

WHAT COMPANIES ARE SUCCESSFULLY REACHING HBCU ALUMNI?

HBCU **CONNECT**

SPRING/SUMMER 2009

HBCU CONNECT'S
TOP 50 EMPLOYERS OF
BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS
AND GRADUATES

BARACK

Obama

& THE WHITEHOUSE
INITIATIVE ON HBCUS



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ON THE COVER

BARACK OBAMA
& THE WHITEHOUSE
INITIATIVE ON HBCUS



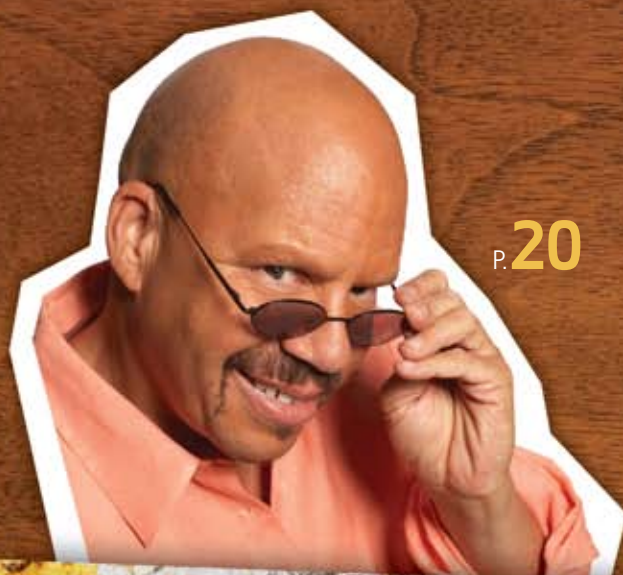
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A Letter from the Editor

First of all, thank you for picking up this issue of HBCU CONNECT. We have been working hard to expand our audience of Historically Black College & University alumni and supporters over the years, so I won't assume you know anything about the history of our organization. We started back in 1999 as a simple website to allow HBCU alumni to connect with each other online and now we've grown to serve not only HBCU alumni but also HBCU students, recruits and supporters using our website, HBCUConnect.com, the magazine that you have in your hands, and via key events such as our annual HBCU Cruise.

In this issue of HBCU CONNECT magazine we are doing things quite a bit differently from previous issues of the magazine. I wanted to get a bit more hands on with the magazine myself and also bust the doors wide open for input from our readers. So don't add me to any spam lists but if you want to drop me a line about the magazine or our website and what we can do to make it better feel free to email me directly at wrmoss@hbcuconnect.com.

So what else is new? Going forward you can expect to see more articles highlighting the achievements of HBCU alumni and their stories of success. This magazine is dedicated to HBCU graduates, so we are

going to put some folks on blast too. So if you don't know what I mean by that, it basically means we are going to talk about what some companies are doing that is really good or not so good when it comes to dealing with the HBCU audience. There are lots of companies trying to tap into the HBCU alumni audience and we have become familiar with many of them but some companies are just not doing right. I'll give you one example. How many people actually knew that Victoria's Secret "Pink" clothing line actually has some HBCU apparel for sale? When I heard about it, I thought to myself, wow that gear should sell like hotcakes, but when I didn't see an HBCU specific marketing campaign to appeal to HBCU students and alumni from this hugely profitable company I was quite discouraged. I think if a company wants to sell to you then they need also buy from you. So we'll call it as we see it.

While you can expect the general vibe from our magazine to be positive, uplifting and very motivational, we're not pulling any punches. There are also some HBCUs that need to step their game up. I mean, I graduated from Hampton University back in 1995 and while I've seen some major improvements on the campus, don't be surprised if we have to get on Hampton about the incredible rise in the cost of tuition for example.

Ultimately you can continue to expect us to be informative with content exclusive to the HBCU alumni audience.

Will Moss

Editor

Ideas?

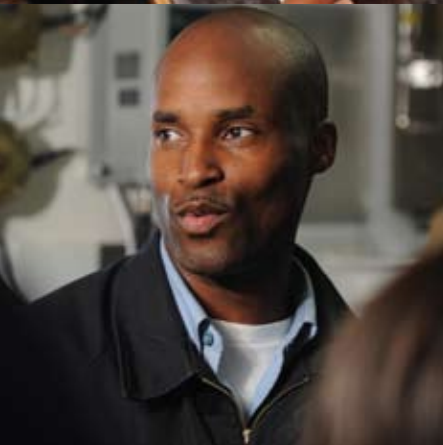


Shoot your comments or ideas to us at editor@hbcuconnect.com.

My Experience with *The U.S. Navy*

... Much More Than What You Think!

By William Moss



Wow...I just came from an extremely exciting and eye opening experience off the coast of San Diego on the USS Ronald Reagan Navy aircraft carrier!

I was lucky enough to experience a day in the life on board a huge aircraft carrier and I also got to speak with over a dozen officers and proud men and women on active duty serving in the U.S. Navy. The event was put together by the Navy Recruiting Command and their African American ad agency of record, Global Hue.

I could have sent someone else on the HBCUConnect staff to attend the event and bring back their perspective on the Navy and things that might be of interest to our audience, but I wanted to personally talk to folks in the Navy and also experience what life might be like on an aircraft carrier so that I could give you my raw and uncut impressions. I must say that at the very least, I was quite impressed! Not only for the obvious things, such as being able to see the equipment, the huge ship we landed on, and the fighter jets, but I was more impressed by the sense of mission, teamwork and accomplishment displayed by the officers and enlistees I spoke with.

So let me tell you some of the highlights of my trip in sort of a timeline...

Tuesday April 14th 2009:

I left Columbus, Ohio heading to San Diego, California and arrived around 4pm or so. I packed crazy light. I think I had to wear some clothes twice by the time I went home on Friday April 17th. I met up with Lieutenant D.J. Holmes with the U.S. Navy and also Lloryn Love with Global Hue. They were kind enough to shuttle me from the airport to the Navy Lodge at the Naval Station in San Diego. The lodge was actually pretty nice. Kind of a mix between a Hampton Inn and a Residence Inn. I was impressed.

Later that evening, we went to dinner with several folks from different black media organizations and some of the African American officers that happened to be stationed in the San Diego area. At dinner I was able to talk to four different officers that had some pretty interesting stories to tell, but each of them had positive things to say about their experience and achievements in the Navy. I felt pretty proud of them. One of the officers I spoke with was actually a Navy pilot! He explained how there were not many black pilots in the Navy but there were definitely opportunities, and for him it was

always his dream to be able to fly different types of aircrafts. He had piloted everything from Helicopters to Jet Fighter planes.

Wednesday April 15th 2009:

We left the Navy Lodge and headed over to the Naval base where we would leave as a group on a flight to head out to the USS Ronald Reagan (www.reagan.navy.mil). We ate breakfast on the Navy base. The food was not bad at all.

That morning we learned a lot about the Navy in general and got a briefing on the USS Ronald Reagan and the other ships in the Navy's fleet. The interesting thing that morning was that we were all going to fly from San Diego to the aircraft carrier on a prop plane and land on the short runway on top of the ship... See, the interesting thing there is that because the runway is not like a normal runway, the way that the airplanes stop without going over the edge of the ship is that they have a hook on the back of the plane and on the deck of the ship they have these super strong cables that, if done correctly, the pilot can land and stop the plane by catching the hook on the cable, with all of us on board petrified.

Well, we took off, flew for about 45 minutes and then right when everybody was falling into that light sleep about to start drooling and what not, we landed, and on the first attempt our pilot got the plane to hook up on deck and in a pretty intense 2 second jerk, we came to a complete stop, and I almost lost my breakfast! Everybody else seemed to be pumped up so I just looked forward to getting off the plane and getting some fresh air!

Wow... We were out in ocean on an aircraft carrier! We saw a gang of F-18 fighter jets, a few helicopters and a crew hard at work. We went below deck and immediately were met by the captain, his crew, and some REALLY good cookies! We'd be trying to find more of those cookies over the following 24 hours but I digress... The captain greeted our group, and was really straight forward and professional. I was impressed with the crew of folks we met and I felt we were definitely in good hands.

That afternoon and evening we got to go on a tour of the ship and have dinner with some of the Navy crew working on the ship in different capacities. I think the highlight of my evening was getting to go up on the bridge and watch the F-18 fighter pilots practicing the landings and take offs from



but most of the action was on deck where the planes were coming in and taking off.

After a nice lunch with some of the officers and commanders on the ship, we prepared for take off, which most everyone described as being pretty exciting and intense since the planes have to be catapulted off of the deck since the runway is not long enough for a normal take off. So we put on our head gear and life jackets and boarded the plane for the take off to head back to San Diego... To my surprise the take off was not that bad! It was like 2 seconds of extreme G-Force and then we were floating in the air on our way home!

The Recap:

Ok so you might be wondering, "what's the point?"

The point is, the Navy has serious opportunities for African Americans! You might think the military is not for you, but if you are trying to get an education, a career and follow your dreams, you may want to give the Navy a serious look. Why? I'll give you two very good reasons: (1) You can get significant tuition assistance from the Navy and (2) you can get paid!

With all of the money drying up for financial aid and scholarships etc, we as African Americans need to be made aware of the opportunities that exist that we can take advantage of and then be open minded enough to pursue these opportunities and see if they would help you reach your goals and dreams.

I was made aware of at least 11 programs that offered scholarship money for college and also monthly stipends! So if you or someone you know is looking at options for paying for college or just looking to do something with themselves to have a better life and a future career, the easiest thing to do would be to check out www.MyNavyMyFuture.com.

the deck of the aircraft carrier in the dark of the night. You could see it took serious skill, but not only skill from the pilots but also skill for everyone else involved in the procedures. You know another interesting thing we got to see that evening was the actual control room where the ship was being guided through the waters. The guy guiding the ship was maybe only 20 years old! Of course there were higher ranking individuals there giving orders but these young men and women had serious responsibilities on the ship.

That night we actually got to sleep on the aircraft carrier. The F-18 jets were landing and taking off above our heads until 2am. It was super loud and I knew most folks would not be able to sleep through it, but me, I slept like a baby!

Thursday April 16th 2009:

We started out early on Thursday morning with breakfast with the enlisted folks on the ship. The food was pretty good, though I didn't eat much because I remembered we were going to have an intense take off from the flight deck that afternoon.

We spent the morning taking a further look around the ship where we saw just about everything! There was a worship area, an internet 'café', several eating areas, and many more things that would make your jaw drop,

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It all adds up.

what's going on...

Upcoming Events

Who: 20th Annual Diversity Recruitment Program

What: Increasing Our Diversity through Education, Empowerment, and Engagement

When: October 23, 2009

Where: Cambridge, MA (Harvard Graduate School of Education)

For more information: <http://isites.harvard.edu/drp>

Who: National Black Pre-Law Conference and Law Fair

What: The nation's premier information-sharing and networking empowerment event for aspiring Black lawyers!

When: November 6–7, 2009

Where: Houston, TX (University of Houston – Downtown)

For more information: <http://www.blackprelaw.com>

Who: HBCU Connect President and Staff

What: HBCU Connect 10th Anniversary Celebration Alumni Cruise

When: Nov. 14–21, 2009 (Plan now!)

Where: Miami, Virgin Islands, San Juan, Grand Turk, and MORE

For more information: www.hbcuconnect.com/cruise

Who: National Black Pre-MBA Conference and Business School Fair

What: To provide a national informational forum for aspiring and current Black business professionals and entrepreneurs

When: November 6–7, 2009

Where: Houston, TX

For more information: <http://www.blackpremba.com>

Add large scale events to the HBCU Connect Alum Magazine Upcoming Events >>

To have your event included on the HBCU Connect Alum Magazine calendar, please submit your event information to jbunch@hbcuconnect.com. We ask that only an authorized representative of the event submit and act as the contact person for the listing. Please provide good contact information for additional questions. Please keep your events description 50 words or less.



BARACK

Obama & THE WHITEHOUSE INITIATIVE ON HBCUS

President Barack Obama is issuing a proclamation recognizing August 30 – September 5, 2009 as National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week. His mission is to strengthen the capacity of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) to provide excellence in education.

John Silvanus Wilson, Jr. Appointed Executive Director for White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities will oversee President Obama's mission and is ready to dive in and build a great foundation with HBCUs.

"Very obviously we're going to have to have great relationships with the new administration, the board of advisors, presidents of the nation's HBCUs and new constituents," states Wilson. "That is at the core of what we're doing – relationship improvement."

That repair work extends into how HBCUs are able to do business. How they conduct business, Wilson stressed, is important as all schools need to thrive in order to achieve President Obama's mandate that America leads the world in producing the most educated and skilled work force and has the highest proportion of college graduates.

*"Education is not
a pathway to success;
it's a prerequisite to
success."* ~ BARACK OBAMA

"Black colleges have to be part of this," states Wilson. "We need to figure out the best way to invest in Black colleges to insure they are at the core of the effort to achieve the goals that the president has set." Part of achieving that goal is showcasing how HBCUs have and continue to play a key role in the larger educational goals Obama has presented. That is evidenced in the cultivation of green economy wonks and cancer investigators, as well as efforts to replenish the ranks of teachers in the nation's public schools already underway at HBCUs.

"If there is a central theme in the executive order (that former President Jimmy Carter signed in 1980 to create the office) that has under girded this office, the theme has been capacity; enhance the capacity of HBCUs; increase funding from the 32 federal agencies", commented Wilson.

Dr. Michael L. Lomax, president and chief executive officer of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) feels President Obama made the right decision in appointing Wilson with such a responsibility. "This is a superb appointment. As a graduate of Morehouse College, John Wilson knows well the contributions, strengths and heritage of our nation's HBCUs," said Dr. Michael L. Lomax "In this position, he can now play a central role in ensuring that these

institutions are strengthened in their capacity to help us all meet the challenging goal that President Obama has set--that America will regain its position as the number one nation in the world in producing college graduates."

White House Initiative staff will coordinate its annual conference on August 30 – September 3, 2009, and the theme for this year's conference is HBCUs: Seizing the Capacity to Thrive!

The White House Initiative staff has five primary objectives set by President Obama:

- Strengthen the capacity of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to expedite their mission of teaching, research and public service.
- Serve as an effective advocate for Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- Identify HBCUs' contributions to American society and enhance opportunities to attract funding from federal and private sources.
- Encourage collaborations and partnerships among HBCUs and other organizations to increase the effectiveness of federal and private funding.

- Encourage corporations, not-for-profits and individuals to form or strengthen partnerships to improve "overall financial stability and academic program development" at America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Over 1,000 representatives from the HBCU community, federal agencies, corporations and foundations are expected to participate in discussions exploring issues of particular interest and concern to the Black college community. The conference will also present the new executive order, appointed new members of the President's Board of Advisors on HBCUs, and the Obama Administration.





Who's Trying To Connect with YOU?

Nationwide Insurance.

We like to highlight some of the companies that are making a specific effort to reach out to HBCU alumni, and in this issue, we coincidentally are featuring two insurance related companies.

It may be a coincidence that we happen to be highlighting two insurance companies, but best believe it is no coincidence that they are both seriously looking to establish a strong relationship with HBCU alumni and maximize their brand presence with you.

HBCU CONNECT has been working with Nationwide Insurance company since 2002, assisting them in their efforts to initially reach out to black college alumni and students to offer employment opportunities. You must give credit to this company for thinking outside of the box early on in working with a 'start up' company like ours at the time, but that kind of outside of the box thinking as paid off well for Nationwide in their efforts to connect with HBCU alumni.

Currently, we have not seen much of the Nationwide recruitment brand in front of the HBCU audience at all, but we have seen an upswing in their marketing efforts to reach out to alumni and offer some of their great services (at a pretty significant discount).

Ok, get ready to take advantage of this, because if you are a member of HBCUConnect.com, Nationwide Insurance is running a very successful program to offer you a real discount on your auto insurance. I actually called in and got a quote and made sure I asked for the HBCU Connect discount, and sure enough, I received a quote (and purchased) a new auto policy that saved me about \$500 a year. Not sure about you, but I really don't enjoy paying my insurance bills, so saving on this particular bill felt really good.

HBCU Connect is always looking for meaningful ways to create more value for their user base and Nationwide Insurance has demonstrated time and time again of being 'On your Side' so join other HBCU Alumni and take advantage of this real discount on your auto coverage. Plus aren't we in a recession!? We need to be saving money and supporting companies that spend dollars within our community to do business with us.


Contact Nationwide Insurance and ask for the HBCU CONNECT member discount!

1-866-556-SAVE (7283)

Will Moss



on blast



The McGraw-Hill Companies



'The Good:

We have to give major credit to McGraw-Hill for being HBCU CONNECT's top company in our first attempt at a top 50 list of HBCU employers. You can always tell a company that is serious about diversity recruiting based on two or three key things. First, are the company's employees behind the whole diversity recruiting effort? Secondly, does management understand why diversity is important and are they behind it? Lastly, do they put up the money necessary to actually make something happen?

Obviously McGraw-Hill is not only serious about diversity recruiting, but also about making an impact within the HBCU community by hiring grads from our beloved HBCUs.

'The Bad:

I'm not sure if putting this company on blast will actually get them some more business, but hey, at least they'll know the power of the HBCU audience. At any rate, did you know you could get some pretty hot HBCU gear from Victoria's Secret? The Pink line to be exact... When they launched their collegiate line up, initially, they didn't have gear for any HBCUs, but after some heat from the HBCU audience, they added some HBCU gear. Ok cool. But it's not like Victoria's Secret is a start up company! I thought at a minimum we would see an online campaign promoting the HBCU gear, I mean at least a major PR push since they didn't initially launch with any HBCUs. My advice for Victoria's Secret/Pink: If you launch an HBCU specific product line, spend some time and money marketing to the HBCU audience so that we know about your products and also so that we know you are interested in us as consumers (and that we're not just taken for granted).

Editor's Note: We actually had some conversations with Pink about marketing to the HBCU audience online but we didn't see anything as much as a press release about the product line. Limited Brands owns Victoria's Secret and they do over a billion dollars in revenue each year.

'The Ugly:

Hmmmm... Ok, I was not sure who we'd put on blast in the ugly section this issue, so let us know who should be on blast in our next issue by emailing us at onblast@hbcuconnect.com.

But food for thought... When you decided to attend an HBCU, wasn't there like somebody in your family that was hating!? Like the person that thought Historically Black Colleges were only party schools, or somehow were inferior to white schools? Well I'm putting that person on blast! Attending an HBCU was one of the best decisions I have ever made in life, and while some non-HBCUs might have better facilities or larger endowments, one thing we know for sure is that we can and should hold Black Colleges responsible for doing the best job at educating young black people. Holla

HBCU ALUMNI ON THE MOVE

Web
2.0

Article By John S. Wilson



In business as is in life there are early bloomers and there are late comers. When it comes to Web 2.0, as companies continue to define themselves and better understand how to monetize their efforts (zero revenue websites are no longer the rage), early bloomers are much better prepared to further grab market share and expand, leverage their experience and focus their efforts where it is most profitable and, most importantly, avoid following the pack and involving themselves in markets they do not know and understand.

HBCU CONNECT IS ONE OF THESE EARLY BLOOMERS.



I spoke with HBCU Connect CEO, William Moss III, a Hampton University alumnus, about how the competition in the market has changed over the years and the future direction of the enterprise. As far as the teamwork within the organization, Moss' views are clear cut:

"I don't care how big or small a company is or how poor or rich they are, when it comes to creating a competitive website they are only as good as their best programmer, designer, marketer, etc. I won't pretend everything we do is the prettiest, but when it comes to online strategy and functionality we know what we're doing."

Clearly, teamwork is not a buzzword to Moss but a value that has held true to form as HBCU Connect has grown over the years. And that growth has not been easy with old rivals as well as new ones such as Alumni Roundup, who have arguably overtaken HBCU Connect in viewership. Recent numbers show Roundup's page views exceed 100,000 daily with a membership of 80,000. Roundup includes over 15 sites dedicated to various HBCUs, of which the flagship site was

Bison Roundup, dedicated to Howard University, where the founders and brothers Bryndan and Rustin Moore are alums.

"Growing your core market is much much more challenging now than it was when I started, but when it comes to the larger competitors, the idea is not to compete with them at what they do best, you stick to what you do best and who you know," Moss said. And it is that singular focus on the HBCU network and its environs that has catapulted HBCU Connect to be a formidable player in the social networking space in which they compete. Connect began in 1995—before Myspace and Facebook, and even before direct competitors like Blackplanet.

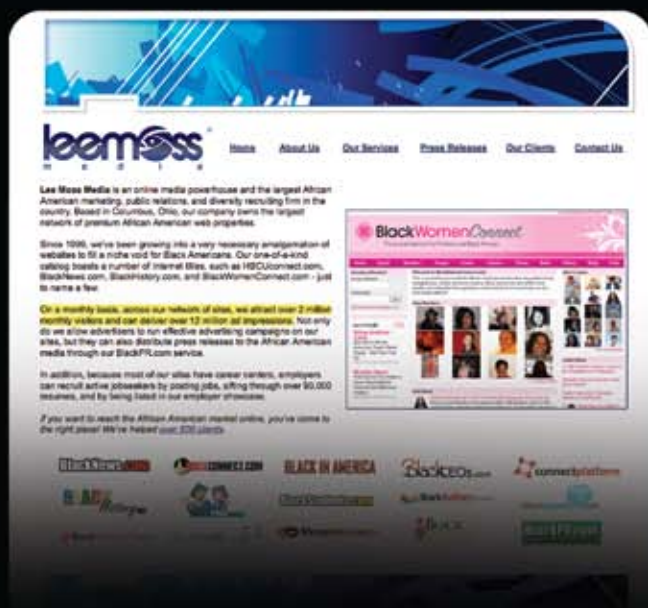
Moss went on to say, "Think about it... We wrote 100% of our own social networking software from day one. Of course we had the idea to do a general market 'facebook' for non-black students and alumni, but guess what? It was not my passion and I can't pretend I know that market inside and out." Which is what distinguishes Connect from its direct and indirect competitors. Other social networking sites were focused on niche markets as well, Facebook for college students and Myspace for high school and college students. It wasn't until later that both not only expanded but began to market themselves toward a general audience. Where Connect differs is in the amount of brands it has and the leverage it can wield. Brands include Connect Platform, which is a Ning-like social networking platform that allows users to create their own social networks without any coding or previous tech experience; African American Careers, a recruiting and job community site for diverse populations; the recently acquired HBCU Network, which started around the same time as Connect and was previously its main competition; and Lee Moss Media, a joint venture with Dante Lee, that has even more web properties most notably, Black Women Connect.



[HBCU] CONNECT BEGAN IN 1995 BEFORE MYSPACE AND FACEBOOK

Collectively these sites draw over 2 million visitors a month.

What has and will continue to propel Connect to success is its ability to strategically look forward and position itself in the right manner. When it comes to strategy Moss feels "By us making strategic acquisitions, partnerships, and launching [innovative] market offerings, if we do it right, we should be serving [and benefiting] our recruitment partners." In regard to the future of Connect and his other ventures, Moss exudes confidence when he considers the future, "...when it comes to growing revenue, it's easy when you consider the fact that we are just scratching the surface of what kind of revenue exists for what we do. I doubt any of our competitors know the breadth of monetization opportunities there are for a social network. We just exploit these opportunities behind the scenes."



This article was written by John S. Wilson for BlackWeb20.com website which is managed by Angela Benton. Visit www.blackweb20.com for the best in internet industry news from a black perspective

What companies are successfully reaching HBCU Alumni?



By Jehan Bunch



State Farm Insurance, one of the #1 insurer of automobiles and homes in the United States has partnered with HBCUConnect.com, # 1 website dedicated to the promotion and preservation of HBCUs to recruit the best diverse talent in the world.

State Farm has over 80 years of service to their customers and has been helping people manage the risks of everyday life and recover from the unexpected since 1922. With nearly over 100,000 employees and agents working throughout the United States and Canada State Farm is utilizing their services on HBCUConnect.com with a strong emphasis on 'sharing' as many opportunities with the HBCU Connect community. They have posted over 400 jobs on (HBCUCareercenter.com) and given insightful tips on the job application and career planning process.

State Farm is committed to maintaining an environment that enables every employee to make the greatest possible contribution. State Farm embraces diversity and strives to be the employer of choice for candidates of all backgrounds. If you are looking for a company that will provide you meaningful work with a competitive benefits package, consider State Farm, a company looking to share, gain and build with you.



knowledge. skills. ethics.

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Based on the American Bar Association's Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools (2008 Edition), Cooley Law School is the largest law school in the nation with the 2nd highest number of minorities in the United States; second only to Inter American University School of Law, Puerto Rico. Cooley ranks 1st in enrollment of African-American students, 1st in foreign national students, 5th in Asian-American students, and 6th in Spanish heritage students in the 50 states. Cooley stands firm in its belief that a diverse student body enhances both the academic experience and the legal profession.

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cooley.edu



Columbus, OH—HBCU Connect.com announced its *Top 50 Employers List*. Companies ranked in the listing demonstrate strength in the following areas: HBCU student and alumni recruitment, brand penetration in HBCU community, and relationship with HBCU organizations.

In its first year, the HBCU Connect.com *Top 50 Employers List* is viable to not just job seekers but to employers as well. HBCU Connect CEO/Founder William R. Moss III feels the list speaks loudly to employers for development of stronger competitive strategies for not just recruitment of HBCU students and alumni but retention as well.

"It's important that people know which companies are putting in real effort to reach out to, and recruit students and graduates from Historically Black Colleges and Universities. These companies are not only good corporate citizens, but they are serious about diversifying their workforce and connecting with African American professionals" states Mr. Moss.

McGraw-Hill Companies secured the #1 spot for highest ranking in all areas for this year's listing. Their primary areas of business are education, publishing, broadcasting, and financial and business services.

HBCUConnect.com is the #1 website dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The *Top 50 Employers List* will be published annually in HBCU Connect "On Campus" magazine and HBCU Connect Alumni Magazine.

Top 50 Employers List 2009

1. McGraw-Hill Companies
2. Continuum Health Partners Inc.
3. State Farm Insurance
4. Department of State
5. General Dynamics
6. Eastern Illinois University
7. Milton Hershey School
8. Anheuser-Busch
9. Arrow Electronics
10. Merck & Co., Inc.



11. Verizon Wireless
12. Oakton Community College
13. Pfizer
14. Central New Mexico Community College
15. University of Kentucky
16. U.S. Coast Guard
17. Booz Allen Hamilton
18. Sodexo
19. Nationwide Insurance
20. Health Alliance
21. Hunter College
22. MidAtlantic Farm Credit
23. U.S. Secret Service
24. Google Inc.
25. Pliant Corporation
26. Denny's Corporation
27. Penske Truck and Leasing Co.
28. City of NY Dept. of Parks & Recreation
29. KPMG
30. City Year
31. Penn State
32. CCBC, Community College of Baltimore County
33. Duke Realty Corporation
34. Blue Cross & Blue Shield of RI
35. Graystone Advertising
36. University of San Francisco
37. Lowe's
38. Boston College
39. The Medical University of South Carolina
40. McKesson
41. University Hospital/State University of New York
42. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)
43. EMC Corporation
44. New Jersey Schools Development Authority
45. West Virginia University
46. ALSAC – American Lebanese Syrian Associated Charities
47. Grand Rapids Community College
48. Leavenworth School District
49. Rockwell Collins
50. St. Lawrence University

Tom Joyner Reaches Out To President Obama For Help With HBCUs

By Dante Lee

The future of Black colleges has long been at risk, and the problem seems to be getting worse. Many of these institutions are old, have outdated facilities, and may not provide students with the best infrastructure possible.

Tom Joyner, host of the nationally-syndicated "Tom Joyner Morning Show" and founder of the Tom Joyner Foundation, recently wrote the following letter to President Obama. As you read this, think about how much effort you as an alumni have made in attempt to preserve our HBCUs—and think about what you personally may be able to contribute.

Mr. President,

I have been a major supporter of yours from the start because I believed you were the best person for the job because I never dreamed in my lifetime that this would happen. You've been doing an amazing job considering that you took over the country at a time when so much is happening. But I do have a concern about one of your recent decisions. I'm calling on you to listen to the tens of thousands of alumni, faculty, administration and students of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) who want you to seriously reconsider your changes to the 2010 federal budget. We want you to extend the \$85 million that was included in the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 and is slated to expire in 2009.

I realize you're dealing with a budget that's in the trillions of dollars, but let me tell you, as a long time supporter and cheerleader for black colleges, literally every single dollar helps to keep their doors open at these institutions. This \$85 million is absolutely crucial for many of the colleges to make sure every student attending these schools have the best infrastructure possible. That means these schools need the direct funds that the federal government has allocated since 2007 to help provide comfortable dormitories, fully furnished classrooms, research labs, libraries and so many things that contribute to these students getting a quality education. The fact is the funding for many HBCUs eligible to receive federal funds has not kept pace with the increasing needs for the institutions.

I've been reading about how you and Secretary [Arne] Duncan are increasing the amount of money for PELL Grants, which means more students may be able to get sorely needed dollars to attend college. That's what my Foundation has been doing for the past 11 years, and the more help these students get to stay in school the better. Don't hesitate one minute in providing those funds, but, Mr. President, you can't have it both ways. If you cut funding that directly affects the operations of these HBCUs, then some of these schools may not be around to educate the students receiving those PELL grants.

Let me try to break it down even further. There are more than 200,000 students who are benefiting from getting an education at an HBCU. It's



safe to say that many of these students may be a first generation college student who may have never have had a chance to even get a college degree if it weren't for an HBCU. Let's be honest. Not every one can go—or get accepted—to Harvard, Yale, Princeton or some of the major colleges around the country. What I know from my own personal experience—and from talking to and getting hugs from the thousands of students, their Moms, Dads, PawPaws and MoMoms over the years—is that many of these students are grateful to have had the opportunity to go to college. Period. What black colleges have given them is love, nurturing and confidence to take on the world. Just listen to what Dr. Billy Hawkins, president of Talladega (AL) College said during a panel discussion among black college presidents on my annual Tom Joyner Foundation fundraiser, the Fantastic Voyage™: "I worked 20 years at white institutions, but students don't get the nurturing they get at a black college."

But more than the touchy-feely stuff, black colleges are producing huge results. For example, here are some very impressive statistics from the National Association For Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, better known as NAFEO: Twenty-four percent (24%) of all PhDs earned each year by African Americans are conferred by twenty four (24) HBCUs; Eighteen (18) of the top twenty-three (23) producers of African Americans who go on to receive science related PhDs are HBCUs; Four (4) of the top ten (10) producers of successful African American medical school applicants are HBCUs. These HBCUs produce twenty percent (20%) more African American applicants than the other six (6) institutions combined; Eight (8) of the top ten (10) producers of African American engineers are HBCUs.

Whenever I'm reminded of these statistics, I can't help but smile. I spend a lot of my time sharing this information with the world because most of the time you hear only about how bad black colleges are doing. Grant it, I'll be the first to tell you some of our black colleges are teetering on the brink of survival, but there are still many black colleges that are serving a critical role in producing future doctors, lawyers, teachers, athletes and engineers. Dr. Diane Suber, president of Saint Augustine's College in Raleigh, NC, said she and her administration have to make tough choices all the time, and most importantly they realize they can not be all things to all people. "It's challenging for us to remain competitive and remain true to our mission," Suber said. "Our quality of education is not substandard. Yes, it could be better if we had more money, but we provide outstanding educational opportunities."

So, I ask you, Mr. President, restore that \$85 million today! This small amount is the kind of investment that will truly impact the lives of thousands of black men and women who will end up helping you bring about the change you talked about during your campaign.

"I'm calling on [Barack Obama] to listen to the tens of thousands of alumni, faculty, administration and students of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) who want you to seriously reconsider your changes to the 2010 federal budget."



Dante Lee is the CEO of Diversity City Media and the co-founder of Lee Moss Media – the biggest powerhouse of premium African American web sites. Read his daily blog at www.DanteLee.com





YEAH, I SAID IT!

By Daniel C. Moss

Hey Whitehouse Initiative on HBCUs! Shame on you! I thought we were in this thing together?

We were planning on attending the White House Initiative on HBCUs' (WHHBCU) 2009 HBCU Week Conference in Washington D.C. in late August-early September.

We've attended this event in the past and it's historically been a great event AND great for our organization and constituency. The workshops and attendees are always thought-provoking and engaging and we generally walk away with new relationships with HBCU institutions, as well as individuals and organizations who secure our services to help them activate, or engage in HBCU-focused initiatives. All said, we looked forward to attending. As we went to press with this issue of the magazine, however, I received an email stating:

Dear Mr. Moss,

Thank you for your application to participate in the 2009 HBCU Week Conference Partner Pavilion. Unfortunately, your application was not approved.

The Partner Pavilion is designed specifically for Federal agencies, educational institutions and conference sponsors in an effort to increase, promote, and enhance capacity building of HBCUs. Your organization is not one of the above categories.

We appreciate your interest and thank you for supporting the White House Initiative on HBCUs.

This, one day before we planned to attend. I don't know if it was an intern, or an alien from Mars (that's the most remote place to come to mind) who wrote me that note, but obviously they didn't have a clue. We've never made it a point to puff out our chests over here, but sometimes "a gentle reminder" is helpful. After all, don't they realize that outside of being the largest organization dedicated to HBCUs that we have a constituency of more than 1.5 Million members from across the country who collectively are the leading promoters of HBCUs and whose contributions literally affect capacity building at our nation's schools? There seems to be some sort of disconnect in D.C. and I'm wondering if they think capacity building can only be conducted by old men in suits, Federal Agencies, Educational Institutions and "Conference Sponsors"? I hate to see people miss out on an amazing opportunity because of a technicality. It seems WHHBCU is missing the larger picture—We're in this thing together, for our HBCUs! Or so we thought...

While we've always forged ahead over the years and circumvented the bureaucracy existent at some of our antiquated organizations and institutions (to include some of our HBCUs), we have come this far by addressing the needs of our members first and challenging at every turn anything which appears to keep us from advancing the cause of our alumni and students. That being said, consider this a warning—HBCUCONNECT.com is pulling no more punches. WHHBCU we know you care about the HBCUs, so no love lost, but to any other organization, individual or entity, quite frankly our stance is: you're either for HBCUs, or you're not ... and WE ARE HBCUs!

That's my 2 pennies.



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