on real-life events. You can't make this stuff up, but, as future HBCU leaders, you can stop the madness. This book is the first of the series designed to make you a better leader. As a person who has worked in and at institutions of higher learning categorized as Research 1 Doctorate Granting Institutions to Tribal Colleges, I have gained a lot of experience. I believe it's better to have multiple skills and years of experience. It helps you to become a better diverse thinker than creating a monolithic mindset. This problem is also an issue with many of our HBCU leaders, and they have no other experiences outside of the institution and culture where they are serving. All HBCUs aren't the same, but the mindset of the leader could be embryonic to other higher education practices. HBCUs are essential to the world and will continue to add value with the right leadership. Prepare yourself with substance and take ownership of your responsibility to be a servant, not to be served.

2

CAN YOU SEE

CASE ONE: WHERE IS THE VISION?

This case addresses how many Historically Black College and University (HBCU) senior administrators are asked to create or develop a strategic plan for the institution. The strategic plan must capture the essence of the institution while maintaining a secure connection with the college or university mission and vision. The most important thing about a strategic plan is it must incorporate institutional governance, accountability and be measurable, student-friendly, and defined. Not a tagline! It is easy for a senior administrator to adopt a previous institution's strategic plan, slogan, or tagline because they refuse or lack the intellectual capital to create a new strategic plan. Quality strategic planning is a subject that has long excited HBCU alumni, students, faculty, staff, and external constituents because it shows possibilities for growth and direction. However, unqualified senior administrators are not able to create or develop these plans of action, which hurt the university infrastructure. The widespread fascination with strategic leadership is because it is supposed to have a process and create a plan that will touch the lives of many. However, unprepared HBCU

leaders use taglines and religious rhetoric that will draw attention from a nonrobust strategic plan that will enhance the university. This chapter will assist future leaders in creating a strategic plan and not use a tagline that will hinder the institution's growth. This case study will allow the reader to consider different conceptions of strategic leadership, approaches for developing a strategic plan, and evaluate the effectiveness of strategic direction. Questions about HBCU leadership have long been a subject of speculation in the past ten years. It is essential for future leaders to understand higher education strategies that will allow them to be successful.

Keywords: Strategic planning; visionary thinking; shared governance.

Southern Hill University

Southern Hill University (SHU) is a small Historically Black College and University (HBCU) located in the bible belt of the South. This university was founded in the mid-twentieth century at the inception of the civil rights movement. SHU serves a historical disadvantage population of citizens with an average household annual income of \$20,000.00 or less. The regional culture of the area was clearly reflected in SHU's campus. Popular were playing and singing the blues, eating catfish and partaking in religious oriented activities. The university has a short history, and it has been in existence for less than 75 years; however, it has seen many struggles. The university has witnessed 10 presidents in its short tenure. SHU has faced many financial challenges during its existence while serving the people in the region. Like many other HBCUs, SHU is currently having financial stability issues. These struggles are associated with a lack of alumni giving, declining enrollment, reduction in state, and federally appropriated funding.

SHU was part of a lawsuit filed by a local citizen that awarded the institution along with other state founded HBCUs a multi-million-dollar settlement. Many HBCUs have sued the state where they are located for an equal share of state-allocated resources. Some of these states consisted of Alabama, Maryland, Mississippi, and North Carolina. Even though these universities are struggling financially, it is still the responsibility of the university to be fiscal stewards of those resources. SHU has been on the brink of closing multiple times in its short history. These closure discussions were very political and began in the board meetings that govern these institutions.

Before the institution decided to settle, a previous president, President Scott, left the institution with a \$27,000,000.00 reserve. That president implemented a strategic plan that leads to many successes for the university and community, for the next 17 years, which included enrollment increases, new graduate and undergraduate academic programs, new educational facilities, successful athletic programs; created a stronger partnership with the local community; secured a record amount of state funding allocations, alumni giving, and philanthropic resources. After President Scott retired, the next president, President Williams, was able to carry out a portion of President Scott's strategic plan. However, President Williams added his unique vision to the previous strategic plan.

President Williams, a new citizen of the state, came to the university with a minimum knowledge of the culture of the campus and communities. Where the university is located in a small rural environment was new and a challenge to President Williams's social life. He immediately employed his colleagues from out-of-state that either needed a job or were hired in a position that was far greater than their previous employment and outside of their skill set. During his tenure at the

university, enrollment increased under scrutiny, and new academic programs were created, while following the strategic plan of President Scott. Many of the initiatives President Scott put in place were changed when President Williams received the settlement from the lawsuit. However, President Williams did create a new master plan for the university, but it did not include the holistic collaboration from the faculty, staff, student, community, and other external stakeholders. After President Williams completed his tenure at the university, an interim president was named to sustain the position, during the presidential search. The interim president was a long-term employee at the university. His relationship with the community was powerful; however, he was not allowed to create a strategic plan or vision for the university, since his time was short-lived.

In the upcoming fall, a new president was hired at the university, establishing a new legacy, tradition, and vision for the institution, President Collier. President Collier was also new to the state and unfamiliar with the institution and the culture of the state. President Collier was a minority and the first female to hold the position as president at the institution. Her past tenure included teaching positions at the department level. Her executive experience was minimal; however, she was able to ascertain the job. She hired an entirely new executive cabinet to help her create a vision for the university. However, her ignorance of the university's culture, along with a lack of understanding of state politics, strategic planning, the academic enterprise, helped her to establish negative campus morale with students, faculty, and staff instantaneously. Her association with the community was minimal, in the form of speaking engagements, hosting parties, participating in community events, and being seen at least as possible on campus, was her *modus operandi*. During her second year as the president of SHU, she needed to create