

HBCU CONNECT

on campus

SPRING/SUMMER 2023

**UNLEASHING
THE BEAT:
HBCU BANDS
CELEBRATE
COLLEGE
CULTURE**

**TSU MAKES
HISTORY WITH
1ST NATIONAL
CHEERLEADING
TITLE**

**VP KAMALA HARRIS MEETS WITH
HBCU STUDENTS**

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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

What's good HBCU family? I hope this letter finds you all well and living your best lives.

Whether you're a new or old member, we're thrilled to have you on board. Our website and social media platforms are designed to provide you with informative and helpful content, including scholarships, internships, job opportunities, and networking events.

At HBCU Connect, we're committed to providing you with access to education, professional advancement, and community involvement opportunities. If you're looking to get ahead in your career or just stay up-to-date on what's happening in the world, you need to be checking us out.

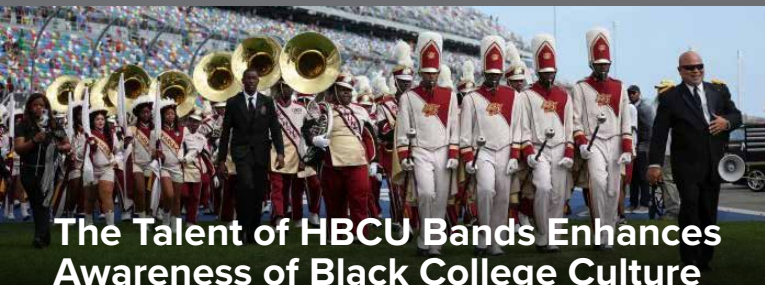
Looking back at 2022, one of our highlights was hosting a series of networking events with some of the brightest minds in a variety of industries. We're excited to continue this series in 2023, and we have some great events coming up. Stay tuned to our website and homepage for details so you don't miss out on these opportunities. See ya'll there!

As our network continues to grow, we're confident that we'll provide you with the resources and opportunities to achieve your goals. So, enjoy all that HBCU Connect has to offer. We've got your back and we're here to help you succeed. HBCUCONNECT.COM – Get Connected!

Sincerely,

Will Moss

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The Talent of HBCU Bands Enhances Awareness of Black College Culture

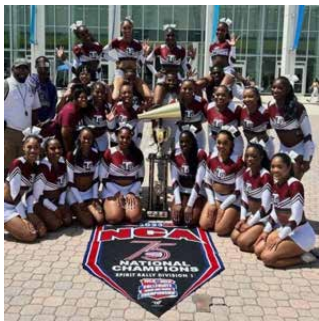
Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have been making waves in recent years with their talented marching bands. The increased demand for their performances has given them more opportunities to showcase their skills on a national level.

HBCU bands have always been an important part of the college experience, with their unique and lively performances attracting crowds of all ages. But now, with more attention on these institutions, their bands are getting even more recognition.

Their appearances at major events like the Super Bowl and Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade have only added to their popularity. This has led to increased opportunities for HBCU band members, including scholarships, internships, and even job offers. The bands are also bringing attention to the rich history and culture of HBCUs. With their unique style of music and dance, they are highlighting the importance of these institutions and the contributions of Black Americans to American culture.

As the demand for HBCU bands grows, it's evident that they're no longer only a campus mainstay. They are now a vital part of the national limelight, highlighting the brilliance and vitality of these historically significant institutions.

Breaking Barriers: TSU Secures First-Ever National Cheerleading Title for an HBCU



Texas Southern University has made history as the first Historically Black College to win a national title in collegiate cheerleading. The Tigers triumphed at the Cheer Spirit Rally competition, held by the National Cheerleaders Association in Daytona Beach, Florida. Cheer and dance teams from universities, colleges, and junior colleges all over the

US competed at the annual event, which is not affiliated with the NCAA.

The Tigers placed first in their division and beat second-place Niagara University by nearly 11 points in the Cheer Spirit Rally category for Division I schools. Texas Southern was among more than 10 HBCUs to compete, and the only one to take home a title. The team posted raw and performance scores of 96.1 and an event score of 95.5875, out of a maximum score of 100.

"I knew this was the year and the team to get the job done," Texas Southern coach Shontrese Comeaux said. "I'm so proud of them and where we're going to take the cheer program next."



FAMU Alumna Makes History Becoming the First Black Woman Neurosurgery Resident at Vanderbilt

Tamia Potter, a FAMU alumna, has made history by becoming the first Black woman to be accepted as a neurosurgery resident at Vanderbilt University. Potter had a passion for neuroscience from a young age and worked hard to achieve her dream. She obtained a nursing assistant license at age 17 and worked overnight at a nursing home while studying for her bachelor's degree in chemistry at FAMU. Later, she excelled in both research and clinical performance at the acclaimed Neurological Surgery program at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Potter's achievement is significant, as it marks a major milestone for Black women in the field of neurosurgery, who have historically been underrepresented in the medical profession. She emphasized the importance of diversity and inclusion in the medical field and hopes to inspire others to follow in her footsteps.

Are HBCUs Still Relevant? *Black Marylanders Say:*



YES!

Historically Black Colleges and Universities have played a vital role in higher education for African Americans since the Civil War. Maryland is home to four HBCUs that serve more than 20,000 students annually, including Morgan State University, Howard University, and Coppin State University. Many of the state's leaders have ties to these institutions, and nationally, HBCUs have seen increased donations, enrollment, and attention from famous alumni, such as Vice President Kamala Harris and media mogul Oprah Winfrey. However, some still question the relevance of HBCUs today, as they become more diverse and inclusive.

To understand the value of HBCUs, several graduates with Maryland ties spoke about how their college experience prepared them for the work world.

Are HBCUs still relevant? Absolutely, HBCUs remain relevant because they provide a unique environment where students can learn and grow without feeling inferior. The legacy of HBCUs lives on as these institutions continue to empower generations of African American students with education and life lessons that instill unshakable confidence needed to excel in society.

"HBCUs are still relevant in 2023 because it is a direct reflection of our ancestry and history. The biggest advantage of attending an HBCU is the sense of community, culture and lifelong friendships that are curated during that experience." – **Jasmine Norton, 35, The Urban Oyster**; *Graduated in 2011 from Bowie State University*



"HBCUs prepare students for the corporate world and entrepreneurship" ... "They are a real mirror of who you are and where you stand with all things being equal. Many times, things will happen to us [Black people] and we wonder if it was because of our color. The HBCU experience tells us whether it's an outside or inside issue." – **Azikiwe DeVeaux, 47, founder of Events 4 Good People**; *Graduated in 1999 from Morgan State University*

"Attending an HBCU made me fearless. I am confident in every room I enter and every assignment I'm asked to perform, because I know that I am good at what I do, and I am proud of who I am." – **Karen Miller, 53, crisis management consultant and political fundraiser**; *Bachelor's degree in telecommunications, minor in speech, 1992; master's in communications management, 2002 (Morgan State University)*



"Virginia Union provided a safe, supportive environment to flourish. I had room to soar and be myself." – **Marcy Crump, 58, event producer and communications consultant**; *Graduated in 1988 from Virginia Union University*



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The Rebirth of Golf at Florida's Oldest HBCU

Florida's oldest HBCU, Edward Waters University, is experiencing a golfing renaissance, with the revival of its golf program. The college's decision to revive the golf team has brought renewed energy to the sport, drawing in young, talented players, and inspiring a new generation of golf enthusiasts.

The groundwork for EWU's rebirth was laid in 2021 when officials from THE PLAYERS Championship announced a \$50,000 donation to fund scholarships, cover operational expenses, and secure a head coach, Kelly Allen. Past PLAYERS tournament chairmen, who are members of the Red Coats, also delivered more than \$10,000 in golf supplies to the team.

The team's success is not just limited to the golf course. It has also become a powerful force for social and community engagement, working to promote the sport and inspire young people to get involved in golf. The team's efforts will help to break down barriers and to promote diversity and inclusivity in the sport, making golf accessible to all.

For many, the revitalization of golf at Edward Waters University represents a new beginning for the sport. It is a testament to the power of dedication and passion and a reminder that even the oldest traditions can be reborn with renewed energy and enthusiasm. As the team continues to grow and thrive, it will inspire many more young people to pick up a club and take a swing.

Colleges and HBCUs Started or Named After Black Women

From trailblazing pioneers to modern-day innovators, Black women have played a significant role in shaping higher education in America. Historically Black Colleges and Universities were founded in response to racial segregation, and many of them were started and led by Black women. Additionally, several colleges and universities have been named after notable Black women, honoring their contributions to academia and society. Let's take a moment to recognize these trailblazers.

Coppin State University

Coppin State University, once known as Fanny Jackson Coppin Normal School, a school for training teachers, was founded in 1926. The school was named after Fanny Jackson Coppin to honor her contributions as a pioneer to education.



Bethune-Cookman University

Mary McLeod Bethune was one of the most influential women of her generation, she was a civil rights and women activist, an educator, and philanthropist. On October 3, 1904, Mary McLeod Bethune, founded and opened the Daytona Literary and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls—what would become Bethune-Cookman University.



Lewis College of Business

With a \$50 loan, Violet T. Lewis founded Lewis Business College in 1928 for black women seeking secretary skills in Detroit, Michigan. At that time, tuition at the school was \$2.50 per week, and there were between 20 and 25 students enrolled.

Voorhees University

Knowing the importance of education, at 23 years old Elizabeth Evelyn Wright founded Voorhees University in 1897 in Denmark, South Carolina. Wright had found her inspiration to open Voorhees University while studying at Tuskegee Institute.





The Belief Gap and Black Male Enrollment: Why More Men Are Needed at HBCUs

Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the United States are experiencing a dearth of male students, with just one in three undergraduate students being male. While Black student enrolment has been declining in higher education, the problem is particularly evident at HBCUs, which aim to educate Black people. Fewer men in key programs such as engineering, law, medicine and teaching threatens the diversity of these professions and contributes to the racial wealth gap.

By the time Black male students are set to graduate high school, many feel they are not college material. Experts say this is due to a “belief gap” between what Black male students can achieve and what teachers and counselors believe they can. To improve the pipeline into higher education, some HBCUs are recruiting and training more Black male teachers and other men of color to work in public schools.

Morehouse College and Fisk University have seen male enrollment increase between 2016-21, partly due to the pitch to young Black boys going beyond an educational benefit. Other HBCUs are making a pitch beyond the educational benefit to convince young Black boys to choose higher education.



Meet The Duo Behind the Battle of the Bands Fundraiser for HBCU Students

Frank and LaKeisha Johnson's love story began at Johnson C. Smith University during homecoming in 2007. A year and a half later, fate brought them back together, and they knew they were meant to be. Now, the couple is giving back to the HBCU community with their HBCU Culture Legacy Foundation. The foundation provides financial support for HBCU institutions and students and hosts the HBCU Culture Homecoming Fest & Battle of The Bands and Fan Festival.

The foundation was motivated by Frank's personal experience. Because of his father's illness, he had to drop out of college during his last year and was ineligible for financial help. The couple wants to ensure that other students do not face the same funding constraints.

The fundraising event, The HBCU Culture Homecoming Fest & Battle of The Bands, was held in the second week of January. It was a memorable time for HBCU students and graduates to come together and create new memories while supporting a great cause.

The Origins and Evolution of Virginia State's Woo Woos



The Woo Woo's of Virginia State University has been an iconic cheerleading group since their inception, bringing energy and excitement to every game and event they attend. But where did they come from, and how have they evolved over the years?

It all started back in 1974, Dr. Paulette Walker-Johnson was a cheerleader at HBCU Cheerleading and Beyond. She initially tried out for cheerleading at Peabody High School during the Jim Crow Era and was a varsity cheerleader for four years. She then got a job at Virginia State College where her father helped her get a job. Despite not having any experience in coaching, she was determined to do what was possible and the style of the stop and shake style eventually evolved. Dr. Johnson initially reworked cheers from her Morgan State days and integrated them into the HBCU cheer circles, earning them the nickname "The Woo Woos".

Over the years, the Woo Woo's have become a beloved institution at Virginia State University, with generations of students joining the squad to carry on the tradition.

The Woo Woo's are more than just a cheerleading squad - they're a symbol of community and school pride. They embody the spirit of Virginia State University and its students, showcasing their passion and dedication with every routine.



Howard University is taking the gaming world by storm! The school's esports team, "Cold Steel," has made remarkable progress really fast. This team is making waves in the industry; From using dorm Wi-Fi and minimal equipment to securing an \$80,000 prize in a major esports tournament.

The impressive esports journey of Cold Steel has achieved new heights with the construction of an esports lab in collaboration with Verizon and Gaming Cxmmunity Co. The lab is helping Howard's teams prepare for high-level competition, and with the upcoming Mountain Dew Real Change esports tournament, they have their sights set on even bigger prizes - a whopping \$500,000 grand prize and the possibility of signing a professional contract.

It's not just about the money, though. As team member Reese Samuel points out, being part of the esports community at Howard has given him a sense of belonging and the chance to pursue his dreams. With an esports degree program in the works, Howard is helping to create a new generation of diverse gaming professionals. Watch out, gaming world – Howard is just getting started!

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White House, VP Kamala Harris Host Briefing with HBCU Student Journalists and Representatives



Historic strides were made in the White House on February 23rd, as student journalists from over 40 historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were invited to participate in a press briefing with Vice President Kamala Harris and Senior Advisor for Public Engagement Keisha Lance Bottoms. The conversation covered a wide range of topics, including plans to support HBCUs and the impact of small businesses on the economy.

The press briefing coincided with Student Press Freedom Day, a nationwide event celebrating student journalism and First Amendment freedoms. The student journalists from HBCUs not only gained professional journalism experience but also had their voices amplified and their unique perspectives highlighted.



The conversation also delved into the crucial issue of mental health in communities of color, a topic close to Keisha Lance Bottoms' heart as she shared her own experiences and the importance of having conversations within the Black community. Harris acknowledged the importance of student journalists' voices from HBCUs, saying, "I know the future of our country is bright because of HCU student journalists' leadership."

The press briefing not only showcased the crucial contributions of HBCUs throughout American history but also served as a powerful reminder of the strength and resilience of the Black community.



Does Florida Bill HB 999 Ban Black Greek Life, Courses, Programs from State Universities?

Florida House Bill 999 (HB 999) was introduced by Florida state Rep. Alex Andrade (R-Pensacola) on Feb. 21, 2023. It would prohibit public colleges and universities in Florida from funding programs or campus activities that promote diversity, equity, or inclusion (DEI) or “Critical Race Theory rhetoric.” The bill would also prohibit majors and minors that teach about race, gender studies, and intersectionality at Florida colleges and universities.

The proposed legislation sparked fears that it would outlaw Black fraternities, sororities, and other student-led multicultural organizations on Florida campuses, but Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and Andrade both stated that the bill would not ban Historically Black or other student-led multicultural organizations on Florida campuses.

However, opponents of HB 999 claim the bill undermines academic freedom in higher education and that its wording is vague and unconstitutional. Some believe it will prevent the university from collaborating with student-led organizations on events that promote ideas that the government deems “bad.” It remains to be seen how the debate around HB 999 will play out; for now, it has ignited a conversation about the role of Black Greek-letter organizations in higher education and the potential impact of legislative action on these groups.



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Remembering Willis Reed: The Ultimate Team Player

Willis Reed: a legendary basketball player who will always be remembered for his incredible performance during Game 7 of the 1970 NBA Finals. Despite suffering from a serious injury, Reed hobbled back to the floor and made the first two baskets of the game, inspiring his team to victory.

Reed's courage and determination in that moment made him an enduring icon of sports history. He embodied the best of what it means to be an athlete: the ability to push through pain and adversity, and to rise to the occasion when it matters most.

But Reed was more than just a great basketball player. He was a leader, a role model, and a true gentleman. He always carried himself with dignity and grace, on and off the court. Willis Reed's legacy will always be remembered and cherished. He was a true champion in every sense of the word, and his memory will continue to inspire generations of athletes to come.





The Only HBCU in Oklahoma — Langston University — is Stepping It Up for Its Students!

Langston University, the only HBCU in Oklahoma, is once again coming to the rescue of its students in their time of need. This time around, the university is wiping out over \$4.5 million in student debt balances using funds from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF). This move will benefit students enrolled in summer 2022, fall 2022, and spring 2023 semesters bringing their balances to zero. Kent J. Smith, president of Langston University, expressed immense pride in this initiative which will have a significant and positive impact on students, graduates, and their families for many years to come. Furthermore, this is the university's second time assisting its students in this manner. Back in August 2021, it cleared the amount of \$4,654,112 bringing the total to over \$9.2 million.

While the HEERF Award will not refund students who have already made payments, Langston University's Office of the Registrar is considering late applications for graduation due to the timing of the HEERF Award to remove obstacles for students.

So, if you're a Langston student struggling with debt, you can breathe a sigh of relief knowing that this university has your back. It's a clear sign of Langston University's commitment to its students and the power of education to transform lives.



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