

# THE EXPERIENCE OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS IN HISTORICALLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS

by *Mikyong Minsun Kim*

**A**frican Americans have gained significant access to higher education institutions during the last 50 years. The U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 and the Higher Education Act in 1965 especially affected the demographical makeup of American campuses, opening the doors for African American students at historically white colleges and universities. However, this democratizing process brought organizational changes to Black colleges and even threatened their survival. Many Black public colleges were forced to merge with other public state colleges.<sup>1</sup> One hundred and three historically Black colleges and universities remain in the nation; among them, 89 are four-year institutions (41 public and 48 private).<sup>2</sup>

This study, using national data, examines African-American students' learning experiences in historically Black institutions and discusses their involvements and opportunities in college. As a natural reference point, Black students' experiences in historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) will be compared with those of Black students in historically

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white colleges and universities (HWCUs). Gender difference in learning experiences will also be explored across and within the institutions. Previous studies seldom explored whether the learning experiences of Black students at HBCUs are comparable to those of Black students at predominantly white institutions, nor did they look at the gender difference in Black students' learning experiences and opportunities.

## RELATED LITERATURE

### *Relatively recent studies found no significant differences in cognitive and academic abilities associated with attending HBCUs vs. HWCUs.*

Most studies on Black colleges have focused on whether they produce better student outcomes. The benefits of attending HBCUs were often discussed in regard to Black students' psychological comfort and well-being as well as their academic and intellectual development. Both Allen<sup>3</sup> and Fleming<sup>4</sup> contended that HBCUs provide Black students with greater psychological well-being, cultural affinity, and nurturing academic relations than HWCUs. Fleming<sup>5</sup> reported

that Black students' cognitive gains are higher at HBCUs than at HWCUs. However, relatively recent studies<sup>6</sup> found no significant differences in cognitive and academic abilities associated with attending HBCUs vs. HWCUs. Bohr, Pascarella, Nora, and Terenzini's study<sup>7</sup> compared freshman growth in reading, math, and critical thinking, whereas Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, and Terenzini's study<sup>8</sup> compared writing skills and science reasoning. Kim<sup>9</sup> compared students' development in overall academic ability, math ability, and writing ability.

Focusing on college grade point average (GPA), Allen<sup>10</sup> reported that HBCU students tend to receive lower GPAs, while Wenglinsky<sup>11</sup> found no difference in college GPA. Wenglinsky also reported that students at Black colleges have higher educational aspirations and are more likely to become professionals.

Moreover, some studies observed that attending an HBCU is positively related with students' remaining in college and completing their degree.<sup>12</sup> Using more recent institutional data, however, Kim and Conrad<sup>13</sup> found that both types of institution offered a similar probability of obtaining a bachelor's degree. Kim also reported that no significant difference was found in the percentage of students transferring before graduation. Although these researchers used different data sets and analytical procedures, it seems that the gaps in cognitive and academic growth between students attending HBCUs vs. HWCUs may have decreased over time.

Flower and Pascarella<sup>14</sup> noted that Blacks attending HBCUs do not seem to develop diversity awareness to a lesser degree than Blacks attending HWCUs. While this issue is important to discuss, results of their study were based on only two Black colleges.

Previous studies<sup>15</sup> found that university faculty, facilities, available academic programs, and opportunities for advanced study are richer in HWCUs than in HBCUs. Kim<sup>16</sup> also discovered that instruction-related expenditure per full-time equivalent student, average faculty salary, and percentage of faculty with a Ph.D. are much lower in HBCUs. These findings indicate that HBCUs have overall poorer financial and instructional resources than HWCUs. Allen<sup>17</sup> also noted that HWCUs have more impressive physical plants and richer resources than HBCUs.

Student-faculty ratio is lower in HBCUs.<sup>18</sup> Black colleges may have achieved this lower ratio by limiting the percentage of Ph.D. faculty and by hiring lower paid female faculty.<sup>19</sup> The gap in average faculty salary between the two types of institutions is large.<sup>20</sup> Allen<sup>21</sup> noted that Black students have more interaction with both Black and white faculty at HBCUs than at HWCUs. In contrast, Wenglinsky<sup>22</sup> found no significant difference in student-student interaction and student-faculty interaction. Obviously, these conflicting findings suggest that more research is needed in this area to deduce the educational implications and to help with policy decisions.

Comparing Black and white students' efforts in two Black liberal arts colleges and two white liberal arts colleges, Watson and Kuh<sup>23</sup> found that in white institutions Black students make a greater effort than white students but make fewer gains. They noted that Black colleges provide a more developmentally powerful environment.

Fries-Britt and Turner<sup>24</sup> found from their interviews and focus groups of successful Black students that an HBCU environment worked well for African-American students and that Black students attending the white institution felt the campus worked against them. At HBCUs, Black students reported that they were very encouraged to be involved in campus activities designed with them in mind. At HWCUs, Black students felt that they were not part of the campus community, both in and outside of the classroom, and that the campus was geared for whites.

Outcalt and Skewes-Cox,<sup>25</sup> using the national data of 7 HBCUs and 114

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HWCUs, examined African-American students' academic and extracurricular activities as well as their satisfaction at HBCUs and HWCUs. They found that African-American students are more involved at HBCUs and more satisfied with the experience at HBCUs. Like other researchers,<sup>26</sup> Outcalt and Skewes-Cox<sup>27</sup> concluded that African-American students at HBCUs feel more supported and encouraged to participate in campus activities than those at HWCUs. Although some of their involvement measures are similar to those used for this current study (i.e., on- and off-campus part-time and full-time work, attended racial and cultural awareness workshop, and worked on group project in class), their study did not examine students' precollegiate academic and socioeconomic characteristics, time spent on activities (as a major student involvement indicator), and the differential pattern of involvement between male and female students. No other study compared African-American students' efforts or involvements with those of white students or the involvement of African-American students attending HBCUs vs. HWCUs.

**I**Applied Alexander Astin's involvement theory to guide this study.<sup>28</sup> Involvement theory is one of several college impact theories in higher education. It is a useful tool for researchers, faculty, and college administrators to use in guiding their investigation of student development and in designing learning environments.<sup>29</sup>

This theory is straightforward. According to Astin, "student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the



student devotes” to the general or specific school experience. Involvement has both qualitative and quantitative features. For example, a quantitative feature can be “how many hours the student spends studying”; a qualitative feature can be “does the student review reading assignments or simply stare at the textbook?”<sup>30</sup>

Astin<sup>31</sup> stated, “The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program.”

This study did not intend to capture qualitative details of individual situations, but using existing national data, it did intend to capture some of the quantitative involvement of African-American students during college. In applying Astin’s involvement theory, I analyzed and compared African-American students’ learning experiences, especially involvement and opportunity, in HBCUs and HWCUs.

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## METHODS

A longitudinal student data set was obtained from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), sponsored by the American Council on Education and the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California, Los Angeles. CIRP’s major purpose is to assess college impacts and to understand college student characteristics among various institutions.

The participants consist of 150 African-American students at HBCUs and 224 African-American students at HWCUs who responded to both an initial survey in the fall of 1985 and the follow-up taken during the summer of 1989. Female students account for 73 percent of the data. There was a somewhat higher percentage of female students at HBCUs (79 percent) than at HWCUs (69 percent). The institutional data set consists of 10 HBCUs (2 public and 8 private) and 71 HWCUs (25 public and 46 private). Fewer than 20 percent of the initially surveyed students responded to the follow-up survey. This may be related to the high dropout, stopout (temporary stop), and transfer rates of African-American students. The data includes only students who attended and remained at the same institution for four years and who responded to the follow-up survey. This means that all students who transferred or left during the period are excluded.

Originally I wanted to use the most recent survey data, from 1995 or

later. However, I found that the 1985-89 cohort is the most extensive in subject numbers and participating institutions.

All the variables and coding schemes appear in Appendix A. To begin understanding the respondents, I analyzed students' background characteristics as they relate to student learning; this data includes gender, high school GPA, SAT, and parental income.

My major focus was to understand comparative learning experiences of African-American students. As mentioned in the discussion of involvement theory, student involvement in different activities, their time investment, and the quantity of their activities are important signposts of student development. I attempted to choose influential (both positive and negative) student involvement and experience variables that the student impact literature suggested.<sup>32</sup>

I chose variables indicating students' time investment for their learning: hours spent on homework per

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week and hours spent on work per week. Students' reports of previous-year activities, such as socializing with someone from a different racial/ethnic background or working on a group project, were considered. I also chose curriculum variables, faculty interaction variables, and work experience variables to help understand the potential of curriculum and opportunities for academic success. College GPAs were compared as an academic performance indicator.

This study used existing national data rather than data created for this purpose. Thus, the measures of student activities are somewhat limited. I also utilized the following statistical methods: means, standard deviations, percentages, t-tests, analysis of variance (ANOVA), cross-tabulation, and chi-square analyses. In order to analyze categorical data, I used percentage information from cross-tabulation.

The chi-square analysis was conducted to observe the association between two or three categorical variables. To analyze continuous and interval (or near interval) variables, I examined means and standard deviations. I used t-tests as well as ANOVA to check the statistical significance of mean differences. I sought to observe the differences between male and female students within each type of institution as well as the overall difference between HBCUs and HWCUs. Thus, I conducted two-way ANOVA for the analysis of time spent on activities per week as well as students' GPAs and parental income (Tables 1 and 2, pages 114-115). The analyses

of t-tests and ANOVA were examined for the mean comparison of HBCUs and HWCUs.

## FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Table 1 shows obvious differences in students' academic preparation level as well as parental income between the two types of institutions. I examined students' high school GPA and SAT because they can influence students' college success, and I looked at parental income because it can affect students' financial situations as well as their learning experiences during college.

African-American students at HWCUs had higher high school GPAs ( $F=14.57$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and SAT scores ( $F=49.66$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) than their counterparts at HBCUs. No significant mean difference in high school GPA and SAT scores was observed between male and female students. The pattern of parental income was the same. African-American students at HWCUs were from wealthier

families than African-American students at HBCUs ( $F=5.24$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) even though a high proportion of HBCUs in the data were private institutions. No significant difference in parental income was found between male and female students.

College GPA was also compared between HBCUs and HWCUs and between male and female students within the types of colleges. There was no mean difference between types of institutions ( $F=0.41$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). The mean of female students was higher when we combined students of both institutions (male: 3.52 vs. female: 3.78,  $F=4.72$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

Notably, however, two-way ANOVA suggests an interaction effect between gender and institutional type ( $F=7.43$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Table 1 shows that African-American female students obtained higher college GPAs than male students at HBCUs, while females obtained lower GPAs than males at HWCUs.

The amount of African-American students' time spent on studying or other tasks can give us a general picture of their college life and learning. Table 2 shows that on average, students at HBCUs and HWCUs tend to spend nearly the same number of hours attending classes or labs as well as studying or doing homework. The means of the two activities are approaching 6, which suggests that on average, students are having to spend about 11-15 hours attending classes or labs and about the same amount of time studying and doing homework beyond regular classes.

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**Table 1****African-American Students' Background Characteristics and GPAs  
Two-Way Analysis of Variance (Mean Comparison)**

Dependent Variables	HBCU (n=150)		HWCU (n=224)		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	HBCU	HWCU
Parental income <sup>1</sup>	6.10 (0.62)	6.39 (0.33)	7.95 (0.43)	6.53 (0.29)	6.24 (0.35)	7.24 * (0.26)
SAT <sup>2</sup>	794.79 (39.05)	798.02 (19.52)	1029.27 (27.61)	948.09 (17.61)	796.41 (21.83)	988.68 (16.37)
High school GPA <sup>3</sup>	4.69 (0.28)	5.30 (0.15)	5.70 (0.20)	5.81 (0.13)	5.00 (0.16)	5.75 ** (0.12)
College GPA <sup>4</sup>	3.31 (0.17)	3.91 (0.09)	3.72 (0.12)	3.65 (0.08)	3.61 (0.10)	3.69 <sup>int</sup> (0.07)

Notes. Standard error is in parentheses.

\*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ .

<sup>1</sup>F = 5.24 ( $p = 0.023$ ), <sup>2</sup>F = 49.66 ( $p < 0.0005$ ), <sup>3</sup>F = 14.57, ( $p < 0.0005$ ), <sup>4</sup>F = 0.41 ( $p = 0.522$ ); results of hypothesis testing of no mean difference between HBCUs and HWCUs from two-way ANOVA.

<sup>int</sup> indicates a significant interaction effect (type of institution X gender),  $F = 7.43$  ( $p = 0.007$ ).

There is no gender difference in these activities.

African-American students at HBCUs, however, spend more time talking with faculty outside class than do their counterparts at HWCUs ( $p < 0.01$ ); the mean of HBCUs is 3.21 and that of HWCUs is 2.81. No gender difference was found. The standard deviations are small and similar between HBCUs and HWCUs and between males and females. This suggests that African-American students talk with faculty outside the classroom about 1-2 hours per week, regardless of institutional type and student gender.

Interestingly, African-American students at HWCUs work longer hours for pay than those at HBCUs; the difference is statistically significant ( $F = 12.29$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Regardless of college type, female African-American students tend to work much longer hours for pay ( $p < 0.01$ ). Specifically, female African-American students attending HWCUs work the longest hours for pay. (Note that average parental income is higher among HWCU students and there is no significant gender difference in parental income level within college type.)

African-American students' responses on their college activities were examined. The top section of Table 3 (page 116) shows students' responses of "frequently" to questions on curriculum formats and content as well as socialization experience with other ethnic groups and students' feeling of detachment from colleges. The original responses were on the three-point scale: not at all, occasionally, and frequently. The original cross-tabulation analysis consisted of a Black college status variable and each dependent variable of interest; I checked chi-square tests to examine whether the relationship between the two variables is independent. Students' socialization experience with someone from a different ethnic group was not independent from their attendance at either HBCUs or HWCUs. The percentage

**Table 2****Hours Spent on Activities Per Week During the Fourth Year of College  
Two-Way Analysis of Variance (Mean Comparison)**

Dependent Variables	HBCU (n=150)		HWCU (n=224)		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	HBCU	HWCU
Attending classes or lab <sup>1</sup>	5.48 (2.05)	6.10 (1.70)	6.17 (1.22)	5.84 (1.42)	5.97 (1.80)	5.94 (1.37)
Studying or doing homework <sup>2</sup>	5.42 (1.46)	5.69 (1.42)	5.84 (1.54)	5.69 (1.37)	5.64 (1.42)	5.74 (1.42)
Talking with faculty outside class <sup>3</sup>	3.13 (1.06)	3.24 (1.10)	2.81 (0.94)	2.81 (1.04)	3.21 (1.09)	2.81 ** (1.01)
Working for pay <sup>4</sup>	3.87 (2.99)	4.32 <sup>a</sup> (2.72)	4.67 (2.64)	5.68 <sup>a</sup> (2.03)	4.22 (2.78)	5.36 ** (2.28)

Notes. Standard Error is in parentheses.

\*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$

<sup>1</sup>F = 1.22 ( $p = 0.271$ )

<sup>2</sup>F = 1.43 ( $p = 0.232$ )

<sup>3</sup>F = 8.31 ( $p = 0.004$ )

<sup>4</sup>F = 12.29 ( $p = 0.001$ ); results of hypothesis testing of no mean difference between HBCUs and HWCUs from two-way ANOVA.

<sup>a</sup> indicates that the mean difference between males and females within the type of institution is significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

of HBCUs was 19.6, while at HWCUs it was 79.6 (chi-square: 120.17,  $p < 0.01$ ). This gap is not surprising because African-American students attending HWCUs would have more chances of interacting and socializing with students of different ethnicity on campus.

The chi-square tests show no association between type of college and most of the students' curriculum experiences. This can mean that African-American students' formal curriculum experiences, such as the format of learning and the discussion of political and social issues, are generally similar whether they attended HBCUs or HWCUs.

I examined the association between gender and all the above variables and found significant gender gaps in two areas. A much higher proportion of Black males worked on a group project for a class than female students at HBCUs, while no significant difference was found between male and female students at HWCUs. A much higher proportion of female students took an essay exam than male students at HWCUs ( $p < 0.01$ ), although the gender difference was visible in both types of institutions.

Female students may have to take essay exams more frequently because they tend to major in the areas of humanities or social science. Future studies should examine whether African-American students take more traditionally gender-segregated majors and courses at HWCUs than at HBCUs.

The bottom section of Table 3 examines student experiences during the senior year or their fourth-year college lives. The original questionnaire simply asks whether students were ever involved in these activities during

**Table 3****African-American Students' College Activities and Experiences  
(Percentage Comparison)**

Response of "Frequently" (in the past year)	HBCU (n=150)		HWCU (n=224)		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	HBCU	HWCU
Worked on group project for a class	50.0	29.9 <sup>b</sup>	29.0	33.1	34.0	31.7
Had class paper critiqued by instructor	28.1	43.6	47.8	51.0	40.7	49.8
Took an essay exam	37.5	58.1	43.5	67.5 <sup>b</sup>	53.3	59.7
Discussed course content with students	62.5	55.6	55.1	53.6	56.7	53.8
Discussed political/social issues	34.4	41.9	39.1	50.3	40.0	47.1
Socialized with someone from a different ethnic group	22.6	19.0	84.1	74.2	19.6	79.6**
Felt like leaving college	6.3	8.7	5.8	13.2	8.2	10.9
<b>Response of "Yes" (during the fourth year)</b>						
Enrolled in honors program	38.7	53.5 <sup>b</sup>	37.7	36.5	50.0	36.5 **
Taking reading study/skill classes	53.1	49.6	29.4	29.3	50.7	28.6 **
Part-time job on campus	35.5	64.6 <sup>b</sup>	62.3	78.7 <sup>b</sup>	58.3	73.5 **
Part-time job off campus	43.8	56.9	46.4	62.7 <sup>b</sup>	54.1	57.5
Worked full-time	3.2	11.3 <sup>b</sup>	8.7	19.3 <sup>b</sup>	10.2	15.6
In intercollegiate athletics	35.5	16.5 <sup>b</sup>	48.5	16.7 <sup>b</sup>	20.5	26.6
In racial/cultural awareness workshop	71.0	58.3	50.7	68.7	61.2	63.6

Notes. \*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ ; results of hypothesis testing of independence between each response variable and type of institution (HBCUs and HWCUs) from cross-tabulations and chi-square analysis.

<sup>b</sup> indicates that the association between the response variable and gender within the type of institution is not independent (from chi-square analysis,  $p \leq 0.05$ ).

their fourth year; students responded to each item with "yes" or "no." Table 3 shows the proportion of students who marked "yes" to the questions related to their academic and non-academic experiences.

Related to students' academic development are their responses as to whether they enrolled in an honors program and whether they took reading or study skills classes. Much higher proportions of respondents at HBCUs enrolled in an honors program (50.0 percent vs. 36.5 percent), and

a much higher proportion of respondents at HBCUs took reading or study skills courses (50.7 percent vs. 28.6 percent), compared with respondents at HWCUs. These proportions seem to be high. Students who successfully finished their fourth year might have been academically strong and actively sought academic help. Nevertheless, the big gaps between HBCUs and HWCUs in these academic involvements are noteworthy. A much higher proportion of female students enrolled in an honors program at HBCUs (53.5 percent vs. 38.7 percent), whereas no gender difference is observed at HWCUs.

Consistent with students' time spent working, noted in the previous section, a higher percentage of African-American students attending HWCUs held part-time or full-time jobs, compared with those at HBCUs (Table 3). A much higher proportion of students at HWCUs (73.5 percent) had part-time jobs on campus than those at HBCUs (58.3 percent). Also, a higher proportion of students at HWCUs (15.6 percent) worked full-time while

they were students, compared with those at HBCUs (10.2 percent). No significant difference between types of institutions was observed for the percentage of part-time jobs off campus. Notably, regardless of the type of institution, a much higher proportion of female students work during college in all three categories of jobs—part-time on- and off-campus jobs as well as full-time—than male students.

As for participation in intercollegiate athletics, no significant difference was observed between HBCUs and HWCUs. Far fewer female students, however, participated in intercollegiate sports (Table 3).

Finally, Black students may have a similar opportunity to attend a racial and cultural awareness workshop in either type of institution. The proportion of students involved in that activity was relatively high and similar, 61.2 percent at HBCUs vs. 63.6 percent at HWCUs.

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

HBCUs tend to have academically less prepared students, less affluent students' parents, and poorer institutional resources than HWCUs. But studies found that in spite of these handicaps, HBCUs have a positive, or no worse than neutral, impact on students' academic or intellectual development. This study attempted to examine how and why HBCUs and African-American students at HBCUs bridge this gap. This study also sought to observe whether there is a gender difference in student learning experience.

The findings suggest that students at HBCUs were less academically

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prepared initially and their parental income levels were lower than those at HWCUs. But college GPAs did not differ between students of HBCUs and HWCUs. (See Table 1.) This finding of no difference in college GPA is consistent with Wenglinsky,<sup>33</sup> but is inconsistent with Allen.<sup>34</sup>

Interestingly, a two-way ANOVA analysis suggested that there is an interaction effect of college GPA between gender and type of institution. (See Table 1.) African-American female students at HWCUs received lower GPAs than male students in the same type of institution or female

students at HBCUs even though that there was no significant gender difference in high school GPAs or SAT scores between male and female students in either type of institution and that mean high school GPAs and SAT scores of female students at HWCUs were higher than those of female students at HBCUs.

Future studies should investigate why Black female students' college GPAs at HWCUs are much lower than those of female students at HBCUs as well as male students at

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HWCUs. Moreover, Black female students attending HWCUs most frequently felt like leaving college during their junior or third year of college, compared with both male students at HWCUs and female students at HBCUs. (See Table 3.) The finding that Black female students may obtain more academic benefits by attending HBCUs is somewhat consistent with the reports of Fleming<sup>35</sup> and Pascarella, Smart, and Stoecker.<sup>36</sup>

This study, however, speculates that the high proportion of female students (about 79 percent in the data) as well as female faculty at HBCUs could generate the benefits of attending a female-majority environment (in terms of number and power—like a women's college).<sup>37</sup> Female students at HBCUs might have been empowered by studying in an environment in which their own gender and race were valued. By contrast, a devaluing and frustrating situation could weaken African-American female students' motivation to concentrate on academic growth at male-dominant and white-centered institutions.

Students at HBCUs and HWCUs seem to have similar experiences in terms of formal academic requirements, activities, and curriculum formats (See Table 2 and Table 3). No difference was found in hours spent on attending classes or labs nor in hours spent on studying or doing homework. Likewise, no difference was found in the degree of exposure in group projects, essay type exams, and instructors' critiques. Students'

discussion of course content, discussion of political and social issues, and socialization with someone from a different ethnic group are related to both formal and informal curriculum activities. I found no significant institutional difference or gender difference in students' discussion of course content and discussion of political and social issues. However, I observed a significant difference in socialization with someone from a different ethnic group. Black students at HWCUs have far more opportunities for contact with people of different ethnic backgrounds. While such diverse interaction is natural and more likely at HWCUs, future studies should try to find out whether these contacts are just formal and business-like or whether they are personal contacts that can result in meaningful relationships.

On the other hand, a similar number of Black students at both types of institution attended a racial and cultural workshop. (See Table 3.) In regard to developing racial and cultural understanding, studies<sup>38</sup> reported that participation in a

diversity awareness program promotes students' intellectual development. According to Flower and Pascarella,<sup>39</sup> attendance at HBCUs does not hinder Black students' growth in diversity awareness, but this study questions whether similar attendance rates in racial/cultural awareness workshops could fill the big gap of 20 percent at HBCUs vs. 80 percent at HWCUs in socialization experience with people from different ethnic groups. Future studies might have to continue to investigate Black students' growth experiences in racial and cultural understanding at HBCUs and HWCUs.

*This study suggests that African-American students at HBCUs have greater informal contact with faculty and more academic engagement.*

**T**his study suggests that African-American students at HBCUs have greater informal (outside the classroom) contact with faculty and more academic engagement. Kuh<sup>40</sup> noted that contact with faculty outside the classroom promotes students' intellectual development. According to Kim,<sup>41</sup> student-faculty ratio tends to be lower in HBCUs. Intuitively, a lower student-faculty ratio can lead to more frequent and better student-faculty interaction outside classrooms. However, the gap of student-faculty contact hours does not seem to be due simply to the enrollment difference between HBCUs and HWCUs, because the gap persisted even when I conducted the analysis excluding large universities (not shown in the tables).

A higher percentage of African-American students at HBCUs seem to be

involved in academically engaging activities such as honors programs and study skills courses than at HWCUs. The opportunity of joining an honors program decreases at HWCUs because Black students have to compete with many non-Black students. A much higher proportion of female students enrolled in honors programs at HBCUs, whereas no gender difference is observed at HWCUs. At HBCUs, African-American students seem to be more actively and deeply involved in the academic community.

*As previous studies contend, HBCUs seem to provide a more academically supportive and engaging environment for African-American students.*

Not much difference was observed in students' participation rates in intercollegiate athletics between HBCUs and HWCUs. Almost 50 percent of male Black students, however, engaged in intercollegiate sports at HWCUs, while only 16.7 percent of female students participated in them. Although female intercollegiate sports are still less popular, African-American female students were far behind in participation in intercollegiate athletics in both types of institutions.

A higher percentage of Blacks at HWCUs work longer hours for pay. Female students also work longer hours, and a higher percentage of them work. Perhaps, more female Black students work longer hours because more male students participate in intercollegiate sports. Working too many hours can limit the time students have for study. Future studies should try to determine why more Blacks at HWCUs work and for longer hours even though their mean parental income level is higher than that of Blacks at HBCUs. Future studies should also investigate why, regardless of type of institution attended, a higher proportion of female students work and why they work longer hours than male students even though that there is no difference in parental income levels between male and female students.

Overall, African-American students at HBCUs are more actively and deeply involved in the academic community. As previous studies contend, HBCUs seem to provide a more academically supportive and engaging environment for African-American students. This study also revealed some indication of less satisfying and more difficult academic experiences among African-American female students at HWCUs. Although HWCUs provide African-American students with equal access in admissions, they may still be less likely to include African-American students in their academic communities. Judging by the findings of previous studies and this present study, there are obvious compensating factors, and the

two types of institution contribute to student learning in different ways: HWCUs provide more visible monetary resources and prestige, while HBCUs offer more visible humane support, deep involvement, and across-the-board equity. <sup>nea</sup>

## Appendix A. Variables and Coding Scheme

Variables	Coding Scheme
<i>Individual characteristics</i>	
Student's gender	1=male and 2=female
Age of student on 12/31/89	10-point scale from 1=16 or less, 2=17, 3=18 to 10=57 or more
SAT	Students' combined SAT scores, ranging from 400 to 1600
Higher school grade point average	8-point scale from 1=D to 8=A or A+
Parental income	14-point scale from 1=less than \$6,000 to 14=\$150,000 or more
College grade point average	6-point scale from 1=C- or less to 6=A or A+
Hours spent per week	1=none; 2=less than one; 3=1-2;
--Attending classes or lab	4=3-5; 5=6-10; 6=11-15; 7=16-20;
--Studying or doing homework	8=over 20
--Talking with faculty outside class	
--Working for pay	
College activities	1=no; 2=yes
--Enrolled in honors program	
--Took reading study/skills classes	
--Attended a racial/cultural awareness workshop	
--Took part in intercollegiate athletics	
--Held part-time job on campus	
--Held part-time job off campus	
--Worked full-time while student	
Activities in past year, 1988	1=not at all; 2=occasionally;
--Discussed course content with students	3=frequently
--Discussed political/social issues	
--Worked on group project for a class	
--Took an essay exam	
--Had class paper critiqued by instructor	
--Socialized with someone from another ethnic group	
--Felt like leaving college	
<i>Institutional characteristics</i>	
Black institution (vs. white institution)	1=historically white institution; 2=historically Black institution
Selectivity	Institutional selectivity in admission based on SAT combined scores, ranges from 400 to 1600
Institutional control	1=public institution, 2=private institution
Total enrollment	Continuous scale

# ENDNOTES

- 1 Roebuck and Murty, "Higher education desegregation," *Historically Black colleges and universities*; St. John and Hossler, 123-155.
- 2 National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics, 2002*.
- 3 Allen, *Black colleges vs. White colleges*, 28-31, 34; Allen, "The color of success," 26-44.
- 4 Fleming, "Sex differences in the impact of college environments on Black students," 229-50; Fleming, *Blacks in College*.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 1982, 1984.
- 6 Bohr, Pascarella, Nora, and Terenzini, "Do Black students learn more," 75-85; Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, and Terenzini, "Additional evidence on the cognitive effects," 494-501; Kim, "Historically Black vs. White institutions," 385-407.
- 7 Bohr, Pascarella, Nora, Terenzini, "Do Black students learn more," 75-85.
- 8 Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, and Terenzini "Additional evidence on the cognitive effects," 494-501.
- 9 Kim, "Historically Black vs. White institutions," 385-407.
- 10 Allen, "The color of success," 26-44.
- 11 Wenglinsky, "The Educational Justification," 91-103.
- 12 Astin (A.W.), *Preventing Students from Dropping Out*, and *What Matters in College*; Cross and Astin (H.), "Factors influencing Black students' persistence in college," 76-90; Pascarella, Smart, Ethington, and Nettles, "The influence of college on self concept," 49-77.
- 13 Kim and Conrad, "The impact of historically black colleges."
- 14 Flower and Pascarella, "Does College Racial Composition Influence the Openness to Diversity of African-American Students?" 405-17.
- 15 Allen, Epps, and Haniff, *College in Black and White*; Kim, "Historically Black vs. White institutions," 385-407.
- 16 Kim, "Historically Black vs. White institutions," 385-407.
- 17 Allen, *Black colleges vs. White colleges*, 28-31, 34.
- 18 Kim, "Historically Black vs. White institutions," 385-407.<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*; Kim and Conrad, "The impact of historically black colleges."
- 20 Kim, "Historically Black vs. White institutions," 385-407.
- 21 Allen, "The color of success," 26-44.
- 22 Wenglinsky, "The Educational Justification," 91-103.
- 23 Watson and Kuh, "The influence of dominant race environments," 415-424.
- 24 Fries-Britt and Turner, "Uneven stories: Successful Black collegians," 315-330.
- 25 Outcalt and Skewes-Cox, "Involvement, interaction, and satisfaction," 331-347.
- 26 Allen, "Black colleges vs. White colleges," 28-31, 34; Fries-Britt and Turner, "Uneven stories," 315-330.
- 27 Outcalt and Skewes-Cox, "Involvement, interaction, and satisfaction," 331-347.
- 28 Astin, *Achieving Educational Excellence*.
- 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 *Ibid.*, 134.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 136.
- 32 Astin, *Achieving Educational Excellence*; Astin, *What Matters in College*; Feldman and Newcomb, *The Impact of College on Students*; Pascarella and Terenzini, *How College Affects Students*.
- 33 Wenglinsky, "The Educational Justification," 91-103.

- <sup>34</sup> Allen, "The color of success," 26-44.
- <sup>35</sup> Fleming, "Sex differences," 229-50.
- <sup>36</sup> Pascarella, Smart, and Stoecker, "College race and the early status," 82-107.
- <sup>37</sup> Kim, "Institutional effectiveness of women-only colleges," 287-321; Kim, "Cultivating intellectual development," 447-481.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*; Smith, *Diversity Works*.
- <sup>39</sup> Flower and Pascarella, "Does College Racial Composition Influence the Openness to Diversity of African-American Students?," 405-17.
- <sup>40</sup> Kuh, "In Their Own Words," 277-304.
- <sup>41</sup> Kim, "Historically Black vs. White institutions," 385-407.

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