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Restructuring Enrollment Management Policies at HBCUs: The Next 184 Year Initiative

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Department of Educational Foundations and Policy Studies

West Chester University

West Chester, Pennsylvania

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

Master of Science

By

Kathleen “K” Rzucidlo

May 2021

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all HBCU staff, faculty and administrators who constantly push above every challenge presented by systematic racism and more to provide the best college experience for our students. A special dedication to the reason behind this thesis and the oldest Institution of Higher Education for African Americans in the nation, Cheyney University, 1-8-3-7. Thank you for your welcoming arms and challenging work environment which sparked this entire thought. Without Cheyney, I would not be writing this thesis.

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#RealHotGirlStudentAffairs

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Abstract

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were created in the early 1800s during times of segregation and explicit racism. HBCUs continue to play a very key role in educating students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds but continue to focus on the development of Black students in the United States. Currently there are 101 HBCUs in 19 states and in Washington D.C. and the Caribbean. For my thematic concern, I will be tackling the concern of why being student success focused in enrollment management approaches are critical at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and how student success and support practices can combat low-enrollment, retention and degree completion with tools like high touch advising methods and intentional housing arrangements. When it comes to the intervention and implementation of my thematic concern, what research has shown to be most conducive, it campus wide buy in from a diverse committee to ensure success of any new policy or procedure. Enrollment practices cannot continue to be siloed and expect transformative changes to occur for student success.

Keywords: HBCUs, enrollment management, retention

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Chapter One: Introduction

When I first entered college, I was the student who picked a major out of fear of coming to school undecided, and I did not want to waste time or money. Growing up, it seemed like every woman I knew was a teacher, nurse or stay at home mom. I did not have any kids and passed out at the sight of blood, so I decided on the educator route even though I was not sure if this is what I wanted to do. Outside of the classroom, I knew exactly what I wanted to do, I quickly got involved in committees, clubs, and organizations, and was present at every event in my residence hall. Although I would end up changing my major to Communication Studies, the joke was that K majored in the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) and minored in Communication Studies.

I was so much more interested in student programming than I was in the philosophers we discussed in our theory classes. It had never dawned on me that some of the most influential people around me worked for the university, which meant I could work for a university. I often say, no one grows up saying, "I want to be a Director of Admissions." These are not the positions we hear about in our living biography assignments in elementary school, so instead we aspire to be Serena Williams or Mia Hamm and other famous athletes, astronauts and actresses. As soon as I learned that higher education was a career choice, I was sold. Almost five years ago, I accepted a job offer as an Admissions Counselor and later shifted to my most loved role as an Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions at Cheyney University.

As I entered the field, I wanted to spend time professionally at as many types of institutions as possible, large, small, private, public, HBCU, religiously based; I wanted to take

advantage of every opportunity I could, until I met Cheyney University. Prior to coming to Cheyney, I saw myself utilizing admissions as a foot in the door to higher education. I had the goal of swiftly making the professional change to student affairs, until I fell in love with enrollment management. I was hired at Cheyney University in April of 2018 while still thinking that admissions was going to be just an initial step and that I would eventually switch to the student affairs and programming side of the university. My experience working at Cheyney University was life changing, I completely shifted my focus professionally and, thus, my concern for this thesis. My professional development goals started to reflect becoming a leader in enrollment management at a Historically Black College or University. Subsequently, I went from hardly having an answer as to what I would want to write about, to knowing exactly what I wanted to focus on: enrollment management policies and the lack of coordinated supports for the retention, persistence, and degree completion of students at HBCUs

We were in our last year before Middle States, our accrediting body, would come in and either extend our accreditation for the next five years or revoke the accreditation, but I believe the students received the short end of the stick since majority of those admitted were failing by the end of the fall semester. Acceptance letters had not been sent out due to inexperienced leadership and registration for accepted student's day was in the double digits. It looked like Cheyney would not make it. Something had to be changed, and it did. New leadership came in, and they even had admissions experience from two prior Pennsylvania state system schools. But the pressure to perform had leadership looking for students anywhere. I did not agree with the practices and ethics that were being put into motion: valuing the number of students—or “heads in beds”—over the students' needs to be successful and persist through to completion. We were

in our last year before Middle States, our accrediting body, would come in and either extend our accreditation for the next five years or revoke the accreditation all together, making students ineligible to apply for federal financial aid. The university was stuck in a bind of needing to keep the doors of the institution open, but at what cost to the students who were funding our institution?

I believe the students received the short end of the stick when the decision was made to maintain open enrollment policies where majority of those admitted were failing by the end of the fall semester. I could not stand under an administration who, due to lack of planning, decided to quickly rush and pump previously denied students into the university with little to no additional support or bridge programming. This effort completely shifted my focus within my research to emphasize the importance of a structural approach to student support and enrollment management policy. It was clear we needed a shift in order to combat low retention, persistence, and degree completion rates.

Meet Cheyney University

Cheyney University was founded in 1837, originally named the Institute for Colored Youth, and located in the heart of Philadelphia. Years later the institution moved 30 miles west of the city to Chester County, Pennsylvania. Cheyney University holds the title for being the oldest Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in the nation. Cheyney University is the bloodline of my thematic concern, as I truly believe experience is life's best teacher. My experience at Cheyney University verified many of the hearsay comments of the inequality and systematic shortcomings of the only HBCU within the Pennsylvania state system. I believe that

universities like Cheyney, in state systems like Pennsylvania's, could be example setting campuses if systems invested the same resources and talent into those walls. Poor state system leadership often led to poor outcomes, which pushed the snowball down the hill to the point of the University's accreditation being on the edge of the cliff with an avalanche on its way. Leaders and administrators with no background in higher education were brought in to assess the trouble. Previous state system employees with no functional area background were put in charge of departments, and consultants were put in charge of offices. For instance, my first supervisor at the University served the institution first as a consultant with the Standardized Aptitude Test (SAT) and then as the director of admissions. This person had less than 2 years of prior admissions or higher education experience. When we asked the person charged with serving as the equivalent to a Vice President of Enrollment Management when we should release acceptance letters, she suggested we hold onto them a bit longer. In April, it is not best practices to hold acceptance letters due to May 1 being observed as National Signing Day, a day where most universities have their fall classes made. By holding the letters, our students who may have wanted to commit to Cheyney, did not even know they had been admitted so late in the timeline of the admissions cycle. According to Pennwatch.pa.gov (2021), this person was being paid as a consultant as the Chief Operating Officer for Access Services charging 100 dollars an hour. These people, as well as others, were hand-picked by the state system and had previously served on the Board of Governors in Harrisburg. With Cheyney's accreditation dangling in the wind, academic programs were dropped, athletics were cut and buildings were closed. Staff were let go and the students left behind. The goal was not student success, it was to maintain accreditation.

Early in 2019, prior to the decision of whether or not Cheyney would secure its accreditation, the state system Chancellor said “Cheyney should plan for that likelihood and figure out a new path, perhaps one in which it affiliates with another university as a department or school or provides career training programs that don’t require accreditation” (Snyder, 2019). The governor and university president had repeatedly taken a stance of positivity with a healthy serving of realism when looking into the future of Cheyney, but Chancellor Greenstein seemed ready to throw in the towel. The goal, of course, was to keep the doors open and once the university’s standing was solidified, then we could focus on the students again. I remember on the day of my second interview with a previous employee who had been asked to come out of retirement from working at the state to come and work at Cheyney, she was very candid with me about the situation Cheyney was in. I understood the journey that was ahead of me, at least I thought I had. I was a student within the Pennsylvania State System and involved in Student Senate, we had a bit closer look at the happenings within the state system and it had always seemed that Cheyney got the short end of the stick and that the students had to suffer for it. I did not know what I had gotten myself into.

This story is common among many HBCUs and this is not by chance, it is by design. Later in chapter three, I will discuss the historical context and how HBCUs have systematically been placed in a position to be challenged in a system that has been created to exclude them and the students that attend them. HBCUs struggling should be a concern of every higher education professional because they house our students and our next generation. It may be cliché, but the children are our future, and just because they are not the universities we are employed at or they are not the specific students that sit in our classes does not mean we should not be concerned

about what is going on in the classrooms and campuses. Supporting HBCUs is an issue of equity and access for the field of higher education and student affairs. HBCUs are not just another type of institution, their existence is rooting in equity and access for those that had higher education restricted to them previously. We must act to dismantle the systemic barriers and practices that keep our HBCUs from true and unfettered success.

The Concern

During my time in the Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs (HEPSA) program at West Chester University, my research began with what I would title as all things enrollment management at HBCUs and has grown more specifically to addressing the lack of active retention and persistence efforts and the programs and structures in place to support students through their academic and co-curricular journey through that college or university. If my research and life experience has taught me anything, it is the importance of campus community participation and buy-in. The collective mindset focused on the success of our students is key to implementing any intervention or policy. Many HBCU's are often painted as struggling, not up to par, and below the standard of their Predominantly White Institution (PWI) counterparts. The sheer existence of HBCU's has even been debated, with people asking whether or not they are necessary in the 21st century. As leadership at HBCUs often voice, these schools are "the people's university" that have continued "serving the underserved," and this contention appears to be true. Research shows that although HBCUs make up a small percentage of colleges and universities in the United States, they produce far more Black professionals in a number of fields

then their predominately white institution counterparts (Esters, 2013, p. 120). Yet as discussed by Dr. Robert Palmer, retention, persistence and degree completion is a huge struggle for HBCUs but specifically the Black men that attend. As explained by Palmer (2013),

Despite the impact that HBCUs have on the educational outcomes of Black students and the supportive campus climates that they engender, recent reports and empirical research have highlighted the problems that HBCUs are experiencing with Black male enrollment, campus engagement, retention, success, and graduation. (p. 66)

I want to utilize my intervention to offset years of systematic racism in the K-12 education system to better assist students be retained, persist and complete their degrees at an HBCU.

I believe with focusing on our student's academic and cocurricular skills we could shift the academic progress trends and increase retention, persistence and degree completion rates. Admitting to ourselves the things we already know are happening on our campuses. Students will party, students will aim to join Greek letter organizations, they will get caught up in relationships, and they will miss a class or two. How can we re-shift the focus to excelling at a social and academic life at the same time? My intervention begins with a core committee of student, staff, faculty and administrators coming together to identify key components needed to be addressed on their individual campuses, please refer to Table 1 for the committee make up. I believe with student success as the focus of practice and foundation in policy, if student success truly became the core of why we functioned on campuses, our campus culture would shift drastically to support students from application to matriculation and eventually to graduation. Programs like the Aggie Impact Scholar Program, the Magnificent MILE (Slade, 2015) and the

shift to Living Learning Communities at Norfolk State University (Ericksen, 2015) are the backbone to my argument that student success focused enrollment management practices can be the tool that can turn around some of the challenges we see at our HBCUs. This intervention, that I will discuss in chapter 4 and 5, start to finish, will aid in retention and persistence with incoming first year students throughout their time on campus and why other universities and enrollment management offices should adopt this approach.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Frameworks

Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.

-Malcolm X

Philosophy of Higher Education and Student Affairs

Education is often treated as the key to life; those who are well educated are successful and will go far. As we enter schools, our parents have a responsibility to have us attend until a certain age to avoid the penalty of truancy and fines, then we decide. Will we continue in our secondary education or begin to work? If you do decide to continue, the next step of education is typically college. Whether it be for an associate or bachelor's degree, we must make the decision if we will go. The luxury of attending is not often afforded to the masses, although it seems like the expected thing to do after high school or a GED. If formal education and college are supposed to form our students into well rounded and participating members of society, why does it do them such harm? Is it worth the debt and extended time living at home and delaying other life goals or societal milestones?

Post-secondary education typically requires a hefty price be paid. In the 2017–18 academic year the National Center for Educational Statistics (2019) reported, annual current dollar prices for undergraduate tuition, fees, room, and board were estimated to be \$17,797 at public institutions, \$46,014 at private nonprofit institutions, and \$26,261 at private for-profit institutions. Between 2007–08 and 2017–18, prices for undergraduate tuition, fees, room, and board at public institutions rose 31 percent, and prices at private nonprofit institutions rose 23 percent (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2018). Students have the option to put themselves into a crippling amount of debt, in the hopes that they will succeed and be able to one

day, pay off that debt and begin their journey to the American dream. Louis Althusser introduces interpellation to us, interpellation is the concept of cyclical rebirth of ideology. Interpellation can be described as the concrete occurrence of ideological reproduction (Backer, 2017). Specifically, the concept that we must go to college, buy a house, get a respectable job and so on is an example of interpellation. I like to think of interpellation being society willingly being cogs in the machine. Society and the ruling class has pushed these ideas onto the dominated classes for so long that it simply feels to be true; this is how the ruling class maintains the power. In the United States, many of the citizens are raised to think that if you can go to college, you will get a better job which will lead to more money. More money leads to more success and an easier life. Unfortunately, the price to achieve these goals set before us have risen to the levels stated above, and simply having to take out the loans to attend college continues to make the dream unattainable. David Saunders (2010) agrees, explaining

As neoliberal policies, practices, and ideas developed in the United States, a parallel process of neoliberal development occurred in U.S. public higher education. Throughout the past four decades, the economics, structure, and purpose of higher education, as well as the priorities and identities of faculty and students, have been altered to better align with neoliberal practices and ideology.

As Saunders (2010) argues, “To make up for the decrease in funds that resulted from the drastic decrease in funding of social services under the neoliberal regime, colleges and universities have prioritized revenue generation and have become increasingly reliant on private sources of funding. I believe that our students deserve better. Students who do make the choice to attend college, should be able to be fully embraced and supported during their journey and seen as

students, not just dollar signs equivalent to their loans and tuition payments. I believe the university should invest in policies, practices and resources to lead our students to their desired success.

The College Experience

Typically, most new college students are roughly 17-18 years old and going to college may be the first time they are left to their own devices. Dropped off at a college campus with hundreds, if not thousands, of new people around them, college students have a few paths they may take. The main reason for going to college is to learn and become educated in a specific area. You select a major based on what you are interested in, what your family wants to see you become, or you hope will maybe make you a lot of money. There are plenty of clubs, organizations, sports, and parties to take your mind off of the academics outside of the classroom. I believe the purpose of higher education is to develop students into well rounded individuals who question their thought process as well as the identity they may have grown up with. Higher education should facilitate learning to continue to push boundaries that may have been set by their small town or large city by investing time to learn more about what this world has to offer. The purpose of higher education over all, is to become global citizens and active participants that can better our society. These lessons may happen in the classroom. Typically, we associate these goals with our philosophy or sociology courses, but I found in my experience that these lessons and developmental moments mostly came from outside of the classroom. Students learn lessons outside the classroom about the many identities we have, and these lessons push us to think deeper about the stereotypes we may believe about ourselves or others. My college development and overall experience would end up becoming the very roots of my thematic

concern and professional track. I was a very involved student leader who did not prioritize my school work. My grades were not terrible, but I could have done much better academically than my GPA reflects. I could say I was too busy embracing the other side of what the university had to offer through student affairs, but if we are being honest, I simply did not apply myself to my academics, mostly, because I did not know how to access the resources needed to better myself as a student. These experiences have led me to my thematic concern as well as my approach to addressing this concern.

The Minds Behind the Method

College can oftentimes be described as the best time of our lives. As higher education professionals, I believe it is our responsibility to create an environment for our students to succeed and enjoy the time they spend on the campus. Paulo Freire is quoted as saying that the purpose of education is "... to begin always anew, to make, to reconstruct, and to not spoil, to refuse to bureaucratize the mind, to understand and to live life as a process- live to become..." (hooks, 1994). Become what? Become anything. As previously stated, my beliefs on higher education and the purpose it serves is to create a place for students to become well-rounded individuals who questions their current thought process, who look at the world critically, and who take this opportunity to create more change in our society. Higher education serves to mold students into active participants in society. As bell hooks states (1994),

In the United States it is rare that anyone talks about teachers in university settings as healers. And it is even more rare to hear anyone suggest that teachers have any responsibility to be self-actualized individuals. Learning about the work of intellectuals and academics primarily from nineteenth-century fiction and nonfiction during my

pre-college years, I was certain that the task for those of us who chose this vocation was to be holistically questing for self-actualization. It was the actual experience of college that disrupted this image. It was there that I was made to feel as though I was terribly naive about “the profession.” I learned that far from being self-actualized, the university was seen more as a haven for those who are smart in book knowledge but who might be otherwise unfit for social interaction. Luckily, during my undergraduate years I began to make a distinction between the practice of being an intellectual/teacher and one’s role as a member of the academic profession. (p. 16)

I am inspired by bell hooks’ distinction and realization separating the practice and the role of being in academia. I believe there is the need for the same distinction in higher education. For staff, faculty and administrators, our jobs must go beyond the task at hand. For example, admissions employee’s jobs are to recruit and process applications, but if we dare to go a step further and embrace self-actualization in ourselves we can work to cultivate that in our student’s journey before we send them into ‘the real world’ after their time on campus.

The Role of Student Affairs and Friends

Oftentimes, when it comes to enrollment management practices, our most successful events occur when we bring together all offices across campus. The main event that comes to mind when I think of campus wide buy-in is orientation. Orientation requires Enrollment Management, Residence Life and Housing, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs and student leaders come together to ensure a successful event when it comes to recruitment and solidifying the incoming class of students. The next question to ask is, can we increase student success and

retention by implementing more campus wide initiatives? Norfolk State University, a Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) ambitiously set out to invent and implement Living Learning Community styled housing in just one year and this article takes us through the process. NSU has roughly 2,000 residents on campus and have a high percentage of first-generation students and more than 90 percent receive financial aid. In 2012, NSU decided to implement LLCs to help retain freshman students. They started the process with an LLC advisor committee that was made up of faculty, staff, students and administrators. Two groupings of LLC were made, one for honors students and the other encompassed additional schools and colleges on campus. This article outlines the lessons learned from this swift implementation of LLCs. Lesson one, LLCs much match universities needs, lesson two, educate the community as to what LLCs are to help create buy in, lesson three provide LLC administrative support like workshops and trainings to better execute the implementation, lesson four, incorporate and build on past success, lesson five, develop supportive teams to go beyond fostering support and collaboration, step six, incorporate assessment. The overarching lesson learned was that there must be a strong and intricate collaborative partnership between academic affairs and student affairs for these LLCs or any campus initiative to succeed, there must be campus and community wide buy-in. This story of transition from traditional housing to LLCs sheds light on what many may think to be a common-sense idea, that you need support from all areas to see success in a project. I believe this approach that NSU took could not have been replicated if only residence life was invested. The university saw a 7% higher increase in freshman retention compared to other models with non-LLC participants. After reading this article and having a point of reference of when and how this has been done before I think it only strengthens the conversation within my

intervention that having an LLC style for first year students, and the community college students would be beneficial as long as it is paired with campus wide buy in and support.

Critical Action Research: To Be Critical or to Not Be Critical

To break down the idea of Critical Action Research, we can look into the idea in its most basic definition. Critical, defined as exercising or involving careful judgment or judicious evaluation. Action, defined as a thing done and the accomplishment of a thing usually over a period of time, in stages, or with the possibility of repetition. Finally, research, defined as the collecting of information about a particular subject. In its very core of a definition, Critical Action Research is to exercise judgement or to evaluate something, to then do something (either once or potentially repeatedly) and to collect information about the thing or topic. Of course, this definition may sound awfully similar to what we may see as typical research, observe a thing, do something, and collect the information, this may appear as elementary as a science project. Originally, Kemmis and McTaggart (1998) defined action research as, “a form of collective, self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situation in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and situations in which these practices are carried out” (pp. 121-122). This definition emphasized that the research performed should actively involve the participants to collectively gain understanding within the topic being researched. In this instance, of creating an intervention to serve students, this means to actively involve those same students. The difference between action research and critical action research, is that critical action research is a particular form of action research that aims to respond to these challenges observed (Kemmis, 2008). In

1972, Max Horkeimer described critical theory as having “no specific influence on its side, except a concern for the abolition of social injustice” and that “its own nature turns it toward a changing of history and the establishment of justice” (Kemmis, 2008). Between Kemmis and Horkeimer, this is an active reminder to constantly focus your work within the population you are working to assist through research or programming. Without consulting the participants, in this case, college students, the response created to aid in fixing the problem, may not be sufficient. We can often distance ourselves from our students, whether it is by our identity, our job title or our age differences. It is not surprising to see upper level staff, faculty and administrators lose sight at who is on the other side of our decisions

Look to the Bottom

I believe what is most important while navigating my aspirations within higher education is to avoid a savior complex. As a white woman looking to work at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, it is imperative to keep in mind that although, over the next few decades I hope to gain many years of experience in higher education, I must always continue to ‘look to the bottom.’ According to Mari Matsuda (1987), looking to the bottom is,

adopting the perspective of those who have seen and felt the falsity of the liberal promise—can assist critical scholars in the task of fathoming the phenomenology of law and defining the elements of justice. . . when notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, are examined not from an abstract position but from the position of groups who have suffered through history, moral relativism recedes, and identifiable normative priorities emerge. (p. 325)

We must, specifically, continue to look to our students. If I have learned anything from my time in higher education is that depending on the professional or culture of the institution, the further you get away from student interaction, the more decisions you make that concern your students. The more we focus on being student centric in our leadership and universities and not simply outcome and financially driven. As we look to bolster enrollment and bring in more funds to these struggling universities, we must remember the current students, that they matter just as much as the prospective students. It is my goal to present universities with a plan to increase student support roles on both academic and student affairs sides of campus to truly see students succeed in far more than just getting a career or completing the next step of their scheduled and expected life time. This critical action research thesis will examine current enrollment management practices within historically Black colleges and universities. Historically Black Colleges and Universities are often the focal point when it comes to conversations of low enrollment and accreditation trouble, in this critical action thesis I will discuss how systematic racism plays its role and how we as HBCU faculty and administrators can continue to combat the symptoms of systematic racism and the side effects it has in our higher education institutions. This concern has informed my intervention to implement student success tools like diverse admissions processes, student support and transition procedures like summer bridge and first year experience courses, high touch student outreach for all students with positions like academic advisors and residence hall directors and intentional housing assignments to limit students feeling unsupported or unable to persist.

Chapter Three: Historical Context

When discussing student enrollment, retention, persistence and degree completion as it pertains to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) it is important to start at the beginning. The HBCU was created initially, because in the United States, Black people were not able to attend a white college or receive any form of higher education because of their race. An educated Black person has always seemed to be America's biggest fear. During slavery, for example, following the Stono Rebellion in 1739 in South Carolina, many states adopted laws that made it illegal to teach a slave to write, and the laws were strengthened after Nat Turner's Revolt of 1831 (Woodson, 1915, p. 193). Black people could be beaten and killed for asking about education or learning to read. Laws like the Negro Act of 1740 in South Carolina, for example, made it illegal for slaves to move abroad, assemble in groups, raise food, earn money, and learn to read English. Slave owners were even permitted to kill rebellious slaves if necessary (Rasmussen, 2010.) Education is seen as the key to freedom, which is why religious oppression and physical and mental domination were key to keeping white people in charge (Kendi, 2016). Since their inception, HBCUs have had the odds stacked against their success, and almost 200 years later many of their campuses are still standing despite forces of systemic racism designed to constantly fight against them.

Historical Context: 1837-1899

In 1837, the first institution for the higher education of Black Americans was founded as the Institute for Colored Youth later to be known as Cheyney University. Although depending on who you ask, some will say that the Ashmun Institute or Lincoln University in 1854 was the first Historically Black College or University to be founded in the United States. The District of

Columbia in 1851 and Wilberforce University in 1856 have argued for the title of first as well. 1837, in the heart of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is where it all began. It was not until after the Civil War (1861-1865) when HBCUs began to emerge across the nation. Shaw University became the first HBCU in the south, located in Raleigh, North Carolina.

On August 30, 1890, the Second Morrill Act was passed and required states with racially segregated public higher education systems to provide a land-grant institution for Black students whenever a land-grant institution was established and restricted for White students. After the passage of the Act, public land-grant institutions specifically for Blacks were established in each of the southern and border states. As a result, some new public Black institutions were founded, and many formerly private Black schools came under public control; eventually 19 Black institutions were designated as land-grant colleges. These institutions mostly offered courses in agricultural, mechanical, and industrial subjects and today are known as Delaware State University, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Virginia State University, North Carolina A&T, South Carolina State University, Fort Valley State University, Florida A&M University, Alabama A&M University, Tuskegee University, Alcorn State University, Kentucky State University, Tennessee State University, Lincoln University Missouri, University of Arkansas at Pine bluff, Southern University, Southern A&M College, Langston University and Prairie View A&M University (HBCU First, 2021).

A scholar, by the name of Travis J. Albritton (1991) stated in his article “Educating Our Own: The Historical Legacy of HBCUs and Their Relevance for Educating a New Generation of Leaders,”

The lack of funding offered to HBCUs established between 1865 and 1896 inhibited their early growth and development. Under the provisions outlined in the Second Morrill Act, states received “an annual appropriation of \$15,000 which after 10 years would grow to \$25,000.” (p. 55)

While in theory the Act supported the growth and advancement of HBCUs, the fact that state legislators could maintain policies to ensure Black and White institutions remained separate served to undermine the success of HBCUs, specifically with respect to funding. Even in their attempt to ensure that Black people received an education, sponsors of the Second Morrill Act adopted a contradictory stance, which ensured that new land-grant HBCUs would in no way be on equal footing with their White counterparts. Moreover, the insufficient financial support offered by individual states further hampered the institutional capacity for long-term financial solvency and the acquisition of physical resources on par with their predominantly White counterparts (Albritton, 2012). From their inception, HBCUs were not meant to be equal to their white counterparts.

Historical Context: 1900-1920

The beginning of the 20th century saw still more schools established for, but by the Great Depression of the 1930s the number of these schools had begun to decline. Many factors contributed to the closings, consolidations, and mergers, including diminished financial support from northern philanthropists and church groups, and the rise of accreditation agencies for colleges and universities (Clement, 2011). Another scholar, as cited by Albritton, Jenkins (1991) highlights this fact, citing a 1919 Federal Bureau of Education Study of Alabama Colleges: State funding for Alabama’s black land-grant institution remained constant at \$4,000 annually

throughout the Great Depression. Unlike its white counterpart, whose state funding averaged \$65,000 yearly between 1900 and 1916, at no time during the period did the black college benefit from special appropriations ‘to meet the growth in enrollment and the advancing cost of maintenance’ (p. 66). Policies and practices, such as this striking discrepancy in funding, guaranteed that HBCUs throughout the South, limited in their capability to provide the necessary resources to educate students, would remain financially inferior to their White counterparts for years to come (Albritton, 2012). These claims scholars make that HBCUs are typically underfunded in comparison to their PWI counterparts is not something new, but inherently sewn into the very fabric of how our system funds Black institutions of higher education and how that affects the students that attend these institutions.

Historical Context: 1921-1940

Legislation also plays a huge role in higher education. The type of institution makes a huge difference in how much say the current legislation and laws have over them. If you are a public-state funded institution, there is influence from both state, federal and local legislation. Enrollments at HBCUs grew consistently between their inception and the 1930s. This growth resulted from expansion among public land grant HBCUs funded under the Second Morrill Act of 1890, and from expansion among private HBCUs supported by churches and foundations. Anderson (1988) documents enrollment trends between 1900 and 1935, revealing the dramatic increases in Black student enrollment over this time period. In 1900, 3,880 Black college and professional students were enrolled in southern institutions, including the District of Columbia (Anderson, 1988). By 1935, the number of Black college and professional students in the South had grown to over 29,000 (Jewell, 2002). Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that Black

women were often able to attend college in more significant numbers than their white female peers because of the open access mission of HBCUs (Jewell, 2002). While in 1900, Black men vastly outnumbered Black women in terms of college and professional school enrollments at southern colleges, we can see the beginnings of current trends among Black women in college representation by the 1930s (Jewel, 2002).

Anderson (1988) states, in 1900, 3,115 Black men and 761 Black women were receiving a college or professional education in the South. However, by 1935 just over 12,000 Black men and over 16,000 Black women were enrolled in college and professional programs throughout the South (Anderson, 1988). While the salience of racial dynamics in higher education has been a useful framework for analyzing HBCUs, in the 1930s scholars called attention to the importance of economic shifts in American society for HBCUs, thereby underscoring the interaction of class and race (Anderson, 1988). Continuing the emphasis on the transformative role of HBCUs relative to Black communities, Woodson's analysis of curricular and ideological trends in higher education for Blacks pointed to a need to transcend the industrial/classical debate in favor of an educational model that incorporated both strains and was more consistent with then- current economic realities. Similarly, Gallagher (1938/1966), while stating that the purpose of HBCUs was twofold, playing an "active role in transforming the caste system" and "addressing the internal problems of the Negro group" (pp. 217-218), noted that it was the responsibility of the HBCU to "transform the institutions of class and race" in American society (p. 225). Bond argued that changes in the basic economic functions of American society stressed the absolute utility of higher education for Blacks in a changing economy. Higher education has often been something that opens doors and shapes our young students into well-rounded and

responsible members of society, coming out of a world of slavery and into the era of Jim Crow before the Civil Rights Movement, the role of HBCUs has shifted with the times and continues to fight the structural obstacles placed in front of them.

Historical Context: 1941-1960

Another huge court case that began to change the face of the student population at HBCU's was in 1954. In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court declared "separate but equal" unconstitutional, ordering the integration of the American public education system through their ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas* (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). This change expanded the number of institutions Black students had access to and increased the number of students attending college. For example, between 1950 and 1960, the number of non-whites (including Blacks) with at least one year of college grew from 414,000 to 779,000(Allen, 2007). As cited by Allen (2007), not only did more Black students begin to enroll in Predominantly White Institutions but also, non-Black students began to enroll at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The face and make up of HBCUs began to shift as the student enrollment began to shift at PWIs as well.

Historical Context: 1961-1980

As we entered the peak of the Civil Rights movement, we continue to see more and more legislation changing the overall face of our society. Within the realm of the university, we continued to see change in enrollment in college overall. Overall, Black enrollments had increased 110% between 1964 and 1969 (Allen, 2007). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 further pushed desegregation, carrying through the federal commitment to desegregate public education(p. 269). Title IV of the Civil Rights Act required that all colleges receiving public

funds or operated by the state to desegregate, while Title VI made it illegal for institutions receiving federal aid to discriminate against students on the basis of race, color, or national origin (p. 269). This legal precedent fueled the second "Great Migration," representing the migration in enrollments from HBCUs to traditionally White institutions (p 270).

As more predominately White institutions (PWIs) opened their doors to Black students throughout the late 1960s and 1970s (many of them offering financial assistance), the number of Black students overall, and high-achieving students in, enrolling at HBCUs began to decline (Allen, 2007). The departure of high-ability Black students coupled with the "open door" policy of HBCUs resulted in demonstrative gaps in academic achievement between Blacks at HBCUs and their counterparts at PWIs (Allen, 2007). As cited by Allen, data reveal that by 1971, 3% of Black students entering PWIs had an A or A+ grade point average (GPA), compared to 1.4% of Black students entering HBCUs (Allen, 2007). While educating Black students regardless of academic preparation was a central part of the mission of HBCUs, the considerable enrollment of Black students with academic challenges changed the landscape of HBCUs for the upcoming decade, leading to increased reallocation of resources to remediation rather than college-level instruction (Allen 2007)

The other most pertinent piece of legislation that occurred during this time was the Higher Education Act of 1965. The Higher Education Act (HEA) was the legislation that is responsible for the authorizing federal student aids programs, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Work Study and federal student loans (Allen, 2007). Although higher education has not always been as expensive as it is now, there was a price tag that created exclusivity for mostly affluent, white men, excluding Black and

brown people, poor people and women. When these programs became available, there was this new-found availability to the chance for education for anyone who wanted to take out loans and receive funding to further their journey at the chance of obtaining the American dream.

Historical Context: 1981-2000

After accessibility to higher education increased, the make-up of enrollment shifted once again, not necessarily by race, but by gender. While total enrollments for Black students overall attending HBCUs stabilized by the 1980s, enrollments for women soared (Allen, 2007). In 1976, 117,944 women were enrolled at Black colleges and universities and by 1989, this number increased to more than 140,000 (Allen, 2007). By comparison, and unlike the early 20th century trends, total enrollments for men at HBCUs decreased from 104,669 in 1976 to 102,484 in 1989 (Allen, 2007). As the student makes changes, our support for students must adapt as well as change with the times. 2000 entered a new millennium and all colleges were expected to keep up with the advancements and new technologies made throughout the decades to come. How can universities keep up to make these changes when they are constantly put at a disadvantage? Another important court case to be familiar with is *Ayers v Fordice*, which came to the courts in 1992. Molly Mitchell (2002) takes us through the 17 years of litigation during this case. After 17 years of litigation, Mississippi's public university system remained racially divided. The state had operated legally segregated universities, but had since adopted race-neutral policies to dismantle its "de jure" segregated system (Mitchell, 2002). All students could choose which school to attend, though the choices produced nearly all white and all black institutions of higher

learning due to extreme. Mississippi was one of the last states to show true change after the Brown v Board decision (Mitchell, 2002). After the landmark decision of Brown was announced in 1954, not much happened to integrate higher education in Mississippi. In fact, even the Brown II mandate of "all deliberate speed" in Mississippi meant no speed at all" (Mitchell, 2002). It was not until 1962, by court order, that Mississippi admitted its first black student, James Meredith, to the University of Mississippi (Mitchell, 2002, p. 1013). The Board of Trustees adopted several new admissions requirements including a minimum score on the American College Testing Program (ACT) test and that applicants have at least five letters of recommendation written on their behalf by alumni of the school to which they applied (Mitchell, 2002). The Board of Trustees were asked to submit a plan to truly desegregate in 1969, to be submitted within 120 days, five years later a plan was submitted to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) and it was declined due to not meeting the requests of HEW and even then, state legislation refused to fund this limited effort plan until 1978(Mitchell, 20020). Finally, this case went to the Supreme Court, where the Supreme Court disagreed with the current standard applied by the lower courts that upheld this de jure segregation of the state higher education system. The Court pointed out four suspect remnants of the prior de jure system (Mitchell, 2002). The Court first addressed the admissions policies of the universities and found that they were enacted with a discriminatory purpose and had current discriminatory effects (Mitchell, 2002).

The unnecessary duplication of programs at Historically Black Universities (HBUs) and Historically White Universities (HWUs) was the second area of concern for the Supreme Court. The policy of "separate but equal" resulted in the duplication of programs; continuing such duplication, the Court reasoned, perpetuated the illegal policy (Mitchell, 2002, p.1018). Next, the

Court considered Mississippi's institutional mission classifications and whether they perpetuated a dual education system. The Court found the mission classifications were traceable to policies enacted to continue segregation and that the classifications also limited student choice. Finally, the Court recognized that the existence of eight public universities was traceable to the dual system. A huge win came from this settlement. The proposed settlement consists of \$503 million to be paid to the HBUs over the next seventeen years (Mitchell, 2002). This amount includes \$245 million to go towards academic programs, \$75 million for capital improvements, \$55 million in public endowment funds, \$35 million in private endowment funds and the over \$83 million already spent as part of the Ayers remedy (Mitchell, 2002). The agreement stipulates that \$500,000 will be paid annually for the fiscal years of 2002-2006, and \$750,000 will be paid for the following five years to increase financial aid for summer remedial programs (Mitchell, 2002). The settlement also includes the requirement that the HBUs attract ten percent other-race enrollment by the Fall of 2018 and sustain it for three years to share in the principal of the private and public endowment funds (Mitchell, 2002). This settlement created a fund for new infrastructure on campus, hiring staff and faculty to create new academic programs, accreditation requirements, equipment needs within labs and other practicing classrooms, sports stadiums, the addition of higher level academic programs like masters and doctoral work and more. It would be naive to think that the success of our state and land grant institution, as well as our students, has not been affected by the legislation throughout history.

Relevant Factors from the Literature

While researching some of the current means of addressing the concern of retention, persistence and degree completion at HBCUs, I found quite a few articles and current

interventions that were being implemented across the nation. In the next few sections, I will a) overview some of the relevant factors that impact HBCU's today, b) discuss the current literature on HBCU's, and c) highlight what some HBCUs are doing to address their students' struggles and what is helping combat them.

Relevant Factor: Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism can be defined as a set of political ideologies that favor free market capitalism, deregulation and reduction in government spending (Harvey, 2007). Neoliberal ideology has affected the very foundation of the university, more specifically, public and state funded institutions. Over the last 10 years, considerable attention has been given to policies that have influences the accessibility to a college experience or postsecondary education. The United States, however, continues to fall behind our peers in the percentage of working adults with a postsecondary degree (Burt, 2018). Furthermore, disparities in postsecondary access by demographic background, notably race, ethnicity, and class, remain. These outcomes suggest that principles of meritocracy and egalitarianism are elusive ideologies for postsecondary institutions (Burt, 2018). Burt continues to write, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the contemporary contest between these contrasting views on higher education, it is valuable to revisit a critical turning point in this dialogue. Burt (2018) notes that the state-higher education partnership was forever reshaped by the structural deterioration of the United States economy in the mid-to-late 1970s.

Rising costs of social programs established under President Lyndon Johnson, led to a bipartisan effort to realign public postsecondary education with free market beliefs. Prior to this period, the public approach to higher education had been increasingly reinforced through federal

acts expanding postsecondary opportunities—legislation such as the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act, otherwise known as the G.I Bill (1944), the Higher Education Act (1965), and Title IX (1972), as well as a series of Supreme Court decisions desegregating higher education—*Gaines v. Canada* (1938), *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* (1950) (Burt, 2018). More recently, scholars have suggested that shifting racial dynamics in the United States during this period altered support for social institutions like higher education (Burt, 2018). We saw a major shift from using eligibility for federal funds like Pell Grants being used for public good to being used for private good and the betterment of businesses and banks.

Fast forward to what financial aid looks like for most students, American undergraduate student loan debt and default have been on the rise with an estimated \$1.3 trillion in outstanding student loan debt as of October 2017 an increase of approximately \$200 billion from September 2014 (Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 2014). The College Board reports that Black students are more likely than their peers, particularly white peers, to borrow; to borrow at higher rates; to have higher monthly debt burdens; and to default on repayment (Baker, 2019). Those in power have and continue to set tuition, fees and housing to a level so high that students are leaving public institutions with so much debt that it makes it nearly impossible to excel in this neoliberal society and as previously stated, scholars have suggested that the shift happened when other races, mostly Black Americans began to seek higher education, this of course, hits our HBCU students and their futures.

Relevant Factor: Race in the US

Emmett Till. Oscar Grant. Trayvon Martin. Kimani Gray. Eric Garner. Ahmaud Aubery. Michael Brown. Tamir Rice. Walter Scott. Alton Sterling. Philando Castile. Breonna Taylor.

George Floyd. These are just some of the names that have created a worldwide call for accountability, justice and the end of police violence against any life, but specifically Black lives. Black lives matter is a phrase that means so much more than simply a Black life matters. It means that Black livelihood matters, Black futures matter, Black joy matters, Black feelings matter, Black health matters, Black education matters, Black neighborhoods matter, Black schools matter. Yet the most common question posed toward HBCUs in this new millennium is, “do we even need HBCUs?” In our supposedly post-racial society, is there still a need for HBCU’s the way there was in their first 100 years of existence? Marybeth Gasman (2017) professor and scholar wrote, “As the Black Lives Matter movement began to fight racial injustices and the murdering of Black people at the hands of law enforcement, Gasman (2017) argued that the ‘relevancy’ question began to take on new meaning. As the rapid killing of Black men and women took place in cities throughout the country, the treatment of African Americans on college campuses became a hot button issue. The Black Lives Matter Movement, which also began around this time took hold in great forces on campuses and led to the removal of leadership and vast changes in policy (Gasman, 2017).

However, at the same time, many African Americans—parents and future students—were watching these incidents on campuses and beginning to wonder if predominantly white institutions were healthy environments for learning, and more importantly, if they were safe for Black and Brown students. During this same time period, HBCUs began to see an increase in new student enrollment. Gasman (2017) notes, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics nearly 38 percent of HBCUs reported a 10 percent increase in undergraduate student enrollment between fall semesters 2013 and 2014. And since 2014, the increases have continued

with over 40 HBCUs (nearly 40% of the 105 in existence), boasting increases in new student enrollments between 10% and 50% (Gasman, 2017). Although it is too soon to make a direct connection between the racial conflict on predominantly white campuses, the attention brought about related to these conflicts by the Black Lives Matter movement, and the increases in enrollment at HBCUs, we know anecdotally that these parents are concerned about sending their children to unsafe campuses. Equally, we know that students are concerned they will not be able to learn or be valued at PWIs. It is my hope that researchers focused on HBCUs will begin to conduct qualitative interviews and survey research with incoming HBCU students to see the correlation between racial conflicts in America effecting the choices students make for their postsecondary education.

In 2016, I was still asked the relevancy question about HBCUs but I expanded my answer to include issues of inclusion, having a safe and empowering learning environment, being valued for your contributions to the academic community, as well as your cultural background. These features of HBCUs have always been in existence but I think they are even more important right now, especially as we move into an era of deep and open hatred and racism fueled by the president of the United States, with no apologies. HBCUs have always been important but they are priceless, essential, and fundamental to the lives of African Americans in the 21st Century. (Gasman, 2017)

HBCUs matter, because Black lives matter and it is important and essential to invest in our students and the universities in which they attend. In the next chapter, I will discuss the importance of creating a community where students feel supported in both their academic and

extra-curricular coursework through restructuring of functional areas across campus at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Current Literature on HBCUs

During my time as a higher educational professional, it became very transparent to me that three things mattered the most to having a successful university, outside of money: student retention, student persistence and students completing their degrees. As an admissions professional, I always encouraged prospective students to ask their tour guides at other institutions two questions, 1) why did you decide to attend this college and 2) why did you stay? These two questions tell you a lot about not only the student, but the institutions as well. I went to a school where I only ever met one student who said it was their top choice, everyone else ended up here because it was an affordable state school or they got some type of grant or scholarship to attend. We all stayed for a variety of reasons, for our freshmen year friends, for an amazing program, for a fraternity or sorority we joined, for the clubs, organizations and sports teams, and even for the environment.

Dr. Claude Hutto, an Assistant Professor at Morehouse College, published an article on the impact that living on campus made for student retention and persistence. Hutto (2002) says, living on campus was further positively associated with satisfaction with college experience and retention. This pattern was observed among all categories of students regardless of sex, race, academic ability, or family background. Unlike commuter students, residential students exhibited greater involvement and attachment to undergraduate life. Living in a dormitory was also positively associated with interaction with faculty and support services, participation in organizations and social fraternities and sororities, and achievement of leadership in

organizations and athletics. Astin (1993) similarly reported a high positive correlation between on campus housing and satisfaction with faculty, attainment of the bachelor's degree, and willingness to re-enroll in the same institution for advance study (cited by Hutto, 2002). The goal goes beyond retention, it is imperative that universities continue. Even now, HBCUs, compared to non-HBCUs, serve students who have a relatively more difficult time sustaining their education all the way through to graduation. It is certainly the case that students from lower socioeconomic statuses, and who come from families with lower household incomes, are more likely to withdraw early and less likely to graduate within six years. HBCUs tend to enroll a greater proportion of these students than their non-HBCU counterparts. Some HBCU students may not have been admitted to other institutions of higher learning due to lower standardized test scores another equally elitist and classist identifier to determine if students are “college material.” For such students, HBCUs (26 percent of which are open enrollment) represent an opportunity for higher learning that might not otherwise have been available (Richards, 2012). It is important that as faculty, staff and administrators at HBCUs, we continue to make the best decision to help our students see it through to graduation and in the next chapter I will discuss how each campus can take an approach to better support our Black students at HBCUs from start to finish.

Addressing the Challenges: Living Learning Communities

HBCUs and the departments within their walls often operate as separate entities, Enrollment Management on one side, Student Affairs on another and the Academic Affairs on another with every department in between not seeming able to collaborate. Ericksen (2015) poses the idea of Living Learning Communities (LLCs) becoming a step in the right direction for all

offices and areas on campus to come together in the just cause of student success. The importance of involvement on all sides of the university have proven in previous research to help students feel more supported, which in turn leads to retention. The article goes into, if an HBCU would like to implement an LLC program there are necessary steps needed to be taken starting with having a supportive administration, creating an advisory group and planning team with faculty, staff and administration involved. These members will also partake in learning communities, essentially monthly check ins and professional development, this assists in another step of establishing campus buy-in and finally encouraging team teaching, the step to exemplify the critical partnership between staff and faculty.

Norfolk State University, a Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) ambitiously set out to invent and implement Living Learning Community styled hosting in just one year and this article takes us through the process. NSU has roughly 2,000 residents on campus and have a high percentage of first generation students and more than 90 percent receive financial aid. In 2012, NSU decided to implement LLCs to help retain freshman students. The started the process with an LLC advisor committee that was made up of faculty, staff, students and administrators. Two groupings of LLC were made, one for honors students and the other encompassed additional schools and colleges on campus. This article outlines the lessons learned from this swift implementation of LLCs. Lesson one, LLCs much match university's needs, lesson two, educate the community as to what LLCs are to help create buy in, lesson three provide LLC administrative support like workshops and trainings to better execute the implementation, lesson four, incorporate and build on past success, lesson five, develop supportive teams to go beyond fostering support and collaboration, step six, incorporate

assessment. The overarching lesson learned was that that must be a strong and intricate collaborative partnership between academic affairs and student affairs for these LLC to succeed, there must be campus and community wide buy in (Ericksen, 2015).

Addressing the Challenges: Advisement/ Co-Curricular Advisors

Within an article found during our research period, authors Palmer and Strayhorn explore the journey of 11 Black men who were academically underprepared for college who could persist to graduation at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) starting from a summer bridge or early start program. From challenges starting before students step on college campuses, we are quickly introduced to some systemic problems as to why Black men have trouble not only attending college but staying through to graduation. Data in the article educates the readers that beginning in high school and even earlier, Black males are disproportionately disciplined in schools, suspended for longer and are more likely to be discouraged from attending college than their White male counterparts. Much research has been done as far as Black male success at traditionally white institutions (TWIs) but not as frequently is it looked at as their success at HBCUs. This data found that between the 11 males, the average profile was a business major, junior having completed at least 93 credits and had a GPA was a 2.7. The findings showed through intensive interviews there were 4 non-cognitive themes that motivated these students to get to the graduation stage. Mastering one's own fate, maintaining focus and academic achievement, time management and balancing your time and developing a passion for one's academic major and achievement.

I believe with research like this it is imperative in courses that so many universities have adopted like, Freshman Year Experience, Introduction to Campus or College, a variety of names have been placed on a variety of formatted courses, to adapt this research into the curriculum, often when a student is getting ready to withdraw or decides to leave at the end of the fall semester, it is already too late. Underprepared students specifically in this study, Black men at HBCUs, need to have relationships with professionals on campus to help encourage the development of these non-cognitive skills to better more positively impact their leadership and personal growth both in and out of the classroom. Of the 11 students surveyed and interviewed, 10 planned to move forward to at least a master's degree and 4 even voiced they wanted to pursue a doctoral degree, this coming from students who typically would not have been outright accepted into these universities. Non-cognitive development and a more student centered and hands on advisement theory could become a make or break for this population of students that so many researchers seem interested in helping, but keep missing the bar, whether it be starting too late in college or even in high school. There is much work to be done, but this article provided a unique insight to the heavily sought after Black male population at TWIs but instead at HBCUs and if it makes a difference regarding retention and persistence.

Addressing the Challenges: Summer Bridge Programs

An article by Dr. Robert Palmer addresses the challenges that threaten the academic success of underprepared Black males at HBCUs. First the article introduces that Black Male

completion and enrollment is far less significant compared to any other racial group, but especially compared to their female counterparts. Notably in 2004, Black women achieved twice as many associates, bachelors and master's degrees then their counterparts. Where does this stem from, the article tells us that social science literature is often fraught with terms describing Black males as endangered, uneducable, dysfunctional and dangerous. This study works to provide literature to speak to the Black male experience at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) specifically, the underprepared male collegiate students. For this study they met with 11 juniors and seniors at public HBCUs who had come into the institutions from the remedial program. They conducted interviews and asked questions like: (a) What are key factors that you perceive as contributing to your academic success? (b) What were obstacles to your academic success? (c) How did you overcome those issues? (d) What has been your greatest challenge as a African American male at this institution? and (e) How have you been able to deal with or overcome that challenge? This research was conducted to give a voice to the students who persisted against the odds, instead of the more commonly found articles written on high achieving Black men. The findings showed that the following proved to be major barriers to persistence and degree completion, Financial support, reluctance of Black men seeking support or pride vs. need and the disconnect between home environment and academic success. The article suggests that more can be done to reach our Black male students on campus to help encourage that seeking support does not weaken or counter their masculinity. (Palmer, 2009)

Another article from Dr. Palmer introduces the fact that although HBCUs do succeed in educating Black students across the nation, they do face challenges in Black male enrollment, campus engagement, retention, success and graduation. The purpose of this article was to tell, in

detail, the impact of the Male Initiative on Leadership and Excellence, a program at an HBCU founded in 2004 to increase retention and graduation rates among Black males. This program involved many offices such as the Office of Student Retention, Honors Programs and Residence Life and has had support from faculty, administrators and staff. The program is anchored in theoretical concepts, one being that student engagement reflects the time and energy students invest in educationally purposeful activities, that student engagement emphasizes that student's involvement in college counts more in terms of desired outcomes, more than who they are or where they went to school. The other concept that anchors this program is the concept of "identity and learning" MILE activities and experiences are reflective to help students become familiar with their internal sense of self, like the theory of self-authorship. Also, participants engaged in a variety of out-of-the classroom activities and reflexive writing assignments, which positively impacted their in class academic performance (Palmer, 2013).

Professional Experience: The Madness Behind the Method

I graduated college in 2016 and went straight into the profession of higher education. My first job was working as an admissions counselor at a small, Catholic institution where I served as the recruiter for the greater Philadelphia area, central and northern New Jersey and the Lehigh Valley regions of Pennsylvania. It was here that I learned hands on just how different high school is for so many students. When I graduated, my dad asked me a reflective question as soon as I got to my family. He said, "Well, would you change anything?" In the high of graduating and even in retrospect, I don't think I would have. I attended college, live on campus all 4 years, I was highly involved and developed some great friendships that have plenty of memories to last a lifetime. As a first-generation student, I was not sure what waited for me on a college campus but

I was ready to get involved. I would ask students I met in their schools what they knew about college, common answers would be fraternities, sororities, sports, student organizations, parties, studying abroad and of course, long papers. My second question showed a different side of what they were expecting from college. The question is, imagine we fast forward 4 years, and you wake up tomorrow on your college graduation day, what are some of the things you want to say you accomplished over the last 4 years? The overwhelming response was along the lines of, I just want to say I did it. It is our responsibility to make sure they can do it, to go above the typical expectation and support our students until they graduate. How can we do this? My intervention should be implemented for both new students and students once they find themselves in poor academic standing or academic probation. The intervention is an adjustment to the structural support that comes from enrollment management to act as a preventative measure before we meet students at the academic probation letter.

This approach was inspired by my professional time at Cheyney University. I entered Cheyney University in the last cycle of accreditation review before the Middle States Accreditation body would come in and decide the university's fate. Why is attending an accredited university so important? First, graduating from an accredited university tends to be a requirement for graduate and professional studies, so if your field of work requires anything above a bachelor's degree, attending a non-accredited institution would not be wise. Most importantly, if the institution is no longer accredited, it cannot receive federal funding, that means no subsidized or unsubsidized loans to help you cover the cost of tuition, fees and room and board, in short, paying for college becomes practically impossible for so many students. This time at Cheyney was very challenging. The pressure was on to increase and maintain enrollment to increase financial

revenue and make progress for Middle States Accreditation to see that we are moving forward to hit the marks of progress made clear in previous reviews. Out of practices created from this dire time, came my intervention. Programs were created in a rush to pump previously denied students into our doors through a bridge program with a local community college, where students could still live on Cheyney's campus, or, so they could pay the housing bill. These students still absolutely deserved a shot at attending college, but did not deserve the lack of support and services that were not made readily available to them. The inception of the program was confusing for students, parents and staff member alike; as higher education practitioners, we cannot lose sight of the reason our campuses are open. Our university missions typically include phrases like, equip and empower students to be visionary leaders in their chosen fields, to serve a multi-generational student population and provides education opportunities while promoting lifelong learning. Other phrases like fosters leadership, social responsibility are used to describe why universities are functioning. Our programming must be intentionally student centered to ensure our students can go out into the world and become highly educated-visionary leaders, lifelong learners, engaged community members who seek to make change in the world. In order to go out into the world as such, they must first be supported so that they can return, persist and graduate.

Chapter Four: Program Design

The previous chapter demonstrated the importance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), the struggles they have faced throughout history, and the systemic challenges that have been built to limit their potential. Originally, HBCUs were formed because Black students were not allowed to attend most colleges in the United States. Traditionally white institutions that were founded prior to the *Brown v Board* case were built for white students, more specifically wealthy, white, male students, and built on the backs of enslaved Black people. (Wilder, 2013, p. 176). In the book, *Ebony and Ivy, Race, Slavery and the troubled History of American Universities*, Wilder (2013) demonstrates how many of America's most revered colleges and universities—from Harvard to Yale to Princeton and countless more—were soaked in the sweat, the tears, and sometimes the blood of people of color. Slavery funded early colleges, built campuses, and paid the wages of professors. Enslaved Americans waited on faculty and students; academic leaders aggressively courted the support of slave owners and slave traders (Wilder, 2013). Significantly, as Wilder shows, our leading universities, dependent on human bondage, became breeding grounds for the racist ideas that sustained them. This intervention takes a structural approach to help combat some of the systemic issues embedded in society in order to uplift our Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The reasoning for a structural approach is because, to put simply, one siloed, individual program or initiative cannot work to combat systemic racism. Many of the problems within HBCUs are typically not by fault of the university or the student. As discussed in Chapter 3, the historical context of this thesis, there have been and continue to be things done to further disenfranchise Black students, who are the majority of those enrolled at HBCUs. The “Next 184 Year Initiative” will primarily be rooted

in a core committee (see Table 1) of cross-campus representatives from academic affairs, student affairs, enrollment management, administration, and the student body with two main projects to implement:

1. Academic and Co-Curricular Orientation and Reorientation Plan Programs
2. 360 Campus Support Training

I truly believe with these projects through this intervention and initiative we would be able to better support our students through their time on our HBCU campuses and see higher retention, persistence and degree completion.

Purpose

Overall Intervention Goals

To structurally combat the effects of systematic racism in order to increase persistence, retention and degree completion rates at HBCUs. To create a campus culture of support for student success

The Next 184 Year Initiative Committee Objectives

1. To collaborate with a variety of campus offices to facilitate campus wide buy-in and support for students and initiatives
2. To review, evaluate, and enact change on University policies, procedures, programs and services impacting student retention, persistence and degree completion
3. To perform assessments of intervention programs and adjust on a yearly basis

Academic and Co-Curricular Orientation and Reorientation Program Plan

The academic and co-curricular orientation and reorientation program plan will be a workshop session within orientation and reorientation for students to establish their academic

and cocurricular goals and create a success plan to achieve them. They will use this plan to check in with both academic and cocurricular advisor to ensure that they stay on track to be successful.

Reference Appendices A and B for the orientation and reorientation student success plan outline.

1. To create a tangible plan for students to outline their success and the steps they need to achieve it
2. To maintain student accountability when goals are not achieved or need to be restructured
3. To maintain student interaction with their academic and co-curricular advisors and build relationships to enhance feeling of mattering

360 Campus Support Training

360 Campus Support Training will offer training to staff, faculty, administrators and student leaders to better prepare them to assist students when and where they need it most. This is to hope to close the gap when students may feel they do not have the supports or resources. In my experience, students may leave the institution without having the correct information. Refer to Appendix C for the training agenda. This component is key to assist in retention and persistence.

1. Objective: Develop a collaborative campus community to support student success
 - a. Learning Outcome 1: Attendees of the 360 Campus Support Training will be able assist students in identifying their support team: academic advisor, co-curricular advisor, residence hall director etc.,
 - b. Learning Outcome 2: Attendees of the 360 Campus Support Training will be able to identify other offices to implement intentional policy and programming to support student's persistence and retention from year to year

Learning Outcome 3: Attendees of the 360 Campus Support Training will be able to counsel students and recognize the student's needs

2. Objective: Create Living Learning Communities (LLCs)
 - a. Learning Outcome 1: Residents will show evidence of their growing understanding of themselves as individuals demonstrating the ability to apply knowledge and skills in solving problems, reflecting thoughtfully on identity, and taking responsibility for the wellbeing of self and others
 - b. Resident Hall Directors will serve as support staff for their residents and resident advisors

Theoretical Frameworks

Looking to the Bottom

Scholar, researcher, lawyer and professor Mari Matsuda is well known for her work in Critical Race Theory. I was introduced to her writing in her published work, "Looking to the Bottom: Critical Legal Studies and Reparations," which talks about adopting the perspective of those who have seen and felt the falsity of your concern area. What Matsuda (1987) suggested is not abstract consideration of the position of the least advantaged. The imagination of the academic philosopher cannot recreate the experience of life on the bottom (Matsuda, 1987). We cannot possibly fix the issues we see happening on HBCU campuses from the outside; each campus has its own struggles and this intervention will never be a one size fits all campus solution. These programs being implemented could and should look differently at Shaw University in North Carolina and at Bethune-Cookman University in Florida. The intervention is intentionally created to start within the core committee to identify the needs of its own campus.

The core committee is composed of every population on campus: faculty, staff, students, and administrators, in order to gain full knowledge from top to bottom of what needs to be addressed. The intention behind the intervention's two components is to help cover the basis of a student's collegiate journey. The academic and cocurricular plan will be introduced at orientation for new students and reimplemented for current students who fall below satisfactory academic progress. The 360-campus support training incorporates student leaders, faculty, staff, and administrators both in and out of the classroom to help students' success journeys. The living learning communities are designed to help establish camaraderie amongst students within their communities and to create stronger support systems when students need it most.

Black Lives Matter - Schlossberg

My reason for coming into higher education as a profession was because I genuinely had such a great time during my time in my undergraduate career and I feel that everyone should be able to have that same experience. To be able to leave an institution and know that you belong there, to know that it is home and what you did made an impact there is a feeling that is hard to replicate. Schlossberg (1989) looks at the five aspects of mattering in their theory of Marginality vs. Mattering. These are: *attention*, the feeling that you are noticed; *importance*, the belief that you are cared about; *ego extension*, the belief that someone else will be proud of your success or will sympathize with you when you fail; *dependence*, the feeling of feeling needed; and *appreciation*, the feeling that one's efforts are appreciated by others (Schlossberg, 1989). This framework is key when it comes to seeing students move through their collegiate journey and is rooted in student success. We cannot have student success when students do not feel as if they matter. Within the intervention plan, all five aspects of mattering are highly focused on.

The Core Committee is focused on all five areas, attention, importance, ego extension, dependence and appreciation. It is the responsibility of the core committee members to be reflective and critical on how they can better the current structure at their universities for students to feel more supported as they move through their collegiate journey. The intervention reflects all five aspects of mattering. The aspects are all feelings of support, as previously mentioned, the five aspects are all feel good words. This is truly the goal, restructure enrollment management policies to reflect being student success focused. When a cocurricular advisor or faculty member stops a student to ask, 'how are your goals going?' after meeting them at orientation, the first three aspects are covered. That student could feel noticed, cared about, and get a feeling that someone would be proud of them. The other two aspects of mattering, dependence and appreciation, would be core focused within the Living Learning Communities. Through the 360 Campus Support Training, staff, faculty and student leaders will be able to focus on how to implement and establish the five aspects of mattering in every aspect of campus life in the hopes of increasing student retention, persistence and in turn, degree completion rates.

Program Proposal

The Next 184 Year Initiative will be responsible for assessing, planning and implementing solutions to help increase retention, persistence, and degree completion ratings at HBCUs. The two components of the proposed intervention would branch off as suggested interventions by the subcommittees formed from the Core Committee with personnel from the respective areas represented. The Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs or their equivalents would oversee the Core Committee to ensure effectiveness in their tasks as well to avoid the potential for continued siloed programming.

Strategically placing the Initiative Committee under the three Vice Presidents holds the potential to prioritize and expedite solutions with approval coming directly from the president's cabinet members.

The Next 184 Year Initiative Core Committee, Core Committee for short, would be responsible for hosting two meetings a year to check in bi-annually with the subcommittees who would meet on a much more frequent basis to keep up to date with the planning, implementation, and changes needed for each component. The Core Committee would be responsible for assessing, strategizing, and implementing solutions to continue to raise retention, persistence and degree completion ratings at the respective HBCU campus. Reference Appendix D to see the training agenda for the Core Committee.

The Next 184 Year Initiative Core Committee Creation

Cross campus representation and full campus buy-in is essential to make sure that all focus areas are addressed. The areas of focus are:

1. Enrollment and Recruitment
2. Persistence and Retention
3. Academic Success
4. Co-Curricular Involvement/Student Life
5. Housing and Residential Support
6. Support and Institutional Commitment
7. Counseling and Health

The suggested Core Committee makeup is outlined in Table 1

Table 1

Representing Body	Members Represented	Primary Role
Undergraduate Students	3	To represent the undergraduate student experience and needs at the undergraduate level Areas of Focus- 1, 2, 3, 6
Graduate Students	3	To represent the graduate student experience and needs at the graduate level Areas of Focus- 1, 2, 3, 6
Faculty	3	To represent the experience and needs of the University Faculty and provide insight as to the academic needs of students within the classroom Areas of Focus- 2, 3, 6
Office of the President	1	To represent and ensure a collaborative and responsive relationship with the Office of the President and our campus initiative Areas of Focus-6
Student Affairs Administration	2	To provide insight for supporting students through student affairs policy, procedures and practices outside of the classroom Areas of Focus- 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
Academic Deans/ Academic Affairs Administration	3	To provide insight for supporting queer and trans students through academic affairs policy, procedures and practices Areas of Focus- 2, 3 6
Student Conduct	1	To represent and provide input on maintain inclusive and supportive policy for students who find themselves in the conduct office Areas of Focus- 2, 4, 6
New Student Orientation	1	To represent and instill institutional support students when they first enter the university through new student programs Areas of Focus- 1, 3, 4, 6
Office of Admissions	1	To ensure recruitment and institutional support for all students from the beginning of the application process as prospective students

		Areas of Focus- 1, 2, 6
Financial Aid/ Registrar/ Bursar	2	To represent and instill understanding and support for students about the subject areas of this office Areas of Focus- 1, 2, 6, 7
Housing and Residential Life	1	To represent and instill support for students outside of the classroom and provide insight as to what students need in their living spaces Areas of Focus- 1, 2, 4, 5, 7
Counseling/Wellness Center	1	To include insight from a mental health perspective as the committee meets to plan supportive practices across campus Areas of Focus- 2, 3, 4, 6, 7
Total Representatives	23	The board is large but will work to help break through silo and single office efforts to support students during their time on campus

Academic and Co-Curricular Orientation and Reorientation Program

When my sister went to her university's orientation, there was a time when they split up the parents, guardians, and guests from the students. We were introduced to the director of residence life and housing who walked us through an exercise of writing notes to our student that would be delivered to them roughly 10 days after they were dropped off in the beginning of the semester, typically when students start to show signs of homesickness. The idea of a simple, pre-addressed envelope to every live-in student that attended orientation being a persistence and retention initiative is so simple yet equally can be very effective. Instead of ice breakers or a physical activity, encouraging students to sit down and make a list of three to five goals for their first semester, and then having a follow up conversation with a co-curricular and academic advisor could be beneficial.

In 2015, scholar and higher education professional, Terrell Strayhorn introduces and discussed what his institution does through the Center for Higher Education Enterprise. The “CHEE” focuses on four areas, college access, affordability, engagement, and excellence (Strayhorn, 2015). The CHEE is a research center that actively works both on and off campus to promote student success (Strayhorn, 2015). Strayhorn (2015) covers a few areas that are critical to student success. Examples are: (a) diversity, (b) the overall culture of higher education, (c) the use of cultural navigators or people who strive to help students move successfully through their academic career, and finally, (d) belonging and mattering as key aspects to what leads to student success. Strayhorn states that so much of these topics go hand in hand. Strayhorn (2015) says, “bringing in students to higher education means nothing if they’re not successful. Access without success is useless” (p.58). Addressing the overall culture of higher education and identifying who the cultural navigators are, from parents to professors and classmates, shows the importance of noticing and recognizing students outside of the classroom and in their other areas of living. This is connected to a critical point of belonging and mattering. We have studied Schlossberg’s theory of mattering when we talked about student development and it is key to understanding how educators, as cultural navigators and student affairs professionals are critical in creating this inclusive and supportive environment from a student’s very first decision to apply to final act of graduation. The *Academic and Cocurricular Orientation and Reorientation Program* serves to assist students from their first strides on campus as new students. During orientation students will sit down with their orientation leaders, an academic advisor and a cocurricular advisor and set goals both inside and outside of the classroom. Students will take time to set at minimum four goals they want to achieve in their first semester, two for academic goals and two for

cocurricular goals. Students will be able to reflect on their goals throughout monthly check ins with either their academic and cocurricular advisor. The goal of these check ins is to increase high touch practices between our students and college personal in order to positively effect student retention, persistence and graduation rates. Reference Appendices A and B to see the student success plan activity for orientation and reorientations.

360 Campus Support Training

This component was highly influenced by the idea of summer bridge programs. Oftentimes there is a high rate of success during a student's time in summer bridge due to the hyper focus attention and support since it is a much smaller student population. A high impact summer bridge program was implemented at North Carolina A&T called the Aggie Impact Scholar Program (AISP) which was looked at during 2011 and 2012 (Slade, 2015). In my observed experience, a comprehensive summer bridge initiative is one program that can be the difference for underprepared students to succeed in the same classes as other more prepared students. Sometimes these programs are referred to as "pipeline programs" to act as an early intervention method to strengthen academic success levels by getting students adapted to their college environment, residential program and campus resources.

A high impact summer bridge program was implemented at North Carolina A&T called the Aggie Impact Scholar Program (AISP) which was looked at during 2011 and 2012 (Slade,2015). Slade (2015) reviewed the test scores between traditionally, outright accepted students and summer bridge students. Results showed roughly a 50-point difference as well as the varying factors from their transcripts regarding AP coursework and average greats in English and math courses(Slade, 2015). How can a program reverse 12 years of formal learning deficits?

Slade (2015) introduced a philosophically based format of the AISP that focuses on academic rigor and student engagement, attention to affective needs, and the acculturation to college life. Slade noted that overall, the program saw 97% retention from the fall semester to the spring semester and 95% returned to North Carolina A&T for their sophomore year.

The Next 184 Year Initiative takes a similar 360-support training approach. The hope is that all students would be able to have the same level of support and attention students experience in this summer bridge program, which may result in similar retention and persistence ratings as found in the Slade (2015) study. The goal of the 360 Campus Support Training would be to have cross-functional area groups go through these training sessions to help direct students as well as other staff and faculty to lead students to the support they need. The cross-functional area groups would be key to create a stronger connection between Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, Administration and all functional areas in between. Reference Appendix C to see the outline of the training agenda. From my own professional experience, what I have noticed it that there is often a large division between staff, faculty and other members of the campus community, but at the end of the day, we are all here to service students, so why do we not communicate more often?

Living Learning Communities. To combat having a siloed approach, it was imperative to bring in all areas from campus for implementation success. As a part of the 360 Campus Support Training component, Living Learning Communities should be implemented. Norfolk State University ambitiously set out to invent and implement Living Learning Community styled hosting in just one year (Ericksen,2015). Ericksen stated that NSU has roughly 2,000 residents on campus and has a high percentage of first generation students and more than 90% receive

financial aid. In 2012, NSU decided to implement LLCs to help retain freshman students. The institution started the process with an LLC advisor committee that was made up of faculty, staff, students, and administrators. Two groupings of LLCs were made, one for honors students and the other encompassed additional schools and colleges on campus (Ericksen, 2015). The author stated that the overarching lesson learned was that there must be a strong and intricate collaborative partnership between academic affairs and student affairs for these LLCs or any campus initiative to succeed; there must be campus and community wide buy-in. The university saw a 7% higher increase in freshman retention compared to other models with non-LLC participants (Ericksen, 2015). Higher retention and persistence ratings can be achieved when high touch practices are put into place and with input being put to use from students, staff, faculty, and administrators. This example at Norfolk State University lays a solid foundation for the reasoning to include the implementation in a student success focused intervention. When you have different areas of campus come together, like in the 360 Campus Support Training, the transition from being an applicant to a new student to a second year student can become so much easier, because the admissions team works hand in hand with the rest of enrollment management, residence life and housing and orientation, and those offices all work together to ensure that not only do staff, faculty and student leaders know where to send students who need help, but they have a specific name of who to go to and why that person or office would be helpful to ensure this student can persist.

Professional Competencies

Regarding the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Professional Competencies, my

thematic concern and proposed intervention touches on quite a few areas. I wanted to format this section easily enough to see at a glance, which competencies are covered under which components. The definitions of each NASPA and ACPA Competency are defined in Table 2.

Table 2

Competency Area	Description
Personal and Ethical Foundations (PEF)	Involves the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to develop and maintain integrity in one's life and work; this includes thoughtful development, critique, and adherence to a holistic and comprehensive standard of ethics and commitment to one's own wellness and growth. Personal and ethical foundations are aligned because integrity has an internal locus informed by a combination of external ethical guidelines, an internal voice of care, and our own lived experiences. Our personal and ethical foundations grow through a process of curiosity, reflection, and self-authorship.
Values, Philosophy, and History (VPH)	Involves knowledge, skills, and dispositions that connect the history, philosophy, and values of the student affairs profession to one's current professional practice. This competency area embodies the foundations of the profession from which current and future research, scholarship, and practice will change and grow. The commitment to demonstrating this competency area ensures that our present and future practices are informed by an understanding of the profession's history, philosophy, and values.
Assessment, Evaluation, and Research (AER)	Focuses on the ability to design, conduct, critique, and use various AER methodologies and the results obtained from them, to utilize AER processes and their results to inform practice, and to shape the political and ethical climate surrounding AER processes and uses in higher education.
Law, Policy, and Governance (LPG)	Includes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to policy development processes used in various contexts, the application of legal constructs, compliance/policy issues, and the understanding of governance structures and their impact on one's professional practice
Organizational and Human Resources (OHR)	Includes knowledge, skills, and dispositions used in the management of institutional human capital, financial, and physical resources. This competency area recognizes that student affairs professionals bring personal strengths and grow as managers through challenging themselves to build new skills in the selection, supervision, motivation, and formal evaluation of staff; resolution of conflict; management of the politics of organizational discourse; and the effective application of strategies and techniques associated with financial resources, facilities management, fundraising, technology, crisis management, risk management and sustainable resources.

Leadership (LEAD)	Addresses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required of a leader, with or without positional authority. Leadership involves both the individual role of a leader and the leadership process of individuals working together to envision, plan, and affect change in organizations and respond to broad-based constituencies and issues. This can include working with students, student affairs colleagues, faculty, and community members.
Social Justice and Inclusion (SJI)	While there are many conceptions of social justice and inclusion in various contexts, for the purposes of this competency area, it is defined here as both a process and a goal which includes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to create learning environments that foster equitable participation of all groups while seeking to address and acknowledge issues of oppression, privilege, and power. This competency involves student affairs educators who have a sense of their own agency and social responsibility that includes others, their community, and the larger global context. Student affairs educators may incorporate social justice and inclusion competencies into their practice through seeking to meet the needs of all groups, equitably distributing resources, raising social consciousness, and repairing past and current harms on campus communities
Student Learning and Development (SLD)	Addresses the concepts and principles of student development and learning theory. This includes the ability to apply theory to improve and inform student affairs and teaching practice.
Technology (TECH)	Focuses on the use of digital tools, resources, and technologies for the advancement of student learning, development, and success as well as the improved performance of student affairs professionals. Included within this area are knowledge, skills, and dispositions that lead to the generation of digital literacy and digital citizenship within communities of students, student affairs professionals, faculty members, and colleges and universities as a whole.
Advising and Supporting (A/S)	Addresses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to providing advising and support to individuals and groups through direction, feedback, critique, referral, and guidance. Through developing advising and supporting strategies that take into account self-knowledge and the needs of others, we play critical roles in advancing the holistic wellness of ourselves, our students, and our colleagues.

Below are the following components and the corresponding competencies for that project.

The Next 184 Year Initiative Committee

Personal and Ethical Foundations

Values, Philosophy and History

Student Learning and Development

Organizational and Human Resources

Social Justice and Inclusion

Leadership

Law, Policy, Governance

Assessment, Evaluation and Research

Academic and Co-Curricular Orientation and Reorientation

Advising and Supporting

Student Learning and Development

Organizational and Human Resources

Social Justice and Inclusion

360 Support Training

Values, Philosophy and History

Advising and Supporting

Student Learning and Development

Social Justice and Inclusion

Leadership

Personal and Ethical Foundations

ACPA and NASPA's Professional Competencies encourages college personnel to utilize the competencies to educate institutional stakeholders regarding the purpose and function of our work as well as utilize them to continue to advocate for the importance of holistic student

learning, development and success within larger policy arenas (NASPA, 2010 p. 11) The three common competencies between all three components of the intervention:

- Student Learning and Development
- Advising and Supportive
- Social Justice and Inclusion

Social Justice and Inclusion is key to *The 184 Year Initiative* as the foundational outcomes are to understand how a person is affected by and participates in maintaining systems of oppression, privilege, and power (NASPA, 2010, p.30). As higher education professionals, we must address the impact of systemic racism for students during their K-12 education. The Social Justice Competencies emphasizes the importance and build meaningful relationships with others while recognizing multiple, intersecting identities, perspectives, and developmental differences that people hold (NASPA,2010, p.30). Students must be seen within not only their race, but their other identities and needs during their college experience, by restructuring to student success focused initiatives, we can better address our students needs and continue to support them as they persist to graduation. Student Learning Development is a focal point in the initiative, especially the foundational outcome to articulate theories and models that describe the development of college students and the conditions and practices that facilitate holistic development (NASPA, 2010, p.32). The 360 Campus Support Training component takes the Student Learning Development competency very seriously, as we must re-center our practices to support our students holistically to see the increases in students returning and completing their degrees. Finally, the Advising and Supporting foundational outcomes that this initiative is most heavily rooted in is to facilitate reflection to make meaning from experiences with students, groups,

colleagues, and others as well as the importance of establishing rapport with students, groups, colleagues (NASPA, 2010, p.36). This functional outcome goes both ways for students and colleagues to better establish rapport with each other to better assist fellow students or colleagues in their efforts to build a campus community of support where students and our professional staff can come together as a community. Having these professional competencies helps assist us to continue to grow as we challenge ourselves to become better professionals for our students.

Chapter Five: Implementation & Evaluation

Recognizing that The Next 184 Year Initiative takes a structural approach to its intervention, the majority of the intervention can be completed with funds that are already in use within the university. The funding that would be needed to see this intervention be successful could possibly be allocated from a number of different sources including the office of the president, student affairs, academic affairs, residence life and housing as well as enrollment management. There are a few items that would need to be implemented. The largest item that is instrumental and quite frankly would need to be approved by the administration is the hiring of a few co-curricular advisors, this of course is the largest expense seeing as it is quite literally the salary and benefits of multiple positions depending on the size of the institution. Recognizing that often, we as higher education professionals are stretched thin under the understanding that our jobs encompass all other duties as assigned. We would want to avoid it by hiring other supporting staff to help with this initiative. Most of the costs would be items that are already within budget lines for other departments such as lunches for the overall committee meeting twice a year, paper and printing budgets, professional development opportunities through their respective departments. Please see the Table below to outline the projected budget.

Table 3

Expense Item	Justification	Cost	Total
Co-Curricular Advisor Position	5 co-curricular advisors 2-3 yrs experience advising or related + bachelor's degree	\$45k annual salary	\$225,000
Breakfast/Food	Initial meeting with leadership	\$12 pp, 25 people max	\$300

Breakfast/lunch for meeting with entire group	Training, Learning Outcomes, expectations, committee break ups Etc.	\$30 pp, 25ppl x 2 times a year, 1 time per semester, new appointees/trained	\$1,500
Paper Materials, Padfolios, Folders, printing, Materials for training	To provide tools for note taking and learning during the training and meetings	\$100 pp	\$2,500
Lunch for meeting with entire group/all committees x 3 a year	Meeting to check in, adjust approaches, adapt and see what is needed	\$25pp x 25 x 3	\$625 per meeting, 3 meetings per year \$1,875

Timeline

Originally, when thinking about the proposed timeline, I thought that this could be accomplished and implemented within a year, after further thought, to see the true effects of this initiative and its three components, I believe it would be best to implement a 4 year plan. Within the first year, the full campus committee or core committee would be formed to establish campus wide buy in and establish the other committees for each component and they can begin to identify the needs of each specific committee and functional area. In year two, the committees will be informed well enough to begin implementation of the LLCs, pilot the orientation and reorientation programs as well as the 360 campus support training to launch in the summer prior to the fall semester. After one year of actively implementing these components, year three is the first year to audit. This audit will be done by implementing lots of opportunities for student, staff, faculty and administrative feedback via surveys and town halls to help the community even outside of the committee feel as though they have a place in forming their campus community and addressing the needs they see, that we may not be addressing. This leads to of course any

alterations and changes that need to happen. Then we enter year four, which is where we will be able to begin the process for reviewing the data collected for retention and persistence. It would be too soon to get a sense of comparative data for degree completion, that would be more readily available at the six-year mark. Reference Appendix E to view the example timeline.

Leadership

According to Peter G. Northouse, leadership is a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. To define leadership as a process, means that we take away the common perception that leadership is a trait or something that is possessed by the individual in the position of power. When we change this mindset, leadership becomes more accessible to those who may have originally subscribed to the thought that leaders are born and not made. In his research, we are shown that the trait definition of leadership is often defined by characteristics like height, intelligence, extraversion, fluency and other characteristics, where as a practice, it focuses on how the interaction takes place (Northouse, 2019). Higher education success is often seen under the president, when enrollment goes up, a new major is created, a new building is built, it is thanks to the President of the college, when in reality, it may have had hardly anything to with that position, but we give leadership a pedestal of recognition. I believe true leadership happens from the ground up and is truly a collaborative effort, great things cannot come from one individual or office and have great impact without the entire organization supporting the initiative or common goal, like Northouse notes.

My intervention is not a one year, one step plan, I would like to implement something transformative, to truly change the face of HBCUs that are struggling with retention, persistence

and degree completion. By establishing full campus buy-in for high touch support practices for students coming in that, historically, may not be what many would consider college material, nothing can be achieved transformatively if we do not seek participation and feedback from our entire campus community when it comes to recruitment. After establishing these three components in the Next 184 Year Initiative, which would hopefully lead to increased enrollment and a more financially sound institution, the next steps as a leader or administrator would lean towards hiring more academic success staff and faculty roles would be the next step, as well as providing trainings, workshops and other professional development to better assist current staff and faculty in retention and persistence efforts for the institutions.

Effective leadership comes in many methods, there is no one way to be truly effective, but what we would like to see happen through this intervention is transformative results on our HBCU campuses. While transformative leadership is embodied by a motivator, an inspirational supervisor who helps team members reach their potential. Transformational leadership practices tend to focus on the big picture while working closely and hands on with their team, the transformation takes place through an intentional process professionals know as the five encompassing practices, introduced by Kouzes and Posner in 1983. Kouzes and Posner believe to have true transformative leadership, these five things must happen, as a leader you must model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the current process and look for innovative ways to improve the institution or organization, you must be able to enable others to act and finally, encourage the heart, celebrate the milestones and nurture a team spirit, provide recognition and accomplishments and other reaffirming actions. Effective leadership would have achieved enrollment goals through the admissions department and then handed off the first year students

to the housing and orientation offices because their job was completed, whereas transformational leadership was implemented at Norfolk State University when they implemented Living Learning Communities, worked beyond the typical expectations and called on professionals from across campus to aid in the active shift and change to see overall success of the students, and that is the goal of my intervention.

Within my first job at a small, private, catholic institution, I had four different supervisors within the course of a year, each with their own leadership styles, in total I have had 7 bosses prior to coming to West Chester University. My first boss, maintained a very hand off and laissez-faire leadership practice, he was kind but I believe he was stepping into his own as a director and wasn't quite sure on how to lead or provide instruction, the group think was missing as we all tended to look to the director for answers, but few were provided. Then my second boss, maintained a servant leadership blended with transactional leadership practice, he was data driven, but also cared that we were happy in the jobs we were doing, he celebrated our successes and clearly defined goals and responsibilities for our recruiting while listening about where we would like to be, both in our professional lives and on the road recruiting. My third boss was very transactional, she was data driven and goal oriented, she was also our Vice President, at the time we did not have a director, so we reported directly to her until a director was found. She was not encouraging and even reinforced many ideologies I took as traditional and complacent, for instance, having to simply wait to have your turn when it came to recognition or growing opportunities, often fueled by age, a very humbling experience that made me realize that I did not want to work for someone like that and also that I did not want to be a leader that recreated some of the same oppressive language that may have been said to me and a newer employee.

Before coming to my current institution, my last three bosses practiced autocratic and dismissive leadership styles. All decisions were made by one person, with little to no input from anyone else, there could be no questions or criticisms or there would be punishment and busywork, this was my least favorite style of leadership practice and I learned very quickly how I would not want to adopt this practice myself as a supervisor in any position or be subjected to it. These different leadership styles have shaped my life in more ways than I could ever imagine, they have taught me who to be more like, what characteristics to never associate with leadership and the worst ones have even shaped my thematic concern, showing me that so much more can be done when you look past transactional and autocratic or authoritative leadership styles.

I believe a transformative leadership practice is imperative to truly see a shift at a struggling HBCU, during my time at the nation's first HBCU we often said, after 182 years, something needs to change, but it never did, not outside of transactional partnerships with private corporations. Student, staff and faculty deserve the best, our students are on our campus to be educated and serviced by the professionals during their time, I believe a challenge to truly shift a mindset of a campus from siloed, everyone moving in separate directions to bringing those same pieces together to create a well-oiled machine will prove to be a hassle, but studies like the creation of LLCs at Norfolk State University proved that it is possible and that we see great results when staff, faculty and administration sit down and work for the common goal of student success. Transformative leadership will play a role within the execution of this intervention to help bring about change on the campus, no longer with departments or offices be solely focused on their own efforts, but hopefully through this intervention, over the follow 2-3 years a shift can be made not only to increase support for all students, the way summer bridge and dual

enrollment students are supported, but also to have the campus community come together in its efforts to ensure our at-risk students do not have an opportunity to fall behind from collaborative efforts on behalf of staff, faculty and administration. Participative and democratic leadership practices will need to be utilized as well, the leadership within the enrollment department must be willing to listen to campus feedback and input, take ideas from the experts in other areas, such as administration, current students, faculty and staff and be able to make sound decisions with that information to still achieve an effective and beneficial outcome.

Assessment & Evaluation of Program

Well, how did it go? From how our day was, to how that meeting with your boss was, someone wants to know how it went. When it comes to planning an intervention to help combat systematic racism and its effects on our Black students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, it must be intentional and strategic. Previously we have discussed the why and implementation, but without assessment and evaluation of a program, it can unravel as quickly as it would with poor planning and implementation.

Rather than simply facilitating programs and providing services, student affairs practitioners must think carefully and attentively about teaching and learning. This shift in perspective is crucial. The learner-centered approach requires consideration of programs and services with the students, and their learning, at the center of focus. Student affairs practitioners should be thinking about these programs in terms of what the student does that contributes or leads to their learning. By placing the student at the center, there is a change in perspective that leads to the possibility of measuring learning, rather than

solely focusing on attendance and satisfaction. This shift in paradigm is crucial for student affairs practitioners to engage in meaningful assessment of student learning in the co-curriculum. The learner-centered perspective urges practitioners to consider the learning that takes place within, and because of, intentionally designed experiences. (Keith, 2019)

How do we gauge these intentionally designed experiences? In the short-term evaluation, surveys would be utilized to establish if students, staff and faculty saw these components as intentional, well planned and executed, helpful and valuable. Survey examples can be found in appendices F, G, and H. Long term, the data would speak for itself. In higher education, often we do not know if a program was truly successful until at least 3-6 years further down the road in order to compare against historical data. The implementation of assessment would change as we grasp hard data to back up the actions behind the core and subcommittees. If students, staff and faculty see and feel a difference in campus culture, student support services and see less students leave after the first semester or first year, the intervention worked. If retention, persistence and degree completion are trending up after 3 years of implementing these enrollment management and student service practices, then it worked and there will be data analysis reports to serve as the backbone for validation.

Limitations and Looking Forward

In every intervention or proposed solution, there will be challenges to seeing a successful launch, some small and some quite large. Compared to their white counterparts, most HBCUs are defined by a small to medium size category, eliminating some concern of transitioning this at a 20,000+ student or 'large institution' but still being aware that the implementation and funding

will look very different at a larger HBCUs with closer to 8,000 students than at our smaller universities that have under 1,500 students in total. The intervention was created with the thought in mind that the majority of the campuses would already have an orientation office, academic advisors and residence halls with residence advisors and directors already staffed, although from professional experience, that is not always the case. Another challenge of course, if getting approval to hire new professionals to serve as these extracurricular advisors, but some campuses do offer these jobs, other staff and faculty unofficially put on that title and become a student's good company along their journey. Leaders and committee members involved with this proposed intervention will face a few challenges depending on the already existing offices and funding at each college or universities.

In conclusion, Historically Black Colleges and Universities are necessary in this society. They opened their doors for Black students when no other institution would. Our HBCUs stand on the shoulders of the Institute for Colored Youth, now Cheyney University, but we worry for our institution's solvency and strength to continue for years to come. Today, higher education institutions are beginning to see retention as the uncovered stone of stability. At least a quarter of students who begin college still fail to return the following year. As Bryan Matthews, director of athletics and associate vice president at Washington College, questions in *Inside Higher Education*, “What other industry do we know that successfully recruits 25 percent new clients each year, plans for an average loss of 25 percent of those new clients, and accepts this as business as usual?” (Olbrecht,2016). We cannot continue to move in a way where this is acceptable, not for the sake of our business model, but for the sake of the quarter of students who never return to their college campuses. Restructuring enrollment management policies at our

HBCUs can be the key that unlocks the next century of our universities legacies. With full campus buy-in and participation, student success centered policy practices, staff, faculty, administrators and remaining focused on why HBCUs exist in the first place, instead of working to solely balance a budget, we will see another 184 years and beyond.

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Appendix A

Academic and Co-Curricular Student Success Plan Activity

Orientation Afternoon Session

- Students will break into groups with 2-3 orientation leaders, 1 staff member and 1 faculty member/academic advisor. In a group setting, students will be asked, how will you know you are successful in college? Then followed by, how will you get there?
- Staff and faculty will call on orientation leaders to share an anecdote of one thing they wish they would have known as a first-year student that would have been helpful.
- Students will then be asked to set four (4) goals for themselves for their first year on campus. Two (2) academically and two (2) within the cocurricular side of the university.
- Students will then be asked to make a plan for how they will achieve their goals. For example,
 - Academic Goal 1 – I will get a 3.0 or higher
 - I will utilize academic resources and my professor's office hours at least once a week or more frequently if needed
 - Academic Goal 2- I will participate in class
 - I will be sure to sit within the T-Zone (first and middle row in front of the professor) to ensure I am attentive and involved in class discussions

- Cocurricular Goal 1- I will not gain the “Freshman 15”
 - I will get involved in intramural sports and utilize the student recreation center
- Cocurricular Goal 2- I will make new friends and try new things
 - I will join at least 2 clubs and attend my Resident Advisor’s floor events to get to know more people on my floor

This activity should take about an hour. Students will be asked to share this with their academic and cocurricular advisors so that progress can be tracked to ensure students are staying on top of their goals as challenges may arise through their semesters on campus.

Appendix B

Reorientation Student Success Plan Activity

1. Small Group Activity

- a. Students will break into groups with 2-3 orientation leaders, 1 staff member and 1 faculty member/academic advisor. In a group setting, students will be asked why they are here, what happened last semester that has their grades dip below the standards of “good academic progress” or a 2.0 grade point average (GPA).

2. Large Group Discussion and Panel

- a. Students who have successfully regained “good academic progress” will speak on a panel of what caused them to lose track of their goals and what helped them refocus and not leave the university.

3. Individual Reflection (or small group discussion)

- a. Students will be asked to reassess their first goals from orientation and be asked to come up with a plan to stick with their goals. Staff and faculty will ask, “how could we have helped” to help show students they are not alone on this journey to graduation. The emphasis in reorientation is that these students have someone in their "corner" to help them see it through.

Appendix C

360 Campus Support Training Agenda

Cross functional area training to help bridge the gaps between the many areas of campus.

The goal of this training is to bridge the gap between functional areas to help further our knowledge of what “the other side” of campus does and how we can help guide students to success.

8:30am - Breakfast

9:00am - Welcome Vice President of Academic, Enrollment Management, and Student Affairs

9:30am – Ice Breaker “On a Scale of 1-10” participants will move around the room from left to right or from 1-10 based on a series of questions. Some fun, “On a scale of 1-10, how much do you like ice cream” and some more professionally based, “ On a scale of 1-10, how often do you feel you help students succeed.”

10am - Group Work Participants will break out into cross functional groups and be asked to deliberate the top five (5) challenges that students on their campus face when it comes to retention, persistence, and degree completion.

10:30am- Big Group Think Each group will have a representative tell what they believe are the five biggest challenges students on their campus face when it comes to retention, persistence, and degree completion. Find the top 3 in common and ask yourselves why. The groups will be posed with how they can aid in students making it beyond these challenges.

11:30am – Group Work Begin to bridge the gaps. How can those in academic affairs help students get to the supports they need within student affairs and equally, how can those in student affairs help students to get the supports they need within academic and enrollment affairs. How can enrollment management bridge the gaps between the two areas and get students where they need to be to be successful

12:15 – Lunch

1:00pm – Closing End Remarks by the President

Appendix D

Core Committee Training Agenda

Members of the Core Committee consist of those listed in Table 1

8:30am - Breakfast

9:00am - Welcome Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs

9:30am – Ice Breaker “On a Scale of 1-10” participants will move around the room from left to right or from 1-10 based on a series of questions. Some fun, “On a scale of 1-10, how much do you like ice cream” and some more professionally based, “ On a scale of 1-10, how often do you feel you help students succeed.”

10am - Group Work Participants will break out into groups and be asked to deliberate the top five (5) challenges that students on their campus face when it comes to retention, persistence, and degree completion.

10:30am- Big Group Think Each group will have a representative tell what they believe are the five biggest challenges students on their campus face when it comes to retention, persistence, and degree completion. Find the top 3 in common and ask yourselves why.

11:30am – Group Work divide the room into three groups, one for each challenge and have them come up with solutions as to how it can be addressed with the prompt of "If you have a million dollars and a magic wand..."

12:15 – Lunch

1:00pm Each group will have a representative tell what they believe is a solution for each challenge and open for discussion from the larger group

2:00pm – Introductions of Sub-Committees Based on the solutions brought up in light of the challenges students face, this core committee will break into three (3) sub-committees who will begin to actively work to implement these solutions, i.e., Living Learning Communities, Academic and Co-Curricular Orientation and Reorientation, and 360-Campus Support Training. Sub-committees will establish a reoccurring, monthly meeting to check in through the first year before a soft launch.

3:00pm – Closing End Remarks by the President

Appendix E

Timeline

First Year

- Beginning in Summer
- Establish the Core Committee to gain full campus buy-in
- Establish 3 areas of focus and assign Core Committee Members to the subcommittee based on their functional/professional area

Second Year

- Beginning in August
- Implement Living Learning community-styled residence Halls
- Pilot Program of Orientation and Reorientation Program
- Pilot Program of 360 Campus Support Training for Staff, Faculty and Administrators

Third Year

- Audit for Improvement via survey and town hall events
- Make changes and continue to provide trainings for the entire campus community
- Continue Orientation and Reorientation program

Fourth Year

- Begin to collect data and see how retention and persistence are being effected
- Audit for Improvement via survey and town hall events

Fifth Year

- Audit for Improvement via survey and town hall events

Sixth Year

- Begin to collect data and see how retention, persistence, and degree completion are being affected
- Audit for Improvement via survey and town hall event

Appendix F

Survey to Measure Impact of Academic and Cocurricular Success Planning

How often did you reflect on and revisit the goals you set at orientation?

Never Once Per Semester Once a Month Bi-Weekly Weekly

Did you feel that by checking your goals you set with your Academic and Co-Curricular Advisor you stayed more on track to achieve them?

Yes Somewhat No

Did you feel that the presence of Cocurricular Advisors were helpful in addition to your Academic Advisor?

Yes Somewhat No

On a scale of 1 to 10, how supported do you feel by the staff and faculty on this campus to complete your degree?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No support Some sense of support I know I am supported and will be successful

How could faculty and staff better support students in their academic and co-curricular progress?

Open Ended Response

Appendix G

Survey for Staff, Faculty and Administrators on Implementation of 360 Campus Support Training

On a scale of one to ten, with 10 being the most prepared, how prepared did you feel to support students in your role before the training?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of one to ten, with 10 being the most prepared, how prepared do you feel to support students in your role after the training?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What 3 things did you learn from the training?

Open Ended Response

Do you feel more connected to your colleagues across campus?

No Somewhat Yes

How can training be adapted to better service you in your role to assist students succeed?

Open Ended Response

Appendix H

Survey for Residential Students living in LLCs

For upperclassmen: On a scale of one to ten, do you feel more connected to your floor/living community than in prior semesters?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

For first year students: On a scale of one to ten, how likely are you to return to campus next year based on your experience of living on campus?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of one to ten, how supported did you feel by your Resident Hall Advisors, Directors and other Staff?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Agree or Disagree: Events and Programming within my LLC are a huge reason as to why I enjoyed my time on campus.

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

How can we create a better living scenario here at *University Name to help you feel comfortable and supported?

Open Ended Response