

## Land Grants Today

Although land grant colleges and universities comprise a small percentage of all postsecondary institutions in the United States – approximately six percent – they have helped to expand access to higher education in each state. The majority of land grant institutions (66 percent) are funded through the 1862 Morrill Act, followed by the 1994 tribal land grants (23 percent) and the 1890 HBCU land grants (17 percent). Many states have more than one type of land grant institution, such as Oklahoma – home to an 1862, 1890 HBCU, and 1994 tribal land grant (see Figure 1). In fiscal year 2017, \$549 million was authorized for the country’s land grant institutions via the four land grant acts, which represents a three percent decline from the \$566 million appropriated in 2014. A subsequent brief in this series will explore employment and salary differences across all land grant institutions. Over the past two decades faculty employment rates have fluctuated as part-time positions have increased. Moreover, national and in-state salary gaps exist among the different land grant types.

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# THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF SUCH COLLEGES SEPARATELY...

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF LAND GRANT INSTITUTIONS

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### Land Grant Institutions: An Overview

July 12, 2012, marked the sesquicentennial anniversary of the 1862 Morrill Act. For over 150 years, land grant colleges and universities have represented the United States’ historical commitment to the democratization of higher education by providing federal support for the establishment or extension of state-sponsored postsecondary institutions. Funded through three separate legislative acts, land grant institutions provide students with affordable access to career-oriented higher education in the areas of agriculture, science and engineering, military science, and the liberal arts. The 99 public and three private land grant institutions<sup>1</sup> in operation today serve students in every state, the District of Columbia, and the five inhabited U.S. territories, and include 21 historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and 25 tribal colleges.

This brief, the first of a series on land grant colleges and universities, examines the history of land grant institutions and the major legislation that supports their establishment and funding. Federal appropriations for land grant institutions have been authorized through over two dozen pieces of legislation; this research brief highlights the main sources of funding supporting the 1862, 1890 HBCU, and 1994 tribal land grant colleges and universities. Future research briefs will explore faculty composition and salaries, the distribution of non-instructional staff and their salaries, and student enrollment. Specifically, each brief will highlight discrepancies between HBCU and non-HBCU land grant institutions.

**Figure 1** Land Grant Colleges and Universities (map next page) marks the name and location of the land grant colleges and universities operating in the United States today. The legend indicates the institution type and the year in which funds were appropriated to establish or expand each land grant.

<sup>1</sup> There is no requirement that land grants be public institutions. Cornell University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology were given land grant status under the 1862 Act, and Tuskegee University has been included in this brief as an 1890 land grant despite having not been officially authorized as such because it received 25,000 acres of land and has a mission consistent with land grant institutions.

### Development of the Land Grant System: 1862-1887

The first of the land grant acts – the Morrill Act of 1862 – was signed into law by President Lincoln during the height of the Civil War and provided each state with 30,000 acres of public land for every senator and representative in the state. States could either sell this land to fund the creation of a new public college or university, or use this land to physically expand an existing institution. U.S. Congressman Justin Morrill had originally introduced the bill in 1857, but it was vetoed by President James Buchanan in 1859.

The United States rapidly grew during the first half of the nineteenth century. To keep pace, the bill’s enactment reflected national interests to expand research in agriculture and mechanical arts through post-secondary institutions. The Morrill Act not only provided educational opportunities to a growing population, but was also a major step in federal intervention into public education.<sup>2</sup>

Although the 1862 Morrill Act provided indirect financial support, the passage of the Hatch Act of 1887 provided federal appropriations to land grant institutions for the establishment and support of agriculture experiment stations to advance research in the areas of farming, ranching, and food production. To this day, these funds are determined by a set formula based on the number of small farmers in each state. As a result, the funding varies annually. The Hatch Act also requires that states must match a major portion of the federal funds.

<sup>2</sup> Lee, J.M., Jr., and S.W. Keys. 2013. “Land-Grant but Unequal: State One-to-One Match Funding for 1890 Land-Grant Universities.” Association of Public Land-Grant Universities.

## Race and the Land Grant System: 1890 HBCU Land Grants

Largely, white males from the middle and industrial classes were the primary benefactors of the 1862 Morrill Act. The Civil War and the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution ended slavery, extended citizenship to all persons born

“...That no money shall be paid out under this act to any State or Territory for the support and maintenance of a college where a distinction of race or color is made in the admission of students, but the establishment and maintenance of such colleges separately for white and colored students shall be held to be a compliance with the provisions of this act...”<sup>1</sup>

1 Morrill Act of 1890, sec. 1.

in the United States regardless of race, and expanded voting rights to African American men. Despite these positive steps, state-level systematic racial oppression under the name Jim Crow often relegated Black Americans to second-class citizenship. Concerns over segregation in the former confederate states in the years following the Civil War led to passage of the Second Morrill Act of 1890 (Agricultural College Act of 1890), which required these states to create land grant institutions for African Americans or provide evidence that race was not an admission criterion for their existing land grant institution.<sup>3</sup> Any states that failed

3 Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities. 2012. The land-grant tradition. Washington, D.C.: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.aplu.org/library/the-land-grant-tradition/file>.

4 Lee, J.M., Jr., and S.W. Keys. 2013. “Land-Grant but Unequal: State One-to-One Match Funding for 1890 Land-Grant Universities.” Association of Public Land-Grant Universities.

“...the endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts in such manner as the legislatures of the states may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.”<sup>1</sup>

1 Morrill Act of 1862, sec. 4.

or refused to provide land grant schooling to African Americans had federal funds withheld. Under the 1890 act, 19 HBCUs were established. Prior to this enactment, African Americans had limited options regarding post-secondary education. HBCUs – for example, Fisk University and Howard University – that did exist prior to 1890, were typically private institutions.<sup>4</sup>

## Expansion of the Land Grant System: 1914-1977

Unlike the 1862 land grants, the 1890 HBCU land grants were given financial support instead of land. Eligible states were granted \$15,000 the first year and an additional \$1,000 each subsequent year, with the annual amount capped at \$25,000.<sup>5</sup> Additional federal funding was allocated to the 1862 land grants through the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which mandated the dissemination of the research conducted by the agriculture experiment stations through a Cooperative Extension Service at each land grant institution. Using a formula similar to the Hatch Act, the Smith-Lever Act also requires states to provide matching funds. The 1862 Morrill Act was also expanded in 1967 and again in 1972 to extend land grant status to the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Micronesia, Northern Marianas, and the Virgin Islands. These jurisdictions and territories received federal funds, but did not receive land, and they are eligible to receive research and extension funds under the Hatch and Smith-Lever Acts.

The 1890 HBCU land grants are not eligible for Hatch and Smith-Lever Act funds, but instead first received federal appropriations through the now defunct Bankhead-Jones Act of 1935 and now receive funds through the Evans-Allen Act of 1977; the Evans-Allen Act provides 1890 HBCU land grants with a minimum of 15 percent of Hatch Act funds to support agriculture research.<sup>6</sup>

Likewise, the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act (NARETPA) of 1977 provides 1890 HBCU land grant colleges with federal funds to support agriculture extension programs.<sup>7</sup> Unlike other legislation, NARETPA disburses these funds directly to the institutions instead of to the states.

5 Committee on the Future of the Colleges of Agriculture in the Land Grant University System, Board on Agriculture, & National Research Council. 1995. Colleges of agriculture at the land grant universities: A profile. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

6 Ibid.

7 Lee, J.M., Jr., and S.W. Keys. 2013. “Land-Grant but Unequal: State One-to-One Match Funding for 1890 Land-Grant Universities.” Association of Public Land-Grant Universities.

## Evolution of the Land Grant System: 1994 Tribal Land Grants

The land grant system was again expanded to include 29 existing, accredited tribal colleges under the Elementary and Secondary Education Reauthorization Act of 1994. This Act authorized a \$23 million endowment from which the colleges receive annual interest payments, as well as a \$1.7 million agriculture and natural resources grant program, \$5 million to the Cooperative Extension Service in states that have both 1862 land grant colleges and 1994 tribal land grants to facilitate collaboration, and \$50,000 per tribal college for agriculture and natural resources postsecondary programs.<sup>8</sup>

8 Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities. 2012. The Land-grant tradition. Washington, D.C.: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.aplu.org/library/the-land-grant-tradition/file>.

The 1994 tribal land grants serve over 80 percent of Indian Country<sup>9</sup> and enroll over 26,000 students in 13 states annually. These institutions are also unique among land grants in that they offer a wider range of services, from high school equivalency (GED) to developmental education, college credentials, and job training, as well as serving as community, economic, and child/elder care centers.

9 Ibid.

# Figure 1: Land-Grant Colleges and Universities

