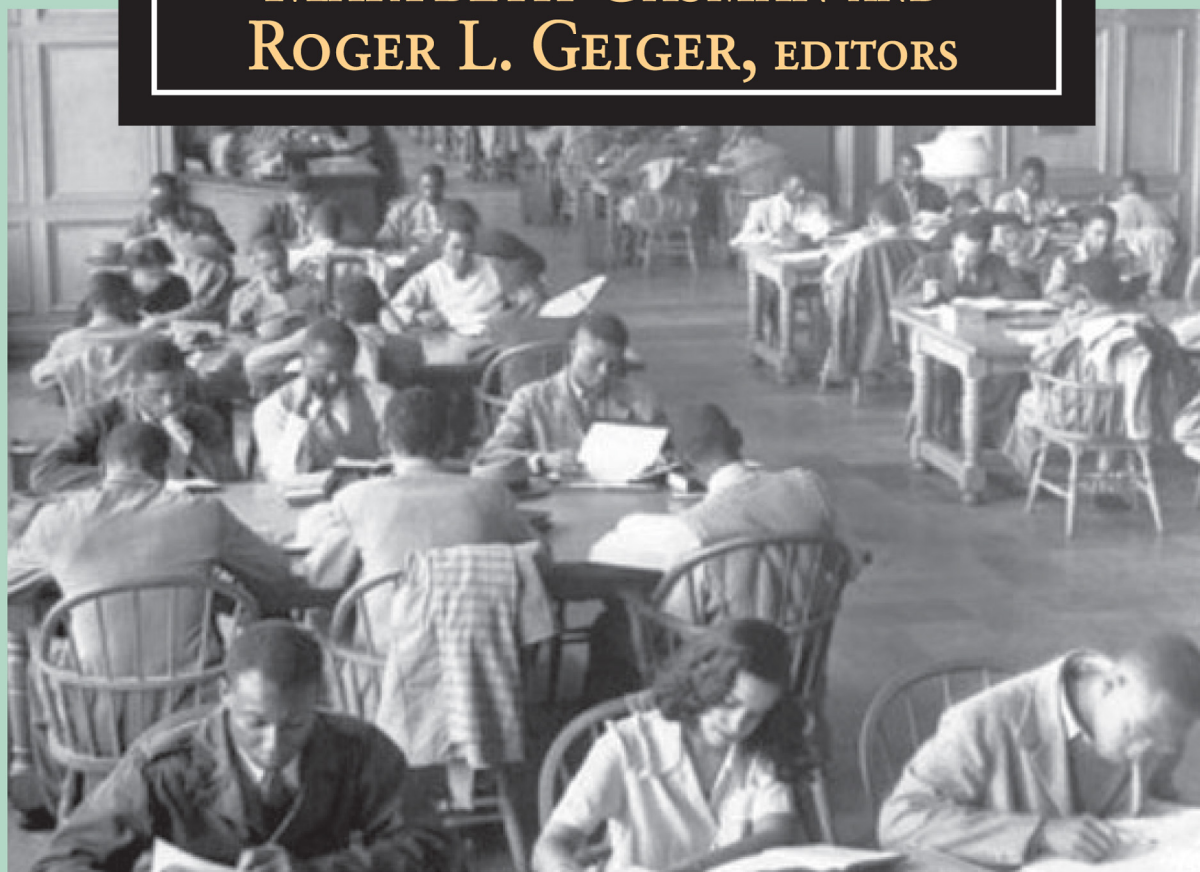


# HIGHER EDUCATION<sup>FOR</sup> AFRICAN AMERICANS BEFORE THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA, 1900-1964

MARYBETH GASMAN AND  
ROGER L. GEIGER, EDITORS



PERSPECTIVES ON THE HISTORY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

VOLUME TWENTY-NINE, 2012

HIGHER EDUCATION<sub>FOR</sub>  
AFRICAN AMERICANS  
<sub>BEFORE  
THE</sub> CIVIL RIGHTS ERA,  
1900-1964

**ROGER L. GEIGER, EDITOR**  
**THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Christian K. Anderson, Associate Editor**  
*University of South Carolina*

**EDITORIAL BOARD**

Katherine Reynolds Chaddock, *University of South Carolina*  
Marybeth Gasman, *University of Pennsylvania*  
Lester F. Goodchild, *Santa Clara University*  
Peter Dobkin Hall, *Baruch College, City University of New York*  
Jurgen Herbst, *University of Wisconsin-Madison*  
Philo Hutcheson, *University of Alabama*  
David R. Jones, *University of Southern Maine*  
W. Bruce Leslie, *State University of New York, College at Brockport*  
Walter P. Metzger, *Columbia University*  
David B. Potts, Tacoma, Washington  
John Thelin, *University of Kentucky*  
Harold S. Wechsler, Former Editor, *New York University*  
Roger L. Williams, *The Pennsylvania State University*

*On the Cover:*  
*Students Studying in Reading Room of Howard University Library,*  
by Alfred Eisenstaedt

HIGHER EDUCATION<sup>FOR</sup>  
AFRICAN AMERICANS  
<sup>BEFORE</sup>  
<sup>THE</sup> CIVIL RIGHTS ERA,  
1900-1964

MARYBETH GASMAN AND  
ROGER L. GEIGER, EDITORS



PERSPECTIVES ON THE HISTORY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

VOLUME TWENTY-NINE, 2012

PENNSTATE



 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2012 by Transaction Publishers

Published 2017 by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

Copyright © 2012 by Taylor & Francis.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notice:

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Catalog Number: 2012006831

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Higher education for African Americans before the Civil Rights era, 1900-1964 / Marybeth Gasman and Roger L. Geiger, editors.

p. cm. — (Perspectives on the history of higher education ; v. 29)

ISBN 978-1-4128-4771-1

1. African Americans—Education (Higher)—History—20th century.  
2. African American college students—History—20th century. 3. African American universities and colleges—History—20th century. 4. Discrimination in higher education—United States—History—20th century. I. Gasman, Marybeth. II. Geiger, Roger L., 1943-

LC2781.H547 2012

378.1'982996073—dc23

2012006831

ISBN 13: 978-1-4128-4771-1 (pbk)

## Contents

Introduction: Higher Education for African-Americans before the Civil Rights Era, 1900–1964 <i>Marybeth Gasman and Roger L. Geiger</i>	1
City Normal Schools and Municipal Colleges in the Upward Expansion of Higher Education for African Americans <i>Michael Fultz</i>	17
Nooses, Sheets, and Blackface: White Racial Anxiety and Black Student Presence at Six Midwest Flagship Universities, 1882–1937 <i>Richard M. Breaux</i>	43
A Nauseating Sentiment, a Magical Device, or a Real Insight? Interracialism at Fisk University in 1930 <i>Lauren Kientz Anderson</i>	75
“Only Organized Effort Will Find the Way Out!”: Faculty Unionization at Howard University, 1918–1950 <i>Timothy Reese Cain</i>	113
Competing Visions of Higher Education: The College of Liberal Arts Faculty and the Administration of Howard University, 1939–1960 <i>Louis Ray</i>	151
The First Black Talent Identification Program: The National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students, 1947–1968 <i>Linda M. Perkins</i>	173
List of Contributors	199



# Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

## **Introduction: Higher Education for African-Americans before the Civil Rights Era, 1900–1964**

*Marybeth Gasman and Roger L. Geiger*

On May 29–30, 1900, W. E. B. Du Bois convened the Fifth Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems at Atlanta University. His subject that year was *The College-Bred Negro*. For the conference, Du Bois had conducted a survey of American colleges and universities to identify African-American graduates. He obtained the names of some 2,500 individuals and managed to elicit responses from half of them. An extraordinary piece of sociological research for any era, the Atlanta study documents the higher educational attainments of African-Americans thirty-seven years after Emancipation, but also in the midst of the Jim Crow era in the South. Given systematic oppression and persecution, there can be little wonder at the meagerness of graduate numbers or the weaknesses of educational opportunities up to and including the “Negro Colleges.” However, the conclusions of the study are on balance hopeful, as are the attitudes of most respondents. Individual African-Americans and their institutions had overcome great difficulties to attain this level of accomplishment. And Du Bois’s purpose was to point the way for further progress.

This volume considers the next phase in the gradual expansion and elevation of African-American higher education, the long march from Jim Crow conditions to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Such progress as was possible was made against heavy odds—the “separate but (un)equal” policies of the segregated South, less overt but pervasive racist attitudes in the North, and formidable legal obstacles to obtaining equal rights. These facts speak for themselves. But the story is nevertheless one of



hope prevailing despite formidable obstacles. The studies that follow examine important aspects of these developments. This introduction provides an overview and context of the principal episodes in this protracted saga.

### **The Landscape of African-American Higher Education, 1900–1910**

When Du Bois focused the Atlanta Conference on higher education for African-Americans, the issue was both a timely and a personal one. Booker T. Washington, the “Wizard of Tuskegee,” had emerged as the spokesman for this subject and, indeed, for the “Negro Question” in the South. In frequent speeches, Washington lauded the kind of industrial education that he had instituted at Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute as the answer to self-improvement for African-Americans and racial harmony in a segregated society. This message was gratifying for White philanthropists who wished to address some of the glaring educational deficiencies of southern African-Americans, but could only do so without challenging White hegemony. At this juncture, Du Bois had little quarrel with industrial education per se; he even taught summer school at Tuskegee in 1903. But this was not the kind of education that he had received and that he wished to provide others as a professor at Atlanta University. He had graduated from Fisk University and entered Harvard as a junior. He graduated with honors, pursued postgraduate studies at the University of Berlin, and earned a Harvard PhD (1895).<sup>1</sup> Other African-Americans needed to obtain a liberal or academic education to provide the cultural and professional leadership that could scarcely emerge from industrial schools. A case had to be made for “Negro Colleges” (now called Historically Black Colleges and Universities, or HBCUs). Du Bois did this in the way he knew best at this stage of his long career—with an empirical sociological study.

His 1900 study of the *College-Bred Negro* marshaled evidence for several strong recommendations. He noted the great need for “common schools and manual training,” as well as a “growing demand for industrial and technical training.” However, he emphasized the “distinct demand for the higher training of . . . leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among the masses.” Du Bois backed this conclusion with responses from prominent northern educators, a few of whom clearly sympathized with Booker T. Washington. But Harvard president Charles Eliot supported Du Bois’s most crucial recommendations: “teachers, preachers, lawyers, engineers, and superior mechanics, the leaders of

industry, throughout the Negro communities of the South, should be trained in superior institutions.” Du Bois also polled HBCU graduates, who reported overwhelmingly that college training had been beneficial for them, more so than any alternative could have been. Here was unambiguous endorsement of the connection between HBCUs and the emerging concept of the Talented Tenth. Du Bois’s study of *The Philadelphia Negro* and the Atlanta University Studies gave him an unrivaled knowledge of the American Black community. From Du Bois’s perspective, Washington’s disregard for college-educated African-Americans when pandering to White audiences threatened to undermine this possibility. Hence, the defense of the College-Bred Negro presaged Du Bois’s imminent estrangement.<sup>2</sup>

Du Bois also recommended that “34 Negro colleges are entirely too many,” and that “eight, or at most, ten colleges” could accommodate the current number of qualified students. He identified the strongest candidates in each of eight states, plus Howard in Washington and Lincoln and Wilberforce in Pennsylvania and Ohio, respectively. At first glance, such shrinkage seems inconsistent with his powerful advocacy for college education. Actually, Du Bois was in line with contemporary thinking on this issue. University of Chicago president William Rainey Harper wrote that same year that “the problem of the small college” was one of the two most pressing issues in American education. Soon afterward, both the General Education Board and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching addressed this issue by supporting the stronger (White) colleges. All agreed that small colleges with inadequate resources should focus on lower levels of education. For Du Bois, elimination or demotion of those struggling institutions, and strengthening the remaining HBCUs, would allow them to “escape some of the deserved criticisms that have been aimed at [them.]”<sup>3</sup> In keeping with this goal, much of the *College-Bred Negro* documents the differences in quality among these institutions.

In 1910, Du Bois revisited this subject with a second, more extensive, Atlanta University Study—*The College-Bred Negro American*. Together, these volumes present an incomparable portrait of higher education for African-Americans in the first decade of the twentieth century. The conclusions were essentially the same, but presented now as “resolutions” endorsed by the presidents of the principal HBCUs. The “demotion” of the weaker HBCUs is only implied in this volume, accompanied by more extensive data on qualitative differences among the schools.<sup>4</sup>

Du Bois grouped the HBCUs according to five waves of foundings. Before the Civil War, Lincoln and Wilberforce universities were established by northern abolitionist church groups. Thirteen colleges were founded in the late 1860s under the auspices of the Freedman's Bureau, including Howard, Fisk, and Atlanta universities. In the 1870s, nine colleges were established by Northern church groups, mostly Methodists; and in the next decade African-American Baptist and Methodist churches established five more colleges. Finally, under state colleges, Du Bois listed only four institutions. Although the 1890 Morrill Act required land-grant funds in segregated states to be shared with a Black institution, most of these 1890s land-grants did not teach at the collegiate level for another two decades.<sup>5</sup> The eight to ten colleges he sought to promote dated from the earlier, Freedman's Bureau era, but a few of the church-related colleges qualified as well. All HBCUs in the South began as multipurpose educational institutions. As of 1899, just six counted more than twenty collegiate students and they were heavily outnumbered by secondary and often primary school students. To evaluate their work, he compared them to the "smaller New England colleges." Only Howard was judged "nearly equal"; Fisk, Atlanta, Wilberforce, Leland, and Paul Quinn were "from 1 to 2 years behind"; and the others (mostly unnamed) were either "2 to 3 years behind" or "little above an ordinary New England High School." The variability in college quality was perceived to be a general problem across American higher education. The Bureau of Education had divided female colleges into "A" and "B" divisions in 1887, and the Harvard Law School felt compelled to rate colleges in 1893 according to the fitness of their graduates for admission. Du Bois sought to be objective by examining curricula and library holdings. Above all, and unlike many critics who came after him, he wished to accurately identify these weaknesses so that they might be remedied.<sup>6</sup>

The first decade of the twentieth century was a critical time for American colleges. The academic revolution of the 1890s had displaced the old classical college with a discipline-based curriculum, which had undermined older notions of a liberal education. To adapt, colleges needed additional resources to hire more teachers with modern disciplinary training. For the HBCUs, however, the meager support from churches and missionary organizations was drying up. The enormous pools of capital now marshaled by northern philanthropists were deliberately directed to Hampton and Tuskegee—the industrial/normal schools that had been so adroitly promoted by Samuel Chapman Armstrong

and Booker T. Washington.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the worsening subjugation of African-Americans in the Jim Crow South made educational progress especially difficult. For the decade, enrollments in American higher education increased by 50 percent, but the HBCUs that Du Bois tracked grew by just 40 percent. Only one of his prescriptions seemed to be validated: enrollments became increasingly concentrated in the strongest institutions. Howard, Fisk, Atlanta, and Lincoln accounted for one-half of college students in HBCUs, and the first three added almost all of the growth. Conversely, the conditions of the other institutions were dire, at least for the “college departments . . . [that] are but adjuncts, and sometimes unimportant adjuncts, to other departments devoted to secondary and primary work.”<sup>8</sup>

Du Bois’s two surveys also provide unique information on the education of African-Americans at northern universities. By 1910, he had identified 693 such graduates of northern schools, or nearly one-quarter of the number of HBCU graduates. Of that total, in 1900, more than one-third (21 percent in 1910) had graduated from Oberlin, where African-Americans had been admitted since 1837. For 1900–1909, total northern graduates grew to nearly 40 percent of those at HBCUs. The leading universities were tolerant for the most part of a small number of Black students, led by Harvard and later Chicago. Otherwise, such students were admitted to a few liberal arts colleges and some Midwestern state universities. The 1910 Report includes a lengthy description of Black students at the University of Kansas, the second-most prolific producer of Black graduates (a total of sixty by 1909). Most Black students in the preparatory classes never entered the university and of those that did most left by the sophomore year. Still, this was a common pattern for the era and their graduation rate of 28 percent was better than that of White students. This was achieved despite hardships and social segregation. The report notes that almost all Black students came from disadvantaged backgrounds. Ninety percent were self-supporting, working the menial jobs that were available to them. They were compelled to live off campus and rarely participated in athletics or social life. Rather, they formed their own associations and participated in the social and church activities of nearby Black communities. This description would seem to hold wherever a significant number of Black students were present. As for Oberlin, a report from that campus identified the recent appearance of a “color line” that discouraged inter-racial mixing in social gatherings and literary societies. Most discouraging, several of those surveyed were dismayed that “prejudice against the colored man has spread from

the South to the farthest point North.”<sup>9</sup> This impression is confirmed by Richard Breaux’s account in this volume of conditions for African-Americans in Midwestern universities.

At the time of Du Bois’s second survey (1910), African-Americans comprised less than one percent of American college students. In the half-century preceding the Civil Rights Era, they labored against heavy odds to achieve progress on two fronts. First, most faced formidable obstacles in preparing for, gaining access to, and studying at institutions of higher education. Second, largely limited to HBCUs, African-Americans would soon struggle to gain control of those institutions so that they might work toward their advancement, rather than perpetuate subordination. This introduction provides only an overview of these historic struggles, but the six studies that follow delve deeply into strategic aspects of these developments.

### **Expanding Enrollments in Higher Education**

The meager enrollments reported by Du Bois improved markedly after 1915. The trigger was the expansion of public secondary education in the South. Although preponderantly favoring White students, Black high school enrollments grew from 15,000 to 100,000 in a decade. Students in HBCUs increased from 2,700 to 12,000 in these years (1915–1925) and the availability of public education allowed these colleges to dispense with some primary and secondary programs. Howard University enrolled one of every six students, while the other HBCUs averaged less than 200 students. One major change was the emergence of college-level programs at the public, land-grant HBCUs, where they had scarcely existed in 1915. In the next ten years college enrollments at HBCUs nearly tripled to 34,000 (1935), with the public share rising from 25 to 37 percent. This progress came with a price. As states grudgingly provided some resources to the 1890 land-grant colleges, they installed Black presidents whose task was to keep students under control and, above all, to avoid politics or protest. These public colleges and normal schools provided African-Americans an opportunity for education but not leadership.<sup>10</sup>

By 1940, the number of undergraduate students at HBCUs increased another 10,000 to roughly 44,000.<sup>11</sup> It was at this juncture that Gunnar Myrdal observed, “increasing education provides theories and tools for the rising Negro protest against the caste status in which Negroes are held.”<sup>12</sup> By the early 1950s, that number had risen to nearly 65,000 students. When the Civil Rights Act was signed in 1964, there were over 110,000

students enrolled in HBCUs, 60 percent of them women.<sup>13</sup> The growth of HBCUs was documented through a series of federal surveys. Much less known are the other ways in which African-Americans sought advanced education. Two papers examine these other alternatives, normal schools and study at northern, predominately White colleges and universities.

In "City Normal Schools, Municipal Colleges and Advanced Education for African Americans" Michael Fultz uncovers the stories of little-known institutions in Washington, Baltimore, Saint Louis, Richmond, and Louisville. These segregated institutions provided the opportunity for thousands of local African-Americans to obtain advanced education. By providing a shorter course of study and the advantages of commuting, city normal schools expanded both access and the prospects for completion. The teaching profession was of vital importance to Black communities. It was the chief occupational outlet for educated Blacks as well as the means for educational upgrading of future generations. Fultz explores the philanthropic and social forces that undergirded the expansion of teacher education programs and schools for African-Americans. Of particular interest is Fultz's broad look at the development of Black normal schools and their contributions to surrounding communities.

Figures are incomplete for the number of African-Americans who attended northern colleges and universities between the Du Bois studies and the Civil Rights Era. Black enrollments at the six Midwestern universities examined by Richard Breaux actually declined from 465 in 1930 to 365 in 1936.<sup>14</sup> Nor did conditions of attendance seem to have improved from Du Bois's survey to 1940. By that date, the small number of southern Blacks who came North for graduate or professional education was dwarfed by a much larger number of northern Blacks who traveled to the segregated South to attend HBCUs. The nearly 3,000 such students represented 7.5 percent of HBCU students. The main reason these students migrated South was to enjoy a normal social life on campus and to be able to participate on athletic teams. In contrast, Blacks on northern campuses were effectively ostracized from campus activities and organizations, and were barred from on-campus living facilities. Moreover, they had difficulty finding off-campus housing and were excluded from many all-White facilities. A few Black individuals played on northern university football teams before World War II, but they were all exceptional cases.<sup>15</sup>

Richard M. Breaux's important study contributes to our understanding of this situation. "Nooses, Sheets, and Blackface: White Racial Anxiety

and *Black Student Presence at Six Midwest Flagship Universities, 1882–1937*,” depicts racial politics at historically White Midwestern universities. The depressing picture that emerges is one of overt White hostility toward Black students that increased as the twentieth century progressed. Breaux differentiates the various types of White students and their perspectives on African-Americans, race, and racism (including both subtle and blatant examples, such as minstrel shows). His examination of historical documents gives the reader insight into the relationships between Black and White students (or lack thereof) on campus as well as the influence of outside forces, such as the Ku Klux Klan on the universities. The conditions of attendance highlighted by Breaux largely explain why some northern Black students preferred to attend college in the segregated South.<sup>16</sup>

### **Shifting Ideas about African-American Higher Education**

By 1915, the northern philanthropists, including those affiliated with the Rockefeller-sponsored General Education Board, took a new approach toward aiding Black higher education. Over the next few years, the philanthropists shifted the emphasis of their giving from industrial to liberal arts education—albeit for a select group of Black liberal arts colleges. These actions followed a pattern of supporting the strongest institutions that the foundations had established in funding of other colleges and universities.

One of the institutions most affected by this shift in emphasis was Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Fayette A. McKenzie, the White president of the institution, was fixated on pleasing White donors in both the Nashville community and in the Northeast. In his inaugural address in 1915, McKenzie assured White Southerners and northern philanthropists that Fisk would aid in restoring the South to economic prosperity and increased national wealth—precisely the goals of these groups. Under his leadership, the General Education Board agreed, in 1920, to support a \$1 million endowment for Fisk. With such large sums pledged to Fisk, the philanthropies were easily able to dominate its board of trustees, displacing the former alliance of Black educators and White missionaries.<sup>17</sup>

In 1923, a memo of the General Education Board called for the collection of more financial support for Fisk and emphasized the urgent need to train “the right type of colored leaders”—leaders who would assist the Negro in becoming a capable worker and respectable citizen. Following this memo, McKenzie curtailed the liberal arts curriculum,

suspended the student newspaper, and refused to allow a Fisk chapter of the NAACP. Further, he arranged racist entertainment for Fisk's White benefactors. Clearly, the "right type of colored leader" was one who acquiesced in the segregationist social order in the South. As a result of his suppression of student initiative and narrowing of the curriculum, McKenzie gained both the support of the northern philanthropists and the praise of local Whites.

However, McKenzie's pandering to the southern Whites caused unrest among the students and alienated many of the alumni. Developments on the Fisk campus became known across the country through alumni networks, which were quite strong. Fisk alumnus W. E. B. Du Bois reacted by openly criticizing and challenging the Fisk administration. On February 4, 1925, the Fisk students revolted in a destructive and defiant demonstration. McKenzie belatedly called in the feared Nashville police. The next day, a protest by over 2,500 Black Nashville citizens called for the end of McKenzie's presidency. His position untenable, McKenzie resigned in April of 1925. Fisk's conservative trustees recognized that desire for Black self-determination contributed to McKenzie's downfall, but they nevertheless appointed another White president, Thomas E. Jones (1925–1946). Du Bois praised the student and alumni victory and hailed these groups as the new Black intellectuals who would challenge control of HBCUs by northern philanthropists.<sup>18</sup>

Campus unrest was not unique to Fisk. The mid-1920s were a time of challenge and new ideas—many of them spread by newspapers, radio, and Northern Black students attending southern schools. Lauren Kientz Anderson examines the atmosphere at Fisk as the institution matured in the 1930s under the more conciliatory president Jones, who sought to promote the doctrine of "interracialism." "A Nauseating Sentiment, a Magical Device, or a Real Insight? Interracialism at Fisk University in 1930," explores the challenge to this doctrine raised by Juliette Dericotte and Mabel Byrd—two administrators at Fisk. According to Kientz Anderson, "interracialism" was a half-way house on the road to racial equality in which Blacks and Whites would work together, while conceding White social superiority. By challenging tacit White privilege, these women probably improved race relations at Fisk. In addition to invoking the words of the Fisk rebels, Kientz Anderson also draws on the perspectives of W. E. B. Du Bois, E. Franklin Frazier, and Horace Mann Bond to explicate the impact and implications of "Interracialism."



### Howard Intellectuals and the New Negro

Fisk was the leading Black liberal arts college, but Howard was the largest and most prestigious institution—a fully developed university with professional schools that proudly regarded itself as the “capstone of Negro education.” Although it was led by White, clerical presidents, academic affairs were largely controlled by Black deans, and Howard students had far more freedom than students at other HBCUs to engage in extracurricular activities. However, the appointment of James Durkee as president (1918–1926) exacerbated the issue of self-determination in a Black university. Durkee sought to centralize administrative authority, even while a new sense of racial pride and self-consciousness was empowering Black intellectuals. In addition, faculty salaries were badly eroded by wartime inflation. Conditions were ripe for the nation’s first effort at faculty unionization, analyzed by Timothy Reese Cain in “‘Only Organized Effort Will Find the Way Out!’: Faculty Unionization at Howard University, 1918–1950.”

The Howard faculty organized a chapter of the American Federation of Teachers on two occasions. In 1918, the union had little impact, but it planted the flag of unionization in higher education for the first time. After World War II, a second union chapter was almost unanimously approved by the Howard faculty. In its short history, it worked constructively with president Mordecai Johnson, but was closed in 1950 during the anticommunist hysteria. Black intellectuals at Howard played a conspicuous role in unionizing the campus. Unlike most of the research pertaining to faculty unionization, Cain explores the period prior to the 1960s—a time virtually ignored by many historians. The focus on a prominent Black college is particularly interesting as relationships between the president and faculty are often mixed and volatile. In Howard’s case, the faculty members, according to Rayford Logan, were either “fervent admirers or bitter critics.”

A desire for self-determination and opposition to “missionarism” among students and alumni forced the resignation of Durkee and the appointment of Mordecai Johnson as Howard’s first Black president (1926–1960). Johnson was an authoritarian and controversial leader, but his long tenure brought important advances for the university. He established a rapport with the federal funders that brought substantial increase in resources, defended the academic freedom of Howard faculty, and aggressively recruited Black scholars to create not just a distinguished faculty, but an intellectual center focused on the problems and the progress of

the Black community. Howard professors made numerous contributions to this effort. Alain Locke in the philosophy department articulated the cultural assertiveness of a new generation with his anthology, *The New Negro* (1925). In the English department, literary critic and poet Sterling Brown invoked the language and culture of southern rural Blacks. In the law school, William Hastie and Charles Hamilton Houston forged the legal strategy that challenged and ultimately overturned the American apartheid regime of racial segregation. Charles Thompson founded the *Journal of Negro Education*, an important forum, and also led the Department of Education, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Graduate School. In the social sciences, E. Franklin Frazier, Ralph Bunche, and Abram Harris, Jr., fulfilled the roles of scholars and activists.<sup>19</sup>

Louis Ray's, "Competing Visions of Higher Education: The College of Liberal Arts Faculty and the Administration of Howard University, 1939–1960," provides insight into the internal dynamics of Howard during these years by examining the role of the above-mentioned Charles Thompson. As dean of liberal arts, Thompson was a significant voice in administrative policy, but one that often took issue with president Johnson. Thompson favored merit and quality, while the president was more concerned with income and expansion. They first clashed over Johnson's policy of raising tuition during the Depression. Johnson seemingly foreshadowed twenty-first-century high tuition policies by seeking greater income from Howard's traditional constituency among the District's Black middle class. Thompson wanted more affordable costs for Howard's many poor students, as well as financial aid. Johnson naturally prevailed, but Howard's enrollment fell by 21 percent. In the 1940s, Thompson advocated limiting growth and raising academic standards, but Johnson proceeded with his policy of building a larger and more comprehensive university. Given the postwar boom in higher education, Thompson's position appears almost quixotic, but it represented a genuine concern for the intellectual side of the university.

### Overcoming Segregation

Howard professors Hastie and Houston worked with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to crack the legal edifice of southern segregation. In the 1930s, southern states began sending African-Americans to northern universities on scholarships to avoid providing equal facilities in the state. Between 1936 and 1950, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund fought and won several cases that made the out-of-state scholarships unconstitutional as a substitute for equal opportunities at home. The courts

ordered states to accept Black students in their state-supported White universities or create separate Black graduate or professional schools. Even under court order, most southern states still found ways to deny African-Americans' admission at the graduate level.

The first higher education lawsuit to reach the United States Supreme Court was *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* (1938). The plaintiff, Lloyd Gaines, was a 1935 graduate of Lincoln University in Missouri who sought to attend law school in that state. After receiving a rejection letter from the University of Missouri, Gaines filed a civil action against Missouri. During the trial, the state admitted that Gaines was denied admission based on his race, but the state circuit court sided with the University regardless. Gaines later appealed the case to the Missouri Supreme Court, which supported the state's policy of segregation based on race, and held that Gaines would not be deprived of any constitutional rights as long as the educational opportunities afforded to him by the state were equal to those provided to Whites. The Court also found that because of the out-of-state scholarship fund for Black students, Gaines had the same opportunities as White students at the University of Missouri.

Gaines appealed the decision to the United States Supreme Court, which ruled that the state of Missouri was not providing instruction in law to its Black citizens and deemed the legal education provided by other states to be irrelevant. Because the state had not established a separate law school for Black students, the Supreme Court held that Gaines was entitled to admission to the University of Missouri. Rather than comply with the Supreme Court's decision, the state of Missouri opted to create a new, Black, publicly funded law school. Although the NAACP was ready to argue that the new law school, with only four faculty members, was not equal to that of the University of Missouri, Gaines mysteriously disappeared, most likely murdered. His case nonetheless struck a blow against the duplicitous doctrine of separate but equal.

That doctrine was further undermined a decade later by *Sipuel v. Board of Regents* (1948) and *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950). In the first case, Ada Sipuel applied to the University of Oklahoma law school and was denied admission based on her race. With the help of the NAACP, Sipuel sued the state with the case reaching the Supreme Court. In accordance with the 14th amendment, the Court held that states must provide equal graduate education for Blacks. Unfortunately, the ruling was not specific about how that education was to be provided and, rather than admitting Ada Sipuel to the University of Oklahoma, the state sectioned off an area

in the state capitol, designating it the “Negro law school,” and hiring three Black faculty members. Eventually, the Supreme Court decided that this practice was unconstitutional and Ada Sipuel was allowed to enroll at the University of Oklahoma.<sup>20</sup>

In *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), Heman Sweatt had been denied admission to the segregated University of Texas law school. With the help of the NAACP, Sweatt sued the university. Although he lost his case at the state level, the United States Supreme Court forced the University of Texas law school to open its doors to all students regardless of race in 1950.<sup>21</sup> Notably, the court declared in these cases that the states not only had an obligation to provide graduate education for Blacks, but that the education must replicate the intellectual level experienced by Whites.

These legal victories began the process of desegregation in southern higher education. The chief accomplishment was token integration of selective institutions beginning in the border states.<sup>22</sup> At this juncture (c. 1950) discriminatory practices toward Black students in northern universities were beginning to be addressed. For example, Indiana University president Herman Wells, who was unequivocally opposed to racial discrimination, only succeeded in integrating on-campus housing in 1952. The University of Nebraska adopted a nondiscrimination policy in 1949. Hence, there was a great deal of work to accomplish in the North in order to move from mere acceptance of Black students to equitable treatment and, beyond that, to valuing their contributions to the university.

In 1935, Charles Thompson had idealistically signaled the need for some agency that could identify Black students with high academic potential and assist in their education. It would be almost twenty years before historically White institutions began to do this by seriously recruiting and enrolling African-American students. Linda Perkins’s “The First Black Talent Identification Program: The National Scholarship and Service Fund for Negro Students” describes efforts to promote racial integration in colleges by placing African-American students in historically White institutions. The NSSFNS identified talented Blacks for colleges and universities before historically White institutions established their own minority recruitment efforts. In 1950, it managed to place almost 200 Black students in northern private colleges. However, its efforts in the South were frustrated for most of that decade. In addition to examining NSSFNS’s development and activities, Perkins discusses the changing leadership of the organization as it moved into the 1960s—leadership that changed from White to Black. She also explores the NSSFNS’s

relationship with the United Negro College Fund, the nation's most influential scholarship fund for African-Americans. The establishment of the NSSFNS has a symbolic significance as well: it represents a turning away from the marginalization of Black students at nonsouthern colleges and universities described above.

### **Toward the Civil Rights Era**

In the South, the legal victories described above launched the process of desegregating higher education—a process with an excruciatingly slow start that proved irresistible in the long run. In 1935, in seventeen border and southern states, no Black and White students were educated in the same classroom or school, from kindergarten to graduate school. Maryland was the first state to “break the color barrier” that year when a legal team led by Thurgood Marshall and Howard’s Charles Hamilton Houston forced the University of Maryland Law School to accept a Black applicant. The decisions in favor of Gaines and Sweatt complicated the maintenance of segregated graduate and professional education by requiring states to offer educational facilities for Blacks comparable to those provided for White students. These rulings were implemented at least tentatively in the border states and Virginia, allowing individuals to attend select programs under stringent conditions. But token desegregation was nevertheless a symbolic achievement, an opening wedge for further progress. The *Brown* decision in 1954 finally invalidated the doctrine of “separate but equal,” once and for all, and the follow-up decision the next year made clear that *Brown* applied to higher education too. By the fall of 1955, the six border states from Delaware to Oklahoma, plus Arkansas, had begun to admit Black undergraduates. Limited advances were subsequently achieved in the Upper South and the University of Texas. Elsewhere, progress toward desegregation was grudging and the five states of the Deep South were intransigent. It took court orders and violent confrontations to achieve token integration in Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi in the early 1960s. Only the Civil Rights Act of 1964 signaled the end of legal segregation in higher education.<sup>23</sup>

Still, breaking the color barrier was not the end of the process of integration. The process began with the legally mandated admission of exceptional individuals to select programs. The next step—and a large one—was the admission of Black undergraduates without restriction in programs. Allowing Black students to live or dine on campus was yet another barrier to overcome. Participation in academic or social