

HBCUCONNECT

FALL/WINTER 2023

on campus

STUDENT FREEDOM INITIATIVE (SFI)

GET TO KNOW HOW
SFI CAN HELP YOU

- FINANCE YOUR EDUCATION
- COVER EMERGENCIES
- GET PAID INTERNSHIPS

2023 HBCU
HOMECOMING LIST

**TOP 50 EMPLOYERS
FOR HBCU GRADS**

**SFI
FREEDOM
VIDEO
COMPETITION**

► ENTER TO WIN CASH PRIZES TOTALING \$20,000! EXCITING DETAILS INSIDE



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HEY HBCU STUDENT FAM!

I hope you're ready for the Fall 2023 edition of HBCU CONNECT's Student Magazine! It's about to be fire, with a fresh dose of all things HBCU, unity, and black excellence. As we gear up for fall, let's take a moment to soak in the energy of this season. The leaves may be changing, but our commitment to hustling, uplifting, and rocking that HBCU pride is not.

Our team has been working hard to handpick next-level content for you. From inspiring stories to must-know campus tips, we're serving up a feast for your mind, soul, and HBCU spirit. And of course, we're all about highlighting the voices that matter most: yours!

Now, let's talk about unity and black excellence. These two words run deep in our HBCU DNA. We're not just a community, we're a movement. We're lifting each other up, supporting our dreams, and showing the world what true unity looks like. When we come together, magic happens. Remember, it's not just about us — it's about the generations before and after us. We're standing on the shoulders of greatness, and we gotta keep that torch burning brighter than ever.

But let's be real — we face challenges. But guess what? We're the future, and nothing's going to stop us from shining like the diamonds we are. As we step into the Fall of 2023, let's keep that HBCU energy alive and kicking. Keep rocking those campus vibes, keep chasing those dreams, and keep standing together stronger than ever.

Much love and respect,

Will Moss

Will Moss | CEO | wrmoss@hbcuconnect.com | 614.864.4446



HBCU Homecomings

Home Team	Visiting Team	Date
Alabama A&M University	Tuskegee University	Sep 30
Alabama State University	Bethune Cookman University	Oct 07
Albany State University	Allen University	Oct 14
Allen University	Edward Waters University	Oct 28
Benedict College	Kentucky State University	Oct 21
Bethune Cookman University	Texas Southern University	Oct 14
Bluefield State College	Lincoln University -Pennsylvania	Oct 07
Bowie State University	Virginia State University	Oct 07
Central State University	Savannah State University	Oct 14
Clark Atlanta University	Central State University	Oct 21
Delaware State University	South Carolina State University	Oct 21
Edward Waters University	Lane College	Oct 07
Elizabeth City State University	Johnson C. Smith University	Sep 30
Fayetteville State University	Johnson C. Smith University	Oct 21
Florida A&M University	Prairie View A&M University	Oct 28
Florida Memorial University	Webber International University	Oct 21
Fort Valley State University	Morehouse College	Oct 21
Grambling State University	Alabama A&M University	Oct 14
Hampton University	North Carolina A&T State University	Oct 28
Jackson State University	Alabama State University	Oct 14
Johnson C. Smith University	Saint Augustine's University	Oct 14
Kentucky State University	Albany State University	Sep 30
Lane College	Virginia University of Lynchburg	Oct 21
Langston University	Arkansas Baptist College	Oct 21
Lincoln University - Missouri	Northeastern State University	Oct 07
Miles College	Allen University	Oct 21
Mississippi Valley State University	University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	Oct 14
Morehouse College	Kentucky State University	Oct 28
Morgan State University	Stony Brook University	Oct 07
Norfolk State University	Morgan State University	Oct 28
North Carolina A&T State University	Towson University	Nov 04

Home Team	Visiting Team	Date
North Carolina Central University	Norfolk State University	Nov 04
Prairie View A&M University	University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	Nov 04
Saint Augustine's University	Fayetteville State University	Oct 07
Savannah State University	Tuskegee University	Oct 21
Shaw University	Johnson C. Smith University	Oct 07
South Carolina State University	Howard University	Nov 04
Southern University and A&M College	Lincoln University - California	Oct 14
Tennessee State University	Norfolk State University	Oct 14
Texas Southern University	Lincoln University - California	Sep 30
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	Alcorn State University	Oct 21
Virginia State University	Bluefield State College	Oct 14
Virginia Union University	Lincoln University - Pennsylvania	Oct 21
West Virginia State University	Glennville State University	Sep 23

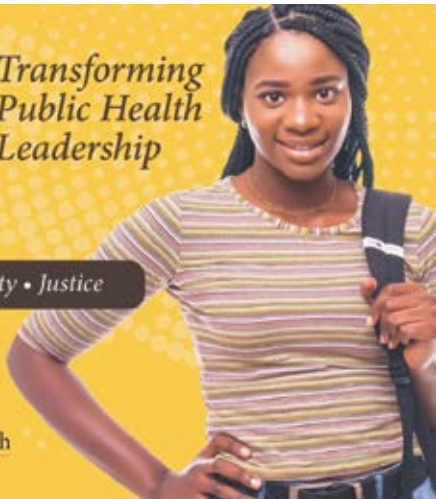


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Student Freedom Initiative

Student Freedom Initiative (SFI), a non-profit founded in 2020 by Robert F. Smith, philanthropist and Founder, Chairman, and CEO of Vista Equity Partners. Smith was the keynote speaker at the 134th Commencement of Morehouse College. SFI provides a catalyst for freedom in professional and life choices for students attending HBCUs, other MSIs and TCUs by increasing their social and economic mobility. Smith's transformational gift of \$34 million for the 400 Morehouse College graduates established SFI's vision to reduce the wealth gap through the lens of education. SFI's vision is implemented through four pillars: Income Contingent Alternative to Parent PLUS loans, Comprehensive Supports, Internships and Certifications, and MSI Capacity Building, Cyber and Broadband.

FREEDOM Video Competition

SFI will be launching its first annual video competition called FREEDOM on Monday, October 2, 2023. Undergraduate STEM students at our participating institutions will answer the topic "Explain the decision process used by you and your family when determining how to finance your college education" within three to five-minute videos which must be submitted no later than Friday, January 26, 2024, at 11:59 pm. The winners will be announced in February 2024. The total prize money available to the top eleven (11) winners is \$20,000, with individual prizes ranging from \$250 to \$7,500.





Student Freedom Agreement (SFA)

The SFA is a private education loan that provides rising juniors or seniors majoring in STEM up to \$20,000 per academic year. The SFA is available as a potential alternative to the Parent PLUS loans.

Microgrants for Emergencies

HELPS program assists full-time students facing unexpected crises, as approved by our participating institution. The institution contributes a minimum of 25% and SFI contributes a maximum of \$1,000 per student annually to address health, life, property, or environmental emergencies.



Student Investment Program (SIP)

SIP is funded by Prudential Financial. This program provides \$1,000 to up to 500 full-time students after completing a 90-minute financial literacy course. The funds are meant for investment in predefined portfolios and promote financial wellness.

Internships and Certifications

SFI collaborates with internXL to offer paid internships to full-time students from any major and academic year at participating institutions. With a vast network of corporations and self-paced learning modules, this program enhances students' job readiness, providing market compensation, stretch assignments, and leadership opportunities.



Top 50 Employers for HBCU Students



1. JPMorgan Chase
2. Johnson & Johnson
3. Visa
4. Giant Eagle, Inc.
5. Wells Fargo
6. Pfizer
7. Virginia Economic Development Partnership
8. Walgreens
9. Bristol Myers Squibb
10. MassMutual
11. ServiceNow
12. Fidelity Investments
13. Agilent Technologies
14. NFP Corp.
15. Supernal
16. CBRE
17. 84.51 LLC
18. Best Buy
19. GE Appliances
20. LULU Lemon
21. Erie Insurance
22. Ansys
23. U.S. Dept. of Veterans Health Administration
24. Pearson
25. Motorola Solutions, Inc.
26. SCRIPPS Research
27. Truist
28. University of Rochester
29. HP
30. Bunge Limited
31. SPX Technologies
32. Fluence Energy
33. CF Industries Holdings, Inc
34. Hackensack Meridian Health
35. The Washington Center
36. Amazon Services LLC
37. Microsoft
38. Deloitte Services LP
39. Maximus
40. UVA Health
41. Rent A Center
42. Tetrattech
43. Albemarle Corporation
44. Bank of America
45. Danaher
46. Sinclair Broadcasting Group
47. Nintendo of America
48. The Coca Cola Company
49. Cardinal Health
50. Thomson Reuters

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Diamond Cook Makes History at Talladega College



Nineteen-year-old Diamond Cook is set to make history as she joins Talladega College's inaugural gymnastics team, marking the second HBCU in the nation to establish such a program. After Fisk University's successful launch last year, Talladega College is opening doors for young athletes like Cook.

Cook, an Edison High School graduate, has dedicated over a decade to honing her gymnastics skills, and her hard work is paying off. After recovering from an injury and facing setbacks, she's proving that perseverance and determination can overcome any obstacle.

Inspired by her mother, Dr. Sharon Cook, Diamond attended the Brown Girls Do Gymnastics camp, where her talent caught the attention of Talladega's head coach Aja Sims-Fletcher. With a soft-spoken voice and a passion for the sport, Diamond is thrilled to join the Talladega team, embarking on a new adventure of growth and competition.

"I've been waiting so long for this to happen," says Diamond, exemplifying the resilience needed to reach her goals. As she steps onto the gymnastics mat at Talladega College, she not only makes history but also inspires future generations of athletes.

TSU Hockey: A New Opportunity for HBCU Students

Tennessee State University (TSU) is set to break new ground by becoming the first Historically Black College and University (HBCU) to introduce ice hockey. This groundbreaking initiative is a result of a partnership between TSU, the

National Hockey League (NHL), the National Hockey League Players Association (NHLPA), and the Nashville Predators.

The announcement comes after a series of feasibility studies conducted in collaboration with the NHL and NHLPA to explore the addition of Division I men's and women's ice hockey programs. TSU's move to establish an ice hockey program showcases the university's commitment to expanding sports offerings beyond traditional options like football and basketball.

This initiative holds great significance, as it contributes to the diversification of both college sports and the NHL itself. By embracing ice hockey, TSU aims to create new opportunities for students and increase diversity within the sport.



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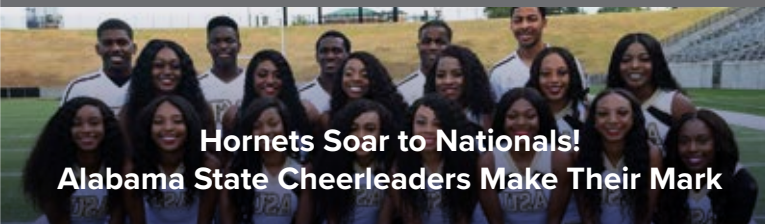
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Hornets Soar to Nationals! Alabama State Cheerleaders Make Their Mark

History is in the making as the Alabama State University cheerleaders gear up to compete in the NCA & NDA Collegiate Cheer and Dance Championship. Securing a bronze bid at the National Cheerleaders Association (NCA) cheer camp in Daytona Beach, Fla., the Hornets are headed to the national stage for the first time.

Head coach De'One Gregg expressed excitement, stating, "This will be the first time we have competed at the national level." Their impressive performance earned them three superior ribbons and a second-place finish in the Rally Routine segment. The team's achievement is underscored by its bronze bid and spirit stick win, marking a historic first for Alabama State.

This achievement echoes the growing prominence of HBCU cheerleading on a national scale. Since Florida A&M University's breakthrough in 2018, other HBCUs, including Texas Southern University, Alabama A&M University, Bowie State University, and Bethune-Cookman University, have earned bids to compete at NCA Nationals. In 2023, Texas Southern University's Lady Tigers clinched a national title, further cementing HBCU cheerleading excellence.

Alabama State's journey to the championship exemplifies the talent and dedication within HBCU athletics. As they prepare for the championship in April 2024, they continue to carry the legacy of their HBCU peers who have paved the way for success on the grand stage of cheerleading.

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It's Official! Philander Smith College Becomes Second HBCU In Arkansas

In a momentous leap towards a brighter future, Philander Smith College has transformed into Philander Smith University. This historic transition ushers in a new era of academic distinction for this 146-year-old institution. Philander Smith now stands tall as Arkansas' second HBCU, entering the illustrious ranks with the University of Arkansas.

Since its inception in 1877, Philander Smith has been a pioneer in educating newly freed Black Americans, making it one of the first institutions west of the mighty Mississippi River to embark on this noble mission. As Cynthia A. Bond Hopson, the interim president and CEO, appropriately expresses, "That one word, 'University,' means that we're moving forward. It means we're offering a different level of excellence."

This evolution was a journey years in the making, commencing in 2015 when the Board of Trustees set the course for change. Last fall, the institution celebrated its inaugural graduate program, a master's in business administration, a testament to its commitment to academic growth. Philander Smith University's legacy of progress continues to inspire and empower with its Social Justice Hub and the Dr. Joycelyn Elders School of Allied and Public Health, these two initiatives are just two examples of how the University is working to make a difference in the world.

And this is just the beginning! They are now considering extra Master's degrees and new undergraduate programs. Philander Smith ain't playing – they are ready to take over the world!



The Divine 9, A Legacy of Black Excellence

The Divine 9 is a term used to refer to the nine historically Black Greek letter organizations (BGLOs) that make up the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC). The NPHC was founded in 1930 on the campus of Howard University to promote cooperation and unity among the nine BGLOs.

Why is the Divine 9 relevant?

The Divine 9 is significant because it represents the legacy of Black excellence and achievement. These organizations have been at the forefront of the fight for social justice and equality for Black Americans. They have also produced some of the most notable Black leaders in history.

What are the benefits of joining a Divine 9 organization?

These organizations provide members with a sense of community, mentorship, and support. They also offer opportunities for professional development, community service, and social engagement. Divine 9 organizations are also known for their strong academic traditions. Many Divine 9 organizations offer scholarships and other financial assistance to their members.

How can I join a Divine 9 organization?

You should research the different organizations and find one that is a good fit for you. Once you have found an organization that you are interested in, you should contact the local chapter and inquire about their membership process.

10 Tips to Rock Your LinkedIn Profile and Get Hired Fast

LinkedIn is a powerful tool for job seekers of all ages, but it can be especially helpful for young college graduates. By following these 10 tips, you can optimize your LinkedIn profile and increase your chances of landing a job interview:

1. Create a strong headline and summary. Your headline should reflect your current job title and industry, and your summary should showcase your skills, experience, and accomplishments.

2. Customize your profile URL. Make it easy for recruiters to find you by customizing your profile URL to include your name or a variation.

3. Use a professional profile picture. Choose a high-quality, professional photo that reflects your industry and personal brand.

4. Include relevant skills. Highlight your areas of expertise by including relevant skills in your profile's Skills & Endorsements section. Add keywords to make your profile more discoverable.

5. Showcase your experience. Use strong action verbs and provide examples of your accomplishments in your experience section.

6. Add media. Add videos, images, and documents showcasing your work and accomplishments.

7. Get recommendations. Recommendations from colleagues, clients, and managers can provide social proof of your skills and expertise. Ask for recommendations from people you have worked closely with who can speak to your strengths.

8. Engage with content. Like, comment, and share posts on LinkedIn to build your network and increase your visibility.

9. Join groups. Join groups related to your industry or interests to connect with like-minded professionals and stay up to date on industry news and trends.

10. Keep your profile up to date. Make sure your profile accurately reflects your current career goals by keeping it updated!



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Beyoncé's BeyGood Foundation Awards Scholarships to Ten Grambling State Students



Beyoncé, the iconic artist known simply by her first name, continues to make waves not only in the music industry but also in the realm of education. Through her BeyGood Foundation, she recently conferred \$10,000 scholarships upon ten exceptional students at Grambling State University.

Ariel Box, one of the fortunate recipients, emphasized the allure of the scholarship: "It was \$10,000, and then it was Beyoncé, so I was definitely going to take that opportunity to apply because you know the worst thing you can get told is no, so always take that first opportunity."

For Sha'Cyla Allen, another scholarship recipient, the honor runs deep. She shared, "It was amazing getting the email saying that I got the scholarship. It was an honor to me and my family because I definitely needed the financial help and just to be a shining light on this campus knowing that we do great things being HBCU."

These scholarships are part of Beyoncé's commitment to donating \$1 million to higher education through her BeyGood Foundation's Renaissance Scholars program. This initiative has already provided substantial support in areas such as disaster relief, education, housing, and mental health.

Among the ten talented recipients, each with their own unique career aspirations, Beyoncé's contribution will help propel them toward their dreams. From criminal defense attorneys to business leaders and healthcare professionals, these scholars exemplify the bright future of Grambling State and HBCUs nationwide.



Jackson State Makes History as First HBCU to Host NASPA Program

Jackson State University has etched its name in history as the first HBCU to host the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Undergraduate Fellowship program, specifically the Dungy Leadership Institute. This week-long initiative aims to nurture the next generation of student affairs professionals.

JSU's Dean of Students, Laquala Dixon, a NASPA member herself, questioned why an HBCU hadn't previously hosted this program that dates to 1919. Armed with determination and a vision, she decided it was high time to bring this prestigious program to one of the "most cutting-edge" institutes in the nation.

From June 23 to June 28 this year, Jackson State University warmly welcomed 30 fellows from across the country. During their stay, these undergraduates delved into various facets of student affairs, exploring competency areas such as leadership, social justice, and technology.

Beyond academics, Dixon and the NASPA staff showed the fellows a glimpse of Jackson's vibrant culture, dispelling misconceptions and fostering a deeper understanding. The program also introduced some fellows to the world of HBCUs, igniting a newfound appreciation.

This pioneering endeavor showcases HBCUs' commitment to excellence and the importance of sharing their remarkable stories with the world. As Dean Dixon said, their work is "just as important and relevant" as any other institution, and it deserves to shine on the national stage.



Top 5 Platforms to Find Scholarships for HBCU Students

It's that time of year again. The time to start thinking about scholarships. But where do you find them? Don't worry, we've got you covered. Here are the top 5 platforms to find scholarships for HBCU students:

1. UNCF: The United Negro College Fund (UNCF) is one of the largest scholarship organizations in the country. They offer a variety of scholarships to HBCU students, including merit-based scholarships, need-based scholarships, and scholarships for specific majors and career goals.

2. TMCf: The Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) is a major scholarship organization that supports HBCU students. They offer scholarships for first-generation students, for students from underserved communities, and for those pursuing degrees in STEM fields.

3. Scholarships.com: Scholarships.com is a comprehensive scholarship search engine that allows you to search for scholarships based on your academic interests, financial need, and other criteria. This site's scholarships open their calls throughout the year but be sure to start searching early to find the best opportunities.

4. Fastweb: Fastweb is another popular scholarship search engine and offers a variety of scholarships specifically for HBCU students.

5. HBCU Connect: Of course, us! We offer a variety of scholarships, including merit-based scholarships, need-based scholarships, and scholarships for specific majors and career goals, so be sure to check out our website for updates.

There you have it! Make sure to start searching early and to get your applications in on time. Good luck!



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Which Type of HBCU Student Are You?

Welcome to the ultimate HBCU personality quiz — the lit edition! We're about to find out which type of HBCU student you truly are. Grab a snack, chill, and let's dive in!

1. If you were a campus event, which one would you be?

- a** Homecoming: The life of the party!
- b** Study session: Always on that grind!
- c** Poetry slam: Spittin' rhymes and wisdom!
- d** Greek step show: Bringing that unity and stomp!

2. Pick a go-to campus hangout spot:

- a** The quad: Where it all goes down!
- b** Library: Hitting the books like a boss!
- c** The art studio: Letting creativity flow!
- d** The Greek plots: Repping your org with pride!

3. It's game day! What's your vibe?

- a** Tailgating and turning up!
- b** Decked out in school gear, cheering loud!
- c** Analyzing every play like a sports analyst!
- d** Part of the step team, entertaining the crowd!

4. Choose your ideal HBCU club:

- a** Greek life: Crossing those burning sands!
- b** STEM club: Nurturing that intellect!
- c** Spoken word poetry club: Dropping bars and wisdom!
- d** Student government: Making changes on campus!

5. Time for a major decision — pick your dream HBCU major:

- a** Communications: Born to shine on the mic!
- b** Pre-Med: Saving lives, one diagnosis at a time!
- c** Fine Arts: Painting your path with creativity!
- d** Political Science: Advocating for change, always!

Mostly A's:

The HBCU Hypebeast

You're the life of the party!
You thrive in the center of the action, especially during epic events like homecoming. Your energy and enthusiasm are contagious, and you're always down for a good time.

Mostly C's:

The Creative Maven

Your creativity knows no bounds! Whether it's through art, music, or other forms of art, you bring a unique perspective to campus life. You inspire others with your artistic prowess.

Mostly B's:

The Scholarly Scholar

You're all about that academic excellence!
You take your studies seriously and can often be found hitting the books. Your determination and commitment to learning are unmatched.

Mostly D's:

The Campus Leader

You're a natural-born leader, always ready to make a positive impact on your HBCU community. Whether you're involved in Greek life, student government, or other leadership roles, you excel at bringing people together.

Share your results with your squad, and remember, HBCU life is all about celebrating our unique vibes while staying connected to our heritage!

It's that time of the year when HBCU Homecoming comes alive, a celebration that encapsulates all that's great about our HBCU community. Students, graduates, and passionate supporters converge in a symphony of pride and nostalgia, rekindling the spirit of these historic institutions. From the pulsating drumlines to the soulful melodies, it's a moment where past and present blend seamlessly, tightening the bonds that endure a lifetime.

Pat Colbert-Williams: Huston Tillotson University

Caroline Wong: #AggiePride

Teresa Rawlings: GO TROJANS!

Sylvia Pryor Ewing: TSU!

James Holmon Sr.: VIKING PRIDE

Jacqueline Sapp: #StartHereGoAnywhere

Carolyn Jackson: UAPB Formerly known as AM&N

Selisia Boss-Wright: Good Ole Bishop Blue

Gwendolyn Smith: WE COMING!!! #MVSU

Angela Spann: #TheFirstHBCU #CU

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but benefits are truly the building blocks of a career. And you'll find a number of uncommon benefits at VA that can set you up for success.

Our perks

Earn ample paid time off and access to federal retirement plans, premium health insurance, and student loan repayment options while you work to serve Veterans.

Our team

VA is the largest health care provider in the country. No matter your role, you'll have the support of an unmatched community of peers and mentors.

Our network

Take your career in a new direction and pursue opportunities anywhere within VA. Wherever life may lead, you can transfer to another VA facility with no loss of benefits.

Our mission

VA's mission of service to our nation's Veterans — and their families, caregivers, and survivors — is the best thing about working here. Just ask our employees.

Your future

For more information about the benefits you can earn by serving Veterans, visit VAcareers.va.gov today.



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