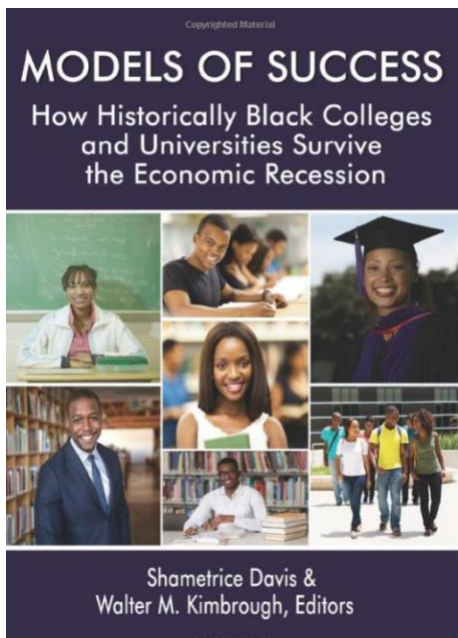




Models of Success: How Historically Black Colleges and Universities Survive the Economic Recession

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In the book, "Models of Success-How Historically Black Colleges and Universities Survive the Economic Recession," edited by Shametrice Davis and Walter M. Kimbrough, the authors discussed how HBCUs survived in difficult times.

This book is a collection of essays written by various scholars and practitioners who share their thoughts on the strategies, innovations, and best practices that HBCUs adopt to ensure their survival and success. Shametrice Davis, an expert in U.S. education and diversity from California State University, Long Beach, and Walter M. Kimbrough, the seventh

president of Dillard University, has compiled seven chapters related to management and leadership approaches at HBCUs during the economic recession.

Davis and Kimbrough's book offers insights that are not very common in current literature or theories. Each chapter demonstrates successful strategies adopted by HBCU leadership during economic hardship. The book emphasizes the challenges faced by HBCUs, their responses to these challenges, and the factors that contribute to their success.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the United States were established with the primary goal of educating Black Americans founded at the time of segregation when most postsecondary institutions were not open to Black Americans. Although the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 enabled colleges and universities to provide education to people from various social strata, only one institution, Alcorn State University in Mississippi, accepted Black students. In 1890, the second Land-Grant Act mandated that states either open their land-grant institutions to Black students or allocate funds to Black institutions. Consequently, 16 exclusively Black institutions were established, and additional HBCUs were founded by the Freedmen's Bureau, Black churches, and the American Missionary Association. Despite financial challenges, HBCUs received federal designation and support under the Higher Education Act in 1965, and today they are funded under Title III, Parts B and D, and Title VII of the Higher Education Act.

In his forward, Charlie Nelms, Chancellor of North Carolina Central University, discussed the impressive list of African American leaders who graduated from HBCUs and emphasized these institutions' significant role in educating students who are either first-generation or come from low-wealth backgrounds. Nelms also highlighted the crucial factors of fiscal solvency and debt in determining the success of higher education institutions and the importance of alumni support in maintaining financial stability.

Higher education has never been as crucial for economic well-being as it is today. Unfortunately, it is low-income students who are least likely to graduate. Therefore, the success of higher education institutions would be defined as effectively serving a greater number of students in diverse ways. In many ways, HBCUs have a distinctive institutional diversity and reputation for providing access and opportunities to students who may not have had such opportunities otherwise. Contributing factors to inclusivity at HBCUs include successful leadership approaches, operational tactics, and environmental variables.

Chapter 1, *The Fundraising Success of Mary McLeod Bethune*, delves into Mary McLeod Bethune's leadership in higher education. The chapter specifically examines her effectiveness as an educator, political

activist, and fundraiser. Through the lens of Bethune-Cookman University, the opening chapter demonstrates how modern HBCU leaders, who often face financial limitations, can benefit from Bethune's journey. By highlighting Bethune's political visibility, engagement, astuteness, and strategic cultivation of relationships, the chapter provides insights into how contemporary HBCU leaders can create a funding pipeline for their institutions.

Chapter 2, *Telling a Story of Student Success at HBCUs*, introduces the definition of student success at HBCUs and explores how the definition is realized. The privileged group believes that their definition, called "master narrative," is the most accurate. Although this definition narrowly defines graduation rate and other yield metrics as indicators of student success, it fails to include the narrative of student success from the viewpoint of HBCUs. In this chapter, the authors introduce Critical Race Theory (CRT) to clearly define success at HBCUs. The authors argue that over-reliance on the master narrative about student success systematically creates barriers for Black students to gain entry or achieve academic success within higher education. The restricted definition of success fails to acknowledge the existence of systemic inequality and the unique experiences of Students of Color. As part of the historically unequal higher education system, HBCUs are expected to conform to predefined notions of success that do not necessarily align with the needs of the communities they cater to.

Chapter 3, titled *Interdisciplinary Collaboration as an Innovative Approach to Developmental Education at Morgan State University*, describes the initiatives taken at Morgan State University (MSU) for developmental education. Financially challenged students are often not as prepared for college and often spend a great deal of money on developmental courses. Students enrolled in developmental courses are less likely to graduate and many identify as women, first-generation, and People of Color. Most efforts focus on enhancing developmental education concentrated in the community college domain, yielding outcomes of varying success. As such, The Southern Education Foundation (SEF), which keeps track of the developmental education program, identified Morgan State University's (MSU) developmental education program is a comprehensive one to enhance student learning outcomes. The collaborative approach adopted by the MSU Developmental Humanities Initiative involves integrating developmental English and reading courses with other reading-intensive freshman courses such as History and English. This cross-disciplinary reinforcement of skills is essential to creating an effective developmental education program. Though descriptions of the outcomes for

students who participate in innovative programs exist, causal assumptions cannot be made, and the findings are difficult to generalize.

Lastly, this chapter highlights five key points for developing successful developmental education programs at HBCUs. The first point stresses the importance of gaining support from senior leaders to coordinate various departments and overcome obstacles. The second point emphasizes the use of existing research on student learning to develop effective innovations. The third point highlights the significance of planning program assessments beforehand, as current research may not fully consider HBCU or Black student experiences. The fourth point recommends using both qualitative and quantitative research methods to better understand program impact. Finally, the fifth point emphasizes the long-term benefits of a curricular redesign for students and institutions, including increased revenue from improved retention rates.

Chapter 4, *Successful Financial Models at HBCUs*, discusses developing a financial model for HBCUs. Distinct approaches are needed to address the financial challenges faced by three categories of American colleges and universities: *Elite-endowed Institutions* have financial reserves to address their current and future needs. These institutions typically focus on widening the admission opportunities for highly capable students who require financial aid. However, compared to their wealthier peers, a greater percentage of students at these institutions do not require financial aid. *Nimble Colleges and Universities* rely on developing programs and research to attract government support. They lower their tuition fees by implementing a work college model and enhanced academic programs to meet the job demand. This strategy diversifies income streams by combining enrollment strategy, endowment funds, and philanthropic support to meet short-term and long-term financial goals. Finally, *At-Risk Colleges and Universities* rely on only a few revenue streams and do not develop a specific academic niche. They are endowment dependent, and a significant portion of their endowment is restricted, meaning withdrawals are limited to the amount of interest accrued only. Authors suggest that institutions adopt a strategy that diversifies their revenue sources. Since there is no one-size-fits-all approach, they should carefully consider strategies for increasing enrollment, engaging in sponsored research, and attracting philanthropic support.

Chapter 5, *We Don't Have to Look Very Far*, examines how a pseudo-HBCU thrived during an economic recession by using organizational identity in strategic planning. This involved preserving its historical significance while establishing a renewed identity to navigate the financially challenging climate. The success of this college was due to the

focus on internally driven institutional identity, which included creating a new mission and attracting high-achieving students and administrators. The chapter's takeaway is that HBCU affiliates should understand their institutional identity from a historical perspective and consider returning to their mission before the *Brown v. Board* decision. While researchers suggest expanding student populations and merging with nearby institutions, understanding the unique identity and strengths of HBCUs is crucial for success.

Chapter 6, *We Over Me*, discusses the impact of leadership styles, specifically servant and transformative leadership, on the success of HBCUs. The authors use John Adams College as an example of how servant leadership can create a community that prioritizes collective success over individual achievement. By promoting shared governance and empowering students, the college fosters a culture invested in the success of all members. The chapter challenges the taboo of poor leadership in HBCUs and demonstrates how a shift towards servant and transformative leadership can lead to institutional success.

In Chapter 7, *Practical Strategies: Leading HBCU During Challenging Economies*, the author provides novel concepts to effectively manage HBCUs during uncertain times. This chapter presents practical recommendations and guidance to HBCU leaders. The author suggests three main approaches to tackle challenging times: building the brand, strengthening, and growing the base, and learning the new language of donors. The author's main argument is that personal images of presidents can be a useful branding tool for smaller and less-resourced institutions. Specifically, the author emphasizes the power of social media and positive news stories to create a favorable impression that can attract donors. To strengthen funding, the author offers strategies that involve using social media to reach a broader audience for fundraising purposes. History and HBCU platitudes are no longer enough to appeal to donors. Instead, colleges must make compelling arguments and take a data-driven approach to convince donors to fund their institutions. It is important to tell stories about admission, retention, and graduation rates, using data to support the argument for increased funding. In addition, the author suggests that colleges should work to build relationships with potential donors and community members, engaging them in the college's mission and vision. By doing so, colleges can increase their visibility and gain the support necessary to thrive in today's competitive funding environment.

In conclusion, the book provides a detailed analysis of how HBCUs successfully navigated the economic recession. The authors offer a

comprehensive overview of the unique challenges faced by HBCUs and highlight the strategies and models that enabled these institutions to remain sustainable and effective. The book is well-researched and well-organized, with clear and concise writing that is accessible to both academic and general readers. The authors draw on a wealth of data and case studies to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the various factors that influenced the success of HBCUs during the economic downturn. One of the book's key strengths is its focus on practical solutions and actionable recommendations. The authors provide a range of best practices and strategies that can be implemented by HBCUs and other institutions facing similar challenges. This makes the book an essential resource for higher education leaders, policymakers, and researchers.

While the book provides insights into the journeys of HBCUs during economic difficulties, it cannot be applied to other institutions, thereby reducing its generalizability. Moreover, the book did not provide any survival strategies adopted by Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) which could also be applicable to HBCUs and fails to explore any potential collaborations between these two types of institutions. Additionally, the book's focus on the successful HBCU leaders did not consider the perspectives of other stakeholders such as faculty, staff, and students. Lastly, the book solely focuses on the economic recession's impact on HBCUs and avoids addressing other challenges and issues affecting student outcomes during this period.

Overall, "Models of Success" is a valuable contribution to the literature on HBCUs and higher education more broadly. The book is informative, engaging, and thought-provoking, and it provides important insights into the strategies and models that can help institutions survive and thrive in challenging economic times.

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About the Reviewer

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