LIBERATION FOR SALE? EXAMINING STEM, NON-STEM, AND MARKET-DRIVEN PRESSURES ON HBCU GRADUATE EDUCATION

by

Keshia Neal

A Dissertation Proposal Submitted to the Faculty of the

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2025

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Keshia Neal, titled *Liberation For Sale? Examining STEM, Non-STEM, And Market-Driven Pressures On HBCU Graduate Education* and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

_____ Date: 07/14/2025
Karina G. Salazar

_____ Date: 07/24/2025
Heather Haeger

_____ Date: 07/27/2025
Gary Rhoades (Jul 27, 2025 07:40:48 EDT)
Gary Rhoades

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

_____ Date: 07/14/2025
Karina G. Salazar
Dissertation Committee Chair
Educational Policy Studies and Practice

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'll be honest–I debated even drafting this page. Not because this hasn't taken a village of support, but because it's a reminder of what has occurred in order for this finished product to happen.

First, I want to thank ME! Keshia, you did it girl! Through the tears, moments of uncertainty, relocation, and a shaky path–it's finally done. Don't ever say you didn't grow from this experience because you did in more ways than you give yourself credit for. You have sowed the tears and are now watching your garden bloom and flourish. What a sight to see–you did that!

To my community–y'all are amaze-balls! To my *freeen*, Kris, this was definitely a win for US. You have listened to my gripes and anxiety throughout this entire ordeal. Most importantly, you have continued to provide me with counsel and much needed cackling. To my Nicole, I couldn't have made it through this job and written this work without our dance breaks and closed door venting sessions. We have been each other's shadows, my fellow Sagittarius–and I am so grateful for our friendship and sisterhood. A huge shoutout to my #ProfessionalTroublemakers, my sisters in chaos and education–Ashley, Brianna, Debra, and Fanisia. You ladies have been the multifaceted soundboard for "what's next?" and "do what makes you happy", I can't even put into words how much y'all mean to me.

Don't think I forgot about the PhD Pact posse–Mary and Giovanni. It's amazing what can happen when you put three Black people of different backgrounds together in the desert. We decided from the beginning that we would support each other to the finish line. Although I may have finished first, I'm still on this journey with you both. We will ***ALL*** finish and be celebrating every step of the way. Y'all have been the dynamic duo of wisdom, church hugs, and hope.

To my fellow graduates and the College of Education (COE). Whew, where do I even start. We began as fresh-eyed scholars and now we're advanced practitioners of social justice, equity, and a little "good trouble". To my Chair and mentor, Dr. Karina Salazar, you're my SHE-ro! You've guided me through this journey and pushed me in ways that have continued to aid in my growth, not only as a scholar, but as a person. You are literally walking proof of what can happen when you put a curious girl with a lot to say on center stage. You are the epitome of being *that girl*. Dr. Gary Rhoades, you were my first professor in this program and have now watched me make it to the end of this chapter. I still don't know how you've managed to recall all the information you've encountered, but I am extremely thankful that you have been a part of this journey. I'll be sure to continue asking questions with boldness with a hint of sarcasm. To COE, you have been a beacon of hope in this academy. You've shown continuously what can happen when people stand on business for what's right. Using your voices, collectively, to support being on the right side of history is what I wish we, your graduates, continue to do.

Last, but certainly not least, to my family. Whew chiiiiile–what a ride this has been. I can honestly say that we've evolved since the beginning of this journey. To my parents, MeMa, and uncles, y'all have always known that I was meant for great things. You've walked with me through a bachelors, masters, and not doctorate–we're done! No more school, at least formally, I can promise you that. To my sisters, Alexis, Brittanie, Sierra, and Ta-Nesha "Mini Me", my wanting better for myself was a direct reflection of wanting to provide better for y'all.

My community is soo big that I can't list everyone, but I thank each and every one of you.

Thank you to my angels, PawPaw (1943-2017) and Mini Me (1996-2024)–

I hope that I made you proud.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

This dissertation uses a multi-state content analysis to examine how public Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) navigate the layered demands of market-driven higher education policy while remaining rooted in their historic missions of racial uplift and educational justice. Analyzing strategic plans, graduate catalogs, and state-level policy documents from Florida, Texas, and North Carolina, the study explores how graduate education is deployed not just as academic expansion, but as institutional strategy—used to resist erasure, secure visibility, and assert value in systems never built for Black educational spaces.

Grounded in frameworks of Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC)—a synthesis of racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983) and academic capitalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004)—alongside *servingness* (Garcia et al., 2019; Garcia, 2020; DeTurk & Briscoe, 2020) and mission drift (Jaquette, 2013; Jones, 2007), this research introduces the concept of *institutional code-switching*: a discursive maneuver through which HBCUs perform policy alignment while preserving core commitments to community, culture, and care. Findings reveal that graduate programs function as both protective spaces and political tools—allowing institutions to survive without conceding the totality of their mission. Rather than chasing external legitimacy, these institutions are reframing what counts as success, on their own terms. This study calls for policy conversations that stop demanding proximity to whiteness as a condition for support, and instead center the lived realities, historical labor, and liberatory visions that HBCUs have always embodied.

Chapter 1 grounds the study in contemporary political and policy conditions and introduces the research questions. Chapter 2 reviews literature on HBCU graduate education,

performance funding, and institutional identity, and outlines the conceptual framework of RAC, servingness, and mission drift. Chapter 3 details the methodological design, including case selection, coding strategies, and the rationale for using across-case content analysis. Chapter 4 presents institutional findings by state, followed by an across-case thematic synthesis that highlights how HBCUs enact adaptation, resistance, and rhetorical negotiation. Chapter 5 concludes with a synthesis of insights, original contributions—including *institutional code-switching*—as well as implications for theory, future research, and policy reform.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> Baby, you can go to school any place. But no school will love you or teach you to love yourself and know yourself, like Hillman. (*A Different World*, 1987–1993, Season 3, Episode 12)

When I first started this research study, this scene between characters, Whitley Gilbert and Dwayne Wayne, kept coming to mind. The tv show *A Different World (1987-1993)* was my first glimpse into what is possible at a college that was designed for the Black community. Whitley, an art history major and French minor from a prestigious background; and Dwayne, a mathematics major who received a perfect math score on the SAT, from a working class background. Whitley is considered a legacy student due to her grandfather's enrollment when universities were slow to integrate. Her character often came across as spoiled, materialistic, and a snob; eager to remind her peers that Gilbert Hall was named after her family. Meanwhile, Dwayne reminded us of how proud his parents were and that his entire community was relying on him to go off to college and accomplish great things. Although fictional, this scene highlighted the complexities that influence Black students when pursuing college. One must not only consider their major, finances, and location; but they must also consider the support and well-being provided by the institution. In this episode, you're provided a glimpse into how the variation of students enrolled is connected to the institution's values and priorities.

What's left unspoken, however, is how institutions respond differently to students like Whitley and Dwayne—not just in how they're admitted, but in how they're supported, validated, or pressured to conform. Their contrasting experiences provide a window as to how class, legacy

status, and communal expectations shape the educational journey in ways institutions must be accountable to.

America's STEM Priorities

For over 20 years, both federal and state governments have prioritized Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM[1]) education with the primary goal of enhancing the United States' competitiveness in the international and economic arenas of the 21st century. This focus stems from a concerning decline in STEM labor market participation and proficiency since the 1980s. Various reports from The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicated a trend of reduced interest and engagement in STEM fields which would have significant implications for the nation's competitive edge in technology and innovation (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2022; Xue & Larson, 2015). Competing internationally is crucial for several reasons: maintaining technological and scientific leadership, driving economic growth, and ensuring national security. Technological and scientific advancements are pivotal for maintaining the country's competitive edge in global markets, fostering innovation, and addressing complex challenges (National Research Council [NRC], 2007).

As other nations continue to invest heavily in STEM education and innovation, the U.S. risks falling behind in critical areas such as technology development, scientific research, and industrial capabilities. The ability to lead in STEM fields is directly linked to the nation's capacity to create high-paying jobs, foster new industries, and address global challenges like climate change and healthcare. In today's context, this issue is even more pressing with the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) becoming a critical policy priority, emphasizing the need

[1] For this dissertation, STEM will consist of science, technology, engineering, agriculture, and math areas.

for a robust and competitive STEM workforce (White & Shakibnia, 2020; West, 2012). Many policy solutions across all levels of government have received bipartisan support for increasing STEM participation, many of which focus on growing and diversifying the STEM pipeline, with significant emphasis on early intervention and K-12 education. National policies such as the America COMPETES Act (2007, 2010) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (2010) have been instrumental in promoting STEM education. The America COMPETES Act aimed to invest in innovation through research and development and improve the competitiveness of the United States in global markets by increasing funding for STEM education (Johnson, 2012). The Every Student Succeeds Act included provisions for STEM education enhancement, particularly through grants aimed at improving STEM instruction and resources in schools (Congressional Research Service, 2010). Educational research driven by these policies highlights the importance of fostering interest in math and reading during primary and secondary school to build a solid foundation for future STEM engagement (Billings, 1997; McGee & Martin, 2011; Louten, 2024). These policies have resulted in numerous initiatives and funding opportunities designed to support STEM education at the K-12 level, thereby establishing a pipeline for future STEM professionals; specifically, focusing on students from underrepresented backgrounds (NRC, 2011).

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) & STEM Production

At the higher education level, colleges and universities have also implemented many initiatives to provide outreach pathways aimed at increasing the success of underrepresented minority students in STEM fields. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have been at the forefront of these efforts, specifically targeting Black communities that often lack the

resources and opportunities to engage in STEM education. For instance, initiatives such as the Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) program by the National Science Foundation (NSF) provide funding and support for HBCUs to enhance STEM education and research opportunities (National Science Foundation [NSF], 2022). In recent years, there has been a growing national interest in HBCUs participating in pathway programs that conduct outreach to high schools, aiming to build a strong foundation for students before they enter college. Programs like the Thurgood Marshall College Fund's Teacher Quality and Retention Program (TQRP) exemplify such efforts by enhancing the quality of STEM education at the K-12 level, thereby preparing students for higher education (Thurgood Marshall College Fund [TMCF], 2021).

HBCUs have demonstrated remarkable resilience and success in streamlining STEM interest at the undergraduate level, which has spurred increased policy attention to expanding pathways at the graduate education level. Initiatives such as the Department of Education's Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program (MSEIP) provide grants to promote graduate-level STEM education and research at HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions, (Department of Education [DOE], 2020). These programs are crucial in creating a diverse and highly skilled STEM workforce, capable of addressing the complex challenges of the modern world. By investing in the success of underrepresented minority students, higher education institutions not only promote equity and inclusion but also contribute to the overall competitiveness of the U.S. in STEM fields (Williams, Coles, and Reynolds, 2020; Williams & Taylor, 2020).

These efforts have led to HBCUs playing a significant role in producing Black STEM graduates at both collegiate levels. According to the NSF, HBCUs awarded 27% of all bachelor's

degrees earned by Black students in STEM fields between 2010 and 2016 (NSF, 2019). For instance, Xavier University of Louisiana is known for producing more Black students who complete medical school than any other university in the United States (Xavier University of Louisiana, 2020).

These figures are connected to prominent HBCUs emphasizing their commitment to STEM and research more broadly in their mission statements and institutional values. For example, Jackson State University began receiving support in 1940 with "the mission of training teachers"; but this has since evolved into being "recognized as an R2 'Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity'...supported by legislative appropriations supplemented by student fees and federal and private grants." (Jackson State University, 2024). Similarly, Howard University is dedicated to developing scholars and professionals who drive change in their communities and the world, emphasizing research and leadership in its mission (Howard University, 2022).

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) & Liberatory Practices

HBCUs were established with a fundamental mission of liberatory education, addressing the systemic exclusion of Black students from higher education during segregation. According to Hammond (2021), liberatory education involves "positioning students to be the leaders of their own learning by helping them increase their ability to actively improve their cognition." This mission extends beyond mere access to education, embedding principles of equity, justice, and empowerment into the institutional mission. By fostering environments where marginalized students can develop as leaders, thinkers, and advocates for social change, HBCUs have consistently advanced efforts to challenge systemic inequalities and uplift communities. These

institutions embody the transformative power of education, equipping students not only with academic knowledge but also with the tools to enact meaningful societal change.

STEM and non-STEM disciplines have been historically framed in ways that reflect broader tensions between market-driven priorities and liberatory education. STEM fields, often positioned as essential to national competitiveness and economic advancement, receive substantial federal and state investment. Conversely, non-STEM disciplines, particularly in the liberal arts and social sciences, have faced growing scrutiny regarding their perceived economic utility. However, these fields remain essential for fostering critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and cultural awareness—qualities necessary for leadership, activism, and community engagement (Roth, 2014). HBCUs, which have long resisted market-driven educational narratives, continue to uphold non-STEM disciplines as integral to their missions of social justice and empowerment, despite systemic pressures to conform to economic demands. This responsibility is evident in their ability to produce a growing number of graduates in fields like liberal studies, education, and social work (Blake, 2024; hooks, 1994; Gasman & Nguyen, 2015).

Recent data highlighted the resilience of humanities programs at HBCUs, even amid national declines. While non-HBCU institutions saw a 20% drop in humanities bachelor's degrees from 2014 to 2022, HBCUs only experienced a 15% decline in humanities degree completions during the same period. However, this decline began to level off between 2018 and 2022, with some institutions even expanding their offerings in general humanities and liberal studies. As a result, annual degree completions in these programs tripled, rising from 347 in 2014 to 1,136 in 2022, despite only 88 of the 107 HBCUs awarding degrees in these fields (Blake,

2024). North Carolina A&T State University, for instance, experienced nearly a fourfold increase in humanities degrees awarded, growing from 85 in 1997 to 333 in 2022.

For example, Spelman College, known for its strong liberal arts curriculum, prepares students not only in the sciences but also in the humanities and social sciences, reflecting its commitment to a holistic educational experience (Spelman College, 2022). As part of Spelman's Strategic Plan Vision:

> As the premier undergraduate institution for women of African descent, Spelman College is a center of intellectual inquiry on global issues, particularly matters impacting people in the African Diaspora. Spelman remains undaunted and recommits to our vision of transformative social justice, adapting our institutional priorities to serve current and future generations. Rooted in commitments to academic excellence, democratic ideals and positive social change, Spelman embraces innovation at local and global levels, while manifesting institutional agility to transform and consistently excel under diverse circumstances. (Spelman College, n.d., para. 1)

Non-STEM majors at HBCUs have played a critical role in continuing the work of building leaders, fostering social activism, and advancing equity—forms of resistance that have solidified their importance and remain central to their evolving missions of social justice and empowerment.

Higher Education Shifts & Influence on HBCUs

David Labaree's (1997) framework of education's three primary goals—democratic equality, social efficiency, and social mobility—provides a lens through which to understand the

evolving role of HBCUs across disciplinary priorities. Democratic equality emphasizes preparing individuals for active participation in democratic society, aligning with HBCUs' foundational mission to foster leadership, civic engagement, and social justice. Social efficiency focuses on equipping individuals with skills that contribute to the economy, while social mobility reflects the use of education as a means for individual advancement. Historically, non-STEM disciplines such as humanities, liberal arts, education, and business have played an essential role in fulfilling these goals. However, the increased focus on STEM at HBCUs presents challenges in balancing these competing priorities. HBCUs must continue to support students who wish to pursue careers in non-STEM fields while maintaining their institutional viability in an economy that increasingly values STEM-based workforce development. While Labaree's (1997) framework provides a useful lens for understanding the tensions between workforce preparation and democratic engagement in higher education, it does not fully account for how racialized economic structures shape these pressures—particularly for institutions like HBCUs, which face unique funding disparities and systemic constraints.

The theory of academic capitalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) helps to address this limitation by examining how market-driven forces and neoliberal policies have increasingly influenced the behavior and priorities of higher education institutions. Academic capitalism highlights the ways institutions adopt market-like behaviors to secure external funding and increase revenue, often prioritizing fields that promise economic returns, such as STEM disciplines, over those perceived as less lucrative, such as the humanities and social sciences. While these behaviors are not inherently detrimental, they can conflict with the traditional missions of institutions like HBCUs, which were founded to provide equitable educational opportunities and serve as engines of social mobility and community uplift.

For HBCUs, the adoption of market-driven priorities presents both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, aligning with labor market demands through academic capitalism can attract funding, improve institutional competitiveness, and expand opportunities for students in high-demand fields. On the other hand, this alignment risks sidelining disciplines that are central to HBCUs' liberatory missions, such as liberal arts and education, which equip students with the critical thinking skills and ethical frameworks necessary to challenge systemic inequalities.

Graduate programs in non-STEM disciplines are essential for expanding research, cultivating practitioners, and addressing societal challenges that require interdisciplinary approaches. These programs contribute to the production of knowledge in areas such as social justice, education reform, public policy, and community development—fields that directly align with the foundational missions of HBCUs (Gasman & Nguyen, 2015; Allen et al., 2007). By equipping students with critical thinking skills, ethical frameworks, and culturally responsive methodologies, non-STEM graduate programs foster leaders who can challenge systemic inequities and drive meaningful change (hooks, 1994; Roth, 2014). Additionally, they provide a pipeline for professionals dedicated to serving marginalized communities, enhancing HBCUs' reputations as centers of intellectual and social innovation (Allen et al., 2007; Florida, 2002). Investing in these programs ensures that HBCUs remain vital not only as academic institutions but also as engines of equity and empowerment in a rapidly evolving world (Gumport, 2000; Golde & Walker, 2006).

HBCUs are in a tough spot—they have to prove they're worth financial investment to political influencers while also pushing back against critics who question their relevance because

of the diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts happening at non-HBCUs. Similar to Labaree, academic capitalism, alone, does not capture the racialized elements within these market shifts.

Navigating Market Pressures and Institutional Missions

Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC) builds on the principles of academic capitalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) and racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983; Leong, 2012; Melamed, 2015) to examine how market-driven priorities are deeply intertwined with systemic racial inequities. Robinson (1983) introduced the concept of racial capitalism, arguing that capitalism has never been race-neutral but is instead inherently structured around the economic exploitation of racialized groups. Melamed (2015) extends this analysis into higher education, demonstrating how racial capitalism manifests in academic institutions, particularly in the form of funding disparities, state governance, and the commodification of Black student success. This framework considers how "whiteness[2]" and racialized economic systems shape institutional decision-making, funding allocations, and perceptions of value within higher education. HBCUs, operating within this racialized capitalist framework, face unique pressures as they navigate systemic inequities while striving to fulfill their foundational missions. These pressures often force HBCUs into a delicate balancing act–resisting market-driven priorities to preserve their liberatory practices while contending with the financial realities of the higher education landscape.

This balancing act reflects the broader intersection of market forces and racialized economic systems, which presents a distinct challenge for HBCUs. As institutions that were

[2] The term “whiteness” refers to a social construct that operates as the normative standard for societal expectations and practices, including those related to education. It encompasses the privileges, values, and norms that are often implicitly centered and upheld in institutional systems.

historically underfunded and marginalized within higher education, HBCUs must navigate economic constraints while maintaining their foundational commitments to equity and liberatory education. This tension underscores the need for an analytical framework that explicitly accounts for both market-driven incentives and racialized systemic pressures. Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC) serves as this framework, building on academic capitalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) and racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983) to examine how HBCUs balance these competing demands. Rather than simply conceptualizing RAC as an abstract theory, this dissertation applies it as a lens to analyze institutional decision-making within HBCU graduate education—particularly in the structuring of STEM and non-STEM program priorities.

Purpose of Study

Grounded in the framework of Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC), this dissertation investigated how the strategic initiatives, missions, and graduate-level decisions of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) reflect both STEM and non-STEM priorities. Rather than viewing these institutional actions as simply reactive or financially motivated, this study examined how graduate programming becomes a strategic site where broader tensions—between liberatory mission and policy compliance, cultural empowerment and labor market alignment—are navigated.

Graduate education provides a particularly rich space for exploring these tensions. At many HBCUs, graduate programs are not only sources of institutional prestige but also vehicles for producing culturally grounded researchers, community leaders, and practitioners. While much of the policy literature and institutional focus has centered on STEM program expansion

(Upton and Tanenbaum, 2014; Merriweather, Lambert, Casey, Howell, & Douglas, 2022; Owens, Shelton, Bloom, & Cavil, 2012; Toldson, Mugo, Hudson, Megra, & Overton, 2022, less is known about how non-STEM graduate programs contribute to institutional strategy, resource allocation, and mission preservation.

This study brought these dynamics into conversation by analyzing how HBCUs articulated and justified their graduate-level priorities in strategic plans and programmatic documents. Importantly, this includes not only *what* programs exist, but *how* institutions narrated their value, sustainability, and alignment with broader goals. These narratives offered insight into how HBCUs position themselves across a spectrum of priorities—from liberatory education and social justice to workforce preparation and market-based incentives.

To support this analysis, I adapted the concept of *servingness* from research on Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) (Garcia, 2020). While originally developed to assess how HSIs go beyond enrollment numbers to actively serve minoritized students, servingness is used here to explore how HBCUs articulate student-serving values, some of which are unique to HBCUs—such as community uplift, liberatory missions, cultural affirmation, and first-generation success—within increasingly constrained funding environments. Rather than framing liberatory and market logics as a zero-sum choice, I conceptualize them as endpoints on a strategic spectrum.

Additionally, I applied the concept of *mission drift* to assess how external pressures—such as performance-based funding and workforce mandates—may lead HBCUs to shift away from their stated missions. This was especially relevant at the graduate level, where institutional strategy often reveals subtle or overt changes in priorities.

Taken together, this framework allowed for a more nuanced institutional analysis that recognizes contradiction, adaptation, and what I later term "institutional code-switching."

This study investigated these nuances by addressing the following research questions:

1. To what extent are STEM and non-STEM values, missions, and metrics described at the graduate level within strategic plans for HBCUs?
2. How do HBCU strategic initiatives address the balance between STEM and non-STEM graduate education in alignment with their broader mission and foundational values?
3. What tensions exist, if any, between the values placed on STEM and non-STEM education within the context of HBCU strategic plans and their institutional mission?

By focusing on institutional strategic plans, graduate catalogs, and archival records, this dissertation investigated how graduate programs at HBCUs reflected both internal commitments to cultural and educational equity and external obligations shaped by performance metrics, funding mandates, and market-aligned priorities. This study contributed to a deeper understanding of how HBCUs negotiated the complexities of organizational decision-making through the combined frameworks of Racial Academic Capitalism, servingness, and mission drift—offering insight into how institutional identity was both preserved and reinterpreted within evolving policy contexts.

Looking Ahead

This dissertation aimed to explore the complexities of HBCUs to refrain from implying them as monolithic. The intentional use of the model of "servingness" emphasized the

importance of values commonly expressed within Black communities, such as giving back, breaking "generational curses[3]," and meeting first-generation expectations.

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature on HBCUs, their evolving institutional missions, and the policy environments that have shaped graduate education. It introduces the study's three interrelated frameworks—Racial Academic Capitalism, servingness, and mission drift—and examines how these concepts have been applied in higher education research. It also surfaces the central tension between STEM and non-STEM fields. Although this tension was initially conceptualized as a binary, the analysis ultimately reframed these categories as a spectrum of institutional leveraging, shaped by policy context, historical positioning, and institutional identity.

Chapter 3 detailed the content analysis and multiple case study design used to examine strategic plans, graduate catalogs, and policy documents from eight public HBCUs across Florida, North Carolina, and Texas. This chapter also provided the rationale for comparative analysis across states and institutions by explaining how state policy logics—such as performance-based funding and workforce mandates—shaped institutional strategy.

Chapter 4 presented the findings in two major phases. First, it offered within-case analyses, examining how each HBCU responded to state policy and articulated strategic priorities across multiple time periods. Second, it provided an across-case synthesis, identifying themes such as graduate education as boundary work, rhetorical resistance, and institutional code-switching—a concept I introduced to describe how HBCUs adopted, mimicked, or subverted dominant policy language while navigating their foundational missions. This chapter

[3] A "generational curse" is often a phrase used to describe historical barriers and exclusionary practices that have helped to keep members of the Black community from achieving social, psychological, and economic success in America.

demonstrated how institutions used both STEM and non-STEM programs as tools for survival, resistance, and cultural affirmation.

Chapter 5 concluded the study by synthesizing key findings and highlighting contributions to the literature on HBCUs, institutional adaptation, and racialized policy constraints. It reflected on the evolution of the study's conceptual framing and offered implications for higher education policy, particularly regarding how institutions of color resist or recalibrate under external pressure. The chapter also outlined opportunities for future research and raised broader questions about liberatory education under racial academic capitalism.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Background on Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs)

For decades, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have been pivotal in providing educational opportunities to Black students, particularly in contexts where systemic inequities and exclusionary practices shaped access to higher education. The complex relationship between education and the Black community reflects a broader historical narrative of resistance against systemic oppression and the pursuit of liberatory practices. Yet, in recent decades, HBCUs have had to navigate increasing systemic and organizational pressures that influence their institutional priorities, from state funding models to federal policy shifts, all of which challenge their foundational missions (Gasman & Commodore, 2014a; Johnson et al., 2017).

The historical exclusion of Black individuals from formal education began during the colonial era, with laws explicitly banning enslaved Africans from learning to read or write (Anderson, 1988). Even after emancipation in 1865, systemic barriers persisted, limiting Black representation in academic fields and professional sectors. During the Reconstruction era (1865-1877), initiatives like the Freedmen's Bureau established schools for formerly enslaved individuals (Painter, 2006), but the deep-rooting of segregationist policies, particularly through Jim Crow laws and the Supreme Court's *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision, solidified a dual education system that funneled Black students to underfunded institutions (Johnson & Watson, 2004; Gasman, 2013).

The effects of this systemic exclusion were far-reaching, shaping the trajectory of Black education in the United States for generations. Underfunded Black schools and segregated

colleges faced continual resource constraints, yet Black communities remained committed to education as a means of resistance and advancement. Educators and leaders within these institutions often worked under extreme financial limitations but still managed to produce generations of scholars, professionals, and activists who would later contribute to dismantling segregationist policies and advocating for civil rights. The resilience of these institutions set the stage for the formal establishment of HBCUs as key pillars in Black higher education.

In response to these exclusionary practices, HBCUs were established, initially in the Northeast by white missionaries and religious organizations, and later in the South following the Second Morrill Act of 1890 (Anderson, 1988). This legislation required states to either integrate Black students into existing land-grant institutions or create separate institutions for them. As a result, the majority of HBCUs were founded in the South, serving as critical access points for Black communities to pursue higher education, professional careers, and socioeconomic advancement (Anderson, 1988). However, many HBCUs were founded through the advocacy of Black leaders and institutions, such as Booker T. Washington and the Black church, which played a significant role in sustaining these colleges (Gasman, 2013; Allen, Jewell, Griffin, & Wolf, 2007). These institutions were not just reactionary measures to exclusion; they were also proactive efforts by Black communities to cultivate self-determination and educational autonomy.

While HBCUs were founded to address the immediate educational needs of Black students, their missions extended beyond academic instruction. They became spaces of cultural affirmation, leadership development, and community empowerment by embodying liberatory educational practices (Williams, Coles, & Reynolds, 2020). At their peak in the mid-20th century, over 200 HBCUs existed (Gasman, 2013), though financial constraints and leadership

challenges have reduced this number to just over 100 as of 2020 (U.S. Department of Education [DOE], 2020; Gasman & Commodore, 2014a, 2014b). Persistent financial instability, coupled with state disinvestment, has disproportionately impacted HBCUs compared to predominantly white institutions (PWIs), exacerbating funding inequities (Mitchell, Leachman, & Saenz, 2019; Boland & Gasman, 2014). Many HBCUs struggled due to chronic underfunding, state policies that limited access to resources, and accreditation challenges that affected institutional viability.

In Knight v. Alabama (1995), the court ruled that Alabama's funding model maintained racial disparities in higher education, requiring the state to enhance HBCU funding and programs (Encyclopedia of Alabama, 2022). This case built upon Ayers v. Fordice (1992**)**, where the Supreme Court mandated that Mississippi address inequities stemming from its dual education system (Cornell Law School, 2025.). The Maryland HBCU lawsuit (2021) resulted in a $1.2 billion settlement, resolving a decades-long case that found state funding practices placed HBCUs at a disadvantage compared to PWIs (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2023; Harper & Simmons, 2019). Similar lawsuits have emerged in Florida and Georgia, challenging persistent underfunding of public HBCUs (Gibbs & Bruns, 2023; Black Enterprise, 2023). However, some cases—such as the Georgia lawsuit—have been dismissed, highlighting the difficulty of obtaining long-term funding equity through legal action. These cases demonstrate the ongoing struggle for equitable funding in public higher education. While some states have been ordered to increase HBCU funding, others have resisted implementation, leading to prolonged legal battles. These disparities remain central to understanding how state and federal policies shape HBCU institutional priorities, particularly as recent legislative actions, including the rollback of DEI initiatives under the Trump administration, threaten federal funding tied to diversity programs (Gibbs & Bruns, 2023; The White House, 2025).

Despite these challenges, HBCUs have remained resilient, producing a significant proportion of Black professionals, particularly in STEM fields. Between 2010 and 2016, HBCUs awarded 27% of all bachelor's degrees in STEM fields earned by Black students (National Science Foundation [NSF], 2019). This emphasis on STEM reflects more than just institutional success; it illustrates how external systemic pressures, such as federal funding priorities and workforce development mandates, shape HBCUs' strategic directions (Matthews & Jones, 2021; Toldson et al., 2022). Many state policies, particularly performance-based funding models, disproportionately favor STEM fields over the humanities and social sciences, compelling institutions to prioritize disciplines that align with economic and workforce demands rather than their broader educational missions (Mitchell, Leachman, & Saenz, 2019; Harper & Simmons, 2019).

Recent years have witnessed a resurgence in HBCU enrollment, particularly between 2018 and 2024, driven by social unrest, the Supreme Court's 2023 reversal of affirmative action, and a growing desire among Black students for culturally affirming educational environments (Knox, 2024; McLean, 2024; NPR, 2022). Following the affirmative action ban, applications to HBCUs surged significantly, with institutions like North Carolina A&T State University receiving over 42,000 applications in 2024—an increase of 12,000 from the previous year (Gwen, 2024). Similarly, Howard University reported a significant rise in first-year enrollment, increasing from 2,268 students in 2023 to 2,796 in 2024 (Knox, 2024). This trend exemplifies the growing appeal of HBCUs as spaces of belonging and academic support, particularly as Black student enrollment declines at predominantly white institutions (Knox, 2024). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), enrollment at HBCUs increased by approximately 6% between 2018 and 2022, even as overall undergraduate enrollment in U.S.

higher education declined by nearly 8% during the same period (NCES, 2023). This increase in enrollment reflects a broader recognition of HBCUs as institutions that provide not only cultural affirmation but also structural supports that enhance Black student success.

The "Missouri Effect," following the protests at the University of Missouri, highlighted this trend, as Black students increasingly sought institutions that provided safe spaces, Black faculty mentorship, and curricula centered on Black experiences (Ma, 2019; Williamson & Palmer, 2019). This phenomenon aligns with a broader pattern of enrollment shifts among Black students, who are increasingly prioritizing institutions that reflect their cultural identities and offer environments of belonging. Research suggests that Black students at HBCUs report higher levels of academic engagement, faculty support, and institutional commitment compared to their peers at predominantly white institutions (Gasman & Nguyen, 2016; Allen et al., 2007). This preference for culturally affirming educational spaces has become particularly pronounced in light of national debates on diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. This shift in enrollment patterns reflects a growing recognition among Black students that HBCUs provide environments where their academic and social needs are met more effectively than at predominantly white institutions. It extends beyond social unrest; it also reflects growing awareness among Black students of the value of HBCUs in fostering student success, as seen in retention trends and graduation rates that surpass those of Black students at PWIs (Gasman & Nguyen, 2016; Allen et al., 2007).

However, the contemporary landscape presents new challenges for HBCUs. The alignment of state and federal funding with market-driven priorities—such as STEM innovation and workforce readiness—often incentivizes institutions to prioritize these areas, potentially at the expense of non-STEM disciplines. While HBCUs have excelled in producing STEM

graduates, non-STEM fields, historically central to their missions, face marginalization in the current educational economy (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Gasman & Commodore, 2014c). Scholars argue that this trend reflects broader systemic forces at play, where state policies reinforce performance-based funding models and workforce-aligned outcomes, pushing HBCUs to adapt institutional priorities to secure resources. These policies emphasize quantifiable student outcomes such as degree completion rates, workforce alignment, and research output—metrics that disproportionately favor STEM disciplines over humanities and social sciences.

As a result, HBCUs face increasing pressures to shift resources toward STEM fields, even when this shift risks marginalizing non-STEM programs that have historically served as pathways to leadership, public service, and cultural preservation. In Texas, the state's performance-based funding model emphasizes student success metrics, such as degree completion and workforce alignment, which disproportionately impact funding allocations for HBCUs (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board [THECB], 2023). In Florida, recent legislative actions, including Senate Bill 7044, have altered accreditation and funding structures, shifting financial incentives toward STEM and workforce-driven programs (Florida Department of Education, 2023). North Carolina's funding model prioritizes research productivity and job placement, reinforcing economic imperatives that pressure HBCUs to align their programs with labor market demands (UNC Board of Governors, 2023). These structural pressures often require HBCUs to navigate difficult trade-offs between sustaining their liberatory missions and meeting external expectations tied to economic growth and market efficiency (Mitchell, Leachman, & Saenz, 2019; Harper & Simmons, 2019).

These structural pressures often require HBCUs to navigate difficult trade-offs between sustaining their liberatory missions and meeting external expectations tied to economic growth

and market efficiency, as state funding priorities increasingly favor workforce-aligned metrics over broader educational goals (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Mitchell, Leachman, & Saenz, 2019; Gasman & Commodore, 2014c). Recognizing the diversity within HBCUs is essential to understanding how these institutions respond to systemic pressures. Some HBCUs have expanded STEM research and graduate programs to align with state and federal priorities, while others maintain a focus on community-based initiatives and social justice-centered undergraduate education (Allen, Jewell, Griffin, & Wolf, 2007; Lee & Keys, 2013). By examining these institutional strategies through the lens of systemic and organizational influences, we gain critical insight into the broader dynamics of resource allocation, mission alignment, and educational equity within the HBCU landscape.

Below, Chapter 2 continues by presenting a brief history of HBCUs and a review of the relevant literature that informs this dissertation study. I begin by examining STEM education at HBCUs, focusing on their role in producing Black graduates in STEM fields and the external funding structures that have prioritized these programs. I then move to the mechanisms of STEM success, highlighting institutional leadership, research partnerships, mentorship, and culturally relevant pedagogies that contribute to student retention and achievement in STEM disciplines. Next, I discuss the importance of non-STEM fields at HBCUs, addressing their historical role in leadership development, civic engagement, and social justice advocacy, alongside the financial and enrollment challenges these programs face. Lastly, I then examine tensions between STEM and non-STEM disciplines, focusing on how funding shifts and institutional priorities create competing demands. From there, I explore market-driven versus liberatory commitments, analyzing HBCUs' responses to external pressures. Finally, I identify gaps in the related literature

and provide a summary of this dissertation's contributions to our scholarly knowledge, setting the stage for the conceptual framework that follows.

Chapter 2 then concludes with the conceptual framework for this dissertation study. I draw on Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC) to explore how systemic inequities and capitalistic values impact HBCUs' capacity to uphold liberatory missions. Specifically, this framework helps to analyze how state and federal funding priorities, workforce demands, and market-driven incentives disproportionately influence the expansion of STEM programs while often marginalizing non-STEM disciplines. I also incorporated the concepts of mission drift and servingness to examine how HBCUs balance internal commitments with external expectations—providing further insight into how institutional priorities evolve under constraint. Understanding these dynamics is essential for examining how HBCUs negotiate competing priorities—whether by aligning with economic imperatives that emphasize STEM workforce production or by resisting these pressures to maintain a holistic, justice-oriented educational model that includes robust support for non-STEM disciplines. This tension remains central to their ongoing evolution and resilience.

History of HBCUs

> The simple truth is that Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have played and will continue to play a huge role in producing graduates in every field of human endeavor. (Johnson et al., 2017 pg. 47)

HBCUs were founded with a core mission of providing educational opportunities to Black students during a time when racial segregation and discrimination excluded them from

predominantly white institutions (PWIs) (Gasman, 2013). The first HBCU, Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, was established in 1837, marking the beginning of an institutional legacy aimed at addressing systemic inequities in education. These institutions were not only designed to combat educational disparities but also to foster leadership, critical thinking, and civic engagement among their students (Labaree, 1997; Allen, Jewell, Griffin, & Wolf, 2007; Gasman & Commodore, 2014b). From their inception, HBCUs emphasized values that extended beyond academic instruction. According to Crewe (2017), these institutions were intentionally designed to foster resilience, critical consciousness, and empowerment among Black students. They offered students a culturally affirming environment that promoted not only academic growth but also social and professional development. This dual mission of education and community advocacy positioned HBCUs as vital mechanisms for cultivating Black leadership across multiple sectors.

HBCUs have historically offered a wide range of academic programs, spanning from liberal arts and education to sciences and engineering. This diversity of offerings underscored their role as comprehensive institutions capable of addressing the multifaceted needs of Black communities. The economic contributions of HBCUs have also been significant. According to the *Economic Impact of the Nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities* report by the U.S. Department of Education (2006), these institutions generate billions of dollars annually and play a critical role in supporting local and national economies. Beyond economic metrics, HBCUs foster social mobility by providing pathways to success for first-generation college attendees and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Hardy, Kaganda, & Aruguete, 2019). These institutions' ability to drive upward mobility often outpaces their

rankings, highlighting the need to assess their value beyond traditional metrics (Hardy et al., 2019).

Despite their contributions, HBCUs have faced systemic challenges such as chronic underfunding and biases in institutional rankings. Hardy et al. (2019) argue that these rankings fail to capture the nuanced and transformative impact of HBCUs. Nevertheless, these institutions have remained resilient, consistently adapting to societal and financial pressures. Crewe (2017) notes that during times of social and economic upheaval, HBCUs have demonstrated remarkable adaptability, continuing to prioritize equity and access while navigating resource constraints. HBCUs also hold profound cultural significance as spaces that celebrate and affirm Black identity. Harris (2019) emphasizes this in her article for *The Atlantic*, where she discusses the enduring necessity of these institutions in combating systemic inequalities and preparing students for leadership roles.

The historical significance of HBCUs provides a foundation for understanding their evolution under federal and state initiatives. The passage of the Second Morrill Act in 1890 required states with segregated educational systems to establish land-grant institutions for Black students, spurring the growth of public HBCUs. While the Second Morrill Act of 1890 aimed to provide land-grant institutions for Black students, states often allocated fewer resources to these institutions compared to predominantly white land-grant colleges (Boland & Gasman, 2014). HBCUs designated as 1890 land-grant institutions have historically faced significant funding disparities compared to their 1862 land-grant counterparts. The Second Morrill Act of 1890 required states to provide separate land-grant institutions for Black students or integrate them into existing institutions. However, while 1862 land-grant universities received consistent state and federal funding, 1890 HBCUs often faced chronic underfunding due to states failing to

provide the required one-to-one matching funds (Harper-Anderson and Hagedorn, 2024). Research grant allocations also reflect systemic inequities between 1862 and 1890 land-grant universities. A comparative study of National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) funding found that 1890 HBCUs received significantly fewer competitive grants than their 1862 counterparts (Aka, Smith & Johnson 2024). This discrepancy affects faculty research opportunities, graduate student funding, and the ability of HBCUs to compete in STEM-related research fields. A recent analysis found that between 1987 and 2020, states withheld over $12.8 billion in funding from 1890 land-grant institutions (The Century Foundation, 2024). This lack of funding has limited research capacity, infrastructure expansion, and academic program development at HBCU land-grant universities (Harper-Anderson & Hagedorn, 2024).

Despite this, HBCUs persisted as sites of academic excellence and social mobility (Johnson et al., 2017). However, resource disparities have long shaped their strategic development, requiring HBCUs to continually reposition themselves within a higher education landscape that remains deeply inequitable (Lee & Keys, 2013). More recently, federal and state initiatives have driven a focus on STEM fields, reflecting national priorities in global competitiveness. These shifts have raised questions about how HBCUs can balance their foundational mission with contemporary demands, particularly as non-STEM programs face marginalization (Owens, Shelton, Bloom, & Cavil, 2012; Matthews & Jones, 2021). Understanding this evolution is essential to situating the broader systemic pressures shaping HBCUs today. The ongoing struggle for equitable funding in public higher education is even more present today. While some states have been ordered to increase HBCU funding, others have resisted implementation, leading to prolonged legal battles. These disparities remain central to understanding how state and federal policies shape HBCU institutional priorities, particularly as

recent legislative actions, including the rollback of DEI initiatives under the Trump administration, threaten federal funding tied to diversity programs (Gibbs & Bruns, 2023).

Historical Philosophies of Educational Purpose

The tensions HBCUs face today—between economic survival and liberatory mission—have deep historical roots. In the post-Reconstruction era, two of the most influential Black intellectuals, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois, articulated sharply different visions for Black education. Washington, born into enslavement and later founding Tuskegee Institute, advocated for an "industrial education" model grounded in manual labor, trades, and vocational training. His approach, laid out in speeches such as The Awakening of the Negro (1994) and further analyzed by Gardner (1975) and Marable (1976), reflected a strategy of economic self-sufficiency within a racially segregated society. For Washington, Black advancement depended on practical skills that aligned with the demands of the Southern economy and reassured white political leaders of Black docility and utility. Yet the term "industrial" itself warrants critical reflection: while often framed as pragmatic, it also risked reinforcing a limited vision of Black intellectual capacity and civic participation. Whose interests were served by restricting Black education to manual labor and service roles?

DuBois, in contrast, insisted that Black Americans were entitled to the full range of intellectual and artistic development. In The Souls of Black Folk (1903) and later essays such as Education and Work (1932), he argued for a liberal arts education that would cultivate what he famously called the "Talented Tenth"—a small group of Black leaders, thinkers, and activists who would challenge racial hierarchies through scholarship, political engagement, and cultural expression. DuBois's vision was not without class bias, but it recognized the centrality of critical consciousness in the fight for racial justice. As Anderson (1988) demonstrates, these debates

over educational purpose were not merely ideological; they shaped the actual structure of Black schooling in the Jim Crow South and influenced how institutions were funded, governed, structured, and valued.

These competing philosophies—education as labor versus education as liberation—continue to shape contemporary policy debates. While STEM fields are often promoted today as the modern equivalent of industrial education, promising upward mobility through alignment with workforce needs, non-STEM fields are not inherently exempt from critique. As this dissertation later argues, disciplines such as the humanities and social sciences have also reproduced Eurocentric, classist, and racist knowledge traditions. The historical debate between Washington and DuBois, then, offers more than a binary choice. It provides a theoretical foundation for analyzing how educational purpose is defined, who gets to define it, and whose knowledge is centered or excluded in the process.

Yet, these questions of epistemic power are not theoretical abstractions—they have material consequences. Across history, both STEM and non-STEM disciplines have contributed to the marginalization, exploitation, and erasure of Black communities. In biomedical research, the unauthorized use of Henrietta Lacks' cells and the Tuskegee Syphilis Study exemplify how Black bodies have been used without consent in the name of scientific advancement (Skloot, 2017). Meanwhile, psychology and anthropology often advanced deficit-based models that pathologized Black identity and reinforced white supremacy under the guise of objectivity (Guthrie, 2004; Bonilla-Silva & Baiocchi, 2001). Harriot (2023) argues that even the liberal arts have historically excluded Black intellectual traditions from curricula, contributing to a broader epistemic denial of Black humanity and complexity. These examples complicate any assumption that liberal or non-STEM fields are inherently more justice-oriented than STEM. Rather, they

reveal that dominant disciplinary frameworks—across the academic spectrum—have long served to uphold exclusionary logics. For HBCUs, this history underscores the need to not only resist market pressures, but also remain critically vigilant about how academic knowledge is legitimized, valued, and taught.

To effectively examine how they have adapted over time, it is necessary to analyze the broader economic, political, and social forces influencing their development. The literature review that follows delves into these forces, highlighting the impact of federal and state policies, shifts in institutional priorities, and the ongoing tension between STEM and non-STEM programming. By applying the framework of Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC) to these dynamics, this study explores how HBCUs negotiate competing pressures while striving to fulfill their foundational missions.

Literature Review

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were founded as a direct response to the racial exclusion of Black students from predominantly white institutions (PWIs). Rooted in segregation, these institutions became critical spaces for Black education, leadership, and social mobility, often extending their missions beyond workforce training to include community uplift and social justice. However, as higher education increasingly operates under neoliberal tenets, HBCUs now face systemic pressures to align with institutional models that prioritize economic productivity, market efficiency, and performance-based funding metrics. The very forces that once marginalized Black students from mainstream higher education now demand that HBCUs integrate into a system that values institutions based on their ability to generate revenue, produce workforce-ready graduates, and conform to competitive, data-driven accountability measures.

This literature review examined how HBCUs negotiated these tensions, balancing their historical commitments to liberatory education with contemporary demands for workforce development, performance-based funding, and market-driven academic restructuring. Moving beyond a simplistic binary of STEM versus non-STEM or good and bad, this review focused on how state and federal policies, racialized funding models, and broader neoliberal reforms shaped institutional priorities. While HBCUs have long been celebrated for their outsized contributions to STEM education, they are also sites where non-STEM disciplines—including the humanities, social sciences, and education—have played essential roles in fostering social justice, civic engagement, and Black leadership. As funding mechanisms increasingly reward institutions based on quantifiable economic outcomes, these fields face marginalization, threatening the broader educational missions that have historically defined HBCUs.

To analyze these dynamics, I first reviewed literature on STEM education at HBCUs, examining the institutional and structural factors that contribute to their success in producing Black graduates in high-demand fields. I then moved to research on non-STEM disciplines, exploring how systemic inequities devalue these programs despite their continued significance to Black communities. From there, I engaged with scholarship on the tensions between STEM and non-STEM programming, shaped by neoliberal influences that have increasingly impacted HBCU decision-making. These bodies of scholarship help illustrate how HBCUs are pressured to conform to dominant institutional models that emphasize market-driven outcomes over social justice imperatives. Finally, this review sets up the context for how HBCUs operate within the larger system of Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC), considering how structural forces shape their institutional trajectories and impact their capacity to resist, negotiate, or conform to external pressures.

STEM Education at HBCUs

STEM education has become a central focus for many HBCUs in response to national calls for increased diversity in STEM fields. HBCUs play a pivotal role in the production of Black graduates in critical STEM areas such as engineering, healthcare, and technology. Programs like the America COMPETES Act and the Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP), funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), have provided significant financial support to HBCUs to enhance STEM education and research (Shuler et al., 2022). These programs have been instrumental in helping HBCUs develop robust STEM curricula, support undergraduate research, and provide mentorship opportunities aimed at retaining underrepresented students in STEM fields (NSF, 2022). While discussions of STEM success often compare HBCU and PWI outcomes, this study focuses on systemic factors shaping HBCU priorities rather than direct institutional comparisons.

HBCUs' success in producing STEM graduates is often attributed to culturally tailored support systems that foster student belonging and resilience. These institutions offer a strong sense of community, mentorship from Black faculty, and specialized programs designed to support students from underrepresented backgrounds (Palmer, Walker, Goings, Troy, Gipson, & Commodore, 2016). Such factors are vital for retaining minority students in fields historically dominated by white and male populations, where many Black students face systemic barriers to persistence and completion. The contribution of HBCUs to the nation's STEM workforce is significant. Owens et al. (2012) highlighted that HBCUs continue to produce a disproportionate number of Black graduates in STEM fields compared to their PWI counterparts. Between 2010 and 2016, HBCUs awarded 27% of all bachelor's degrees earned by Black students in these fields, highlighting their crucial role in addressing the underrepresentation of Black professionals

in STEM industries (NSF, 2022). With ongoing support from initiatives such as the National Science Foundation's funding for minority-serving institutions, HBCUs remain vital contributors to building a diverse and inclusive STEM workforce.

However, the increased emphasis on STEM has also sparked concerns about its impact on institutional priorities. While STEM funding has provided critical financial resources and visibility for HBCUs, some scholars argue that its prioritization may inadvertently shift focus away from the broader educational missions of these institutions. Recent reports show that humanities degree completions at HBCUs have declined by 15% between 2014 and 2022, with fields like English experiencing a steep 58% drop (Blake, 2024; Allen, 2024). Although interdisciplinary programs, such as liberal studies, have seen growth, the overall decline in traditional humanities degrees suggests that the prioritization of STEM may be reshaping student enrollment trends and resource allocation at HBCUs.

Mechanisms of STEM Success at HBCUs

The impressive success of STEM programs at HBCUs is not incidental; it is driven by a combination of intentional leadership, culturally relevant practices, strategic external support, and expanding research and mentoring opportunities. Understanding these mechanisms is crucial to analyzing how these institutions consistently outperform others in fostering STEM success among Black students while navigating racialized funding structures and systemic barriers.

Intentional Leadership

A defining feature of HBCUs is the connectedness fostered by their leadership teams, who center core values rooted in Black culture—particularly the idea of Blackness as a strength

in combating external pressures. McGee et al. (2021) describe this approach as “race-conscious” leadership, emphasizing how HBCUs explicitly address race and integrate this awareness into their classroom spaces, student support systems, and institutional missions. HBCUs attribute much of their success to a “family-like” culture and evolving cultural awareness, both of which are designed to create a humanizing educational environment (Williams et al., 2022; Washington Lockett et al., 2018; McGee et al., 2021).

Research also highlights that HBCUs with strong STEM investments often have presidents and provosts with STEM backgrounds, giving them a unique perspective on the importance of these programs (Jaeger et al., 2021). Additionally, Boncana et al. (2021) emphasize that successful HBCU presidents exhibit visionary thinking and bold leadership, actively securing external partnerships and grant funding to enhance STEM resources. These leaders function as strategists and fundraisers, ensuring that HBCUs not only develop high-quality STEM programs, but also maintain a commitment to student retention, engagement, and success. This leadership dynamic positions HBCUs as critical players in producing STEM graduates while staying true to their mission of supporting underrepresented students.

Strategic External Support

In addition to leadership strategies, HBCUs' STEM success is further bolstered by targeted federal and industry-backed initiatives. Programs such as the National Science Foundation’s HBCU-Up, the HBCU STEM Undergraduate Success Research Center (STEM-US), and the Department of Defense’s STEM initiatives have played a critical role in fostering STEM expansion at HBCUs (NSF, 2020). HBCU-Up, for instance, focuses not only on

undergraduate retention but also on developing research capacity and theory-driven models that promote STEM persistence among underrepresented students (Smith, Geddis, & Dumans, 2021).

These large-scale, programmatic support initiatives are strategically leveraged by HBCUs to address racialized K-12 educational disparities, including funding inequities, inadequate STEM teaching resources, and systemic barriers that have historically hindered Black students from pursuing STEM careers. As Strayhorn (2013) highlights, minority-serving institutional environments are essential for cultivating STEM success among Black students, while Smith et al. (2021) demonstrate how HBCU research pipelines help retain Black students in high-level STEM careers.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Beyond structural and financial support, HBCUs' culturally relevant pedagogy is a crucial factor in STEM student success. This approach, often described as a "second curriculum", highlights informal learning experiences that exist alongside traditional academic content, reinforcing students' socio-political consciousness and fostering deep connections to both local and global Black communities (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Wondwossen, 2020; Williams, Russell, & Summerville, 2021).

At HBCUs, culturally relevant pedagogy is intentionally embedded into STEM curricula, ensuring that Black students see themselves reflected in their disciplines. For instance, Sanders Johnson (2021) highlights how chemistry education at HBCUs incorporates historical narratives such as that of Nathan "Nearest" Green, the first African American master distiller, to engage students in organic chemistry through culturally relevant storytelling. This method combats

deficit-based models that have historically excluded Black contributions from scientific disciplines (Freeman, Winston-Proctor, Gangloff-Bailey, & Jones, 2021).

HBCUs also serve as sites of educational decolonization by actively dismantling eurocentric academic traditions through culturally responsive teaching (CRT) (Washington & Johnson, 2021). This approach fosters higher retention and engagement by validating students' cultural identities while challenging systemic educational inequalities. Programs in environmental science, for example, often integrate community-based research on environmental justice issues affecting Black communities, empowering students to use their academic skills for social change (Archer, Davis, Ebanks, & Gragg, 2019).

Research and Mentoring Opportunities

STEM success is heavily tied to research capacity and faculty mentorship, both of which influence institutional rankings, funding, and program prestige. HBCUs have dramatically expanded their STEM research production through initiatives such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Minority University Research and Education Project (MUREP), the National Institutes of Health's Research Infrastructure in Minority Institutions Program (NIH-RIMI), and the Department of Defense's HBCU/MI Program (NIH, 2024; DoD, 2024; NSF, 2024).

These federally backed partnerships have increased HBCU access to cutting-edge laboratories, strengthened faculty support networks, and expanded student research opportunities (Smith, Geddis, & Dumas, 2021; Morton, 2021; Gasman & Nguyen, 2016). As of 2023, eleven

HBCUs have earned Research 2 (R2)[4] research classifications, meaning they "confer at least 20 research doctorates and report at least $5 million in total research expenditures"—an achievement made possible through intentional policy shifts and targeted investments (Fitch, 2023). Recently, Howard University is the only HBCU to have earned a Research 1 (R1) research classification, meaning "very high research spending and doctorate production" (Mobley, 2025).

Mentorship also plays a critical role in student success, particularly for Black women in STEM fields, who often face unique barriers to persistence (Dickens, 2021). Faculty mentoring initiatives at HBCUs help bridge these gaps, fostering an environment where Black students are more likely to persist and excel in STEM disciplines (Hendrickson & Haynes, 2019). Winkle-Wagner and McCoy (2016) found that faculty at HBCUs reported stronger community support and mentorship networks compared to their counterparts at PWIs, which contributed to a greater sense of belonging and retention in STEM disciplines.

Additionally, HBCUs have expanded their reach into local Black communities, providing early STEM engagement programs for K-12 students (Ero-Tolliver, 2019; Jaeger et al., 2021). These efforts ensure that STEM pathways begin early, helping address systemic pipeline issues that contribute to racial disparities in STEM professions (Kendricks, Nedunuri, & Arment, 2013; Toldson, 2018).

While these mechanisms demonstrate how HBCUs have successfully fostered STEM talent, the growing emphasis on STEM funding and workforce alignment raises critical questions about the future of non-STEM disciplines at these institutions. As state and federal funding

[4] R1 and R2 are designations granted by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education®. Also known as the Carnegie Classification®, founded in 1973, is used as a classification system to assist in capturing the diversified educational landscape.

models increasingly reward STEM expansion, non-STEM fields—including the humanities, social sciences, and education—face declining enrollments and shrinking institutional support. The next section explores these tensions, considering how HBCUs balance STEM growth with their broader educational and social justice missions.

The Importance of Non-STEM Fields at HBCUs

While STEM disciplines attract increasing attention and funding, non-STEM fields—particularly the humanities, social sciences, and education—face mounting pressures despite their continued relevance to HBCUs' core missions. These programs play a vital role in fostering critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and leadership skills, all of which are necessary for active democratic participation and social justice advocacy (Gasman, 2013; Spelman College, 2022). Historically, HBCUs have been central to producing Black leaders in education, law, public policy, and the arts, serving as incubators for movements that have shaped social and political change (Brown & Davis, 2001; Williams, 2013). Unlike many PWIs, where liberal arts disciplines have long been regarded as supplementary, HBCUs have consistently viewed these fields as essential to racial uplift and institutional self-determination (Brown & Davis, 2001).

Non-STEM disciplines contribute to societal well-being by promoting cultural awareness, ethical decision-making, and the ability to address complex social issues (Labaree, 1997; Astin, 1997; Roth, 2014). These fields equip students with the skills necessary to tackle global challenges such as systemic inequality, environmental justice, and policy reform (Astin, 1997; Killough et al.,2018). HBCUs have long played a pivotal role in training thought leaders, activists, and policymakers who advocate for historically marginalized communities (Roth, 2014). As Dana Williams (2013) argues, HBCUs uniquely prepare African American students in

the humanities and social sciences to engage in advanced scholarship and leadership rooted in racial and social justice.

However, as state and federal policies increasingly favor workforce-aligned education, concerns are mounting that the growing focus on STEM may devalue non-STEM fields, diminishing their role within HBCUs (Gasman, 2013; McGee, 2020; Williams, 2017). By shifting funding and institutional incentives toward STEM, HBCUs risk sidelining disciplines that have historically been central to their missions of leadership and civic engagement. A study by the American Academy of Arts & Sciences (2024) found that humanities degrees at HBCUs have declined by 15% from 2014 to 2022, a trend reflective of broader shifts in higher education. However, the study also noted that this decline was less severe than at non-HBCU institutions, suggesting that HBCUs continue to play a critical role in sustaining humanities education despite systemic funding challenges and shifting institutional priorities. Despite this resilience, some HBCUs have been forced to phase out humanities and social science programs due to declining enrollment and persistent financial constraints (American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2024). The study highlights that state funding restrictions have further exacerbated these challenges, limiting institutional capacity to sustain humanities programs and contributing to program eliminations at several HBCUs. For instance, Savannah State University recently eliminated majors in English, history, environmental science, and Africana studies as part of a cost-cutting reorganization plan (AP News, 2024).

While STEM education is undeniably important for economic and technological competitiveness, scholars argue that HBCUs must maintain a balanced curriculum that supports both workforce readiness and the broader social and ethical development of students (Williams, 2017; Killough et al., 2018). By sustaining strong humanities and social sciences programs,

HBCUs ensure that their graduates are equipped to address the multifaceted challenges of an evolving society (Davidson, 2008).

Liberal Arts Innovation and Leadership Development

Historically, HBCUs have played a central role in fostering leadership and activism. According to the National Museum of African American History & Culture (NMAAHC) (Favors, n.d), HBCU students and faculty have been key players in civil rights, voting rights, and Black Lives Matter movements. This legacy reinforces the importance of liberal arts education in cultivating civic leadership. Despite external pressures to prioritize STEM, HBCUs remain deeply committed to cultivating leadership and innovation across disciplines. Jelani M. Favors (2019), in *Shelter in a Time of Storm: How Black Colleges Fostered Generations of Leadership and Activism*, examines how HBCUs have historically served as intellectual sanctuaries, providing Black students with critical spaces for leadership development and activism. These institutions not only foster academic success but also instill a sense of cultural responsibility and social advocacy, aligning with the broader objectives of liberal arts education.

Recent initiatives reflect this ongoing commitment to liberal arts education. The United Negro College Fund (UNCF)'s efforts to establish liberal arts innovation centers exemplify how HBCUs are supporting non-STEM programs while fostering critical thinking and social justice advocacy (The United Negro College Fund [UNCF], 2022). In 2022, $1.2 million in grants were awarded to four HBCUs—Fayetteville State University, Voorhees College, Talladega College, and Dillard University—to create interdisciplinary centers integrating technical and liberal arts disciplines (UNCF, 2022). These centers focus on digital literacy, ethical decision-making, and

human-centered leadership skills, ensuring that students receive broad-based training that prepares them for both workforce and civic engagement roles.

Beyond curricular expansion, these liberal arts initiatives are reshaping HBCU leadership training models. By integrating humanities with social sciences, business, and policy studies, HBCUs prepare students for careers in education, public service, and nonprofit leadership, fields that are critical for sustaining Black economic and political progress (Dennis, 2024). Research indicates that HBCU graduates in non-STEM fields experience higher rates of social mobility compared to their PWI counterparts, largely due to strong mentorship models and community-based career pathways (Schwarb, 2021).

Lee and Keys (2013) argue that HBCUs must strategically reposition themselves to ensure that liberal arts education remains a central component of institutional identity while also responding to contemporary workforce demands. This challenge underscores the need for curricular innovation that blends leadership training, critical thinking, and applied skills to prepare students for diverse career pathways. Additionally, Andrews et al. (2016) note that institutional sustainability is increasingly tied to how well HBCUs balance their commitment to liberal arts education with the financial realities of modern higher education. While external funding overwhelmingly favors STEM (Li, 2020; Centers, Balazs, and Ogunyale, 2023), many HBCUs have proactively secured alternative resources to sustain liberal arts and social sciences programs.

The historical significance of liberal arts education at HBCUs cannot be overstated. By cultivating critical consciousness, community-centered leadership, and interdisciplinary problem-solving skills, these institutions empower graduates to advocate for systemic reform and

drive progress within Black communities. The continued investment in liberal arts innovation ensures that HBCUs remain at the forefront of transformative education—providing not just economic mobility, but also the intellectual and ethical frameworks needed for sustained social change.

Tensions Between STEM and Non-STEM Priorities

While research has extensively explored STEM expansion at the undergraduate level, fewer studies examine how these shifts create tensions within graduate education at HBCUs. As institutions pursue federal and state funding tied to STEM priorities, questions arise about how these incentives affect resource allocation, faculty morale, and institutional identity (Powers, 2000; Carter, 2018; Palmer, Walker, & Goings, 2016). These tensions are not merely fiscal—they implicate how academic value is constructed and contested within HBCUs themselves. Williams (2013) emphasizes the continued need for humanities and social science programs that foster ethical reasoning and social justice leadership. Yet, non-STEM faculty and students often report feeling undervalued, citing shrinking budgets, reduced visibility, and fewer research opportunities (Palmer et al., 2016; Shuler et al., 2022). Faculty in non-STEM disciplines have also voiced concerns about having to "defend the value" of their work in ways that STEM counterparts do not, especially when departments are pressured to justify graduate programs based solely on workforce outcomes or grant acquisition (Killough et al., 2018; Brown & Davis, 2001).

Gasman and Commodore (2014c) observe that this unequal emphasis reinforces the perception that liberal arts programs are expendable, despite their role in cultivating civic engagement and critical consciousness. Similarly, Davidson (2008) notes that this shift has

impacted graduate education by reframing scholarly worth in terms of economic utility, often sidelining fields that do not align with performance-based funding metrics. These internal disparities challenge HBCUs' efforts to sustain academic diversity and uphold liberatory missions.

Still, it is essential not to frame this tension as a binary between "good" non-STEM fields and "bad" STEM expansion. As noted earlier, disciplines across the academic spectrum have historically participated in the marginalization of Black communities—from deficit-based psychological frameworks to biomedical exploitation and exclusionary research agendas. Likewise, STEM fields can also be spaces of radical innovation, cultural agency, and institutional advancement, particularly when HBCUs shape them toward community-anchored goals. At the same time, many non-STEM fields at HBCUs have actively worked to decolonize curricula, center Black intellectual traditions, and train students in critical, justice-oriented praxis—challenging the very knowledge hierarchies in which they were once complicit. The real tension, then, lies not in discipline alone but also in the logics that govern funding, program development, and curricular authority. HBCUs operate within a constrained landscape where aligning with economic imperatives can support institutional survival, even as it risks shifting attention away from justice-centered, holistic education. Understanding these dynamics as a continuum—rather than a dichotomy—helps reveal how different programs, departments, and stakeholders negotiate the values embedded within knowledge production itself.

Interdisciplinary Strategies Amid STEM and Non-STEM Tensions

In response to the disciplinary tensions outlined above, many HBCUs have pursued interdisciplinary approaches that reject rigid distinctions between STEM and non-STEM fields.

These models reflect longstanding commitments to community uplift and social justice, in creating collective scholarly community to address some of the most pressing and interdependent societal problems (e.g., global health pandemics) (Callahan, 2020). Interdisciplinary programs such as urban education, environmental justice, Africana public health, and digital humanities often reflect both institutional mission and student interest—grounding scholarly inquiry in lived experience, community relevance, and critical consciousness.

Some HBCUs are adopting interdisciplinary strategies to navigate STEM/non-STEM tensions more intentionally. These efforts include programs that integrate data science with social justice and environmental science with Africana Studies. The American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) has recognized this challenge, launching the HBCU Faculty Fellowship and Grant Program to support humanities and social sciences faculty (ACLS, 2023). These initiatives reinforce the ongoing relevance of non-STEM disciplines while finding innovative ways to align them with contemporary workforce demands. For instance, digital humanities, public health, and environmental justice programs at HBCUs illustrate how institutions are strategically blending liberal arts education with STEM applications. UNCF (2022) highlights how these programs are creating new pathways for students by integrating technical skills—such as data analysis and digital storytelling—with traditional humanities training.

By leveraging interdisciplinary approaches, HBCUs sustain their foundational missions of educational equity, community uplift, and Black intellectual tradition while remaining adaptive to evolving economic and policy landscapes. Programs that examine the ethical implications of artificial intelligence (AI) or the social dimensions of scientific research demonstrate how HBCUs can position themselves at the forefront of

contemporary academic debates (Favors, 2019). These efforts are not merely reactive; they represent epistemic interventions that center Black life and liberatory knowledge production across fields.

Additionally, HBCUs serve as critical entry points into STEM Ph.D. pipelines, helping diversify the scientific workforce while preserving their broader academic missions (Upton & Tanenbaum, 2014; Gasman & Nguyen, 2016). This dual role allows HBCUs to expand access to advanced STEM training while ensuring that students graduate with the critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and cultural fluency necessary for leadership across sectors.

While interdisciplinary approaches offer clear benefits, they also reflect broader shifts in academic priorities. The increasing emphasis on programs that integrate liberal arts with STEM or professional fields like business can be understood within a neoliberal framework. Kraatz, Ventresca, and Deng (2010) argue that even mission-driven institutions—such as liberal arts colleges—are adopting market-based logics in response to funding constraints and enrollment pressures. In this light, interdisciplinary initiatives at HBCUs may not solely reflect pedagogical innovation or mission alignment, but also strategic positioning to attract external resources and enhance student employability. While such efforts offer pragmatic value, they also raise important questions about whether this shift reinforces a market-driven model of education—potentially sidelining disciplines and intellectual traditions that do not directly align with economic imperatives.

Federal Initiatives & HBCU Shifts

Federal initiatives have played a critical role in shaping the development and evolving priorities of HBCUs, particularly as these institutions respond to shifting political, economic, and social landscapes. According to NSF funding reports (2024), STEM funding at HBCUs increased by 19% in 2022, while there were no equivalent increases for humanities programs. This funding discrepancy affects how HBCUs structure their academic offerings. Title III, Part B of the Higher Education Act has been instrumental in providing essential funding for institutional infrastructure, academic expansion, and operational sustainability (U.S. Department of Education, 2023). Additionally, partnerships with federal agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Labor have incentivized HBCUs to align their academic and research agendas with national workforce priorities in sustainability, health sciences, and equitable employment practices (EPA, 2023; Department of Labor, 2023).

One of the most impactful areas of federal engagement has been in the expansion of STEM education. Programs such as the Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) and the National Science Foundation's HBCU-UP initiative have provided critical resources for expanding research capacity, developing STEM curricula, and increasing retention rates among underrepresented students (NSF, 2022). However, most federal STEM initiatives prioritize undergraduate access and retention rather than graduate program development–particularly in fields beyond STEM–leaving critical gaps in support for advanced degree pathways and cross-disciplinary innovation at HBCUs.

Between 2010 and 2016, HBCUs awarded 27% of all bachelor's degrees earned by Black students in STEM fields, underscoring their central role in diversifying the STEM workforce

(Owens et al., 2012; NSF, 2022). The White House Council of Economic Advisers (2024) further highlights that HBCUs produce a disproportionate share of graduates in high-demand fields, significantly contributing to the national economy.

However, despite these federal investments, HBCUs continue to face systemic funding inequities—particularly at the state level, where performance-based funding models and historic underfunding of public HBCUs disadvantage these institutions compared to their predominantly white counterparts (Boland & Gasman, 2014). Many public HBCUs operate in states that have failed to equitably fund them despite federal mandates, exacerbating disparities in faculty resources, research infrastructure, and student support services (Williams, 2017). These financial pressures create a paradox: while STEM expansion has positioned HBCUs as valuable to national economic goals, the funding structures driving these shifts have also sidelined many of the disciplines central to HBCUs' historical missions. This paradox reflects a broader policy pattern in which inclusion is framed through access to opportunity rather than structural redistribution–placing the burden on HBCUs to adapt without meaningfully transforming the inequitable systems that shape funding decisions.

Despite the emphasis on STEM fields, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) have provided critical funding for HBCUs to sustain programs in liberal arts, cultural studies, and creative disciplines. NEH grants have supported archival research, public history projects, and initiatives preserving the contributions of Black scholars, artists, and activists. For example, the Humanities Initiatives at Historically Black Colleges and Universities program has enabled institutions to develop new humanities curricula and digital humanities projects that document Black history and culture

(NEH, 2025). Similarly, the NEH Awards for Faculty at HBCUs program provides funding for advanced research and scholarly work in the humanities (NEH, 2025).

Likewise, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has played a pivotal role in sustaining arts programming at HBCUs. NEA grants support artistic and cultural initiatives, including theater productions, public art projects, and music programs. The agency has actively encouraged applications from HBCUs, revised grant guidelines to increase accessibility, and provided technical assistance to improve funding opportunities (NEA, 2025). For instance, Bennett College has received NEA funding to support a community-centered theater festival (NEA, 2025). While these grants are crucial, they lack the long-term stability and scale of STEM-based federal investments, making it difficult for humanities and arts programs at HBCUs to achieve the same level of institutional prioritization.

In response, HBCU leaders have adopted strategic approaches to maintain competitiveness while safeguarding their foundational commitments to racial uplift and social justice. One key strategy involves forging partnerships with private sector organizations to diversify funding sources, allowing institutions to reduce dependency on fluctuating state and federal allocations. Additionally, many HBCUs have developed interdisciplinary programs that integrate STEM with social sciences and humanities, ensuring that students receive a well-rounded education that aligns with both workforce demands and institutional values. At the policy level, leaders continue to advocate for state and federal funding equity, emphasizing the importance of sustaining non-STEM disciplines that are critical to civic engagement and social change. Andrews et al. (2016) note that these efforts reflect the broader resilience of HBCUs, demonstrating how these institutions navigate systemic pressures while remaining steadfast in their commitments to educational access, community empowerment, and racial equity.

Recent DEI rollbacks have raised concerns about long-term funding stability for student support initiatives at HBCUs. Institutions are adjusting their strategic plans to align with shifting federal expectations (NSF, 2024). While STEM continues to dominate federal priorities, sustained advocacy for NEH and NEA funding is essential to ensuring that HBCUs can preserve their historical role in fostering a robust intellectual and cultural tradition that extends beyond workforce development.

Liberatory to Market-Driven Missions

HBCUs were founded with missions of liberatory education—preparing students not only for economic mobility but also for leadership in social, intellectual, and political movements (Allen, Jewell, Griffin, & Wolf, 2007). This mission extended beyond academic achievement to civic responsibility and community empowerment. Over time, however, higher education has become increasingly aligned with market-driven imperatives, pressuring HBCUs to prioritize disciplines that directly serve workforce demands—particularly in STEM fields.

These shifts are propelled by performance-based funding models and state policies that emphasize economic outputs over justice-oriented education (McGee & Martin, 2011). Neoliberal frameworks have further reinforced these trends, framing higher education as a private investment rather than a public good (Orphan, 2018). For HBCUs, this presents a dual challenge: maintaining financial stability by aligning with funding incentives while simultaneously resisting the erosion of their original historical missions. The task is not only to prepare technically proficient graduates, but to equip them with the critical thinking and leadership tools necessary to challenge structural inequities.

While STEM expansion aligns with national economic goals it has contributed to the decline of non-STEM disciplines. For example, humanities degree completions at HBCUs dropped by 15% between 2014 and 2022, with English seeing a steep 58% decline (Blake, 2024). These shifts reflect broader systemic forces influencing higher education, where disciplines that generate measurable economic returns are prioritized over those that foster civic engagement and social analysis. Jaquette (2013) describes this phenomenon as mission drift, wherein institutions shift academic priorities to attract enrollment and secure funding or prestige– often at the expense of their founding values.

Although HBCUs have excelled in producing STEM graduates, the marginalization of non-STEM disciplines raises critical questions about the sustainability of their liberatory missions. As Wilcox et al. (2014) argue, the growing emphasis on workforce production risks weakening the democratic and emancipatory functions these institutions were built to serve. If funding structures continue to favor workforce-aligned education over social justice-oriented disciplines, how can HBCUs maintain their role as incubators of Black intellectualism, activism, and leadership?

One key factor in this tension is the persistent funding gap between HBCUs and predominantly white institutions (PWIs). Toldson (2016) notes that HBCUs receive disproportionately less public funding, intensifying pressure to pursue workforce-aligned and grant-rich disciplines. In response, many HBCUs have developed interdisciplinary programs that integrate STEM with critical race studies, social policy, and digital humanities—allowing students to gain technical expertise alongside a critical understanding of systemic inequality. Others have expanded partnerships with philanthropic organizations committed to racial equity, and strengthened policy advocacy

aimed at securing equitable public investments. These strategies signal institutional agency: a refusal to fully surrender to market-driven demands while adapting to survive within them.

This tension between economic viability and liberatory education is not unique to HBCUs—but for institutions founded on social transformation, the stakes are especially high. As external funding priorities evolve, HBCUs must negotiate these pressures while keeping their academic programs grounded in their historical commitments. The Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (2012) suggests that innovation in financial strategy and public policy engagement will be essential to protecting mission integrity without capitulating to neoliberal pressures. Through such measures, HBCUs can continue to uphold traditions of social justice and intellectual empowerment—even within an increasingly economized educational landscape.

While research has highlighted HBCUs' contributions to Black undergraduate success in STEM (Palmer et al., 2016; Shuler et al., 2022), fewer studies have examined how institutional priorities shift at the graduate level—where decisions about research classification, prestige, and program expansion carry unique implications. As HBCUs pursue greater recognition through R2 or R1 classification, graduate-level STEM growth is often favored due to its alignment with federal funding and research metrics. Yet this prioritization raises urgent questions: how do institutions balance the pursuit of research prestige with the preservation of their broader social missions?

This study addresses that gap by examining how HBCUs position STEM and non-STEM graduate programs in response to both internal commitments and external

pressures. Rather than focusing solely on funding disparities or faculty experiences, this research investigates the decision-making processes that shape graduate program development, strategic plans, and institutional identity. By centering HBCU leadership and administrative strategies, it challenges static portrayals of these institutions as reactive or constrained, and instead emphasizes their adaptive agency.

These adaptations are not merely financial—they are shaped by racialized policy legacies, constrained funding structures, and systemic exclusion. *Racial Academic Capitalism* (RAC) offers a lens to analyze how market forces intersect with historical inequities in shaping institutional behavior. Similarly, *servingness* provides a way to assess how HBCUs uphold their educational commitments under pressure, while *mission drift* helps trace how values shift in response to policy and performance incentives. The following section engages these frameworks in depth to explore how HBCUs negotiate the spectrum between liberatory and market-driven goals.

Theoretical Framework

The history of HBCUs is one of resilience, activism, and adaptive resistance. To understand their organizational evolution—and how STEM and non-STEM priorities have been shaped over time—it is essential to recognize that these institutions have continuously navigated systemic forces designed to disrupt, constrain, and mold them into alignment with dominant educational and economic structures. These forces are deeply racialized and classed, operating within broader capitalist frameworks that shape institutional behavior and decision-making. This dissertation draws from both racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983) and academic capitalism (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) to advance Racial Academic Capitalism

(RAC) as its central theoretical framework. Two additional constructs– servingness and mission drift – are employed as analytical tools to examine how HBCUs negotiate the complex tensions between foundational liberatory commitments and external market-driven pressures. Rather than treating these dynamics as binary or linear, this study frames them as existing along a spectrum of institutional positioning–where adaptation, resistance, and compromise coexist.

Academic Capitalism

Academic Capitalism, as conceptualized by Slaughter and Leslie (1997) and later expanded by Slaughter and Rhoades (2004), describes the growing entanglement between higher education institutions and market-based logics. It focuses on how colleges and universities adopt entrepreneurial behaviors—such as seeking external funding, prioritizing revenue-generating programs, and aligning curriculum with labor market demands—to remain competitive in increasingly neoliberal policy environments. Rather than functioning solely as public goods, institutions begin to operate as market actors, reshaping academic priorities around profitability, prestige, and performance metrics.

Originally developed to analyze shifting patterns of faculty research in U.S. and global higher education systems (e.g., research for public good versus research for external revenue generation) via Slaughter and Leslie (1997), Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) conceptualized academic capitalism in the new economy in response to declining public investment in education and the rise of accountability-driven reforms in the late 20th century. The framework was particularly concerned with how faculty labor, student recruitment, research agendas, and institutional governance began to reflect the imperatives of the knowledge economy. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) emphasized that institutions, especially public ones, were reconfiguring

themselves to attract competitive funding through grants, partnerships, and tuition-based revenue—all while adopting the language of markets: efficiency, innovation, and outcomes.

Within higher education scholarship, academic capitalism has been widely used to examine the corporatization of universities (Cote & Allahar, 2011), the erosion of faculty governance (Rhoades, 2003; Spinrad, Relles & Watson, 2022), and the strategic expansion of STEM and professional programs at the expense of liberal arts disciplines (Ellison & Allen, 2018). It has also been applied to critique performance-based funding models and state policies that reward institutions for aligning with workforce development goals rather than social justice or civic education (Jaquette, 2013; Orphan, 2018). Researchers have used this framework to analyze how universities chase prestige, pursue Research 1 classification, and expand branding and marketing strategies in ways that mirror private industry (Cantwell & Kauppinen, 2014).

However, one of the central limitations of academic capitalism lies in its race-neutral orientation when applied to specific phenomena, such as exploring the characteristics of localities that university recruiters visit to solicit admissions applications. For instance, Salazar (2022) argues that academic capitalism presumes that racial differences in the probability of receiving a recruiting visit (e.g., schools with greater proportions of Students of Color are less likely to receive a visit) are due to racial wealth gaps in the recruitment of affluent students for the purposes of increasing tuition revenue. The original theory was not designed to account for how race, racism, or racial inequality shape institutions' experiences with marketization. Its unit of analysis is often the institution or system, abstracted from the social and historical conditions that define how different types of institutions engage with market logic. As such, while academic capitalism is a powerful tool for analyzing shifts in institutional behavior under neoliberalism, it lacks a critical racial analysis—failing to account for the structural inequalities that differently

position Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), including HBCUs, within the academic marketplace. This limitation necessitates theoretical expansion, particularly when the goal is to analyze institutions that were founded in direct resistance to racial exclusion and continue to operate within racialized political economies.

Racial Capitalism

Racial Capitalism, first conceptualized by Cedric Robinson (1983), posits that capitalism has never existed as a race-neutral system; rather, racial hierarchies are fundamental to its development and operation. Unlike traditional Marxist critiques of capitalism, which focus primarily on class struggle, racial capitalism emphasizes how racial differentiation has historically been used to extract labor, accumulate wealth, and justify economic exploitation. Robinson (1983) argues that racialized economic structures did not emerge as secondary effects of capitalism but were inherent to its very formation, shaping global systems of production, wealth distribution, and social stratification.

Originally developed as a framework to analyze the intersections of race and political economy, racial capitalism has since been applied across various disciplines, including law (Leong, 2012; Woods, 2017), sociology (Laster Pirtle, 2020), history (Jenkins & LeRoy, 2021), and education (Gerrard, Sriprakash & Rudolph, 2021). Within higher education literature on organizational behavior, racial capitalism has been used to analyze how policies and funding structures disproportionately disadvantage Black institutions, reinforce racialized labor segmentation within the professoriate, and commodify diversity initiatives without addressing structural inequalities (Ferguson, 2012; Stein, 2016). Scholars have also explored how historically marginalized institutions are systematically underfunded despite their critical role in

expanding access to education for racialized populations (Patton, 2016). This research underscores how racialized economic logics shape institutional survival, positioning some universities as beneficiaries of state and corporate investment while leaving others to struggle within financial uncertainty.

Despite its strengths in highlighting how race and capitalism are deeply intertwined, racial capitalism presents certain limitations when applied to institutional analysis in higher education. The framework tends to operate at a macro level, focusing on broad systemic critiques rather than the specific mechanisms through which institutions themselves navigate and negotiate market pressures. Additionally, while racial capitalism provides a powerful critique of how racial exploitation is embedded within economic systems, it does not inherently offer a structured model for analyzing organizational decision-making. This gap necessitates theoretical integration, particularly when examining how HBCUs—which exist at the nexus of racialized economic marginalization and higher education's market-driven imperatives—exercise agency within these constraints.

Racial Academic Capitalism

While academic capitalism and racial capitalism each offer critical insights into how higher education institutions are shaped by market pressures and racialized economic structures, neither framework alone is sufficient to fully account for the unique positioning of HBCUs within the broader academic economy. Academic capitalism theorizes the neoliberal turn in higher education—emphasizing how institutions adopt market logics, pursue external revenue, and restructure academic priorities to remain competitive (Slaughter & Rhoades). However, it remains largely race-neutral, often overlooking how these processes disproportionately affect

racially marginalized institutions. Conversely, racial capitalism centers race as fundamental to the development of capitalism itself (Robinson, 1983), offering a powerful critique of how racial hierarchies are embedded in the political economy of U.S. institutions. Yet it does not offer a structured model for analyzing higher education institutions' behaviors, choices, and adaptations in a policy-driven context.

This study introduces Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC) as a synthesized framework that brings these theories into direct conversations. RAC is used to examine how HBCUs operate within a racialized and market-driven academic ecosystem, where institutional priorities are shaped not only by neoliberal demands—such as entrepreneurialism, research productivity, and labor market alignment—but also by historical and ongoing racialized funding disparities, systemic policy constraints, and exclusionary prestige economies. Within this framework, HBCUs are not framed as passive recipients of racial and economic oppression, but rather as strategic actors making constrained choices to uphold their missions while navigating hostile policy terrain.

RAC foregrounds institutional agency and complexity. It helps explain how HBCUs selectively adopt, adapt, or resist dominant logics—such as STEM prioritization or R1 classification aspirations—based on a spectrum of values and constraints. This spectrum avoids binary thinking about institutional alignment, allowing for a more textured analysis of both adaptation and resistance. To further examine this negotiation, RAC incorporates two analytical tools: servingness and mission drift.

Servingness, adapted from research on Hispanic-Serving Institutions (Garcia, 2020), is used to assess the extent to which HBCUs sustain culturally responsive, justice-oriented, and community-serving practices within market-facing systems. It allows this study to trace how

liberatory intent is retained—even partially—amid pressures to conform. Mission drift, meanwhile, captures how institutional priorities may shift in response to performance-based funding, research classification goals, and competitive labor-market incentives, sometimes at odds with original educational or community-serving missions.

Racial Academic Capitalism serves as the central theoretical framework guiding this study. It shapes the overall design, coding structure, and interpretation of institutional behavior. Servingness and mission drift function as secondary but necessary analytical lenses, helping to examine how institutions balance community commitment and equity-centered narratives within the context of market-driven accountability structures.

Servingness

Servingness is a multidimensional concept that captures how institutions move beyond compositional diversity to actively support and empower racially minoritized students through organizational culture, structural practices, and intentional engagement (Garcia, 2020; Garcia et al., 2019). Originating from scholarship onHispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), the concept critiques the federal designation process that relies on enrollment thresholds without requiring institutions to demonstrate culturally affirming or equity-oriented practices. As Garcia et al. (2019) argue, servingness is not a binary condition but a spectrum, reflecting varied levels of institutional commitment to equity, student success, and justice.

Garcia's Multidimensional Conceptual Framework for Understanding Servingness includes four domains: outcomes, experiences, structures, and external influences. Indicators of serving include both academic outcomes (e.g., graduation, transfer, GPA) and non-academic outcomes (e.g., racial identity development, critical consciousness, civic engagement); student

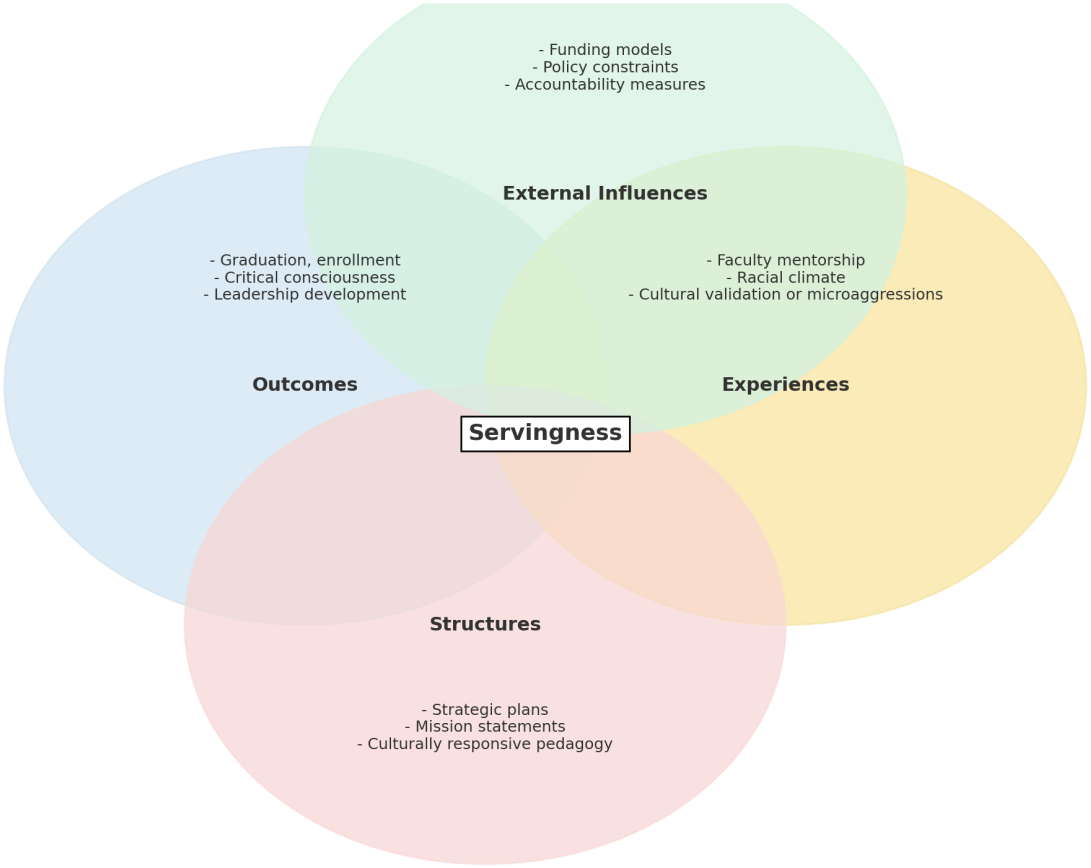
experiences shaped by faculty interaction, campus climate, and cultural validation; and institutional structures like mission statements, curriculum design, and pedagogy. External factors such as state policy and federal funding logics frame what institutions are structurally rewarded for prioritizing (Garcia, 2018).

This dissertation repositions servingness for use in the HBCU context—not simply as a theoretical borrowing, but as a critical re-framing. Unlike many HSIs, HBCUs were founded with explicit racial justice missions. They have historically used curriculum not only to uplift students but also to resist systematic and discriminatory exclusion from professional, research, and graduate-level fields. For HBCUs, access to STEM or other high-prestige disciplines may *enhance* servingness—especially when those fields were previously weaponized to exclude Black scholars from economic mobility or civic leadership. This contrasts with literature on HSIs, where a move toward research-intensive status is often framed as antithetical to servingness (DeTurk & Briscoe, 2020). In the HBCU context, research expansion can *align* with servingness when it addresses systemic access gaps.

As shown in Figure 2.1, servingness for HBCUs can be mapped across a spectrum of institutional behavior—ranging from culturally affirming, community-rooted programming to compliance-driven market alignment. This framework is particularly useful in analyzing how HBCUs respond to the intersecting pressures of Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC). An institution may demonstrate high levels of servingness by expanding access to high-wage STEM graduate programs *while also* sustaining identity-affirming campus experiences and faculty mentoring. Alternatively, servingness may decline when institutional rhetoric emphasizes diversity but resource allocations favor prestige metrics, performance funding, or labor-market alignment at the expense of student support and critical pedagogy.

Figure 2.1

Dimensions of Servingness (Adapted from Garcia et al., 2019)



This study uses servingness as an analytical tool to assess how HBCUs navigate graduate program expansion in both STEM and non-STEM fields. Rather than framing growth in market-valued disciplines as inherently oppositional to racial equity, this approach evaluates whether—and how—such growth is accompanied by commitments to culturally responsive structures, identity-affirming experiences, and long-term community-serving goals.

Mission Drift

Mission drift refers to the gradual shift of an institution away from its original goals in response to external pressures such as funding incentives, policy mandates, or competitive market forces (Taylor & Cantwell, 2019; Jaquette, 2013). While some degree of institutional evolution is expected– and even necessary– mission drift becomes particularly consequential when it undermines foundational commitments. For HBCUs, whose missions are rooted in racial uplift, social justice, and educational access, these shifts carry both practical and symbolic weight.

The concept of mission drift originated in nonprofit and public sector research to describe how organizations adjust their priorities to secure external resources, often at the expense of their original public service missions (Jones, 2007). In higher education, mission drift has been linked to behaviors such as rebranding for prestige, shifting from teaching to research-intensive models, and privileging enrollment growth or STEM expansion over liberal arts and community-based goals (Pusser, 2006; Jaquette, 2013). These changes reflect broader neoliberal trends, where institutional success is increasingly defined by quantifiable outcomes, research funding, and workforce alignment.

Rather than treating mission drift as an isolated phenomenon, this dissertation embeds it within the broader framework of RAC. As state and federal funding mechanisms increasingly prioritize economic returns over democratic outcomes, HBCUs face growing pressure to realign their academic offerings–particularly at the graduate level. In many cases, this has resulted in the expansion of STEM and professional programs at the expense of social sciences, humanities, and education–fields traditionally central to Black intellectual life and community-based leadership.

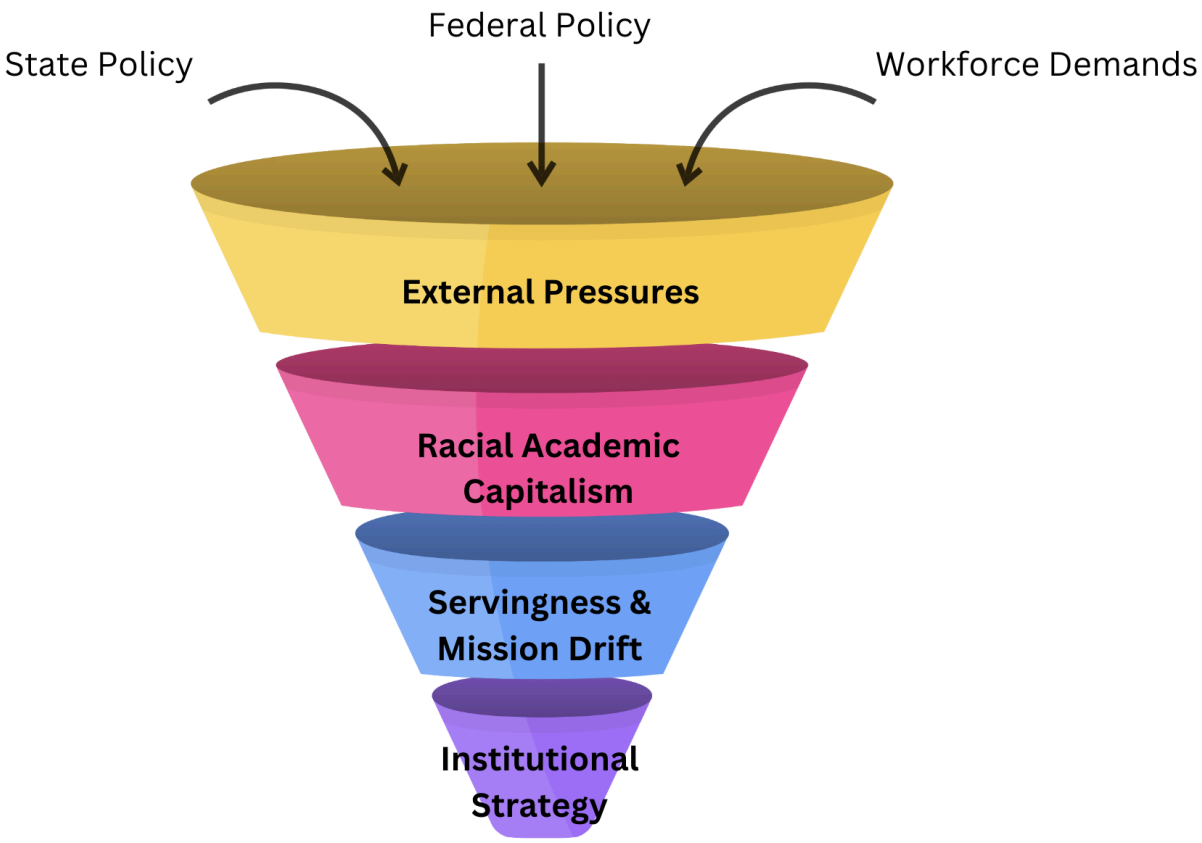
Yet, not all programmatic shifts constitute mission drift. Some may reflect strategic adaptation–an intentional recalibration that preserves core values even amid structural constraints.

This dissertation uses mission drift as an analytical tool to trace how HBCU strategic priorities evolve in response to external pressures. By analyzing institutional strategic plans and graduate program developments, this study identifies patterns in how HBCUs balance resource constraints, performance incentives, and their historical missions. Situating these shifts within RAC highlights the structural forces that drive realignment, while also recognizing institutional agency and adaptation.

Situating mission drift within this framework allows for a more nuanced analysis of institutional identity, purpose, and adaptation. Rather than treating mission drift as a binary condition, this study evaluates where institutions fall on a spectrum of transformation—from deliberate mission expansion to inadvertent mission erosion. This approach highlights the complexities of institutional survival, resource competition, and legacy preservation in a system that often rewards market responsiveness over racial justice and liberatory aims.

Figure 2.2

Theoretical Framework Mapping[5]



Together, these frameworks offer a layered lens for interpreting how HBCUs both respond to and reshape the pressures imposed by racialized market logics in higher education. By employing Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC) as the overarching framework, this dissertation situates HBCUs within the broader racialized academic economy, where institutions must continuously navigate external pressures tied to funding, prestige, and workforce alignment. The incorporation of servingness and mission drift as analytical tools provides a structured means of

[5] This theoretical framework adapts a funnel structure inspired by Salazar (2019) to illustrate the flow of external pressures through Racial Academic Capitalism, analyzed via servingness and mission drift.

evaluating how HBCUs negotiate systemic constraints, articulate institutional priorities, and balance liberatory commitments with economic imperatives. Rather than framing mission drift as inevitable or servingness as static, this framework offers a more nuanced account of how institutions adapt, resist, and strategically reposition themselves. This approach not only informs the analysis of institutional strategic plans but also supports the logic of case selection detailed in Chapter 3 (Methodology). By mapping institutions along a Servingness vs. Market-Driven Incentives spectrum, this study captures the diverse ways HBCUs engage with racialized academic capitalism—highlighting patterns of agency, constraint, and transformation across varied state policy contexts.

> In a capitalist society, EQUITY is not the goal—it contradicts capitalism's very purpose. Capitalism thrives on competition, hierarchy, and the accumulation of wealth by a specific group who control resources (and the use of certain words). True EQUITY, which seeks to redistribute opportunities and address SYSTEMIC DISPARITIES, challenges this structure by ADVOCATING for a more level playing field. (Brown-Grier, 2025, para.3)

Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC) serves as the central theoretical framework guiding the content analysis of institutional documents. Mission drift and servingness operate as complementary analytical lenses that inform the development, application, and interpretation of codes. Language around academic priorities—particularly references to STEM, non-STEM, and interdisciplinary programs—is not treated as neutral. Rather, it is evaluated through the lens of how institutions navigate racialized market pressures.

Codes are designed to capture both explicit (e.g., "economic development," "industry-aligned," "research competitiveness") and implicit discursive signals(e.g., aspirational

framing of innovation or progress) that suggest market alignment. In contrast, language that foregrounds social justice, community uplift, cultural affirmation, or identity-conscious pedagogy—especially in non-STEM contexts—is coded as indicative of servingness. RAC provides the structural backdrop for understanding these pressures, while servingness and mission drift help identify how institutional language reflects either resistance to or alignment with prevailing logics.

Interdisciplinary programs are a particularly nuanced site of analysis. They are not assumed to represent balance or neutrality. Instead, their coding depends on discursive framing—that is, how institutional rhetoric constructs value and positions programs in relation to either market responsiveness or liberatory aims. Drawing on Howarth (2024), discursive framing is understood as the use of language to shape perceptions of reality, define legitimacy, and set institutional priorities. Even language framed as "innovative", "excellence," or "efficient" may obscure how racialized and economic logics drive academic restructuring.

When interdisciplinary efforts position liberal arts or social justice content as secondary to technical training—such as leadership skills for engineering fields or communication training for data science—they are coded as extensions of racialized market logic and potential indicators of mission drift. Conversely, when programs embed STEM content within frameworks of environmental justice, Black public health, or digital humanities, they are interpreted as efforts to sustain servingness amid constrained conditions..

This theoretical approach ensures that the coding process moves beyond a binary of STEM versus non-STEM, instead tracing how institutional narratives and strategic decisions reflect deeper tensions between survival, adaptation, and resistance. Chapter 3 details the methodological design, including case selection, data sources, and coding strategy, that

operationalizes these frameworks in the analysis of HBCU strategic plans and graduate education priorities.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The primary objective of this dissertation study was to examine how Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) navigated the tension between upholding their liberatory missions and responding to market-driven imperatives. Specifically, this study explored how HBCU strategic plans negotiated market incentives and institutional resistance in prioritizing STEM and non-STEM graduate programs. Recognizing that HBCUs are not monolithic institutions, this study accounted for the varying degrees of external influence they experienced within their respective states and communities. While previous research has addressed broad systemic shifts, it has not fully explored the institutional differences among HBCUs—particularly those often overlooked in mainstream discourse.

This study employed a multiple case study design, utilizing public and archival documents to identify contextual themes. The analysis was structured through the servingness continuum–a framework that captures the spectrum of institutional priorities ranging from community-serving commitments to market-driven shifts. This chapter outlines the methodology used to explore how public HBCUs negotiated external policy pressures while advancing their institutional missions. It begins by presenting the study's research questions and case study design, followed by an overview of the multiple case study approach and rationale for institutional selection. Next, it contextualizes the research within a twenty-year policy landscape that has shaped higher education priorities, particularly in Florida, North Carolina, and Texas. The chapter then details the hybrid coding and content analysis approach used to examine institutional documents, and concludes with discussions of validity, ethical considerations, and researcher positionality.

Research Questions

This study examined how HBCUs structured their strategic initiatives and graduate programs in response to both institutional commitments and external demands. Given the unique role of HBCUs in fostering social mobility, equity, and community engagement, this research explored how institutional strategies evolved under external constraints. Specifically, this study addressed the following questions:

1. To what extent are STEM and non-STEM values, missions, and metrics described at the graduate level within strategic plans for HBCUs?
2. How do HBCU strategic initiatives address the balance between STEM and non-STEM graduate education in alignment with their broader mission and foundational values?
3. What tensions, if any, exist between the values placed on STEM and non-STEM education within the context of HBCU strategic plans and their institutional mission?

The methodological approach aligned with these research questions by analyzing institutional documents to identify how HBCUs framed STEM and non-STEM priorities in their strategic initiatives. Through a multiple case study design, this study captured variations across institutions and explored patterns in institutional decision-making. These questions guided the research process and helped illuminate how HBCUs navigated structural constraints while maintaining commitments to educational access, social justice, and workforce demands. The analysis drew on strategic plans, mission statements, and archival records to examine institutional priorities over time.

Research Design

This study employed a multiple case study design to investigate how selected public HBCUs structured their strategic initiatives while balancing liberatory commitments and market-driven pressures through graduate education. Case study methodology is particularly well-suited for research that seeks to understand institutional behavior within its real-world context, especially when those contexts involve overlapping influences from state governance, federal mandates, and performance-based funding models (Yin, 2018). Given the systemic forces shaping institutional priorities—ranging from federal and state policies to workforce development trends—this research examined how HBCUs actively negotiated these external pressures while maintaining mission-driven commitments to equity, access, and community engagement.

A multiple case study approach was appropriate because it enabled comparative and layered analysis across institutions situated in distinct policy environments. As Yin (2018) emphasizes, case studies are ideal when "the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). Within this design, within-case analysis allows for a deep exploration into how each institution responded to its unique conditions, while cross-case analysis facilitated identification of broader patterns, divergences, and institutional positioning. This approach supported the study's aim of surfacing structural variation and institutional nuance—not to generalize across all HBCUs, but to trace how policy logics and equity-driven missions are negotiated differently across contexts. It also aligned with the study's conceptual framing, which drew on Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC), mission drift, and servingness to explore how public HBCUs navigated market-based accountability structures while resisting the erasure of their founding purposes.

This methodological approach was rooted in the belief that institutions are not simply autonomous agents but are situated actors operating within a larger educational ecosystem—one shaped by historical disinvestment, shifting political mandates, and racialized performance expectations. Rather than attributing strategic shifts solely to internal decision-making, the study examined how public HBCUs responded to policy constraints, funding pressures, and evolving definitions of institutional "success." Understanding these dynamics required purposeful sampling—not just to access data, but to capture the complexity and variability of institutional behavior across distinct policy landscapes. Purposeful sampling, therefore, served as both a methodological and conceptual choice: it enabled the selection of "information-rich cases" that offered insight into how institutions contended with structural constraint while navigating their missions (Yin, 2018; Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015; Suri, 2011).

To analyze institutional responses, this study relied on archival and public documents—including strategic plans, mission statements, and funding reports—collected from a strategically selected set of public HBCUs. These sources provided longitudinal insight into how institutions constructed their priorities and responded to shifting mandates. Table 3.1 lists each institutional document included in the analysis, along with source links and page counts. All documents were uploaded and coded in Atlas.ti using the hybrid coding framework outlined in Table 3.3. While specific code frequency counts are not included here, they informed the thematic insights detailed in Chapter 4.

Case Study Rationale and Sampling Approach

This multiple case study followed purposeful sampling techniques used to select "information rich" cases to explore the aforementioned research questions. As Yin (2018) notes, information-rich cases are "chosen strategically to provide a rich understanding of a phenomenon, rather than aiming for any sort of generalization" (p. 52). In doing so, this sampling approach emphasized conceptual depth and contextual variation, enabling the study to probe how public HBCUs negotiated external pressures while advancing their institutional missions. My initial approach to case selection focused specifically on public HBCUs, which ensures access to a wealth of publicly available institutional records—such as strategic plans, mission statements, and archived reports—making it possible to track longitudinal shifts in institutional discourse.

However, access alone does not justify this focus. Public HBCUs operate within state governance frameworks that expose them to intensified performance-based funding metrics, shifting political mandates, and workforce-aligned accountability structures. As Coupet (2017) explains, "public revenue streams for HBCUs often come with strings attached," pushing institutions to adapt in ways that may compromise their original missions (p. 41). Similarly, Boland and Gasman (2014) argue that state policy often imposes "accountability systems that HBCUs are structurally disadvantaged to meet" (p. 10), highlighting the importance of understanding how these institutions respond.

Purposeful sampling is especially useful in such cases, where the goal is to understand variation and complexity. As Palinkas et al. (2015) emphasize, purposeful sampling is suited to "identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest" (p. 534), allowing researchers to build rich,

contextualized findings. By focusing on public HBCUs, this study examined how institutions balanced liberatory educational goals with demands for efficiency, workforce relevance, and compliance.

Case selection was guided by five interrelated considerations, each aligned with the study's conceptual frameworks and research questions. First, all selected institutions are public HBCUs, which face distinct pressures as they operate within state accountability systems that prioritize workforce alignment and STEM outcomes. These imperatives often conflict with HBCUs' historic missions of access, equity, and cultural responsiveness. Public HBCUs are particularly relevant to this study because they sit at the intersection of market responsiveness and equity-serving expectations, shaped by state performance funding and policy mandates (Boland & Gasman, 2014; Coupet, 2017; Minor, 2008). Their participation in state funding systems—often with "strings attached" (Coupet, 2017)—makes them uniquely suited for exploring institutional navigation of racialized policy constraints.

Second, the cases were selected from three different state policy environments—Florida, North Carolina, and Texas—that each implemented distinct higher education governance models. This cross-state variation offered comparative insight into how state structures shape institutional behavior, allowing the study to observe how similar institutions may respond differently depending on policy context. Such comparison was essential to understanding how broader systems influenced institutional decision-making and mission alignment.

Third, the selected institutions reflected variation in the intensity and type of external influence. For example, North Carolina's centralized governance model presented a different set of constraints than Florida's performance-based funding system or Texas's workforce

credentialing mandates. This variation enabled analysis of how specific policy logics—centralization, performance metrics, or labor market alignment—interacted with institutional identity and strategic planning. By examining these differences, the study explored how mission drift and servingness were shaped not only by institutional goals but also by the type and degree of policy pressure imposed.

Fourth, each institution maintained graduate-level programs across both STEM and non-STEM disciplines, which was critical to answering the study's research questions. Because the inquiry centered on how institutions balanced and framed graduate education priorities across disciplinary lines, the presence of both STEM and non-STEM offerings allowed for comparative analysis of how programs were described, prioritized, or positioned over time. This disciplinary spread ensured that the analysis was grounded in institutional strategy, not simply structural capacity.

Finally, each case provided access to a substantial range of strategic planning and institutional documents, including archived materials from at least the mid-2000s onward. While not all institutions offered complete records for every year, each offered enough longitudinal documentation to trace discursive and strategic shifts across major policy eras—such as the implementation of performance-based funding, national STEM expansions, and recent shifts in diversity policy. This was necessary for observing how institutional language and priorities evolved in response to shifting external mandates, internal leadership, and systemic pressures over time.

Together, these five considerations ensured that the selected cases reflected the structural tensions, disciplinary complexity, and historical span necessary to examine how public HBCUs

positioned themselves within a changing higher education ecosystem. The multistage, purposeful approach used here was not only methodologically appropriate but conceptually necessary to analyze the interplay between mission, market pressure, and institutional response (Palinkas et al., 2015; Suri, 2011; Yin, 2018). The findings contribute to a broader understanding of how HBCUs have navigated policy constraints, economic imperatives, and community-serving commitments amid shifting higher education priorities.

Policy Context and External Influences: Federal and State Drivers of Institutional Strategy (2004-2024)

Federal policies set broad agendas for higher education, shaping funding structures, academic focus areas, and institutional accountability measures. However, state governments interpret and implement these initiatives in ways that reflect regional economic, political, and educational priorities. This push-and-pull between federal oversight and state autonomy creates both opportunities and constraints for institutions—particularly HBCUs, which must navigate shifting funding models, evolving compliance requirements, and longstanding mission-driven commitments.

Federal Policy Initiatives: National Priorities and Structural Shifts

Over the past two decades, federal policies have reshaped higher education by influencing funding priorities, institutional strategies, and access for underrepresented students. These initiatives reflect shifting national agendas—ranging from STEM expansion and workforce development to increasing diversity, equity, and access in education. Below is a chronological overview of key federal policies (2004–2024) that have shaped both HBCUs and the broader higher education landscape.

STEM Funding Mandates

Federal policy over the past two decades has consistently prioritized investment in STEM education and research, reshaping funding priorities for higher education institutions. The *America COMPETES Act* (2007) served as a foundational policy aiming to bolster U.S. global competitiveness by increasing federal support for STEM education and research. Building on this momentum, the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (2009) directed significant funding to agencies such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Department of Energy to expand STEM research and workforce development initiatives within higher education. More recently, the *STEM Education Act* (2015) broadened the formal definition of STEM to include computer science and introduced targeted grant funding to support both K-12 and postsecondarySTEM initiatives.

Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives

Several policies and legal rulings have addressed systemic inequities in higher education, promoting equitable opportunities and representation for historically underrepresented groups. In *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), the Supreme Court affirmed that race-conscious admissions policies could be used to foster diversity in higher education. The *HBCUs PARTNERS Act* (2020) further supported diversity by strengthening federal agency partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), expanding funding and research opportunities. However, in a significant reversal, the *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard & UNC* (2023) decision overturned affirmative action policies, fundamentally altering how institutions approach diversity strategies.

Broad Educational Access Policies

A number of federal efforts have sought to enhance accessibility and affordability in higher education, particularly for marginalized communities. The *Education Sciences Reform Act* (2002) established evidence-based research frameworks to inform education policy and guide equitable funding models. Again, the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (2009) played a key role by expanding Pell Grant funding and creating the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) to prevent budget cuts in higher education. More recently, the *COVID Relief Act* (2020) provided emergency financial aid to colleges and universities, supporting students facing economic hardship during the pandemic.

External Pressures on HBCUs

While these federal policies are not the primary focus of this study, they provide essential context for the external pressures that have shaped HBCU strategic planning. Federal STEM mandates incentivized institutions to prioritize STEM fields, often marginalizing non-STEM disciplines such as the humanities, social sciences, and cultural studies– areas central to HBCUs' historical missions. Although diversity and inclusion policies align with HBCUs' longstanding commitment to racial equity, they also introduced new compliance benchmarks and reporting requirements that strained institutional resources.

These federal priorities set the stage for how state governments structure their own strategic plans. As federal funding and judicial rulings shape national priorities—particularly in STEM investment, diversity, and access—state-level governance determines how such initiatives are implemented across public institutions.

In Florida and North Carolina, the interplay between federal priorities and state governance materializes through Performance-Based Funding (PBF) models that tie state

funding to institutional outcomes. While intended to promote accountability and efficiency, these models carry different implications for HBCUs–shaping how they allocate resources, prioritize academic disciplines, and navigate their historical missions.

State-Level Context: How Governance and Policy Shape Institutional Strategy

To accurately understand how HBCUs are positioned, it's important to examine how state infrastructure influences institutional decision making. Across U.S. higher education, performance funding models and accountability initiatives have laid the groundwork for state-level policymaking that aligns with federal priorities. This study focuses on Florida, North Carolina, and Texas–states selected for their strong influence over public higher education systems and their relatively high concentrations of HBCUs. These cases reflect the tensions surrounding how STEM and non-STEM graduate programs are prioritized and framed.

The geographic clustering of HBCUs in states like Florida, North Carolina, and Texas makes these regions particularly salient for examining how political dynamics shape higher education policies—and how those policies, in turn, affect HBCU strategy. While each state includes both public and private HBCUs, this study centers exclusively on public institutions due to their alignment with state mandates and the availability of strategic planning and archival documents (see Appendix A for a full list of HBCUs by state). Although higher education is often framed as a business model—with students positioned as units of economic output—state influence has both enabled and disrupted educational ecosystems (Sav, 2016; John & Parsons, 2005; Laderman, Cummings, Lee, Tandberg, & Weeden, 2023). State policies play a critical role in shaping the priorities and strategic direction of HBCUs, especially in states with large Black populations and long-standing histories of racial inequity in education. Each of the three states

examined here has implemented distinct policies that reinforce market-driven logics while shaping institutional responses in different ways.

In Florida, the shift to performance-based funding (PBF) significantly reshaped higher education by tying state appropriations to specific performance metrics such as graduation rates, job placement, and degree completions in high-demand fields like STEM (Mitchell, Leachman, & Saenz, 2019). While this model aims to incentivize efficiency and workforce readiness, it often places HBCUs at a disadvantage. These institutions disproportionately serve first-generation and economically disadvantaged students who face systemic barriers that may affect their academic outcomes. As a result, HBCUs may experience reduced funding, pressuring them to prioritize market-aligned programs—particularly in STEM—at the expense of broader commitments to social justice, community engagement, and holistic education.

In North Carolina, PBF is embedded within the centralized governance of the University of North Carolina (UNC) System. Like Florida's, the model emphasizes degree completions, workforce alignment, and graduation rates, reflecting national trends in higher education finance (Lee & Keys, 2013). However, the centralized structure of the UNC System creates additional constraints for HBCUs. While resource allocation may be more streamlined, institutional autonomy is also reduced—limiting the ability of HBCUs to invest in non-STEM disciplines that are vital to their missions. This centralized approach places HBCUs in a constrained position: they must align with systemwide goals while also preserving their historical commitments to educating underrepresented and marginalized populations.

In Texas, higher education policy centers on workforce development and economic growth. The state's formula funding model allocates resources based on enrollment and credit

hour production, incentivizing institutions to grow programs in high-demand fields such as STEM and business. While this model aligns with state economic objectives, it tends to marginalize disciplines that do not offer immediate workforce returns. HBCUs in Texas must navigate these funding formulas while continuing to advocate for the value of a comprehensive education that includes the humanities, arts, and social sciences (Andrews et al., 2016).

Collectively, these state policies reveal the broader structural pressures shaping HBCUs' strategic decisions. The emphasis on market-driven outcomes and performance metrics reflects a broader shift in public higher education—one that often runs counter to the community-serving and justice-oriented missions that define HBCUs. By examining how HBCUs in Florida, North Carolina, and Texas respond to these state-level dynamics, this study offers insight into the evolving landscape of graduate education at HBCUs and the broader policy environment shaping the future of Black higher education.

Strategic Planning as Policy Translation: Florida, North Carolina, and Texas

While state policy sets broad directives, strategic planning documents offer a window into how public universities translate those directives into institutional priorities. For HBCUs in particular, strategic plans are not neutral tools—they are sites where institutions must reconcile external accountability metrics with internal commitments to access, equity, and cultural relevance. In this study, strategic plans function as *policy translation artifacts*, revealing how institutions internalize, resist, or selectively adopt the logics embedded in performance-based funding, workforce development mandates, and equity rhetoric. By examining strategic planning at the state level, this section traces how governance structures and accountability regimes shape

the discursive framing of graduate education priorities across three distinct contexts: Florida, North Carolina, and Texas.

To visualize how governance structures differ across Florida, North Carolina, and Texas, Figure 3.1 provides a timeline of significant federal and state policies.

Florida: Performance-Based Funding and Strategic Alignment

The State University System (SUS) of Florida has undergone significant strategic shifts over the past several decades, reflecting national trends in higher education governance and accountability. These changes have aimed to enhance student success, increase institutional efficiency, and align university outcomes with state workforce needs. A key turning point was the adoption of a Performance-Based Funding (PBF) model in 2014, which ties institutional funding to metrics such as graduation rates, retention, and post-graduation employment (Florida Board of Governors, 2024).

Early Strategic Planning (1998-2003). The SUS 1998–2003 strategic plan established foundational system-wide priorities, including expanding undergraduate access, advancing research and graduate education, and fostering public-private partnerships (Florida Board of Governors, 1998). It also introduced cost-saving strategies such as distance learning and performance-based budgeting. While these efforts stopped short of formal PBF implementation, they laid the groundwork for Florida's eventual shift toward accountability-based funding.

Refinement of Institutional Goals (2005). By 2005, SUS strategic planning introduced more structured accountability measures (Florida Board of Governors, 2005). This version emphasized mission differentiation, recognizing that institutions had distinct roles within the system. It also reinforced data-driven performance tracking, further aligning institutional funding

with measurable progress toward state-defined goals. These refinements directly preceded the launch of the PBF model.

The 2025 Strategic Plan and Performance-Based Funding. The most recent strategic plan—initially framed as the SUS 2025 Plan and amended in 2022—integrates PBF principles as a central mechanism for institutional accountability (Florida Board of Governors, 2022). The plan focuses on three key pillars: (1) Teaching and Learning, which promotes degree completion and workforce alignment; (2) Scholarship, Research, and Innovation, which prioritizes research output and economic development; and (3) Community and Business Engagement, which expands university partnerships with employers and public agencies.

Under the current PBF model, institutions are funded based on performance metrics such as graduation rates, retention, post-graduation earnings, and degree production in high-need fields (Florida Board of Governors, 2024). Institutions failing to meet these metrics risk reduced funding, while high-performing institutions receive additional allocations. As a result, the model incentivizes a system-wide emphasis on efficiency, employability, and responsiveness to labor market trends.

North Carolina: Centralized Governance and Student Success Metrics

The University of North Carolina (UNC) System has historically operated under a centralized governance model, with state appropriations primarily based on enrollment figures. However, in April 2022, the UNC Board of Governors approved a new funding structure incorporating Performance-Based Funding (PBF). Fully implemented in the 2023–2024 fiscal year, the model links a portion of institutional funding to student success and other state-defined strategic outcomes (University of North Carolina System, 2022).

Strategic Planning and Institutional Goals (2017-2022). The 2017–2022 strategic plan, *Higher Expectations*, established system-wide goals centered on student access, affordability, institutional efficiency, economic impact, and community engagement (University of North Carolina System, 2016). It also emphasized increasing STEM graduates and expanding research capacity—particularly in high-demand fields. Community impact was positioned as a core priority, with a focus on university partnerships, local outreach programs, and regional economic development. The plan introduced measurable targets for graduation rates, cost-effectiveness, and workforce alignment—laying the foundation for the subsequent shift to performance-based funding.

The 2022-2027 Strategic Plan and Performance-Based Funding. Building on the *Higher Expectations* framework, the 2022–2027 strategic plan continues to center student success but broadens its scope. New priorities include support for adult learners and military-affiliated students, expansion of online learning, and financial aid reform (University of North Carolina System, 2022). The plan also explicitly targets graduate education, calling for increases in graduate degree completions and improved retention at the post-baccalaureate level. These priorities are closely aligned with the implementation of the PBF model, which incentivizes institutions to demonstrate progress on metrics such as degree completion, affordability, and post-graduation outcomes.

Implementation of Performance-Based Funding. Under the current model, state funding allocations now reflect changes in performance-weighted, resident student credit hours—rewarding institutions that show gains in targeted outcomes (University of North Carolina System, 2022). The integration of PBF represents a policy translation in which student success becomes both a discursive and financial imperative. Institutions are expected to align

their internal planning with externally imposed benchmarks, reinforcing broader national trends in higher education that prioritize efficiency, completion, and workforce readiness.

Texas: Workforce Development, Equity, and Credentialing Initiatives

In Texas, higher education strategy has been guided by a series of statewide plans aimed at expanding educational attainment, advancing workforce development, and promoting healthcare equity. These initiatives—implemented through a formula funding model—reflect the state's emphasis on economic growth, credentialing, and population-level outcomes. Over time, Texas has revised its strategic goals in response to shifting demographic trends and labor market demands, positioning higher education as a driver of state competitiveness.

Closing the Gaps by 2015: Expanding Access and Excellence. Launched in 2000, *Closing the Gaps by 2015* marked a statewide effort to elevate Texas higher education by increasing access and improving outcomes (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board [THECB], 2000). Its objectives included enrolling 500,000 additional students, increasing degrees and certificates awarded by 50%, and enhancing academic quality and research output—especially in science and engineering. Framed as both an equity and economic imperative, the plan aimed to close racial and socioeconomic gaps in educational participation while strengthening Texas's reputation as a knowledge-based economy.

60x30TX: Aligning Higher Education with Workforce Needs. Introduced in 2015, the *60x30TX* plan built upon its predecessor with a sharper focus on workforce alignment (THECB, 2015). Its signature goal was to ensure that by 2030, at least 60% of Texans aged 25 to 34 would hold a postsecondary credential. The plan emphasized four strategic priorities: increasing completion rates, embedding marketable skills into curricula, aligning programs with labor

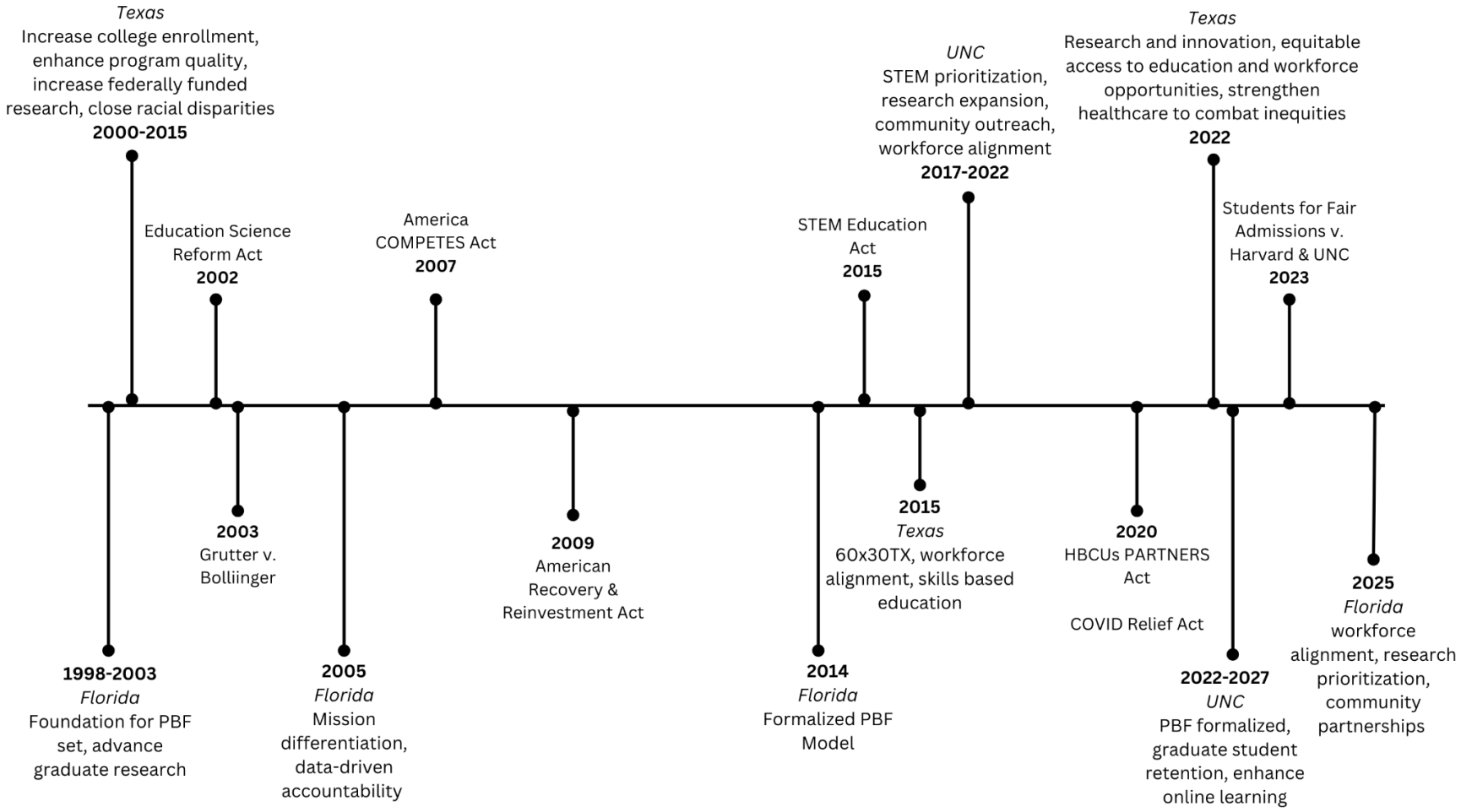
market needs, and managing student debt relative to post-graduation salaries. Through this lens, economic mobility and degree utility became dominant metrics of institutional success.

Building a Talent Strong Texas: Expanding Credential Attainment and Equity. In 2022, the *Building a Talent Strong Texas* initiative expanded upon the 60x30TX framework by broadening its focus to Texans aged 25 to 64 and embedding equity as a central principle (THECB, 2022). This plan foregrounds the idea of "credentials of value"—emphasizing that higher education should lead directly to meaningful employment. It also highlights the role of research and innovation in driving economic growth, further reinforcing higher education's utility-based framing. While the plan references equity in access and outcomes, it does so through the language of workforce competitiveness, illustrating how racial and economic justice goals are increasingly filtered through performance and credentialing logics.

Healthcare Workforce Development: Addressing Workforce Shortages. In parallel with statewide initiatives, the University of Texas System developed a Population Health Strategic Plan that prioritizes health equity and healthcare workforce expansion—particularly in underserved areas (University of Texas System, 2022). These efforts aim to strengthen healthcare training programs, enhance access in rural regions, and address disparities in provider distribution. Together, they demonstrate how institutional strategy in Texas increasingly aligns with state labor priorities—particularly in STEM, business, and health professions—potentially marginalizing disciplines that fall outside these defined priorities.

Figure 3.1

Federal Initiatives and Strategic Plan Timeline



Case Selection

This study examined public HBCUs in Florida, North Carolina, and Texas–-states that were strategically selected for their distinct higher education governance structures, funding models, and policy frameworks. These environments shaped how public navigated external pressures while upholding their institutional missions.

The selection of public HBCUs aligned with the study's focus on analyzing publicly available documents, including strategic plans, mission statements, and funding reports. Public institutions, governed by state-level higher education mandates, were especially relevant for investigating how policy environments influenced institutional priorities and planning.

Institutions were included based on three core criteria: (1) they were publicly funded HBCUs with accessible archival and strategic documentation spanning at least 20 years; (2) they operated in states with distinct higher education policies that impacted institutional decision-making; and (3) they offered graduate programs across multiple disciplines, enabling comparative analysis of STEM and non-STEM priorities.

The 20-year timeframe (2004–2024) was chosen to capture two decades of significant shifts in higher education policy, including the rise of performance-based funding models, evolving federal priorities, and intensified diversity and accountability initiatives. These shifts directly shaped institutional decision-making, making this period essential for tracing longitudinal trends.

The selected institutions reflected a range of institutional types, system affiliations, and policy contexts, allowing for meaningful comparison across cases. Selection was also informed

by the availability of public records, ensuring a robust and document-rich analysis of institutional strategy over time.

University Cases

The following institutional profiles contextualized each case included in this study based on the criteria outlined in the purposeful sampling strategy. These brief overviews highlighted each university's classification, graduate program offerings, policy environment, and financial and enrollment characteristics relevant to the study's conceptual focus. Table 3.1 provides a comparative overview of these institutional cases, including system affiliation, Carnegie classification, endowment size, and graduate enrollment data.

Endowment figures were current as of 2024, with the exception of Fayetteville State University (2020) and Elizabeth City State University, for which no publicly available data were located. Graduate enrollment data reflected Fall 2024 reporting, with the exception of Fayetteville State University, for which no graduate enrollment figures were publicly available. These contextual variations were noted to ensure transparency while maintaining focus on the broader patterns of institutional positioning, policy alignment, and mission framing under state-influenced constraints.

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

Florida A&M University (FAMU) served as a critical case for examining how public HBCUs responded to the pressures of performance-based funding (PBF) in Florida—one of the earliest and most aggressive adopters of this model. As the state's only public HBCU, FAMU

operated within a competitive performance matrix that tied institutional funding to state-defined metrics such as graduation rates, post-graduation employment, and STEM degree productivity.

Its classification as an R2: Doctoral University with High Research Activity, along with its broad range of graduate offerings across both STEM and non-STEM disciplines—including pharmacy, engineering, education, the humanities, and business—positioned it to reflect how institutional strategy was shaped under PBF regimes. While FAMU's relatively high endowment ($124M) and graduate enrollment (1,469) suggested a degree of institutional capacity, these resources did not exempt it from the structural constraints imposed by Florida's market-oriented accountability framework.

FAMU's inclusion in this study provided insight into how an institution with deep community-serving roots navigated, and at times reframed, its mission in response to sustained performance pressures.

Fayetteville State University

Fayetteville State University (FSU) represented a smaller-scale public HBCU within the centralized University of North Carolina (UNC) System, offering a critical contrast to institutions governed under more autonomous performance-based models. With its graduate programming concentrated primarily in the College of Business and Economics, FSU illustrated how institutions with more limited offerings responded to centralized oversight and systemwide strategic alignment mandates.

Although FSU held a Research University designation and participated in the UNC System, its $24.8 million endowment (2020) and the absence of publicly reported graduate

enrollment figures indicated resource constraints and data limitations that are also common among smaller public HBCUs. FSU's inclusion in this study supported the focus on institutional variation and made visible how centralized governance structures shaped strategic planning, resource allocation, and academic prioritization—particularly for institutions with narrower graduate program profiles.

Elizabeth City State University

Elizabeth City State University (ECSU), another institution within the UNC System, offered a distinctive case defined by both its small size and administrative structure. ECSU did not operate a formal graduate college; instead, its four master's programs were housed within the Division of Academic Affairs. This model reflected a flexible yet under-resourced approach to graduate education that aligned with broader themes of institutional capacity and policy compliance.

With no publicly reported endowment data and a Fall 2024 graduate enrollment of just 105 students, ECSU embodied many of the material constraints faced by smaller public HBCUs under centralized oversight. Its inclusion in this study was essential for exploring how institutions with limited infrastructure navigated strategic priorities—particularly within a governance system that promoted systemwide alignment but allowed for differentiated levels of institutional scale and specialization.

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

North Carolina A&T State University (NCAT) stood as one of the most prominent and well-resourced public HBCUs in the country, making it a pivotal case within this study. As the

largest HBCU in the U.S. by enrollment and a designated R2: Doctoral University with High Research Activity, NCAT offered comprehensive graduate programs across agriculture, engineering, education, nursing, the sciences, and the humanities.

Situated within a centralized governance system that had recently transitioned toward performance-based funding, NCAT operated at the nexus of institutional autonomy, state accountability, and national recognition. Its $202 million endowment and graduate enrollment of 1,814 reflected both financial capacity and programmatic breadth—positioning it as a high-capacity case for examining how public HBCUs framed their missions while advancing research excellence and workforce alignment.

NCAT's inclusion was especially valuable for tracing strategic positioning at the intersection of Black institutional identity and state-imposed performance expectations.

North Carolina Central University

North Carolina Central University (NCCU) represented another significant case within the UNC System, notable for its diverse graduate offerings across health sciences, law, business, and the humanities. With a graduate enrollment of 1,984 and a $56.9 million endowment, NCCU reflected a mid-range institution in terms of scale and resources.

Its inclusion added nuance to understanding how centralized governance—paired with emerging performance-based funding (PBF) influences—shaped institutional decision-making. NCCU's professional programs, particularly in health and legal fields, positioned it within the broader workforce development goals of the state. At the same time, its enduring liberal arts and social justice orientation underscored its dual mission. As a public HBCU operating within a

maturing policy shift, NCCU helped illuminate how institutions interpreted and implemented state-aligned strategies without fully abandoning identity-centered commitments.

Winston-Salem State University

Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) rounded out the North Carolina cases by offering a mid-sized, health science–oriented institutional profile. Its graduate programs spanned health sciences, business, and education, reflecting alignment with both local workforce needs and systemwide emphasis areas.

With a $51.5 million endowment and a Fall 2024 graduate enrollment of 590, WSSU represented a strategic case for analyzing how public HBCUs structured professional and applied programs within a centralized governance environment that encouraged consistency across institutions while still allowing for some degree of programmatic specialization.

WSSU's strong focus on health sciences also contributed to cross-state comparisons with similarly oriented programs at PVAMU and TSU, providing additional insight into how health-related fields were framed in strategic documents across varying policy environments.

Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical University

Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) served as a critical case for examining how public HBCUs responded to state-level policy logics centered on workforce development and healthcare expansion. As a member of the Texas A&M University System, PVAMU operated within a statewide higher education agenda that emphasized credentialing in applied fields tied to labor market demand—particularly in health, engineering, and technical professions.

PVAMU's classification as an R2: Doctoral University with High Research Activity and its expansive graduate offerings—including programs in engineering, public and allied health, education, juvenile justice, and architecture—reflected alignment with these sectoral priorities. With a Fall 2024 graduate enrollment of 971, PVAMU represented a mid-sized HBCU with broad disciplinary coverage and research capacity.

Its system affiliation introduced structured oversight and coordination while also providing access to resources that supported programmatic expansion. PVAMU's inclusion in this study enabled an exploration of how graduate program development and strategic priorities were articulated within a policy environment focused on workforce alignment, offering comparative value alongside institutions operating under performance-based or centralized governance models.

Texas Southern University

Texas Southern University (TSU) provided an important comparative case within the Texas higher education landscape. Unlike Prairie View A&M, TSU is an independent public HBCU, unaffiliated with either the Texas A&M or University of Texas systems. This distinction allowed for an examination of how institutional independence intersected with the state's broader policy emphasis on workforce readiness and healthcare credentialing.

TSU held an R2: Doctoral University with High Research Activity classification and offered graduate degrees across a wide range of fields, including pharmacy, education, public affairs, science and technology, and the liberal arts. With a Fall 2024 graduate enrollment of 522, TSU reflected a modest graduate population and resource base, yet maintained a diverse disciplinary portfolio aligned with both state workforce sectors and community-serving missions.

Its inclusion in this study provided a unique lens through which to assess how public HBCUs outside of system governance structured their priorities—particularly in relation to healthcare-related fields and applied professional programs. TSU added valuable variation in institutional scale, system affiliation, and mission framing, all within the same state policy environment.

Table 3.1

HBCU Cases

State	Institution	Graduate Colleges	Notable Policy Influence	Classification(s)	Endowment (2024)	Graduate Enrollment (Fall 2024)
Florida						
	Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU)	Agriculture & Food Sciences; Education; Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences; Science and Technology; Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities, Engineering; Allied Health Sciences; Architecture and Engineering Technology; Business & Industry; Nursing; Environment	Performance Based Funding	R2 Doctoral Research University; 3rd HBCU US News (2025); Ranked 81st by US News (2025)	$124M	1,469
North Carolina						

Fayetteville State University (FSU)	College of Business and Economics; College of Education; Health, Science & Technology; Humanities and Social Sciences	Centralized Governance[6]	Research University Designation; 21st HBCU US News (2025)	$24.8M[7]	N/A
Elizabeth City State University (ECSU)	Division of Academic Affairs[8]	Centralized Governance	14th HBCU US News (2025)	N/A	105
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NCAT)	Agriculture and Environmental Sciences; Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Business and Economics; Education; Engineering; Health and Human Sciences; Nursing; Science and Technology	Centralized Governance	R2 Doctoral Research University; 8th HBCU US News (2025); 231st (2025); Largest HBCU in the U.S.	$202M	1,814
North Carolina Central University (NCCU)	Arts, Social Sciences & Humanities; Health and	Centralized Governance	15th HBCU US News (2025)	$56.9M	1,984

[6] In April 2022, North Carolina University System was approved to transition to a formal PBF model. This dissertation will focus on centralized governance.
[7] Fayetteville State University endowment from 2020.
[8] Elizabeth City State University does not have established colleges to house their four Master's level programs.

	Sciences; Business; Education; Law; Library and Information Sciences				
Winston-Salem State University (WSSU)	Arts, Sciences & Education; Health Sciences; Graduate College; University College; Business and Entrepreneurship	Centralized Governance	220th US News (2025); 12th HBCU US News (2025)	$51.5M	590
Texas					
Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU)	Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; Architecture; Arts and Sciences; Business; Education; Engineering; Juvenile Justice; Nursing; Public and Allied Health	Workforce Development & Healthcare	R2 Doctoral Research University; 23rd HBCU US News (2025); 359th (2025); Texas A&M University System	$151M	971
Texas Southern University (TSU)	Communication; Liberal Arts & Behavioral	Workforce Development & Healthcare	R2 Doctoral Research University; 57th	N/A	522

	Sciences; Education; Business; Pharmacy & Health Sciences; Public Affairs; Science, Engineering and Technology	HBCU US News (2025); No Ranking US News (2025); Independent from as TX University System

Data Collection

Data from 2004 to 2024 were collected from university strategic plans, archived graduate catalogs, institutional executive summaries, and mission statements. These documents were sourced from a strategically selected set of public HBCUs, offering longitudinal insight into how institutions constructed priorities and responded to evolving mandates—particularly shifts emphasizing competitiveness, marketability, and research innovation.

The data collection process began with a thorough review of each institution's website. This included navigating Institutional Advancement pages (e.g., https://www.famu.edu/administration/university-advancement/index.php) and Strategic Planning portals (e.g., https://www.wssu.edu/about/strategic-plan-2030/index.html) to retrieve publicly available planning documents. When documents were missing or webpages had been taken down, the Wayback Machine[9] was used to recover archived versions and identify changes in institutional language over time.

Table 3.2 lists each institutional document included in the analysis, along with source links and page counts. While specified code frequency counts are not detailed here, they informed the thematic findings presented in Chapter 4.

[9] The Wayback Machine (archive.org) is a digital archive that captures snapshots of web pages over time. It was used in this study to retrieve institutional documents that were no longer publicly accessible and to trace historical shifts in website language and framing.

Table 3.2

List of Institutional Documents

State	Institution	Document Title	Years Covered	Pages	Source	Coded In Analysis
Florida						
	FAMU	Strategic Plan for Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University	2004-2005 2012-2013	38	https://www.famu.edu/about-famu/pdf/FAMU%20Strategic%20Plan%202004-2013%20.pdf	Yes
	FAMU	Florida Agricultural and Mechanical Strategic Plan	2010-2020	15	https://www.famu.edu/administration/strategic-planning-analysis-and-institutional-effectiveness/institutional-effectiveness/reports-and-publications/strategic-plan.php	Yes
	FAMU	Appendix A-Institutional Work Plan Performance Measures and Entities with	2010-2020	23		Yes

	Primary Responsibility Strategic Plan				
FAMU	Florida A&M University Appendix B-Revised New Degree Programs for Strategic Plan 2010-2020	2010-2020	10	http://strategicplanning.famu.edu/images/Resources/AppendixB-NewDegreeProgramsListRevBOTadditionsJune62013.pdf	Yes
FAMU	*2020 Vision with Courage* Accountability Indicators Strategic Plan	2010-2020	8	https://www.famu.edu/administration/strategic-planning-analysis-and-institutional-effectiveness/institutional-effectiveness/pdf/Strategic%20Plan%202010-2020%20-%20Approved%20Updated%207-28-10.pdf	Yes
FAMU	*FAMU Rising: Florida A&M University* Strategic Plan	2017-2022	76	https://www.famu.edu/about-famu/strategic-plan/index.php#:~:text=Boldly%20Striking%2C%20Florida%20A%26M%20University's,Long%2DTerm%20Fiscal%20Health%20and	Yes
FAMU	Graduate Catalogs	2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019,	N/A	https://catalog.famu.edu/content.php?catoid=7&catoid=7&	No

			2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024		navoid=427&filter%5Bitem_type%5D=3&filter%5Bonly_active%5D=1&filter%5B3%5D=1&filter%5Bcpage%5D=38	
North Carolina						
	FSU	*From a Proud Legacy to a Twenty-First Century World-Class University of Choice* Strategic Plan 2015-2020	2015-2020	26	https://www.uncfsu.edu/Documents/strategic-plan-unc-correlations__1_.pdf	Yes
	FSU	*Strategic Plan Refresh 2022-2027*	2022-2027	5	https://www.uncfsu.edu/ready-for-tomorrow-the-fsu-strategic-plan-2022-2027	Yes
	FSU	2022-2023 Year 1 Report Cart	2022-2023	20	https://www.uncfsu.edu/about-fsu/fsu-leadership	Yes
	FSU	Graduate Catalog	2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024	N/A	https://acalog.uncfsu.edu/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=2284	No

	ECSU	*Forging Our Future* Strategic Plan	2020-2025	N/A	https://www.ecsu.edu/about/strategic-plan.php	Yes
	ECSU	Graduate Catalogs	2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2017-2019 Addendum, 2020-2021, 2020-2021 Addendum, 2021-2023, 2023-2024		https://www.ecsu.edu/academics/registrar/catalogs.php	No
	NCAT	*Preeminence 2030: North Carolina A&T Blueprint*	2010-2030	16	https://www.ncat.edu/about/initiatives/strategic-plan-2023.php	Yes
	NCAT	Executive Summaries	2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020	121		Yes
	NCAT	Graduate Catalogs	2005-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2010, 2010-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2020-2021, 2021-2022,	N/A	https://www.ncat.edu/tgc/graduate-catalog/index.php	Yes

			2022-2023, 2023-2024			
	NCCU	*The Pathway to the Future* Implementation Plan	2015-2017	7		Yes
	NCCU	Strategic Plan	2019-2024	20	https://www.nccu.edu/strategic-plan-2019-2024	Yes
	NCCU	Graduate Catalogs	2013-2015, 2015-2016, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024	N/A	https://ecatalog.nccu.edu/index.php?catoid=24	No
	WSSU	*Experiencing Academic Distinction: Transforming Learning for the 21st Century* Strategic Plan Close-Out Report	2016-2021	17	https://www.wssu.edu/strategic-plan-creation/strategic-planning-process.html	Yes
	WSSU	*WSSU 2030: Unleash the Genius*	2022-2030	2	https://www.wssu.edu/about/strategic-plan-2030/index.html	Yes
	WSSU	Graduate Catalogs	2007-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012,	N/A	https://catalog.wssu.edu/	No

			2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2015-2017, 2017-2019, 2019-2021, 2021-2023, 2023-2024			
Texas						
	PVAMU	A Plan for Reinventing Prairie View A&M University	2016-2021	70	https://www.pvamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/StrategicPlan_Web.pdf	Yes
	PVAMU	Journey to Eminence 2035 Strategic Plan	2024	13	http://www.pvamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Strategic-Plan-2024-.pdf	
	PVAMU	Graduate Catalog	2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2021-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024	N/A		No
	TSU	Strategic Plan	2001-2006	53	https://www.tsu.edu/about/administration/institutional-effectiveness/strategic-plan-archive	Yes

TSU	*2010 Plan of Excellence* Strategic Plan	2005-2010	44		Yes
TSU	Strategic Plan	2009-2015	14	https://www.tsu.edu/about/administration/institutional-effectiveness/strategic-plan	Yes
TSU	*Vision 2022* Strategic Plan	2017-2022	16		Yes
TSU	Graduate Catalogs	2006-2008, 2008-2010, 2012-2014, 2016-2018, 2018-2020, 202-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024	N/A	https://www.tsu.edu/registrar/archive-catalog	No

Note: "Coded in Analysis" refers to documents uploaded and actively coded in Atlas.ti. Graduate catalogs were reviewed for context but not coded directly.

Data Analysis

This study used content analysis to examine how public HBCUs defined and communicated their strategic priorities over time, as reflected in strategic plans, mission statements, and related institutional records. As a qualitative research method, content analysis allowed for the systematic interpretation of text-based data within its context (Krippendorff, 2019). It was especially well-suited for analyzing institutional discourse, as it enabled the identification of patterns, shifts in language, and evolving organizational values and priorities.

Following Krippendorff's (2019) framework for content analysis, this research employed a hybrid coding approach that integrated both deductive and inductive methods. Deductive coding began with predefined categories—such as *servingness* and *mission drift*—to assess how well they applied to institutional shifts. Inductive coding, on the other hand, allowed new themes to emerge, capturing unexpected institutional responses or evolving priorities across the 20-year period.

Schreier (2012) emphasized the flexibility of content analysis, noting its capacity to address both manifest and latent meanings—making it particularly useful for capturing the nuanced ways institutions positioned themselves in response to external pressures. This flexibility supported a more genuine interpretation of how strategic narratives evolved over time.

In this study, institutional documents served as primary data sources, offering insight into how HBCUs responded to changing funding structures, state mandates, and shifting expectations within the broader higher education landscape. While federal and state policy documents

provided essential background, the core of the analysis focused on how institutions articulated their own missions, values, and strategic goals in their own words.

To systematically assess these records, this study applied a hybrid coding approach that blended deductive and inductive strategies. Deductive coding used predefined categories to track institutional discussions around *servingness*, *mission drift*, *STEM prioritization*, and *workforce alignment*. This structured approach helped identify recurring themes within strategic plans across states and institutions.

Inductive coding, by contrast, allowed for emergent themes that did not fit within predefined categories, ensuring that the analysis remained responsive to shifts in language, priorities, or strategic direction over time. Given the 20-year scope of this study (2004–2024), maintaining flexibility in coding was essential for capturing unexpected institutional adaptations. While deductive coding provided a foundation for recognizing anticipated trends, inductive analysis enabled the discovery of new or evolving themes not previously documented in the literature.

Qualitative data analysis software (Atlas.ti) supported the coding process. The platform's capacity to upload, tag, and compare text-based data across multiple institutions and timeframes made it well-suited to the study's longitudinal and comparative design. Codes were applied consistently across both state and institutional documents to track the presence, evolution, and frequency of strategic themes.

To visualize this process, Table 3.3[10] presented a thematic evolution table that illustrated how institutional themes emerged and shifted over time. This visual representation served as a conceptual model for tracking change, rather than a predetermined analytical outcome.

To deepen the analysis, this study employed both within-case and cross-case analysis. Within-case analysis examined each institution individually, enabling a more detailed understanding of institutional context, leadership decisions, and policy influences. Cross-case analysis compared institutions across Florida, North Carolina, and Texas, identifying similarities, divergences, and broader patterns in strategic adaptation.

By centering institutional records, this study ensured that the analysis remained grounded in how HBCUs defined their priorities in their own words. Rather than assuming a direct correlation between institutional discourse and enacted practice, this approach offered a more nuanced understanding of how public HBCUs framed their strategic priorities in response to state-imposed constraints and an evolving higher education landscape.

Table 3.3

Thematic Evolution Guide

Theme	Description	Possible Language Indicators	Institutional Positioning & Autonomy

[10] While this initial thematic guide distinguishes STEM prioritization and workforce alignment as separate categories, these were later coded as sub-themes within the broader framework of Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC) in Chapter 4. This reflects the iterative and inductive nature of the analysis, where emergent data patterns led to a more integrated thematic structure.

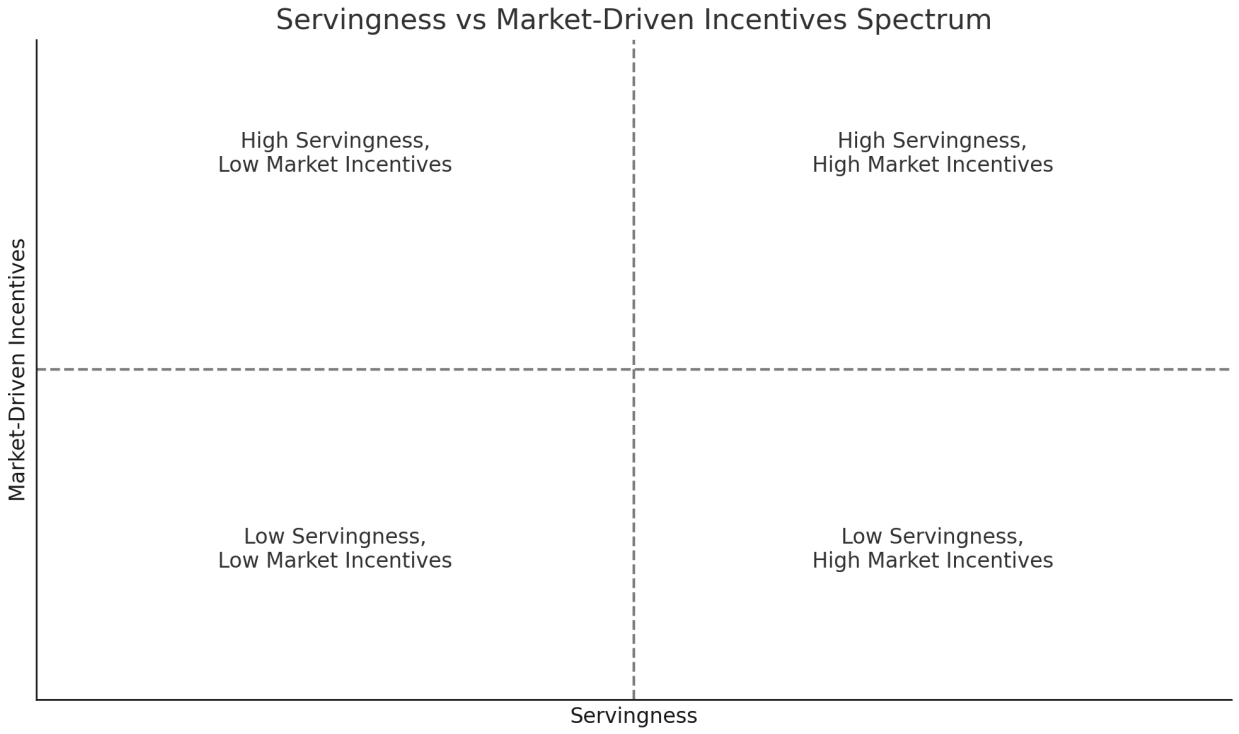
Servingness	HBCUs' roles in civic engagement, partnerships, and cultural responsiveness	"Community partnerships"; "public service initiatives"; "civic engagement programs"; "economic impact of HBCUs"	*More Autonomy*–Strong external funding supports servingness *Less Autonomy*–Reliance on state funds limits engagement
Mission Drift	Shift in institutional priorities, often due to funding, policy changes, or external pressures	"Expansion beyond core mission"; "market-driven changes"; "funding reallocation"	*More Autonomy*–Expands mission strategically *Less Autonomy*–Forced shifts due to funding constraints
STEM Prioritization	Increased emphasis on STEM fields in funding and workforce alignment	"STEM education funding"; "technology-driven curriculum"; "innovation in science and engineering"	*More Autonomy*–Balances STEM and non-STEM *Less Autonomy*–STEM prioritized to secure funding
Workforce Alignment	Aligning academic programs with labor market needs	"Skills-based education"; "career readiness", "industry partnerships"	*More Autonomy*–shapes workforce programs independently *Less Autonomy*–Follows state-mandated workforce priorities

In addition to coding and thematic tracking, this study utilized the Servingness vs. Market-Driven Incentives Spectrum (see Figure 3.2) as an interpretive tool to assess how institutions positioned themselves in relation to liberatory commitments and market responsiveness. This spectrum, introduced in the literature review, offered a conceptual means of categorizing institutions based on the extent to which their strategic rhetoric reflected equity-oriented practices (*servingness*) or prioritized performance-based funding metrics, prestige-seeking, and labor market alignment (*market-driven incentives*).

The spectrum did not assume these positions were mutually exclusive; rather, it framed them as relational dynamics that institutions negotiated over time. This tool was applied in the cross-case analysis to contextualize how each institution's strategic orientation evolved across the study period, and to identify patterns of convergence or divergence among the selected HBCUs.

Figure 3.2

Servingness vs Market-Driven Incentives Spectrum



Institutional Positioning	Description
High Servingness, Low Market Incentives	Institutions that prioritize liberatory missions and community-serving goals, maintaining autonomy from market-driven pressures.
High Servingness, High Market Incentives	Institutions that integrate liberatory goals within market-driven structures, balancing workforce development with social justice commitments.
Low Servingness, High Market Incentives	Institutions experiencing mission drift, prioritizing market imperatives (e.g., STEM or workforce alignment) over historical social justice commitments.

Low Servingness, Low Market Incentives	Institutions struggling to serve their communities and attract market resources, often constrained by systemic barriers and funding inequities.

Validity, Ethical Considerations, and Limitations

Ensuring the trustworthiness of this study required a careful approach to data verification and consistency. Given that institutional documents—such as strategic plans and mission statements—are self-reported, it was essential to recognize their role as curated representations of institutional identity rather than objective reflections of practice. To mitigate potential bias, this study employed triangulation by comparing multiple institutional documents over time, assessing how stated priorities aligned with broader trends in policy and funding. Additionally, the use of multiple case studies allowed for cross-case comparisons, which strengthened the validity of findings by identifying whether observed patterns were unique to a single institution or indicative of systemic trends across public HBCUs.

This study also prioritized ethical considerations by ensuring that institutional shifts were analyzed within a structural and systemic context, rather than being framed as institutional failures or deficiencies. The goal was to examine how institutions responded to external pressures, rather than assigning blame for changes in mission alignment. Because the research focused on public institutions, all analyzed documents were publicly accessible, reducing concerns about confidential or proprietary information. However, given that some archival data may have been removed or altered over time, care was taken to note where gaps existed and to acknowledge potential limitations in institutional self-presentation.

Despite efforts to ensure a rigorous approach, this study had several limitations. The reliance on publicly available records meant that institutional decisions not explicitly stated in documents remained outside the scope of analysis. Additionally, while the longitudinal nature of the study captured institutional changes over time, it did not account for the immediate decision-making processes behind shifts in mission alignment. Finally, because this study was not a discourse analysis, it focused on how institutions framed their priorities, rather than interpreting implicit meanings in language. While this approach provided insight into institutional self-presentation, it did not measure actual implementation of strategic priorities beyond what was documented.

Researcher Positionality

As a Black cisgender woman whose self-identified Blackness deepened during my collegiate years, this research is both deeply personal and, at times, intimidating. My experience as a first-generation doctoral student—and as someone still navigating that identity—continues to shape how I engage with this work. While my first exposure to HBCUs came from watching *A Different World*, I attended predominantly white institutions (PWIs) for most of my academic journey. Still, I was fortunate to find a small, yet powerful, Black community that included peers, faculty, and mentors who embodied excellence and support. That space was my version of #BlackExcellence—a place where I could see and be surrounded by brilliance that looked like me.

So, why the intimidation? As I entered graduate studies, I encountered a research landscape where scholarship on HBCUs often followed narrow patterns: highlighting only the most prominent HBCUs, homogenizing Black student experiences, relying on deficit models, or

focusing exclusively on undergraduates. Much of this work positioned HBCUs in contrast to PWIs, rather than attending to their distinct institutional logics. In contrast, I chose to pursue a topic where I could be seen as an "outsider"—not because I lacked connection, but because I did not attend an HBCU myself. Still, my intention is not to speak for HBCUs but to contribute to a more expansive, systems-oriented understanding of their strategic positioning.

This study does not seek to reinforce deficit narratives, nor does it attempt to generalize across all HBCUs. Instead, it focuses on how public HBCUs navigate systemic policy structures and market pressures while pursuing institutional missions rooted in equity and cultural commitment. My goal is to meet these institutions with nuance, recognizing that HBCUs are not monolithic. They exist in multiple shades—of history, capacity, aspiration, and response.

This chapter has outlined the methodological framework for examining how public HBCUs navigate external policy pressures while maintaining their institutional missions. By employing a multiple case study design and a hybrid coding approach, this research captures the complexities of servingness, mission drift, STEM prioritization, and workforce alignment within strategic plans and institutional documents. These themes allow for a deeper understanding of how HBCUs articulate graduate education priorities, negotiate tensions between STEM and non-STEM disciplines, and balance external demands with internal commitments. Analyzing institutions across Florida, North Carolina, and Texas offers insight into the structural constraints shaping HBCU decision-making, while also illuminating how institutions strategically adapt to shifting higher education landscapes. Together, these methodological choices provide the foundation for the next chapter, where findings from the document analysis will further reveal how institutions define and negotiate their priorities over time.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

HBCUs function as a networked system of institutions that advance Black scholarship by centering the experiences, needs, and cultural realities of the Black community—while simultaneously navigating the shifting goalposts of educational legitimacy. This constant repositioning is not a new phenomenon. It is both malicious and egregious, obscured by an educational system that publicly celebrates Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) for their contributions while quietly recalibrating expectations behind closed doors. This contradiction—what might best be described as policy-level verbal gymnastics—frames the broader context in which this study was conducted.

This chapter investigates how HBCU strategic plans have responded to state-level priorities through their graduate-level programming over a 20-year period (2004–2024). Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC) serves as the central theoretical framework, synthesizing academic capitalism (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) with racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983) to examine how market logics and systemic racial hierarchies co-structure institutional responses. This framework anchors both the coding process and the interpretive analysis, allowing for a critical exploration of how HBCUs navigate policy shifts that privilege market responsiveness, workforce alignment, and institutional prestige.

Two complementary lenses—servingness and mission drift—further support this analysis. Servingness, adapted from research on Hispanic-Serving Institutions (Garcia et al., 2019; Garcia, 2020), is used here to evaluate how HBCUs maintain student-serving values such as cultural affirmation, first-generation success, and community uplift in the face of constrained resources. Mission drift, drawn from nonprofit and higher education literature (Taylor &

Cantwell, 2019; Jaquette, 2013), helps surface how institutional strategies may shift over time in ways that reflect adaptation, compromise, or departure from foundational goals.

The following research questions were used to guide this analysis:

1. To what extent are STEM and non-STEM values, missions, and metrics described at the graduate level within strategic plans for HBCUs?
2. How do HBCU strategic initiatives address the balance between STEM and non-STEM graduate education in alignment with their broader mission and foundational values?
3. What tensions, if any, exist between the values placed on STEM and non-STEM education within the context of HBCU strategic plans and their institutional mission?

RAC offers a lens to explore how market-driven incentives and policy mandates are embedded within racialized and class-based hierarchies—structures that disproportionately shape how institutions of color must compete in the contemporary education marketplace. Supporting this central framework, servingness highlights how HBCUs articulate their student-serving commitments through narratives of cultural affirmation, community uplift, and belonging. Mission drift, in contrast, reveals the tensions institutions face when striving to reconcile equity-driven goals with external demands for performance, prestige, and economic return.

Using a multiple case study design, this study employed content analysis and a hybrid coding strategy to identify both explicit and implicit themes across state and institutional documents. The findings presented here build upon the methodological approach outlined in Chapter 3 and draw from strategic plans, graduate catalogs, and archival materials. The analysis is grounded in the three core frameworks—RAC, servingness, and mission drift—which were operationalized through both deductive and inductive coding methods.

To ensure alignment between the research questions and the thematic structure of the findings, Table 4.1 maps each research question to its corresponding code groups and emergent themes. This table provides a conceptual bridge between the study's design and its analytical outcomes, offering a roadmap for interpreting the institutional data.

This chapter unfolds in three stages. First, it presents an analysis of state and institutional strategic plans, including graduate catalogs, to trace how state policy priorities have shaped institutional discourse. Second, it offers a within-case thematic analysis of graduate program trends across the selected HBCUs, examining how institutions position and justify specific programmatic choices. Third, it presents an across-case comparison that highlights shared patterns, strategic divergences, and rhetorical adaptations—illuminating how HBCUs collectively and distinctly respond to policy pressures while attempting to preserve their missions.

Table 4.1

Alignment of Research Questions with Thematic Code Groups and Emergent Findings

Research Question	Relevant Code Groups	Emergent Themes/ Insights
RQ1: To what extent are STEM and non-STEM values, missions, and metrics described at the graduate level within strategic plans for HBCUs?	RAC, Mission Drift	Strategic ambiguity; STEM prioritization; marginalization of non-STEM graduate programs; performative alignment with market demands; strategic duality;

		graduate programs as market signaling tools
RQ2: How do HBCU strategic initiatives address the balance between STEM and non-STEM graduate education in alignment with their broader mission and foundational values?	RAC, Servingness, Mission Drift	Programmatic preservation; discursive duality; interdisciplinary as a bridging strategy; selective adaptation to policy pressure; servingness as negotiated rather than stated; preservation without branding as a mission practice
RQ3: What tensions exist, if any, between the values placed on STEM and non-STEM education within the context of HBCU strategic plans and their institutional mission?	Mission Drift, Servingness, RAC	Institutional code-switching; symbolic resistance; strategic reluctance; cultural sovereignty vs. economic compliance; tactical silence; tension between mission and metric

Findings

Institutional responses to state policy were not made in a vacuum—they were shaped by the governance structures, accountability frameworks, and funding mechanisms unique to each

state. While all HBCUs in this study operated under heightened pressure to demonstrate market responsiveness, the specific ways these pressures unfolded varied significantly across Florida, North Carolina, and Texas. Each state brought its own set of expectations, policy logics, and resource constraints that influenced how graduate education was framed, resourced, and prioritized at the institutional level.

Guided by the framework of Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC), with supporting lenses of servingness and mission drift, this chapter examines how institutions articulated their graduate education strategies under distinct policy conditions. The findings explore how institutional actors navigated and interpreted the demands of market-based accountability while also negotiating their foundational commitments to equity, access, and cultural affirmation.

This chapter is organized into two major parts: *Institutional Within-Case Analyses* and *Across-Case Themes*. The first part begins with a state-level overview of each higher education policy context, followed by an in-depth analysis of institutional strategic plans, graduate catalogs, and mission language from 2004 to 2024. Each institutional case concludes with thematic findings that directly address the study's research questions. The second part offers across-case synthesis that highlights recurring patterns across the eight institutions—such as rhetorical adaptation, strategic preservation, and institutional positioning. This includes a focused examination of graduate programs as both strategic assets and mission-anchored commitments within broader market-driven environments.

This structure reflects the iterative nature of the research process, which evolved through continuous reflection and close engagement with the data during both coding and writing. By analyzing how graduate education was narrated, resourced, and strategically leveraged, the

following sections offer insight into how HBCUs responded to shifting policy terrain while striving to uphold their historical and cultural missions.

Institutional Within-Case Analyses

Florida: Performance-Based Funding and Strategic Containment

In Florida, the adoption and expansion of performance-based funding (PBF) significantly reshaped how public institutions were expected to define and deliver value. Beginning in the early 2010s, the Florida Board of Governors (2005) introduced a metrics-driven approach that tied institutional funding to quantifiable outcomes such as graduation rates, job placement, and median wages. This model, framed as a tool to drive innovation and accountability, disproportionately impacted mission-driven institutions like Florida A&M University (FAMU), the state's only public HBCU.

As a land-grant, doctoral-granting research institution, FAMU navigated dual imperatives: responding to the structural demands of PBF while maintaining fidelity to its historical mission of access, service, and leadership development within Black communities. The tension between these imperatives was reflected in shifts to strategic language, programmatic restructuring, and the evolving framing of graduate-level education across institutional documents. Florida's higher education policy landscape thus provided a fertile context for analyzing how graduate education at FAMU was positioned over time—revealing patterns of adaptation, preservation, and symbolic alignment.

Guided by the framework of Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC), this analysis interprets how FAMU responded to market-based accountability structures embedded in state policy.

Supporting lenses of servingness and mission drift further inform the reading of institutional narratives, highlighting both resistance to and reinforcement of dominant performance logics.

The following section begins with a timeline of institutional shifts from 2004 to 2024 and a thematic analysis of FAMU's strategic plans. While the structure emphasizes alignment with the study's research questions and code groups, the presentation of findings also reflects ongoing analytical reflection during the writing process—shaping how data are interpreted across subsequent institutional cases.

Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University

Florida A&M University (FAMU), as the state's only public HBCU, occupies a unique and often precarious position within Florida's performance-based funding (PBF) framework. The university's strategic plans from 2004 to 2024 consistently reflected a dual imperative: to elevate doctoral and research visibility in alignment with state economic goals, while simultaneously preserving its cultural and mission-driven commitments to racial equity and community uplift. This discursive negotiation appeared most clearly in how FAMU framed its graduate programs—particularly in how it justified both STEM and non-STEM program growth.

Across the documents analyzed, FAMU's strategic plans were among the most narratively rich of any institution reviewed. The university foregrounded its land-grant identity and legacy of Black excellence while layering economic competitiveness, innovation, and industry alignment into its graduate education rationales. Proposed doctoral programs in public health, African American studies, and sustainability were frequently positioned at the intersection of servingness and Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC), indicating an effort to align cultural specificity with workforce relevance. This rhetorical blending suggested that FAMU was

not rejecting neoliberal logics outright—as critiqued in Academic Capitalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004)—but instead reframing them in ways that reinforced its mission. In this context, servingness encompassed not only cultural affirmation and community uplift, but also the expansion of access to research-based and professional graduate programs historically denied to Black students. Rather than a binary choice between equity and economy, FAMU's approach reflected a spectrum of strategic responses within a RAC system—transforming market-aligned language into a vessel for equity and institutional legitimacy.

Strategic Plan Analysis

2004-2013 Strategic Plan

FAMU's 2004–2013 strategic plan reflected a pivotal moment in the university's post-desegregation evolution, as it sought to assert its role as a doctoral/research-intensive university within a shifting higher education policy landscape. From the outset, the plan emphasized the institutional mission to provide "an enlightened and enriched academic, intellectual, moral, cultural, ethical, technological and student-centered environment," with a distinct focus on leadership preparation and service to society. The university directly acknowledged its commitment to African American education while welcoming all, anchoring this in a values framework that includes integrity, respect, and collaboration (p. 2).

This mission-driven identity is further reinforced by Goal 3.4, which sought to "firmly establish the University as a competitive Doctoral/Research-Intensive University" known for "state-of-the-art research that supports high-quality graduate, undergraduate and professional programs" (p. 14). The corresponding strategy emphasized building expertise in areas aligned with both state expectations and FAMU's unique mission as a public HBCU and land-grant

institution. This framing highlights the dual imperatives of external competitiveness and culturally grounded relevance, encapsulating a strategic posture deeply reflective of Racial Academic Capitalism—where research excellence and institutional mission are rhetorically blended to justify programmatic growth and resource investment.

The plan articulated the external pressures facing the university, including performance-based funding strategies, enrollment corridor mandates, and limited state investment. FAMU's response, detailed in the five strategic initiatives, highlighted graduate expansion as a central focus. Under Strategic Initiative 1, the university calls for "a 20% increase in graduate student enrollment over 10 years," along with development of new programs "that meet market and student demands" (p. 6). Further demonstrating this alignment, the plan notes that such growth "should enable the institution to maintain its competitive advantage while positively contributing to the attainment of the Board of Governors (BOG) Y-Axis strategic goals" (p. 3). This direct reference to system-wide targets reinforced how institutional planning was shaped by the need to demonstrate relevance within a performance culture. Additionally, Strategy 5.1.2 outlined a specific goal to "become the number one producer of African Americans with graduate and professional degrees" in high-demand, STEM-aligned fields—including engineering, computer science, public health, and business (p. 18). This language reflected an institutional strategy that ties racial uplift directly to market productivity, revealing how the university's racial justice mission is leveraged to support broader workforce and economic development imperatives. Together, these elements illustrate how RAC manifested early on as both a strategic necessity and a rhetorical bridge between cultural identity and policy legitimacy.

However, the plan also embedded a counterbalancing discourse aligned with *servingness*. Initiatives such as summer pre-college programs, underrepresented student recruitment, and goals to increase Black participation in graduate fields—particularly STEM—reflected a broader access mission. As discussed earlier, FAMU's framing of *servingness* included expanding curricular access as a form of mission fulfillment within a performance-based system.

Language from the document reveals FAMU's dual strategic positioning:

> "FAMU will strengthen and enhance teaching and learning in its undergraduate programs and expand its emphasis on graduate programs, grantsmanship, research, and international education." (p. 5)

> "FAMU's educational programs have been and continue to be the building blocks of a legacy of academic excellence with caring." (p. 3)

These statements show that while the university is adopting more state-aligned language around competitiveness and outcomes, it is also preserving a mission-oriented discourse focused on equity and Black educational leadership.

FAMU's 2004–2013 strategic plan marked a moment of synthesis between economic imperatives and historical commitments. The university signaled its readiness to compete within a market-based framework—but did so on its own terms, seeking to leverage performance outcomes in ways that sustained its legacy of service to Black communities. These ambitions are made explicit in the plan's recognition of Board of Governors (BOG) targets for degree production, which called for substantial increases in graduate output—16.5% in master's degrees, 5.6% in doctoral degrees, and a 22% rise in professional degrees—alongside a directive

that 50% of all degrees be conferred in prioritized workforce areas (p. 6). The plan also acknowledged BOG expectations that minority graduation rates mirror their share of the general population, reinforcing how racialized equity goals were framed through the lens of production metrics.

At the same time, FAMU embeds a broader vision that connects graduate education to global and interdisciplinary relevance. As noted in Goal 5.4, the university asserts that globalization "affects nearly every aspect of life," and that academic programs must integrate global awareness across all levels of education (p. 18). This framing not only broadens the rationale for interdisciplinary programming but also reflects a hybrid logic in which market competitiveness, cultural identity, and global competency are intertwined. In this way, the plan positions FAMU's graduate expansion as both a response to state imperatives and a strategic opportunity to reaffirm its mission through globally engaged, culturally grounded scholarship.

2010-2020 Strategic Plan

Titled *2020 Vision with Courage*, FAMU's 2010–2020 strategic plan represented an evolution in both tone and structure from the previous cycle. It reflects a university that is responding more explicitly to systemic pressures around performance, accountability, and global competitiveness, while still drawing on its land-grant legacy and racial justice commitments. The plan's vision statement affirms a bold aspiration to be "internationally recognized as a premiere land-grant and research institution" (p. 2), signaling a more globalized institutional identity and an expanded frame for excellence. This document marked a clearer institutional embrace of planning language tied to outcomes, innovation, and stakeholder alignment.

The five strategic initiatives reinforce both compliance with system-wide goals and FAMU's differentiated identity. Strategic Initiative 1.5 called for the development of new graduate programs based on "University priorities" and "market and student demands" (p. 5), including interdisciplinary programs and online learning. This framing—particularly the call for flexibility in delivery, responsiveness to workforce needs, and partnership with international institutions—signals a strong RAC orientation. It aligns closely with performance-based logics that increasingly shape Florida's policy environment.

However, FAMU continued to assert its identity as a mission-driven, access-focused institution. The strategic plan outlined a vision in which graduates would become "competent leaders and courageous change agents with ethical decision-making skills" (p. 2). This emphasis on transformational leadership and ethical commitment reflected *servingness* (Garcia, 2018), grounding the institution's goals not only in market success but also in societal uplift and community-centered priorities. Similarly, Strategic Initiative 5 spoke to sustaining an environment of internationalization, diversity, and inclusiveness—a move that reflected both a continuation of HBCU values and a strategic bid for relevance in a global higher education landscape.

Notably, FAMU ties its graduate education and research agenda to local and global impact, affirming:

> "The research will continue to address local, state and global needs... [and] actively engage faculty, undergraduate and graduate students." (p. 2)

And:

> Additionally, internationalization and diversity are paramount in the 21st Century collegiate experience and the global economy. International and domestic diversity and inclusion are comprehensive in that they include race, religion, ethnicity, geographic and individual perspectives, world views, learning styles, socioeconomics, cultural differences, etc. An understanding and appreciation of international and diversity dynamics are fundamental aspects of a successful education. (p. 11)

These statements demonstrate the institution's discursive positioning at the intersection of prestige-seeking and community responsiveness.

Overall, the 2010–2020 plan reflects a maturing strategic posture: one that recognizes the necessity of demonstrating value through metrics, competitiveness, and innovation, while also seeking to maintain institutional soul. The rhetorical balance between these tensions embodies both strategic adaptation and quiet resistance—hallmarks of the broader HBCU policy navigation within neoliberal systems.

2017-2022 Strategic Plan

The 2017–2022 FAMU strategic plan presents a highly intentional and rhetorically agile document that reflects the institution's sharpened ability to navigate between market-based expectations and HBCU-serving mission. Released during a time of heightened performance-based funding pressures in Florida, this plan demonstrated how FAMU strategically framed graduate education as both a public good and a state investment opportunity.

From the outset, the plan positions institutional performance as a funding imperative:

> "This is critical to enhancing student success and ensuring that FAMU meets state performance metrics that are used to fund higher education." (p. 1)

This quote exemplified the tension between Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC) and mission drift, signaling a shift toward more data-driven rationales for academic initiatives. At the same time, the plan integrated a vision of institutional distinctiveness grounded in legacy, equity, and racial uplift:

> "As the nation's leading public HBCU, we graduate nearly 2,200 students each year, about 90% of whom are African American." (p. 16)

This dual-discursive move reflected *servingness* and strategic alignment—acknowledging the metrics-oriented expectations of the state while reaffirming a visible commitment to Black communities. The quote positions racial equity not as secondary, but as central to the university's claim to excellence and legitimacy within a performance-based funding regime.

Graduate education is highlighted as a lever for both institutional prestige and social transformation. FAMU sets its sights on doctoral expansion and national competitiveness:

> "We aspire to have the research footprint and impact of an internationally recognized doctoral-research university." (p. 5)
> "Research is central to our mission and vision for the University." (p. 5)

These statements lean into RAC, but the surrounding context—focused on student opportunity and inclusive leadership—keeps the plan tethered to its original mission. The plan further illustrates this hybrid logic through language around graduate student support:

> "We are equally focused on providing graduate and professional students with sufficient resources and professional development opportunities to ensure their success." (p. 16)

Goal 3 offered an even more explicit articulation of this dual strategy. The university affirms that "graduate education plays an essential role" in shaping leaders for "the academy, industry, and government," and ties the value of graduate education to solving national and global challenges. This section positions FAMU as a top producer of African American graduates in pharmacy and physics, while emphasizing the need to extend that distinction into additional disciplines. Plans to grow and market nationally recognized programs, recruit high-achieving students, and support new areas of distinction reflect a strategic use of RAC-aligned tools (competitiveness, visibility, industry relevance) to advance servingness goals tied to equity, representation, and transformation (p. 30).

This pairing of opportunity language with accountability signals a theme of strategic duality that appears throughout the document. FAMU is simultaneously signaling to the SUS and Board of Governors that it understands the metrics game, while communicating to its own community that its historical mission remains intact. Ultimately, the 2017–2022 plan is the most rhetorically sophisticated of the three strategic documents. Graduate education becomes the discursive and strategic site where this negotiation is most visible—where prestige, representation, and resistance converge.

Graduate Catalog Analysis

A review of FAMU's graduate catalog offerings over the past decade revealed a steady expansion in STEM-related programs and a notable continuity in mission-aligned non-STEM

fields. This catalog analysis supported and mirrored the strategic priorities articulated in FAMU's strategic plans, particularly regarding doctoral-level growth, interdisciplinary development, and industry-aligned offerings.

Between 2014 and 2024, FAMU introduced at least six new graduate programs, including offerings in supply chain management, healthcare administration, systems engineering, and global security. These additions reflect a clear alignment with Florida's performance-based funding (PBF) framework, which rewards workforce-aligned, high-demand fields. During the same period, two programs—Criminal Justice (MA) and Nursing (PhD)—were removed from the catalog. Overall, the majority of FAMU's graduate offerings (~75 programs) remained stable, suggesting a selective adaptation strategy rather than wholesale restructuring. These additions reflected the university's increasing alignment with RAC, in which economic competitiveness and market positioning are elevated as core rationales for graduate program development. At the same time, longstanding programs in African American Studies, Public Administration, and Curriculum & Instruction remained active and consistent across the catalog review. Their continued presence reflected a form of *servingness* that preserved educational spaces intentionally designed to address the needs and experiences of Black communities, while also promoting civic engagement and public-sector leadership. These programs served as anchors of mission integrity—offering graduate-level pathways that reinforced both cultural relevance and community impact within a shifting policy environment.

There was also evidence of strategic interdisciplinarity—programs that blended technical fields with social relevance, such as environmental science and sustainability. These offerings serve as bridging mechanisms between state expectations and institutional values, supporting thematic overlaps between RAC, servingness, and in some cases, mission drift, where language

and structure may lean toward market legitimacy without explicit loss of mission. Overall, FAMU's graduate program development appeared to support the narrative strategy laid out in its strategic plans: expanding offerings in fields of high external value while continuing to protect legacy programs that defined its unique institutional identity. The graduate catalog becomes not just a list of offerings, but a material reflection of the university's strategic negotiation between compliance and cultural fidelity.

Across its strategic planning cycles and graduate program evolution, FAMU demonstrated a consistent pattern of strategic duality—balancing the demands of state accountability metrics with a sustained commitment to its mission as a historically Black, land-grant institution. The university has expanded its graduate offerings in line with Florida's PBF incentives, while also protecting and justifying programs that serve the cultural, social, and civic needs of Black communities. FAMU's rhetorical agility and programmatic decisions reflected an institutional strategy that neither fully resisted nor fully conformed, but instead leveraged discursive and curricular tools to maintain relevance, funding, and mission integrity.

While FAMU operates within a decentralized governance structure and a highly metricized funding model, the next section turns to North Carolina—where centralized governance through the UNC System shaped a different set of constraints and possibilities for public HBCUs. The following analysis explored how five North Carolina institutions responded to system-level imperatives, revealing varied strategies of alignment, negotiation, and resistance in their graduate education planning.

North Carolina: Centralized Governance and Controlled Alignment

In North Carolina, the University of North Carolina (UNC) System operated under one of the most centralized governance structures in the country. All 16 public universities—five of which are HBCUs—are overseen by a unified Board of Governors, with strategic planning and institutional performance tightly managed through system-wide priorities. This governance model leaves limited room for institutional differentiation, often requiring HBCUs to frame their missions and programming in ways that reflect broader UNC goals rather than their own historical commitments.

For institutions like North Carolina A&T State University (NCAT), North Carolina Central University (NCCU), Fayetteville State University (FSU), Elizabeth City State University (ECSU), and Winston-Salem State University (WSSU), this centralization has shaped how graduate education is discussed, resourced, and strategically justified. While each HBCU carries a distinct identity and disciplinary focus, the UNC System's emphasis on workforce development, efficiency, and research competitiveness has led to recurring tensions between institutional autonomy and system compliance.

This section begins with a timeline of language and programmatic shifts across each HBCU from 2004 to 2024. These shifts are analyzed in relation to UNC System strategic plans to examine how institutional framing has evolved—either in alignment with, or resistance to, system-wide expectations. As with the Florida section, this portion of the chapter presents findings for each North Carolina institution, highlighting graduate program trends and rhetorical shifts across strategic plans. While some themes emerge across cases, deeper cross-institutional comparisons are synthesized later in the chapter.

North Carolina A&T State University

Strategic Plan Analysis

North Carolina A&T State University's (NCAT) strategic planning documents from 2013 through 2030 reflected a consistent institutional trajectory toward research prominence, economic development, and state-aligned workforce production. This orientation is evident in the university's *Preeminence 2020* plan and its subsequent executive summaries, which framed the institution's role in terms of innovation, competitiveness, and STEM-centered growth. As early as 2013, the university emphasized its position as a "leading producer of African American engineers" and its ranking "No. 1 in the nation in the number of B.S. degrees awarded to African American female engineers" (North Carolina A&T State University, 2013, p. 1). Subsequent reports reinforced this narrative, celebrating national leadership in nanotechnology, autonomous systems, and advanced manufacturing as evidence of its evolving identity as a premier research institution. The 2020 executive summary noted the establishment of a new Center for Excellence in Transportation, highlighting "A&T's extraordinary strengths in autonomous vehicles" and "deep vein of expertise in both road-based and flying autonomous vehicles" (North Carolina A&T State University, 2020, p. 5).

This STEM-centered framing is deepened in *Preeminence 2030*, which reflected the institution's pursuit of Carnegie R1 status—the highest classification within the Carnegie system, denoting very high research activity and output. The plan cites a 60% growth in research funding over two years and $97.3 million in competitive research awards as evidence of this trajectory (North Carolina A&T State University, 2023). While the plan includes language around social equity and educational justice, these priorities are often positioned in service of economic outcomes. For instance, A&T affirms that it "educates the workforce of the future, supports

businesses... and [has] an annual economic impact... of $1.5 billion" (North Carolina A&T State University, 2023, p. 2). Similarly, pillars such as "Education and Lifelong Learning" and "Health, Transportation, and Housing Equity" are framed in terms of enhancing innovation and expanding institutional impact, rather than centering cultural or mission-driven imperatives. Even when emphasizing its identity as an HBCU, the institution employs discursive strategies that embed *servingness* within broader logics of market legitimacy.

Thus, while NCAT retains symbolic references to access, representation, and cultural uplift, its strategic planning materials prioritize competitive research expansion, interdisciplinary commercialization, and economic returns. These patterns exemplify the broader pressures of Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC), as well as a rhetorical negotiation between mission fidelity and alignment with state system priorities.

Graduate Catalog Analysis

NCAT's graduate catalog from 2010 to 2024 revealed a clear institutional investment in STEM and applied research programs, mirroring the thematic emphasis found in the university's strategic plans. Over this period, NCAT added multiple graduate programs aligned with economic competitiveness and research funding potential. In total, 38 new graduate programs were added and 22 were removed during this timeframe. Notable additions include the Ph.D. in Computer Science, the M.S. in Bioengineering, the Ph.D. in Nanoengineering, and the M.S. in Data Science and Engineering—all introduced between 2014 and 2024 and reflective of strategic priorities around research innovation and federal grant alignment (North Carolina A&T State University, 2024). Similarly, the expansion of interdisciplinary programs such as Agricultural and Environmental Systems—with concentrations in agribusiness, natural resources, and animal

health—illustrated how STEM-adjacent fields have been elevated through specialized, industry-responsive degree structures.

Concurrently, the catalog showed a significant reduction in non-STEM or historically mission-aligned programs. Programs removed during this period included Community Counseling, Counselor Education, Elementary Education, and various teaching specializations in Graphic Communication and Technology Education (North Carolina A&T State University, 2024). While these removals may have reflected shifting student interest or labor market conditions, they also marked a rhetorical and curricular distancing from traditional HBCU educational domains focused on social uplift, civic engagement, and public-sector service. In contrast, newly added programs with embedded technical dimensions—such as Supply Chain Management and Technology Management—further underscored a curricular pivot toward market-oriented fields.

At the same time, select interdisciplinary programs served as bridge points between institutional heritage and economic strategy. For instance, the university's introduction of a Master of Science in Agricultural and Environmental Systems with a focus on sustainability and natural resources signaled a hybrid logic—addressing societal needs while maintaining a language of workforce relevance. The emergence of professionally oriented tracks such as the Master of Accountancy and the Professional Science Master's in Biology (Industrial Biosciences) further exemplified this dual positioning. These programs are explicitly aligned with labor market demands and funding priorities, reflecting RAC through their emphasis on industry competitiveness and technical specialization. Yet they also offer tangible pathways for students from historically excluded communities—particularly Black students—to access high-impact sectors where representation remains limited. This curricular emphasis reflects a

layered institutional strategy: while advancing economic visibility, these programs simultaneously operate as expressions of *servingness*—expanding access to professional fields that have historically excluded Black learners and institutions.

At the same time, the catalog reveals a strategic shift toward offerings that respond to workforce imperatives, federal research priorities, and interdisciplinary innovation—often displacing programs rooted in cultural affirmation, public service, or historically mission-driven fields. In this way, the curriculum itself becomes a reflection of institutional negotiation between legacy commitments and external pressures, with *servingness* reframed through the lens of economic utility rather than cultural or communal centrality.

North Carolina Central University

Strategic Plan Analysis

North Carolina Central University's (NCCU) 2019–2024 strategic plan, *Charting a New Landscape for Student-Centered Success*, reflects a multidimensional institutional strategy that balances mission-centered values with evolving market expectations. The plan's structure and tone emphasized responsiveness to shifting workforce demands and demographic changes while affirming NCCU's legacy as a public HBCU. From its opening vision, NCCU positions itself as "a top-tier institution that has a robust and flexible curriculum, innovative research, market responsive co-curricular programming and impactful community engagement" (North Carolina Central University, 2019, p. 5). This language illustrates the university's dual orientation: retaining a commitment to "Truth and Service," while adapting its operations to support economic development, interdisciplinary programming, and innovation across sectors. As the plan notes, this shift is intentional—emphasizing "interwoven, interdisciplinary goals and

objectives" as part of a deliberate move away from a "silo-centric operational paradigm" toward a more integrated, student-centered model (p. 7). In this context, interdisciplinarity is not framed as a trend, but as a strategic mechanism for institutional transformation—one that aligns educational structure with market relevance while preserving mission-driven outcomes.

Across its four core goals—Student Access and Success; Innovation, Research, and Entrepreneurship; Collaboration and Partnerships; and Institutional Sustainability—NCCU demonstrated an institutional logic that increasingly privileges workforce-aligned outcomes, extramural research productivity, and performance-based planning. The plan explicitly called for "the development of additional doctoral programs" and emphasizes building infrastructure "required for a change in NCCU's Carnegie Classification," suggesting aspirations toward R2 or R1 status (p. 12). At the same time, the plan highlights commitments to educational equity, including a goal to "graduate 25% more students from low-income backgrounds" and to "create a new college or school" targeting fields like healthcare, technology, and data sciences (pp. 11–12). These examples revealed a blend of mission-driven and market-responsive imperatives, often framed through strategic ambiguity. While the language of access and equity persists, it is increasingly attached to economic metrics and innovation pipelines—echoing broader patterns of RAC. In this context, NCCU's strategic narrative reflected a calculated negotiation between preserving its HBCU identity and responding to state and system-level mandates around labor market preparation and institutional competitiveness.

Graduate Catalog Analysis

Between 2013 and 2024, NCCU's graduate program offerings demonstrate a slow but deliberate reorientation toward applied, interdisciplinary, and workforce-responsive fields, with

33 programs added and 12 removed over the period. While many foundational programs such as the Master of Public Administration (MPA), Master of Business Administration (MBA), and Library Science (MLS) have remained consistent, new additions signal strategic positioning in areas identified as critical by both the UNC System and broader labor market trends. Programs such as the Ph.D. in Integrated Biosciences, the M.S. in Nutritional Sciences, and specialized tracks in Library Science (e.g., Digital Library, School Librarian, and Public Libraries) reflect targeted investments in interdisciplinary fields that link STEM, public service, and technology. In particular, the development of concentrations in Business Administration—such as Wealth Management and Real Estate—suggests a shift toward professionally oriented graduate education with immediate workforce applicability (North Carolina Central University, 2024).

Concurrently, the catalog shows a pattern of removals that primarily impact traditional liberal arts and teacher preparation fields. Of the 12 programs removed between 2013 and 2024, most were in non-STEM areas, including Physical Education (MS), Chemistry (MS), English Secondary Education (MEd), and School Counseling (MA)**.** Several interdisciplinary or professionalized replacements emerged, including degrees in Special Education with Behavioral/Emotional Disabilities and a new track in Kinesiology and Recreation Administration. These changes reflect a larger pattern of curricular narrowing around career-relevant outcomes, particularly in healthcare, education leadership, and business analytics. Notably, the catalog also captures efforts to modernize historic strengths—for instance, by evolving Chemistry into “Chemistry and Biochemistry,” and Biology into “Biological and Biomedical Sciences”—framing traditional scientific disciplines through a 21st-century, research-oriented lens. Taken together, the catalog entries reflect NCCU’s effort to sustain its

public mission and HBCU identity while adopting programmatic shifts that meet external expectations of growth, funding eligibility, and workforce alignment.

Between 2013 and 2024, NCCU's strategic shifts revealed a nuanced recalibration of institutional identity—one that selectively integrated state imperatives while maintaining foundational commitments to educational equity and mission integrity. The university's strategic plan emphasized student-centered success, innovation, and institutional sustainability, with growing attention to doctoral expansion and economic impact. While equity and service remain core rhetorical values, their framing is increasingly tethered to workforce relevance and regional competitiveness—a shift that, at first glance, may appear more aligned with *servingness* than the national STEM imperatives emphasized at peer institutions like NCAT. However, this regional emphasis is itself shaped by market-oriented logic, reflecting state-level pressures to produce locally employable graduates in applied and interdisciplinary fields. The concurrent removal of teacher education and liberal arts programs—long-standing pillars of community uplift—complicates the notion that regional competitiveness alone can sustain HBCU mission commitments.

Instead, NCCU's strategy reflects a hybrid model: one that selectively preserves legacy values while reorienting graduate education toward measurable economic impact within state and local ecosystems.

Similarly, the graduate catalog reveals a dual emphasis: preserving foundational programs in law, business, and education, while expanding applied biosciences, interdisciplinary specializations, and business-adjacent degrees. Across both strategic planning and curricular development, NCCU demonstrates a form of adaptive alignment—embedding legacy commitments within contemporary logics of market responsiveness. While national research

competitiveness is not a dominant theme, regional workforce development and applied impact emerge as guiding rationales, suggesting a more localized expression of Racial Academic Capitalism (RAC).

This regional focus complicates conventional interpretations of *servingness*: while it may expand economic access and employment pipelines, it also risks narrowing the scope of public service by deprioritizing programs historically tied to civic engagement and cultural leadership. In this way, NCCU's positioning diverges from institutions like NCAT, where STEM prestige and national competitiveness more explicitly define the strategic narrative.

Fayetteville State University

Strategic Plan Analysis

Fayetteville State University's (FSU) strategic planning documents from 2015 through 2027 present an institution navigating complex mandates to expand opportunity while aligning more explicitly with economic, technological, and workforce imperatives. In its 2015–2020 plan, FSU reaffirmed its mission to produce "global citizens and leaders as change agents" while advancing programs in "teacher education, the arts and sciences, health professions, business and economics, and unique and emerging fields" (Fayetteville State University, 2015, p. 5). Even at that stage, themes of entrepreneurial education, online degree expansion, and military partnerships were emerging as key priorities. The plan also outlined targeted actions such as the development of new STEM programs, rebranding existing degrees to align with labor demands, and increasing interdisciplinary credentialing through multi-discipline completers (p. 12). Cultural and civic engagement remained visible as well, with initiatives like the Fine Arts and Distinguished Speakers Series (p. 16), expanded internship and research pipelines (p. 19), and

new benchmarking metrics to evaluate institutional research output—illustrating a strategy that blended public mission with performance alignment.

By the time of the 2022–2027 plan and its accompanying report card, those priorities were sharpened into bold institutional imperatives. The university framed itself as "the university of human potential" and declared that its "graduates are ready for tomorrow" through career readiness, expanded research capacity, and industry-responsive programs (Fayetteville State University, 2023, p. 3).

The 2022–2027 strategic plan is organized around five priorities: academic excellence, student engagement and career development, campus community vitality, strategic partnerships, and sustainability. It explicitly states the goal of preparing students to "compete on a global level," naming military, adult learners, and first-generation students as target populations (Fayetteville State University, 2022, p. 6). Within this framework, graduate education and research are positioned as engines of institutional transformation—a role that is both rhetorical and operational, as later emphasized through FSU's targeted expansion into high-demand graduate fields. This framing will be revisited in the discussion chapter to expand upon its broader significance across institutional cases. The report card notes "new academic programs in emerging fields such as cybersecurity and military behavioral health" and emphasizes FSU's "top-ranked online MBA" and "largest HBCU producer of teachers in North Carolina" (Fayetteville State University, 2023, p. 3). While language around diversity, cultural pride, and service to rural and military populations remains visible—particularly in the institution's core values—such identity markers are consistently framed in service of producing "career- and life-ready global citizens" (p. 5). As a result, FSU's HBCU mission is folded into a broader push

for measurable outcomes, where cultural references support, rather than lead, the case for innovation and workforce alignment..

Graduate Catalog Analysis

FSU's graduate program offerings between 2016 and 2024 reveal a marked pivot toward market-aligned, flexible, and technology-driven academic pathways, particularly within business and education fields. Across this timeline, the Master of Business Administration (MBA) underwent substantial specialization, with the addition of tracks in Business Intelligence and Data Analytics, Cybersecurity Management, Health Informatics, and Digital Enterprise and Cloud Management—each reflecting broader institutional goals around innovation, employability, and regional industry alignment (Fayetteville State University, 2024). These additions not only responded to workforce demands but also aligned with the University's stated ambition to become a leader in emerging fields, as noted in both its strategic plans and annual report card. This expansion coexists with sustained offerings in more generalist MBA tracks like Marketing, International Business, and Project Management, creating a diversified but clearly applied orientation within FSU's business programs.

Simultaneously, the catalog reflects consolidation and curricular pruning in teacher preparation and behavioral science programs, with many MAT and MEd degree variants in subjects such as Science, Language Arts, and Secondary Education being removed or restructured. Removals were especially prevalent between 2018 and 2023 and often replaced with streamlined or interdisciplinary alternatives—such as broader K–12 or 6–9 subject area programs that offered more consolidated credentialing options. In total, 29 programs were added and 27 were removed between 2016 and 2024, with most additions concentrated in applied

business and education fields, and most removals affecting legacy liberal arts, counseling, and traditional teacher preparation pathways.

Programs in Counseling, Experimental Psychology, and Sociology were also phased out, suggesting a shift away from legacy liberal arts and social science graduate programs in favor of professionally oriented degrees with clearer economic utility. Still, some non-STEM programs saw revitalization through specialization. The Social Work program, for instance, retained strength across multiple concentrations, including Mental Health and Children & Family tracks, while new education programs addressed instructional technology and special education subfields. Taken together, FSU's catalog exhibits a recalibrated institutional strategy: one that prioritizes efficiency, labor alignment, and online adaptability, while selectively preserving elements of its traditional public-service mission in fields like social work and education leadership.

FSU's strategic planning and graduate program development from 2015 through 2024 reflect a deliberate evolution from a regional access institution to a responsive, professionally oriented public HBCU. While the university's mission continues to emphasize community transformation, military engagement, and cultural pride, these values are increasingly positioned within a broader narrative of innovation, research competitiveness, and career readiness. Strategic documents emphasized performance metrics, interdisciplinary partnerships, and technological advancement—particularly in the creation of new academic programs in cybersecurity, behavioral health, and data analytics. The graduate catalog echoes these priorities, showing expansion in applied business and healthcare fields alongside the reduction or restructuring of many liberal arts and traditional teacher preparation pathways. In both planning and practice, FSU teeters between symbolic affirmation of its HBCU identity and strategic

alignment with state demands for economic contribution and workforce development. While references to cultural legacy and public service remain present, they are often positioned in support of performance metrics rather than as stand-alone imperatives—raising questions about whether identity is being authentically embedded or selectively showcased for legitimacy.

Winston-Salem State University

Strategic Plan Analysis

Winston-Salem State University's (WSSU) strategic documents from 2016 through 2024 presented a compelling case of institutional continuity and evolution, marked by a strong emphasis on equity, health sciences, and liberal education as cornerstones of its identity and strategic vision. The university's 2016–2021 strategic plan, *Experiencing Academic Distinction: Transforming Learning for the 21st Century*, foregrounded WSSU's commitment to producing "critical thinkers, analytical problem solvers, effective communicators, and innovative and creative collaborators" through liberal education and high-impact practices (Winston-Salem State University, 2020, p. 1). Graduate and professional programs were positioned not only as vehicles for upward mobility, but also as platforms for integrating community engagement and health equity into curricula. The plan explicitly noted that "100% of the programs in the School of Health Sciences integrated health equity focused activities" and that graduate students had increasing opportunities for supervised research and conference presentations (p. 3). These efforts were supported by institutional research centers such as the Center for the Study of Economic Mobility and the Center of Excellence for the Elimination of Health Disparities—both reinforcing the university's social justice mission through data-driven, community-engaged scholarship.

This commitment was deepened in Goal 3, which emphasized building "commitment to social justice through enhanced community engagement" (p. 6), including interdisciplinary partnerships like the Spatial Justice Studio's NSF-funded initiative to integrate data science into Urban Studies. Moreover, Goal 2 expanded the university's vision for graduate education—recognizing WSSU's growing profile in graduate and professional degree offerings, including increased graduate enrollment, gains in Black and Hispanic student representation, and a notable rise in faculty-supervised research projects across health sciences and liberal arts (p. 10). Joint programs across colleges, integration of community engagement into 100% of graduate curricula, and mobile unit outreach efforts all demonstrate a holistic vision of graduate education as a driver of both academic distinction and social impact.

The university's 2023–2024 *Unleash the Genius* strategic priorities continued this trajectory but introduced more explicit workforce-aligned language and data-informed operational efficiency. WSSU outlines goals to "increase student enrollment," "improve undergraduate degree efficiency," and "enhance operational efficiency" through tactics such as partnerships with Project Kitty Hawk and use of EAB Navigate for subgroup retention analysis (Winston-Salem State University, 2023, pp. 1–2). Though still rooted in a value-centered mission—amplified through campaigns that celebrate "faculty, student, and alumni genius"—the 2023 plan adopts a more measurable, outcomes-based orientation, particularly regarding enrollment yield, financial aid optimization, and graduation rates. Together, WSSU's strategic documents reflect an institutional identity that blends long-standing commitments to health equity and social justice with a growing responsiveness to performance metrics and economic imperatives. In this dual alignment, WSSU positions itself as a distinctly mission-driven HBCU navigating both regional impact and national competitiveness.

However, despite its continuity in values, the current plan lacks the depth and specificity of earlier documents when it comes to graduate education. The shift toward generalized efficiency language—without robust articulation of graduate program direction, interdisciplinary expansion, or mission alignment—may signal a moment of institutional uncertainty, where strategic clarity is still evolving. While earlier plans tied graduate education explicitly to equity, interdisciplinarity, and regional service, the 2023 plan leaves this work implied rather than fully developed—raising questions about the extent to which graduate-level *servingness*, as historically enacted through culturally rooted programming and responsive mission articulation, will remain central to WSSU's evolving institutional strategy.

Graduate Catalog Analysis

WSSU's graduate program offerings from 2007 to 2024 illustrate a sustained commitment to professional preparation in healthcare, education, and public service, while selectively expanding into areas of technological innovation and interdisciplinary science. Throughout this period, the university maintained robust programs in Nursing (MSN), Occupational Therapy (MSOT), Healthcare Administration (MHA), and Rehabilitation Counseling (MSRC), underscoring its long-standing investment in applied health and community wellness (Winston-Salem State University, 2024). These programs formed the foundation for the university's identity as a health sciences institution. At the same time, new programmatic growth has been marked by the addition of terminal degrees such as the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), the Transitional Doctor of Physical Therapy (t-DPT), and the 5-Year BS-MS in Computer Science and Information Technology—each aligned with trends in workforce specialization, licensure pathways, and interdisciplinary training.

Between 2007 and 2024, several programs were phased out—most notably in liberal arts and traditional teacher education—while four new graduate programs were introduced and three were removed, reflecting a modest but purposeful recalibration of WSSU's graduate portfolio. The removal of programs such as the MEd in Elementary Education, the MA in English as a Second Language and Applied Linguistics, and the MPT in Physical Therapy reflects a consolidation of graduate offerings, likely in response to enrollment shifts and state licensure reforms. In their place, WSSU pursued more targeted credentials—particularly those that support adult learners, online delivery, and high-demand professions. The continued presence of the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) and strategic additions like the BS-MS pathway in computing suggest that the university is refining its graduate portfolio toward efficiency and interdisciplinary relevance rather than simply expanding its number of offerings. Overall, the catalog reveals a pragmatic balancing act: preserving WSSU's historic role in preparing health professionals and educators, while pivoting toward programs that reflect both regional labor needs and internal aspirations for institutional growth and impact.

WSSU's strategic planning and graduate catalog evolution from 2007 to 2024 demonstrate a sustained effort to balance health equity, social justice, and liberal education with emerging state and system-level demands for enrollment growth, operational efficiency, and workforce alignment. Across both its 2016–2021 strategic plan and the 2023–2024 institutional priorities, WSSU positions itself as a mission-driven HBCU that advances community impact through high-touch graduate education, particularly in health sciences and applied professional fields. Its graduate catalog reflects this alignment, maintaining strength in nursing, therapy, and counseling programs while gradually phasing out liberal arts and traditional education degrees.

At the same time, the university has introduced interdisciplinary and tech-forward offerings such as a 5-year BS-MS in Computer Science and advanced terminal degrees in healthcare.

However, while the 2023–2024 plan continues to echo core institutional values, it offers comparatively less clarity around the future direction of graduate programming—raising questions about whether WSSU's strategic approach to graduate education will maintain its previous depth and intentionality. Even so, the broader institutional strategy reflects a form of adaptive preservation: protecting its foundational identity in health and service while strategically responding to external accountability pressures through targeted innovation and performance-based restructuring.

Elizabeth City State University

Strategic Plan Analysis

Although a full strategic plan document was not made publicly available, screenshots from Elizabeth City State University's (ESCU) 2020–2025 strategic planning materials and publicly available assessment reports offer insight into an institutional strategy grounded in regional engagement, K–12 pipeline development, and focused graduate program offerings. The strategic plan outlines five thematic goals: Academic Excellence, Student Success, Institutional Sustainability, Economic Impact, and Inclusive Excellence. Across these areas, ECSU emphasizes its commitment to expanding access for rural and underserved populations in Northeastern North Carolina while increasing its visibility and competitiveness in key workforce sectors such as aviation, education, and the sciences. The goal of "Economic Impact" explicitly ties university efforts to regional development, aiming to align degree production with labor

market needs and to serve as an “anchor institution” within its geographic region (Elizabeth City State University, 2020).

The available planning materials and institutional performance data point to a pragmatic strategy that balances mission-aligned goals of access and service with increasingly targeted programmatic investments. Graduate education is framed as a growth area, especially in teacher education, STEM-adjacent fields, and applied mathematics. While diversity and equity are noted as institutional values, the framing of these themes is less developed than at other North Carolina HBCUs, likely due in part to the institution’s small size and limited programmatic bandwidth. Nevertheless, ECSU’s strategic language signals a cautious alignment with UNC System goals—particularly around enrollment, degree productivity, and workforce relevance—while retaining a regional service ethos rooted in teacher training and STEM education. In this context, ECSU’s strategic positioning appears focused on institutional survival and niche specialization, rather than broad market expansion.

Graduate Catalog Analysis

ECSU’s graduate catalog from 2015 to 2024 reflects a steady but limited programmatic portfolio, with a notable concentration in education, biological sciences, and applied mathematics. The catalog data shows no graduate program removals during this period; instead, ECSU maintained its existing offerings while selectively expanding in areas of local and regional relevance. During this period, ECSU added one new graduate program—the “Teacher Leader” concentration within the MEd in Elementary Education—and did not remove any programs, suggesting a pattern of minimal change shaped less by expansionary ambition than by institutional stability and capacity. Long-standing degrees such as the Master of School

Administration and the Master of Education in Elementary Education remain core offerings, reflecting ECSU's historical role as a regional teacher-training institution (Elizabeth City State University, 2024). In 2020, the university added a new "Teacher Leader" track within the MEd in Elementary Education, likely in response to evolving K–12 licensure and instructional leadership needs, especially in rural school districts.

Beyond education, ECSU sustains a diverse cluster of graduate programs in biology and mathematics, each with multiple concentrations. The Biology (MS) program includes both general biological sciences and a track in biology education, while the Mathematics (MS) offerings are subdivided into applied mathematics, remote sensing, community college teaching, and mathematics education. These specialized tracks suggest an intentional alignment with research, instruction, and workforce preparation needs in Eastern North Carolina—particularly in STEM-adjacent fields that may support local economic development or feed into K–12 and community college systems. However, unlike larger HBCUs in the state, ECSU's catalog does not exhibit expansion into business, health sciences, or interdisciplinary graduate programs during this period. As such, the catalog reflects a modest but stable institutional strategy: one that sustains legacy programming in education and STEM, while cautiously introducing targeted enhancements that serve regional labor needs and credentialing demands.

ECSU's strategic planning and graduate offerings between 2015 and 2024 reflect a focused and pragmatic institutional identity rooted in regional service and professional preparation. Although full strategic documentation was unavailable, the 2020–2025 planning materials and programmatic assessments signal a commitment to educational access, economic development, and workforce alignment, particularly in teacher education, biology, and mathematics. Unlike its larger North Carolina HBCU counterparts, ECSU's strategy emphasizes

stability over expansion, sustaining core graduate programs while selectively introducing enhancements—such as the MEd Teacher Leader track—that address local licensure needs and leadership pipelines. The absence of removals and the continued presence of specialized STEM fields such as remote sensing and applied mathematics suggest a niche-based model responsive to geographic and economic context. ECSU's institutional trajectory thus reflects a logic of strategic preservation: maintaining a legacy of regional impact while modestly aligning with broader system-level goals.

Texas: Market-Driven Logics and Workforce-Oriented Metrics

Texas has long approached higher education policy through a lens of economic return and workforce alignment. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), which oversees public institutions across the state, has introduced successive long-term strategic plans—Closing the Gaps, 60x30TX, and most recently, Building a Talent Strong Texas—that center postsecondary education as a lever for economic growth. These plans prioritize credentials of value, labor market outcomes, and industry partnerships, often downplaying the role of cultural mission, community uplift, or educational equity.

For Texas Southern University (TSU) and Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU), both of which serve largely Black and first-generation student populations, this policy environment necessitates careful rhetorical maneuvering. As institutions rooted in social justice and racial uplift, their graduate programming must meet the demands of a heavily metricized system while still signaling allegiance to their founding missions.

This section presents a timeline of language and programmatic changes from 2004 to 2024 across TSU and PVAMU. Strategic plan analysis is used to uncover how each institution

has positioned its graduate programs in response to THECB priorities—particularly in fields like health, education, business, and STEM. Building on the chapter's earlier structure, this section details findings for each Texas institution, tracing graduate program changes and rhetorical positioning within strategic planning documents. Although several patterns surface across cases, comparative insights are reserved for the concluding cross-state analysis.

Prairie View A&M University

Strategic Plan Analysis

Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) has consistently positioned itself at the intersection of access, academic excellence, and social responsibility. Designated as an "institution of the first class" in the Texas Constitution, PVAMU anchors its mission in a commitment to high-quality education, research, and service—particularly in support of underserved communities (PVAMU, 2016, p. 4). Across multiple strategic planning cycles, including the 2016–2021 *A Plan for Reinventing PVAMU* and the 2035 *Journey to Eminence* plans, the university has maintained a consistent focus on student success, institutional relevance, and research expansion. These guiding values—access and quality, diversity, leadership, relevance, and social responsibility—are not only aspirational but also embedded throughout its operational goals and institutional planning logic (Prairie View A&M University, 2016; 2025).

The 2016–2021 plan, titled *A Plan for Reinventing PVAMU*, was framed by a recognition of PVAMU's historical mission and its contemporary potential. It declared that "founded for the express purpose of educating the progeny of former slaves, PVAMU...has evolved into an 'institution of the first class' and serves all segments of the population" (PVAMU, 2016, p. 4). This framing acknowledged the dual imperative to honor legacy while embracing institutional

transformation. Strategic themes—ranging from student success to research innovation—were mapped against both Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) goals and state priorities such as the 60x30TX plan. In doing so, PVAMU articulated a dual commitment to serving historically underrepresented groups and positioning itself as a competitive, research-active institution.

One of the plan's more resonating phrases, "pound the rock," emerged as a metaphor for the university's call to action. It reflected a cultural shift toward accountability and institutional urgency, wherein "each employee must exhibit a sense of urgency and, in effect, pound the rock to make changes that will position the University to realize its full potential" (PVAMU, 2016, p. 8). This language emphasizes a strategic and rhetorical move to frame persistence, not simply as resilience, but as transformational labor. The shift toward research capacity is especially notable across planning cycles. By 2021, the university aimed to enter the upper quartile of research prominence among HBCUs and to begin "the pathway leading to becoming an emerging research institution based on quality, scope, and dollar value of research expenditure" (PVAMU, 2016, p. 26). This aspirational goal is expanded further in the 2035 strategic vision, which calls for awarding 70 doctoral research degrees and investing in postdoctoral fellowships, research-intensive faculty, and laboratory infrastructure (PVAMU, 2025, p. 16). The language across these plans demonstrates a marked evolution—from emphasizing basic research engagement to envisioning a robust graduate and research ecosystem capable of national and international impact.

These plans also reinforce PVAMU's mission to serve as a "national model for student success," even as the institution navigates market pressures and policy mandates. In the 2035 framework, strategic goals are articulated through phrases like "promote comprehensive growth," "accelerate the university's research capacity," and "extend our impact through

regional, national, and global outreach efforts" (PVAMU, 2025, pp. 8–17). These statements suggest a growing fluency in institutional code-switching—using the language of performance, innovation, and competitiveness while sustaining an equity-centered mission. As such, the strategic plans serve not just as roadmaps for action but as discursive tools that help legitimize PVAMU's presence in both state policy arenas and national rankings.

PVAMU's evolving strategic language—from "reaffirming legacy" to "research prominence" and "global outreach"—will be central to how this study interprets shifts in mission framing, programmatic direction, and institutional identity over time. These transitions provide a critical foundation for analyzing how HBCUs like PVAMU reconcile the demands of racialized academic capitalism with a commitment to educational justice and public good.

Graduate Catalog Analysis

From 2012 to 2024, Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) demonstrated a deliberate recalibration of its graduate program offerings, reflecting evolving institutional priorities and strategic alignment with both state and system-level mandates. This period was marked by the addition of high-demand, professionally oriented programs—particularly in nursing, justice studies, and psychology—alongside the removal of several legacy degrees in agriculture and human sciences. These changes correspond with broader strategic shifts identified in PVAMU's 2016–2021 *A Plan for Reinventing PVAMU* and 2035 *Journey to Eminence* plans, where the university signaled a commitment to expanding research capacity, responding to workforce needs, and enhancing graduate-level impact in service-driven disciplines. Between 2012 and 2024, PVAMU added 13 new graduate programs and removed 8, reflecting a dynamic period of

experimentation and strategic reorientation toward healthcare, psychology, and applied research disciplines.

The nursing discipline experienced significant expansion beginning in the mid-2010s, with the introduction of the Family Nurse Practitioner (MSN), Nurse Administration (MSN), and Nurse Education (MSN) programs. These were soon followed by the launch of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), which, despite being temporarily removed from the catalog, was reinstated by 2023–2024. This fluctuation suggests not only programmatic experimentation but also a renewed institutional commitment to addressing critical shortages in advanced practice nursing and healthcare leadership. Similarly, PVAMU's additions in the psychological sciences, including Clinical Adolescent Psychology (MS, PhD) and Juvenile Forensic Psychology (MS), reflect a deepening specialization in mental health and justice-aligned fields. These programs complement PVAMU's long-standing investment in Juvenile Justice education, as the Juvenile Justice PhD remained consistently available across the entire 12-year span.

The university's expansion into doctoral education was further demonstrated by the addition of the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) in 2022–2023. The DBA, with its emphasis on applied research and executive leadership, aligns with PVAMU's strategic aim to "drive strategic advancement of research" while preparing graduates for complex, data-informed decision-making roles (Prairie View A&M University, 2025). Coupled with continued offerings in Electrical Engineering (PhD) and Educational Leadership (PhD), PVAMU's growing doctoral portfolio reinforces its trajectory toward becoming a more research-intensive, doctoral-granting institution as outlined in its strategic plans.

Simultaneously, the university phased out several graduate programs in the agricultural and human sciences, including MS degrees in Animal Science, Agricultural Economics, and

Social Sciences, as well as Family and Consumer Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies in Human Sciences. The absence of these programs from recent catalogs suggests a potential reallocation of institutional resources away from under-enrolled or less market-aligned degrees. This trend mirrors broader shifts in public HBCU environments where academic offerings are increasingly scrutinized for labor market alignment and funding viability. Notably, the MS in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences was introduced in the 2022–2023 catalog, which may signal a strategic pivot toward interdisciplinary environmental studies—a field increasingly valued for its relevance to sustainability and public health.

Despite this reconfiguration, PVAMU has maintained a stable portfolio of graduate programs in STEM and professional fields. Degrees in Computer Science, Computer Information Systems, Chemistry, Engineering, and Electrical Engineering were consistently offered throughout the timeline, indicating institutional prioritization of technical disciplines central to the research enterprise. These programs align with PVAMU's stated goal to become "an emerging research institution based on quality, scope, and dollar value of research expenditure" (Prairie View A&M University, 2016, p. 26). The continuity of these programs also supports long-term capacity-building in graduate-level instruction and innovation.

PVAMU's education programs, including Curriculum and Instruction, Special Education, Educational Administration, Counseling, and Educational Leadership, were consistently retained across the 12-year period. These offerings reinforce the institution's historical roots in teacher preparation while reflecting an enduring public mission to support school leadership and community-based educational equity. The addition of the Master of Social Work (MSW) in 2023–2024 further emphasizes this mission, enhancing PVAMU's service to communities

through a program that directly addresses workforce shortages in public health and social services.

Overall, PVAMU's graduate catalog history reveals a dual trajectory of institutional identity: one that sustains core commitments to equity and access through education, while simultaneously embracing the demands of research prominence and professional relevance. This evolution in program offerings illustrates how strategic language and institutional priorities have materialized over time—not only in narrative but in curricular infrastructure. These shifts provide a critical lens through which to assess how the university's mission alignment and responsiveness to market-driven policy logics have been negotiated through its graduate programming.

Texas Southern University

Strategic Plan Analysis

Texas Southern University's strategic planning from 2001 through 2025 reveals a deliberate evolution from mission-centric rhetoric rooted in access and cultural uplift to a more hybridized logic that blends student success, research competitiveness, and institutional performance. Early plans such as the 2001–2006 and 2005–2010 frameworks emphasized TSU's statutory role as an "urban programming" institution committed to broad access, particularly for underrepresented communities. These documents reflect an institution still very much in a foundational phase—focused heavily on undergraduate education, physical and technological infrastructure, and internal stability. Strategic priorities centered on enrollment management, fiscal integrity, and basic institutional capacity rather than research competitiveness or graduate expansion. Even as these plans invoked a long-term vision for "preeminence," they

acknowledged the immediate realities of declining state appropriations and increasing accountability demands, positioning TSU as a university navigating both opportunity and constraint within a limited resource environment (Texas Southern University, 2005).

By 2009–2015, TSU had consolidated these themes into measurable performance goals, including improvements in licensure pass rates, the development of interdisciplinary research centers, commercialization of intellectual property, and retention-based enrollment strategies (Texas Southern University, 2009). These priorities reflect core tenets of Academic Capitalism, in which public institutions are incentivized to compete for prestige and resources by demonstrating value through labor-market outcomes, knowledge production, and entrepreneurial performance. The plan explicitly framed these goals within a workforce and economic development agenda, noting efforts to produce "a diverse body of graduates with the competencies and skills needed by the workforce to increase the level of business productivity that results in employment opportunities in the community" (p. 17). At the same time, the plan elevated the institution's research ambitions, declaring its intent to "become a nationally recognized center of research that provides faculty and graduate students with innovative and creative research, professional development opportunities and supporting grants" (p. 17). These statements reflect a dual focus: advancing racial equity through graduate and professional access while aligning institutional growth with market productivity and external funding competitiveness—a clear example of TSU's early articulation of RAC. In this framing, diversity and inclusion are not just moral imperatives but strategic assets, discursively justified through their potential to enhance institutional competitiveness and labor market outcomes.

The university's 2017–2022 strategic plan formalized this shift through five integrated institutional goals: Student Success and Completion, Academic Program Quality and Research,

Culture, Partnerships, and Finances (Texas Southern University, 2018). The plan emphasized first-year experience design, strategic use of data to enhance advising, and curricular revision to meet labor market needs. In doing so, it elevated retention, graduation, and career readiness to institutional benchmarks—signaling a deeper embrace of performance-based planning. The plan also articulated a goal of "fostering a culture of innovation" in academic units and building faculty capacity for sponsored research, thereby reinforcing TSU's identity as a comprehensive research-oriented HBCU. These goals continue into the 2025 planning cycle, where TSU positions itself as "Houston's HBCU," linking academic excellence to civic partnerships, interdisciplinary centers, and economic development through workforce training and entrepreneurship (Texas Southern University, 2023). Across this timeline, TSU performs a careful negotiation between preserving its historical public mission and adopting metrics-driven strategies that respond to state system demands. The resulting institutional logic reflects the pressures of racial academic capitalism—where cultural legitimacy, market relevance, and public accountability converge within an evolving HBCU context.

Graduate Catalog Analysis

TSU's graduate program trajectory from 2006 through 2024 reveals a deliberate evolution toward applied, interdisciplinary, and professionally-oriented fields, particularly in health, public service, and STEM-related disciplines. While TSU has retained many foundational programs in the arts and social sciences—such as Psychology (MA), English (MA), and Public Administration (MPA)—the catalog shows a clear institutional shift toward expanding terminal degrees and specialized professional offerings. Between 2006 and 2024, TSU added 9 new graduate programs and removed 9, illustrating a pattern of deliberate rebalancing rather than wholesale expansion or contraction. Notable additions over this period include the Executive

MBA, the Executive Master of Public Administration (EMPA), the PhD in Administration of Justice, and the MS in Pharmacy—each reflecting strategic investments in graduate education tied to workforce demand, licensure outcomes, and research intensification (Texas Southern University, 2024).

Simultaneously, the university retired several legacy programs, including the MFA in Performing Arts, the MA in Clinical and Urban Sociology, and multiple degrees in Health and Human Performance and Industrial Technology. In several cases, these removals were followed by updated or rebranded replacements—such as the phased-out Human Performance (MS) leading to the introduction of Health & Kinesiology (MS), and new interdisciplinary options like Sports Studies and Sport Leadership (MS). This reconfiguration suggests a refinement of TSU's graduate portfolio: reducing redundancy, consolidating mission-aligned offerings, and rebranding academic pathways to better match external expectations of graduate program value. The presence of new PhD programs in Pharmaceutical Science and Environmental Toxicology, alongside long-standing doctoral degrees in Urban Planning and Education, further illustrates TSU's intent to expand its research and professional footprint while remaining rooted in public-serving disciplines.

In contrast to more wholesale overhauls at other institutions, TSU's catalog changes reflect a steady rebalancing of institutional priorities. Programs in teaching, humanities, and the liberal arts remain—but increasingly alongside, and often overshadowed by, graduate degrees that signal technical expertise, applied policy training, and sector-specific leadership. Taken together, the catalog portrays a university incrementally adapting to market logics while retaining core programmatic anchors that align with its HBCU legacy and urban mission.

TSU's strategic planning and graduate program offerings from 2001 through 2024 reflect a university negotiating the intersection of mission preservation and market recalibration. Across successive strategic plans, TSU consistently framed itself as a comprehensive urban HBCU committed to educational access, community service, and professional excellence. Over time, however, this narrative evolved into a performance-oriented strategy, emphasizing retention, licensure outcomes, interdisciplinary research, and innovation infrastructure. The graduate catalog reveals parallel patterns: while foundational degrees in the liberal arts, education, and public service remain intact, they have increasingly been accompanied—and, in some cases, supplanted—by professionally oriented and STEM-adjacent programs. TSU's adaptation is not abrupt but incremental, reflecting an institutional strategy of portfolio refinement rather than programmatic overhaul. This blend of continuity and innovation illustrates how the university has sought to sustain its identity as a public-serving HBCU while responding to competitive pressures in Texas' higher education landscape.

Across-Case Themes Analyses

Graduate Programs as Strategic Anchors: Navigating Market Pressures, Cultural Commitments, and Institutional Boundaries

The previous sections documented how institutions framed and implemented graduate programming over a 20-year period, and how those shifts mapped onto state priorities and strategic imperatives. Yet beneath the surface of program additions, removals, and reframing lies a more complex story about institutional agency, structural constraint, and the politics of knowledge production in racialized educational systems.

This is not merely a story about which programs were added or cut—but about what kinds of knowledge are deemed valuable, fundable, and legitimate in a system structured by RAC. Interdisciplinary programming, for instance, is often celebrated in mainstream policy discourse as a sign of innovation, flexibility, and relevance. But in HBCU contexts, the adoption of interdisciplinary framing may be less about intellectual hybridity and more about survival. When institutions repackage culturally grounded programs under the guise of "data science" or "public policy innovation," it raises a critical question: Is interdisciplinarity functioning as a space of institutional creativity, or as a Trojan horse for epistemic conformity?

What emerges from the data is a tension between rhetorical participation in dominant logics and quiet acts of curricular preservation. Institutions like NCAT and PVAMU are fluent in the language of innovation and research competitiveness; their strategic documents are saturated with performance-based indicators and STEM expansion. Yet other institutions—WSSU, FAMU—retain robust non-STEM graduate offerings and integrate them into narratives of cultural legacy and community uplift, even when such narratives are not prominently featured in state frameworks. These curricular decisions represent more than program stability—they reflect strategic enactments of *servingness*, in which institutions actively preserve mission-aligned fields despite neoliberal pressures to conform. As DeTurk and Briscoe (2020) argue, equity-oriented institutions navigating state-imposed performance demands must contend with the erosion of liberatory goals in favor of market logic. In this context, the continued support of culturally rooted, interdisciplinary, and community-responsive programs at some HBCUs can be read as acts of institutional care—affirming historical commitments to Black educational uplift through graduate education.

This divergence is not incidental. It reflects institutional calculus about where adaptation ends and protection begins. Where some institutions use symbolic capital (e.g., land-grant status, R1 aspirations) to gain room for maneuver, others draw red lines around graduate education—refusing to fully monetize or rebrand the disciplines most tied to cultural memory and social responsibility.

Thus, graduate program development becomes a window into a deeper dialectic: between the logics of survival and the ethics of mission. HBCUs are not passively absorbing neoliberal policy—they are, as this study shows, strategically navigating, selectively resisting, and discursively reshaping those logics in ways that defy simple categorization. The visual code maps and catalog timelines are not just data—they are manifestations of strategic refusal, symbolic negotiation, and in some cases, institutional mourning for what has been quietly lost. In reading these patterns, we begin to see servingness not as a static designation, but as a dynamic praxis—one that reveals how HBCUs navigate the uneasy terrain between institutional survival and liberatory aspiration in a system not built for their flourishing.

Legibility and Silence: Framing Graduate Values in Strategic Narratives

Research Question 1 asked: To what extent are STEM and non-STEM values, missions, and metrics described at the graduate level within strategic plans for HBCUs?

Across the institutions examined, graduate education emerges as a discursive battleground where HBCUs are compelled to narrate their value in terms legible to external funders, policymakers, and ranking bodies. STEM is not just prioritized in strategic documents—it is positioned as the default language of legitimacy. Within strategic plans from NCAT, PVAMU, and TSU, graduate STEM expansion is framed through a familiar lexicon of

"innovation," "economic development," and "national competitiveness." These values are rendered as self-evident goods, rarely interrogated but always measured. The very metrics used to assess institutional worth—research expenditures, doctoral production, industry alignment—are inherently tilted toward disciplines that serve state and market needs. In this context, the appearance of STEM values in strategic documents is not simply reflective of workforce trends, but of the racialized structure of academic value itself.

However, non-STEM values—particularly those rooted in cultural identity, community accountability, and social justice—persist in quieter, often less celebrated ways. At institutions like FAMU and WSSU, graduate programs in Educational Leadership, Curriculum and Instruction, and Public Administration are maintained not because they align with external performance incentives, but because they represent institutional commitments that transcend market logics. These programs rarely receive the rhetorical fanfare of their STEM counterparts, but their persistence across planning cycles and catalog revisions suggests intentional preservation. What is notable is not only their survival, but their discursive positioning: rather than being expanded, reframed, or rebranded under interdisciplinary banners, many of these non-STEM programs remain intact—untouched by the very innovation language that reshapes so many others.

This reveals a critical asymmetry. While STEM programs are constantly evolving, adapting, and absorbing the language of policy legitimacy, non-STEM programs often remain untouched—shielded from rebranding or strategic reinvention. This study introduces the concept of *institutional red lines* to describe these protected curricular spaces: zones of intentional preservation where institutions quietly refuse to commodify disciplines rooted in cultural mission and social responsibility. Their quiet presence becomes a form of epistemic resistance. In

resisting the urge to repackage these programs as "policy innovation" or "data-driven education," institutions make a different kind of claim: that not all knowledge must be instrumentalized to be valued.

Importantly, the absence of non-STEM metrics in strategic plans should not be misread as neglect. Rather, it reflects the selective visibility that institutions must manage when operating within systems that reward conformity over cultural specificity. The silence around non-STEM graduate values in some documents is itself a strategic act—a way to avoid drawing scrutiny or appearing misaligned with state agendas. In this way, HBCUs are not simply responding to policy environments; they are curating their institutional narrative, carefully choosing which parts of their mission to amplify and which to protect through omission. This narrative choreography is not accidental—it is a calculated form of *servingness* that guards cultural and epistemic integrity under the guise of institutional pragmatism.

Balancing Acts: Interdisciplinary Bridges and Institutional Code-Switching

Research Question 2 asked: How do HBCU strategic initiatives address the balance between STEM and non-STEM graduate education in alignment with their broader mission and foundational values?

While institutional strategic plans rarely describe their programmatic moves as negotiations, the structure and language of graduate offerings suggest precisely that—a careful calibration of visibility, market logic, and mission fidelity. The idea of "balance" between STEM and non-STEM graduate education is less about proportionality, and more about narrative strategy: how HBCUs manage to assert their cultural mission within state-sanctioned logics of productivity and economic alignment. Interdisciplinary framing often acts as the discursive

bridge across this divide, offering institutions a way to protect legacy programs while rebranding them in language more palatable to funding bodies and system leaders.

This pattern appears clearly at FAMU, where programs in sustainability and public health are couched in interdisciplinary rhetoric that aligns with workforce development, while still drawing from culturally grounded traditions of environmental justice and community health. But the reliance on interdisciplinary framing is not universal. At WSSU, for example, strategic plans reveal less emphasis on interdisciplinary innovation and more overt commitments to cultural identity, student support, and community engagement. Programs such as Rehabilitation Counseling and Healthcare Management are maintained as stand-alone offerings, without being reframed under new policy-facing labels. This suggests an institutional logic less concerned with strategic mimicry and more invested in transparency around mission-serving graduate education.

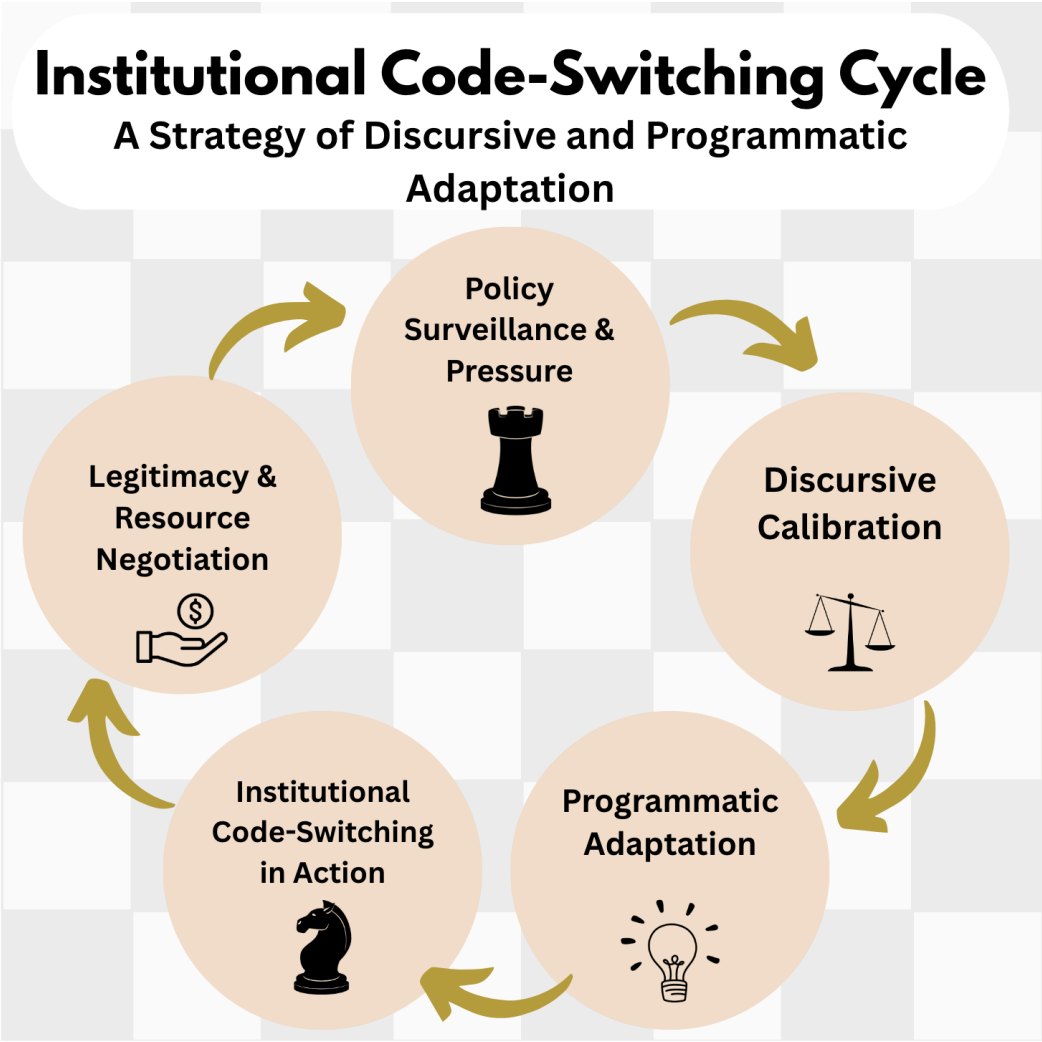
Similarly, NCCU offers a hybrid case. While the institution retains traditional graduate programs in law, education, and public administration, it has also introduced cross-cutting initiatives in social work and behavioral health. However, rather than branding these offerings as "interdisciplinary innovation," NCCU's planning documents emphasize their social relevance, urban impact, and historical connection to Black leadership pipelines. Here, interdisciplinarity is implied through community outcomes rather than through discursive rebranding.

This variability in framing reveals multiple layers of *institutional code-switching* (see Figure 4.1). Code-switching, as theorized in sociolinguistic and educational research, refers to the practice of shifting between languages or communicative styles in response to changing audiences or social power dynamics (Martin-Jones, 1995; Kamwangamalu, 2010). In professional and academic contexts, it is often a racialized survival strategy for individual

people, allowing marginalized individuals to navigate spaces governed by dominant cultural expectations (McCluney et al., 2019). Applied at the organizational level, code-switching provides a lens through which to understand how HBCUs frame graduate education through the tensions between historical missions and market pressures: not as a simple reflection of internal priorities, but as a carefully managed act of translation. Through interdisciplinary branding, performance metrics, and policy-legible language, institutions strategically present themselves to external audiences without fully compromising internal mission commitments.

Figure 4.1

Institutional Code-Switching Cycle



Note: Institutional code switching is impacted if one or more "pieces" are altered. The cycle is not a linear phenomenon.

Importantly, not all institutions engage with code-switching in the same way. While schools like PVAMU and FAMU perform discursive fluency through strategic plans filled with innovation language, other institutions choose more subtle or hybridized approaches. North

Carolina Central University (NCCU), for instance, retains traditional graduate offerings in law, public administration, and education while also introducing programs in social work and behavioral health. Rather than emphasizing interdisciplinarity or marketability, NCCU foregrounds these programs' social relevance, urban community impact, and alignment with Black leadership traditions. Here, the balance between adaptation and authenticity is navigated not through reframing, but through intentional narrative positioning—signaling both strategic awareness and cultural accountability.

Whether through performative adaptation or discursive restraint, code-switching becomes a marker of institutional literacy: a way for HBCUs to remain legible within economic systems that were never designed to affirm their full mission. In the context of academic capitalism and the new economy[11], this legibility is not neutral—it demands fluency in the logics of market responsiveness, workforce development, and entrepreneurial value creation (Rhoades & Slaughter, 2004). As public institutions are increasingly evaluated through performance-based funding, applied research productivity, and job-placement metrics, HBCUs must continually translate their historic commitments into the language of economic utility. In some cases, interdisciplinary framing becomes a shield; in others, silence is a strategy. Either way, graduate program design and rhetoric reflect not just educational priorities, but political choices about what to say, how to say it, and who needs to understand.

[11] *Academic Capitalism and the new economy* refers to the reorientation of public universities toward market-driven behaviors, including revenue generation, labor-market responsiveness, and entrepreneurial knowledge production. As theorized by Slaughter and Rhoades (2004), this model reshapes institutional priorities through state policy mechanisms, research commercialization, and performance-based accountability structures.

Red Lines and Rhetorical Resistance–Graduate Education as Institutional Boundary Work

Research Question 3 asked: What tensions exist, if any, between the values placed on STEM and non-STEM education within the context of HBCU strategic plans and their institutional mission?

If RQ1 exposed patterns of rhetorical emphasis and RQ2 revealed strategies of narrative balancing, RQ3 turns to the silences—the choices institutions make not to transform, reframe, or justify certain graduate offerings. Here, the question is not what institutions highlight, but what they protect. These moments of preservation, quiet retention, and non-performance constitute what this study calls *institutional red lines*—programmatic spaces that resist policy mimicry and remain anchored in mission, history, and cultural accountability.

Borrowing conceptually from the history of *redlining*—the racially discriminatory practice of marking certain neighborhoods as unworthy of investment (Salazar, 2022; Coffin, 2023)—this study reframes *institutional redlining* as a strategic boundary-drawing practice performed by HBCUs. Rather than excluding or denying access, these red lines serve as protective zones—marking programs, pedagogies, and missions that cannot be commodified without compromising the institution's core identity. These boundaries are not about resource denial but about epistemic preservation. They represent spaces of curricular resistance, where institutions assert that some forms of knowledge do not require justification, innovation framing, or external validation to be retained.

At institutions like WSSU and NCCU, programs in rehabilitation counseling, educational leadership, and public administration persist across planning cycles and graduate catalogs with minimal discursive revision. They are not reframed as interdisciplinary innovations nor narrated through metrics of market value. Instead, they simply continue. This continuity is not inaction—it is intention. These programs represent forms of knowledge production so deeply

embedded in the institution's cultural identity, community function, and historical mission that their value does not require translation. Their legitimacy is not derived from market trends or performance frameworks, but from their enduring role in producing leaders, healers, and educators who serve Black communities—work that predates and often exceeds the boundaries of state metrics.

TSU offers a compelling counterpoint. Its strategic plans, while referencing student success and workforce development, rarely engage deeply with the rhetorical strategies seen at PVAMU or FAMU. This difference may be partly structural: unlike PVAMU, which operates within TAMUS, TSU remains an independent public institution. Without system-level mandates shaping its narrative frame, TSU's planning language is more succinct and mission-anchored. Its rhetorical restraint may reflect greater institutional autonomy—but it may also limit its visibility within state-aligned performance cultures. Whether read as independence or marginalization, this rhetorical distinction reinforces the layered complexity of how HBCUs engage in strategic discourse.

These choices—what is rebranded and what is left untouched—reveal the limits of adaptation. Strategic plans, when read alongside graduate program trajectories, show that HBCUs are not infinitely malleable. They stretch where needed, translate where strategic, but also hold firm. Preservation, in this context, is not stagnation—it is refusal. It is a rejection of frameworks that demand constant justification of non-STEM, community-engaged, or identity-centered education. This refusal matters. It signals that institutional survival is not just about flexibility, but about boundary work—about drawing lines around what cannot, and should not, be remade to fit someone else's idea of value. These red lines remind us that the project of historically Black higher education has never been solely about producing workers for the

market. It has always been about producing knowledge, leadership, and care on terms that resist reduction. In this sense, refusal becomes a form of servingness—positioned at one end of a broader spectrum where institutional actors continually negotiate how much to bend, and where to hold. Servingness is not a binary, but a dynamic orientation that reveals itself in both adaptation and resistance.

Preservation as Strategy: What Institutions Protect–and Why It Matters

What emerges across these research questions is not just a sorting of strategic plans or program offerings, but a deeper portrait of institutional intentionality under constraint. HBCUs do not simply respond to policy environments—they interpret them, navigate them, and, at times, reject them. Graduate education, in this analysis, becomes a site of both rhetorical performance and strategic withholding. Interdisciplinary language, innovation framing, and policy legibility are not signs of mission drift on their own; they may also be tools that institutions wield to create space for continuity. In this context, preservation itself becomes a strategy.

This strategy is not always legible in documents. In fact, some of the most meaningful acts of resistance take place through what is left unsaid—programs that remain unrevised, unrenamed, and unpublicized, but continue year after year. These offerings, often rooted in community uplift, identity-affirming pedagogy, and public service, represent institutional red lines. They are the places where adaptation stops. And they reveal something fundamental about what these institutions are willing to protect—even when doing so carries risk in performance-driven systems.

This preservation is not accidental—it is patterned, political, and intentional. It reveals that HBCUs are not just reacting to shifting policy demands; they are actively reshaping the

terms of engagement. Yet in naming these strategies—code-switching, redlining, silence—this dissertation also invokes language historically rooted in marginalization. These are terms that have often been used to pathologize individuals and institutions serving Black communities, to explain away disparities as deficiencies, or to mark difference as dysfunction. And yet, in the hands of HBCUs, these same terms can take on new meaning. What follows is a reflection on how this language, once used to constrain, now helps to tell a different story—one of agency, resistance, and reclamation.

Reclaiming the Language: Survival Through Strategic Reframing

One of the most unexpected findings to emerge from this content analysis is not just what institutions say—but how the language itself functions. Much of the terminology explored in this study—terms like *code-switching, redlining, silence, drift*—originates from frameworks historically used to mark marginalization, constrain mobility, or signal institutional failure. Yet when applied to HBCUs, these terms transform. Code-switching becomes a strategy of institutional bilingualism. Redlining is no longer a mechanism of exclusion, but a line drawn to protect sacred (curricular) space. Silence is reinterpreted not as absence, but as refusal. What was once pathologized becomes tactical.

This process of linguistic reclamation echoes the larger history of Black education—of building systems of care, knowledge, and resilience in the shadow of exclusion. HBCUs are not just passive actors within policy regimes that continuously move the goalposts; they can also be players who understand the game and selectively engage it, even as they challenge its terms. This study reveals that if we trace institutional logic from its foundations—not from the state's metrics

or the market's demands, but from community, mission, and memory—what looks like misalignment may in fact be strategy.

And that's the point: we cannot assess HBCUs by the tools designed to dismantle them. As Audre Lorde (1984) reminds us, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (p.112). This analysis insists on a different set of tools—ones that recognize refusal as rigor, silence as resistance, and preservation as a radical commitment to futures not yet legible to the systems designed to erase them.

Strategic Adaptation and Institutional Identity: Across Case-Synthesis

The preceding sections presented individual institutional narratives of strategic adaptation, resistance, and mission negotiation. This final section synthesizes those cases, drawing comparative insights across state contexts, system affiliations, and rhetorical strategies. Rather than identifying a singular trajectory for HBCUs in the policy landscape, this synthesis maps the tensions institutions face as they navigate state directives, performance metrics, and cultural missions. By layering code distribution, graduate program patterns, and institutional framing strategies, this section highlights how some institutions adopt the language of market-driven policy to create institutional room, while others rely on discursive restraint or historical mission as forms of epistemic resistance.

Drawing from the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2, institutions are located along a conceptual spectrum—from those that primarily engage in market-facing adaptation to those that center servingness through preservation and refusal. These positions are not fixed, nor are they necessarily indicative of institutional weakness or strength. Rather, they reflect divergent

strategic orientations in response to structural constraint(s). The following visuals and narrative comparisons illustrate how institutions leverage—or resist—discursive tools to shape their graduate education trajectories in a landscape where legitimacy remains contested.

Servingness vs. Market-Driven Incentive Spectrum Interpretation

To better understand institutional responses across states, this study introduced a conceptual spectrum ranging from mission-centered servingness to market-driven performance alignment. Institutions were not evaluated as more or less successful along this continuum; rather, their positioning reflected the discursive and programmatic strategies they employed to negotiate legitimacy, autonomy, and identity within structurally constrained environments.

At one end of the spectrum, institutions like WSSU demonstrated a high degree of discursive consistency with servingness frameworks. Their strategic language emphasized student well-being, cultural affirmation, and community uplift—often without invoking the state's preferred rhetoric of innovation, economic development, or performance metrics. Their graduate offerings remained stable and identity-anchored, suggesting not stagnation but a deliberate refusal to reframe mission-aligned degrees in market terms. On the opposite end, institutions such as PVAMU and NCAT actively engaged with performance-oriented discourse. Their strategic plans were saturated with references to interdisciplinary innovation, economic competitiveness, and research productivity—signaling strong alignment with labor market expectations and system-level incentives. While these strategies may have enhanced institutional visibility and funding opportunities, they often demanded the rearticulation of culturally rooted programs through externally legible, policy-facing narratives.

Between these poles laid a hybrid model, most clearly represented by FAMU. FAMU integrated culturally grounded values into performance-driven frames by using interdisciplinary language as a bridge. Graduate programs in sustainability, public health, and education were rhetorically positioned as simultaneously socially responsive and economically viable. This discursive agility enabled FAMU to perform both resistance and compliance—preserving mission-aligned programs while translating them into the language of policy logic. Other institutions, like TSU and ECSU, presented a different form of response—what this study framed as *strategic silence*. With less rhetorically elaborate strategic plans, these institutions appeared to have abstained from full participation in market-aligned discourse. Yet this absence may itself have been intentional, signaling a refusal to dilute institutional mission or perform adaptation purely for legibility's sake. Their quieter stance did not indicate a lack of strategy, but rather a different mode of resistance—one that foregrounded continuity and cultural autonomy over discursive compliance.

Taken together, these placements revealed that institutional adaptation was not linear or uniform. It was contingent, rhetorical, and deeply informed by historical positioning, system affiliation, and policy context. The Servingness vs. Market-Driven Incentives Spectrum, introduced in Chapter 3 and applied here, offered a conceptual tool for interpreting how HBCUs navigated the enduring tension between visibility and voice—between playing the game and protecting the mission.

These placements were informed by the Servingness vs. Market-Driven Incentives Spectrum introduced in Chapter 3 (see Figure 3.2), which visualized how institutional strategies could be interpreted along two dimensions: their alignment with community-serving, liberatory missions, and their adoption of market-driven incentives or language. Institutions like WSSU and

TSU occupied the upper-left quadrant—prioritizing servingness while remaining rhetorically and structurally resistant to market alignment. PVAMU and NCAT, by contrast, appear in the lower-right quadrant, having embraced innovation, STEM prioritization, and economic development as core institutional narratives. Institutions such as FAMU and NCCU span the upper-right quadrant—leveraging interdisciplinary discourse and strategic ambiguity to align with both community missions and policy performance cultures.

The updated visual mappings in Figures 4.2A and 4.2B expand on this framework by providing a pre- and post-spectrum analysis based on institutional documentation from 2004–2024. These figures illustrate how ECSU and FSU, previously omitted from the spectrum, align mid-spectrum with varying degrees of drift. ECSU trends toward moderate servingness with limited market uptake, while FSU demonstrates a clearer trajectory toward performance-driven alignment—particularly in its more recent strategic plans and enrollment management language. Together, these visualizations help surface the nuanced ways institutions reconcile legacy commitments with external accountability demands, often relying on strategic ambiguity or symbolic preservation to maintain institutional coherence.

Figure 4.2A

Servingness vs. Market-Driven Incentive Spectrum (2004-2014)

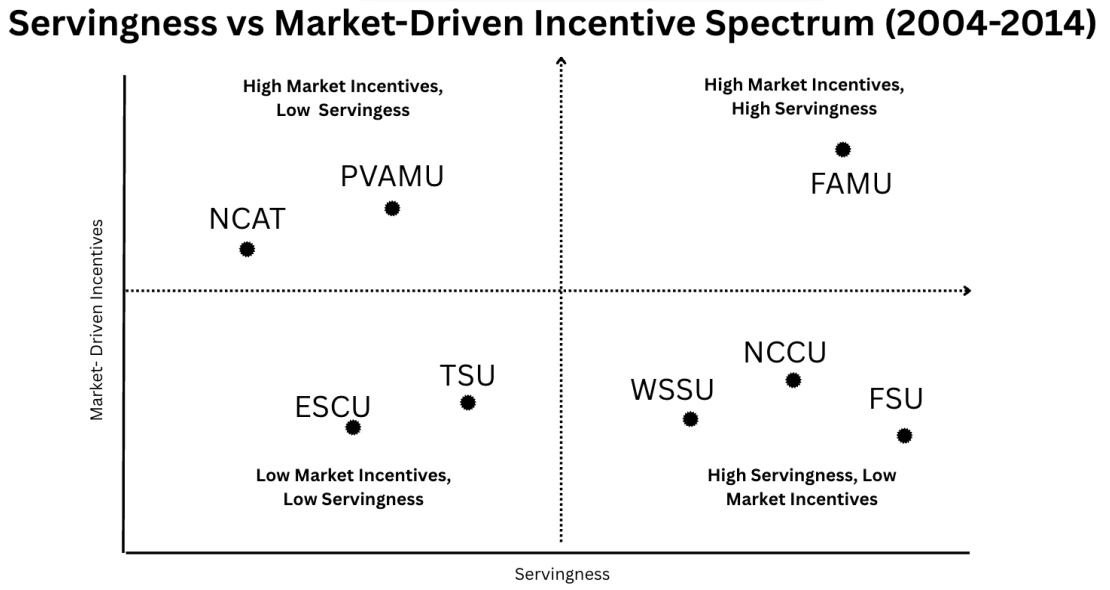
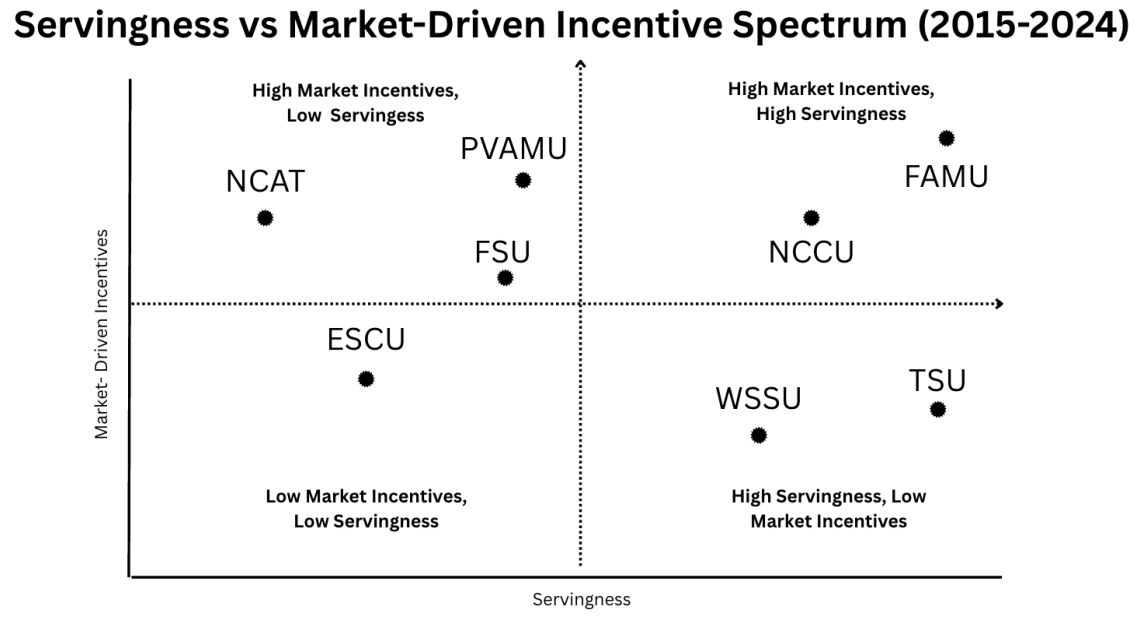


Figure 4.2B

Servingness vs. Market-Driven Incentive Spectrum (2015-2024)



Note: WSSU remains positioned in the high-servingness quadrant due to its historical emphasis on health equity and social justice; however, its most recent strategic plan introduces ambiguity around future graduate direction, suggesting potential movement toward a more market-responsive stance.

Across-Case Comparison: Institutional Positioning Across Policy Logics

Across the three state contexts, institutional responses to graduate education and strategic planning varied not only in content, but in rhetorical strategy, narrative density, and the degree of engagement with market-driven discourse. NCAT and PVAMU most actively adopted the language of research competitiveness, interdisciplinary innovation, and economic development—placing them firmly in the performance-driven quadrant of the strategic spectrum. Both are situated within flagship state systems (UNC and TAMUS), which likely incentivize more visible alignment with policy logic and funding priorities.

In contrast, institutions like WSSU, NCCU, and TSU maintained rhetorics more closely tied to cultural identity, student support, and educational access—hallmarks of servingness. While NCCU deployed some interdisciplinary framing, WSSU and TSU presented more consistent mission-aligned language, with less emphasis on innovation metrics. Notably, TSU's independence from a flagship university system may explain its restrained rhetorical approach and fewer performance-facing indicators in its strategic documents.

FAMU continued to exemplify rhetorical hybridity. It blended cultural mission with economic logic through carefully crafted interdisciplinary framing, allowing for both visibility and preservation. Its strategy illustrated how the middle ground institutions often navigate—neither fully absorbing market logics nor rejecting them outright, but translating

legacy programs into the state's preferred grammar. Table 4.2 summarizes the cross-case positioning of each institution across key dimensions, including discursive strategy, programmatic behavior, servingness alignment, and policy engagement. This comparison helps clarify how institutional variation reflects not only strategic choice, but also structural constraint.

FSU and ECSU demonstrated lower levels of rhetorical engagement overall, with strategic plans that emphasized operational continuity, institutional stability, and incremental adaptation over high-visibility innovation or market-driven rebranding. While both institutions referenced student success and workforce relevance, they did so with less rhetorical intensity and policy alignment compared to institutions like NCAT or PVAMU. FSU framed its strategy through regional health service and education leadership, engaging workforce themes with moderate discursive depth. ECSU, by contrast, maintained a narrow but consistent focus on localized workforce needs—particularly in healthcare and K–12 education—though its smaller scale and limited graduate infrastructure suggest these patterns may be as much about constrained capacity as intentional preservation. In both cases, what emerged was a form of bounded adaptation—less a rejection of state priorities than a reflection of institutional positioning within system hierarchies.

These differences reflected more than stylistic choices—they illustrated the diverse structural, rhetorical, and material conditions under which HBCUs operate. System affiliation, state-level performance cultures, institutional history, and resource access all shaped how schools narrate their value, protect their mission, and strategically respond—or refrain from responding—to policy pressures.

Table 4.2

Across-Case Comparison: Institutional Positioning Across Policy Logics, Strategic Adaptation, and Rhetorical Engagement

Institution	State	System Affiliation	Discursive Strategy	Programmatic Behavior	Rhetorical Engagement*
ECSU	NC	UNC System	Preservation-focused; local workforce alignment	Stability with localized adaptation	Low-Medium
FSU	NC	UNC System	Preservation-focused; workforce alignment	Stability with incremental adaptation	Medium-Low
NCAT	NC	UNC System	STEM expansion; innovation; performance-aligned	Growth-oriented expansion	High
NCCU	NC	UNC System	Regionally responsive translation	Selective adaptation	Medium
WSSU	NC	UNC System	Health-equity framed servingness	Stable with limited adaptation	High
FAMU	FL	Florida SUS	Interdisciplinary hybrid preservation	Adaptive with translation	Medium
PVAMU	TX	TAMUS	Market-driven STEM and Research Expansion	Growth-oriented expansion	High
TSU	TX	Independent	Mission-centered with selective policy engagement	Preservation-focused with gradual metric integration	Low-Medium

**Note: Rhetorical Engagement may be shaped by resource limitations and narrower institutional scope rather than intentional strategy.*

This chapter has traced the strategic responses of public HBCUs across Florida, North Carolina, and Texas, examining how institutions negotiate the shifting terrain of graduate education amid market pressures, state-level performance mandates, and longstanding cultural missions. Through a multi-layered content analysis of strategic plans and programmatic trends, the findings revealed that institutional behavior is not simply reactive, but likely strategic and intentional—marked by code-switching, rhetorical translation[12], and preservation-as-resistance. Whether through overt policy alignment, narrative hybridity, or strategic silence, these institutions enact varied forms of agency within structurally constrained systems. The Servingness vs. Market-Driven Incentives Spectrum and the cross-case matrix together demonstrate that institutional adaptation is not a matter of compliance, but of boundary work—drawing lines around what can be repackaged, what must be preserved, and how value is made legible to those in power. The next chapter will build on these insights by exploring the broader implications of these findings for theory, policy, and the future of historically Black graduate education.

[12] Rhetorical translation refers to how institutions adapt their public language to align with state or federal priorities—such as emphasizing workforce readiness or innovation—while still holding on to deeper mission-driven goals. Similar to code-switching, it reflects a strategic effort to remain visible and viable without fully changing core values.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This study has examined how public Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) navigate and strategically respond to racialized policy landscapes. While Chapter 4 offered a comprehensive analysis of institutional alignment and discursive shifts, this chapter looks forward—to policy trajectories, reform narratives, and the research that must follow. As demonstrated, HBCUs must continuously reposition themselves in response to volatile funding formulas, shifting performance criteria, and state and federal politics that often mask retrenchment with the language of reform. In doing so, they exercise what this study terms institutional code-switching—a concept introduced here to describe the layered rhetorical and strategic practices through which HBCUs protect mission-aligned values while adapting to dominant policy frameworks.

This chapter reflects on the broader implications of those findings. It begins with a high-level synthesis of core insights before moving into an analysis of the shifting political landscape. From there, it proposes directions for future research, advances policy recommendations grounded in racial equity, and ends with a reflective conclusion that returns to the researcher's analytic evolution and the enduring importance of HBCUs in American higher education.

Summary of Key Insights

Across institutions, there were ongoing tensions between mission-driven commitments to access and equity and externally imposed market incentives. While some institutions retained markers of servingness through culturally affirming language or public service orientations, others appeared to be navigating pressures that aligned more closely with market-oriented

definitions of success—signaling instances of subtle or overt mission drift (Pusser, 2006; Jaquette, 2013).

The study uncovered several cross-cutting insights about institutional behavior, policy alignment, and rhetorical strategy. Chief among them is the strategic elevation of graduate education as a lever for institutional transformation. While Florida A&M University (FAMU) provided the most detailed documentation of this trend, it was not alone. Institutions across all three states signaled a growing reliance on graduate programming to bolster institutional legitimacy and access to resources. North Carolina A&T's (NCAT) research identity, Prairie View A&M's (PVAMU) targeted STEM expansion, and Winston-Salem State University's (WSSU) adaptive health equity framing all demonstrate this trend in different forms. Even at smaller institutions like Fayetteville State University (FSU) or Elizabeth City State University (ECSU), the cultivation—or strategic reduction—of graduate offerings functions as a critical lever of institutional identity formation.

Graduate programs are not simply academic expansions; they are political instruments. They serve as catalysts for institutional transformation, offering pathways to reclassify, rebrand, and reclaim value in systems that prioritize research output, workforce alignment, and economic mobility. However, this strategic use of graduate education is not equally accessible to all HBCUs. Institutions with stronger infrastructure, system affiliation, or external partnerships can more easily leverage graduate programs as transformative tools, while those with limited capacity may struggle to maintain or justify these offerings within hostile policy climates.

At the same time, the pressures of survival were especially apparent at smaller or more vulnerable institutions. Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) and Fayetteville State University

(FSU) often appeared to be navigating multiple goalposts—still responding to prior accountability measures while simultaneously interpreting new classifications and priorities. Texas Southern University (TSU), as the only independent institution in the sample, also exemplifies the challenge of operating without the structural support of a university system, making its strategic language and graduate offerings even more vital for institutional visibility.

This dissertation also revealed the use of strategic ambiguity—what this study terms institutional code-switching. Institutions adopt the language of performance and compliance while embedding core values of racial uplift, public service, and cultural affirmation within their strategies. This layered discourse enables them to meet external expectations without fully surrendering their missions. Institutional code-switching exists along a spectrum: from deep structural adaptation to symbolic compliance. It reflects both constraint and creativity, enabling institutions to protect curricular commitments in systems that reward conformity. Strategic planning, in this sense, becomes a site of resistance, translation, and negotiation. Even amidst these forms of adaptation, systemic barriers persist. Institutions often comply with performance logic to secure minimal funding increases, while still being structurally under-resourced. Policy tools intended to "reward success" often place undue burdens on HBCUs—especially those with limited capacity or heightened oversight. Rather than remedying disparities, such tools often repackage constraints as opportunity.

Contributions to Literature

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on higher education policy, HBCU institutional strategy, and racialized academic structures in several key ways. First, it extends the application of Racialized Academic Capitalism (RAC) by demonstrating how this

logic not only persists but evolves within state-level performance funding regimes—particularly in states marked by political volatility and racialized austerity. Rather than simply documenting underfunding or workforce alignment, this study reveals how HBCUs must navigate RAC rhetorically, symbolically, and structurally to maintain institutional legitimacy and protect core elements of their mission. Yet this navigation is not purely reactive. HBCUs are not new to these constraints—they are seasoned actors within systems that often reward conformity and punish deviation. Their strategies reflect long-standing traditions of survival, subversion, and cultural preservation under structural duress.

Second, the study introduces and elaborates on the concept of institutional code-switching—a layered discursive and strategic response that enables institutions to signal compliance with dominant metrics while preserving historical commitments to Black educational uplift. This concept builds upon prior scholarship on strategic ambiguity (Abdallah & Langley, 2014; Sillince et al., 2012) but grounds it within the specific racialized context of public HBCUs navigating performance-based and workforce-centered policy systems. Unlike ambiguity framed as institutional indecision or weakness, institutional code-switching is treated here as an intentional practice of rhetorical dexterity and cultural signaling, shaped by histories of exclusion and current pressures of legitimacy. It functions along a spectrum—from symbolic accommodation to structural recalibration—and reflects how institutions toggle between what is legible to the state and what is vital to their communities.

Third, this research offers a systems-level interpretation of graduate education as a strategic site of institutional transformation. Prior literature often treats graduate program expansion as a neutral or market-driven development (e.g., Gumport, 2005; Mok & Neubauer, 2015). This study complicates that view by showing how HBCUs use graduate education both to

meet external expectations (e.g., research productivity, doctoral pipelines) and to reclaim space in disciplines from which they have been historically excluded. In some cases, STEM expansion is not mission drift but a reparative entry into scientific domains long denied to Black scholars. In other cases, the preservation of non-STEM programs—despite lacking performance-based incentives—serves as a form of epistemic resistance. Together, these dynamics reveal graduate education as a tool of both adaptation and restoration.

Fourth, the study contributes to debates about how equity is defined, measured, and rewarded in higher education policy frameworks. It challenges the assumption that dominant evaluation systems—rooted in economic productivity and quantifiable growth—adequately reflect the missions of institutions historically excluded from mainstream narratives of excellence. Instead, it calls for performance regimes that account for structural inequality, cultural mission, and the historical constraints that shape organizational response. When institutions are judged solely by STEM growth or research output, they are punished for preserving values that do not fit narrow definitions of innovation or competitiveness.

Finally, this study deepens theoretical understandings of servingness (Garcia, 2020; DeTurk & Briscoe, 2020) and mission drift (Jones, 2007; Jaquette, 2013) by embedding them in the organizational, curricular, and policy realities of HBCUs. It argues that servingness must be understood not only as a demographic or relational commitment, but as a curricular strategy of inclusion, protection, and access. Graduate programs that center public service, cultural knowledge, or interdisciplinary healing do more than reflect mission—they enact it. Likewise, the study introduces the concept of institutional red lines to describe the boundaries institutions draw around such programs—refusing to rebrand, consolidate, or monetize them for external approval. These contributions open space for more differentiated, historically grounded research

on Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), resisting reductive comparisons and calling instead for frameworks that center institutional origin stories, resource environments, and structural constraints.

The next section expands on the concept of institutional code-switching in greater depth, offering a framework for understanding how HBCUs negotiate identity and legitimacy within—and sometimes against—the racialized metrics that shape U.S. higher education.

Institutional Code-Switching: Navigating Legibility, Resistance, and Structural Constraint

This study introduces the concept of *institutional code-switching* to describe how HBCUs manage external legibility while preserving internal commitments to cultural mission, educational equity, and epistemic care. Borrowing from the sociolinguistic concept of code-switching—which captures how individuals navigate power and audience through shifts in language, tone, or demeanor—this framework examines how institutions similarly toggle between the expectations of dominant policy actors and the preservation of their own liberatory aims. Unlike linguistic code-switching, which is often discussed at the interpersonal level, institutional code-switching operates at the organizational and discursive level—within strategic plans, graduate program portfolios, and the symbolic languages of compliance.

Institutional code-switching emerges as a form of rhetorical maneuvering, enabling HBCUs to align with state expectations on the surface while embedding deeper logics of resistance beneath. It is not about deception, nor is it reducible to "playing the game." Instead, it reflects a longer historical pattern of survivalist strategy in Black institutions—what Collins (1990, 2019) refers to as the work of navigating interlocking systems of domination without forfeiting self-definition. Angela Davis (2011) reminds us that the denial of educational

opportunity to marginalized communities has always been structural and intentional—not a gap, but a mechanism of control. When HBCUs make discursive choices about which programs to rebrand, which to repackage, and which to protect, they are not simply reacting to policy—they are engaged in a process of institutional reorientation within constraint.

This is particularly visible in the treatment of graduate programs across the case institutions. For example, North Carolina A&T (NCAT) and Prairie View A&M (PVAMU) demonstrate a high degree of fluency in the language of policy legitimacy: research competitiveness, STEM pipelines, economic mobility. Their strategic plans foreground these values, offering a front-facing narrative that satisfies external funders and system leaders. Yet embedded within these documents are signals of continuity—programs that link back to land-grant missions, community engagement, and culturally affirming practices. In these cases, code-switching operates as strategic layering, not abandonment. The performance of policy fluency masks a deeper insistence on self-authorship.

By contrast, institutions like Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) and Florida A&M University (FAMU) exhibit forms of code-switching that emphasize adaptive preservation. Rather than fully adopting state-sanctioned language, these institutions strike a discursive balance—using terms like "health equity," "community impact," and "public service innovation" to justify programs that may not be legible through traditional market metrics. Their rhetorical choices reflect an awareness of what must be said to survive, and what must be said to remain true. In these cases, code-switching allows institutions to walk the line between visibility and subversion—to assert relevance without capitulation.

Importantly, institutional code-switching is not uniformly emancipatory. It exists on a spectrum, ranging from tactical compliance to reluctant co-optation. In some cases, HBCUs may adopt the language of innovation or entrepreneurship in ways that subtly dilute their historical mission. The pursuit of doctoral expansion or R1 designation can bring resources and prestige, but also invite performance expectations that marginalize non-STEM disciplines or community-based knowledge. As Davis (2023) warns in her reflections on higher education and liberation, institutions can be seduced into aligning with systems that ultimately replicate the very exclusions they were founded to resist. In this sense, not all acts of code-switching are liberatory—some may reinforce the hierarchies they seek to outmaneuver. Or, as Zora Neale Hurston said plainly, "all skinfolk ain't kinfolk." Not every decision made under the banner of shared identity protects institutional mission. Recent leadership shifts—*cough, the new president of FAMU, cough*—remind us that proximity to Blackness does not guarantee a commitment to liberatory goals.

Yet to dismiss code-switching entirely as duplicity or drift would be to miss its generative potential. Institutional code-switching is a refusal to be legible on someone else's terms. It is a politics of translation, a strategy of presence, and—at its best—a site of fugitive planning (as Clyde Woods or Fred Moten might frame it). It represents how HBCUs continue to navigate what Collins (2019) calls the "difference that power makes"—asserting agency not in spite of constraint, but through it.

This concept offers new insight into how institutional strategy is constructed—not just in what is said, but how it is said, and to whom. Code-switching explains the co-existence of performance metrics and cultural mission, of STEM investment and humanities survival, of state

legibility and local rootedness. It clarifies why some institutions emphasize doctoral production while others preserve small graduate programs in education or public affairs without apology.

In sum, institutional code-switching is not a flaw in HBCU strategy—it is the strategy**.** It is the language of living within domination without surrender. By naming and theorizing this practice, this dissertation contributes a new lens for understanding how Black institutions resist being reduced to policy caricatures. It also provides a framework for future scholarship to examine how organizational identity, survival, and refusal are navigated in other racialized or under-resourced contexts.

Shifting Policy Landscapes

The current policy moment is one of both volatility and *politricking*[13]. Across Florida, Texas, and North Carolina, HBCUs are being asked to demonstrate impact amid hostile or contradictory political mandates. As states roll back diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts while simultaneously rolling out new classification systems and performance models, institutions must engage in a form of strategic clairvoyance—adapting to metrics that may soon shift again. This instability isn't just political—it's structural, and it demands constant rhetorical recalibration.

What emerges in this context is a familiar double-bind: perform equity, but don't name race. Deliver outcomes, but without confronting the root causes of inequity. The April 2025 White House fact sheet promoting "excellence and innovation at HBCUs" (The White House, 2025) arrived just weeks after FAMU reported a $16.3 million grant loss due to federal

[13] *Politricking* refers to the strategic games and performances embedded within political systems, often requiring marginalized actors to adapt quickly in order to avoid harm. This usage emphasizes the high-stakes maneuvering demanded by shifting power structures. Not to be confused with the podcast *Politricking with Tshidi Madia*, which addresses political developments in South Africa.

restructuring (Dorisca, 2025; Jean, 2025). Such contradictions represent more than bureaucratic confusion—they reflect what this study identifies as a form of symbolic performance without structural commitment. As Weissman (2025) notes, federal initiatives often repackage austerity as reform, leaving HBCUs rhetorically praised and materially undercut.

This landscape is where institutional code-switching becomes not just a rhetorical strategy but a survival essential. Institutions must project alignment with performance mandates while preserving internal values that often lack direct policy recognition. The rise of frameworks like the Carnegie Student Success Classification exemplifies this pressure. Though framed as a shift "beyond prestige," its rollout coincides with the rollback of DEI—and thus inherits its contradictions. Without mechanisms to name and account for racialized barriers, such classifications risk incentivizing superficial equity narratives that obscure deeper structural exclusions.

Similarly, tools like the Social Mobility Index (CollegeNET, 2024) offer expanded metrics, but do so through race-neutral language that flattens systemic difference. These tools—while useful in reframing institutional impact—often push HBCUs to code-switch institutionally: to rebrand liberatory programs under the guise of economic uplift, or to justify cultural education in terms of job readiness. In this way, code-switching becomes both a tool of preservation and a potential site of erosion.

Indeed, this is Racialized Academic Capitalism (RAC) in its evolved form. RAC no longer relies solely on prestige hierarchies—it now absorbs equity language, retools classification systems, and places the burden of proof on institutions already structurally marginalized. As McLean (2025) warns, even proposed Education Department cuts risk

accelerating institutional closures, particularly at MSIs. These reforms, no matter how equity-branded, often require HBCUs to demonstrate value using metrics that do not reflect their full mission.

In this climate, the stakes of code-switching are higher than ever. It can safeguard institutional autonomy—or facilitate quiet assimilation into frameworks that were never built to affirm Black institutional life. The risk is not just rhetorical drift—it is mission dilution disguised as compliance. And as this dissertation shows, some institutions are drawing red lines. Others, however, may find themselves drifting further into a terrain where institutional voice is lost to institutional survival.

Future Research Directions

Future research must extend the temporal and institutional scope of this study to examine how policy adaptations unfold over time and across institutional types. Longitudinal analysis will be key in evaluating whether frameworks like the *Carnegie Student Success Classification* result in substantive equity gains—or merely rebrand existing hierarchies using softer, more politically palatable language. Researchers should track how these classifications are operationalized in practice, particularly in states with histories of DEI rollback and equity resistance. Are these frameworks capable of capturing liberatory intent, or do they incentivize institutional code-switching that masks deeper forms of constraint?

Critical scholarship must also interrogate how metrics are constructed, deployed, and politicized. Even metrics that appear student-centered can reinscribe harm if developed without racial consciousness. Tools that reward degree output, job placement, or median salaries may unintentionally punish institutions serving marginalized students, rural communities, or public

service–oriented fields. In this way, equity metrics become a Trojan horse—appearing neutral while reproducing RAC logics that prioritize economic utility over social transformation.

While tools like the *Social Mobility Index* offer partial alternatives—highlighting institutional contributions to upward mobility rather than elite selectivity—their race-neutral design limits their capacity to measure what matters most to mission-driven institutions like HBCUs. Future research should develop and test metrics that capture both economic and racial mobility, alongside qualitative indicators of cultural responsiveness, social impact, and epistemic inclusion. This includes understanding what "success" looks like from the perspective of the communities these institutions serve—not just what funders reward.

There is also a need for comparative work across Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs)—but such work must resist the tendency to collapse differences under broad equity umbrellas. HBCUs, unlike many Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) or emerging MSIs, were founded on explicitly liberatory mandates—in response to racial exclusion and systemic denial of access. Many other MSI designations, by contrast, are tied to present-day enrollment demographics rather than historical missions. This distinction matters: it shapes how institutions position themselves, what kinds of legitimacy they seek, and the degree of narrative or strategic flexibility available to them. Comparative research must therefore interrogate not only outputs and outcomes, but origin stories, funding logics, and the evolving politics of MSI identity.

Additionally, research must explore the effects of heightened state oversight and intervention, particularly in institutions like Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) and Texas Southern University (TSU). Although mentorship or stabilization models may be framed as supports, they can function as soft mechanisms of consolidation—curbing institutional autonomy

under the guise of accountability. These frameworks raise important questions: Do they provide true stability, or do they reinforce dependency and surveillance? What forms of institutional agency remain under such models, and how do they impact servingness or mission preservation? These questions are crucial for evaluating whether policy "support" models ultimately replicate the very inequities they claim to resolve.

Lastly, future research should expand the application of intersectionality in higher education policy. Originally developed by Crenshaw (1989) to theorize how overlapping identities structure lived experience, and later applied by higher education scholars like Nichols and Stahl (2019), intersectionality has primarily centered the individual student experience through lenses of race, gender, and class. But in the context of this study, intersectionality also operates at the institutional level. Institutions themselves are shaped by overlapping structures of constraint: performance funding, regional politics, accreditation oversight, and federal retrenchment. Research that attends to these place-based, policy-driven intersections will better capture the layered realities HBCUs face—and the adaptive strategies they deploy to survive, resist, and reimagine what higher education can be.

As institutions are asked to demonstrate student success and equity gains, a central contradiction remains unresolved: the very policy tools used to define and evaluate equity are being dismantled. DEI offices, race-conscious climate surveys, and protected federal funds are increasingly under attack, even as institutions are expected to produce disaggregated outcomes and demonstrate racial progress. This paradox deserves urgent scholarly attention. How can institutions be held accountable to metrics that are no longer politically safe to measure? What happens when *performing equity* becomes more important than *enacting it*? Future research must interrogate this emergent era of equity without evidence, where rhetorical commitment masks

infrastructural erosion—and where HBCUs are once again forced to innovate under surveillance while protecting missions that policymakers have rendered invisible.

Policy Recommendations

Policymakers must fundamentally rethink how success is defined, measured, and rewarded—especially when it comes to institutions founded on missions of racial justice and educational access. The following recommendations focus on structural shifts and accountability strategies needed to sustain HBCU resilience in a rapidly evolving and racialized policy landscape.

First, funding formulas should be tied to institutional mission—not just labor market returns. HBCUs were not created to generate elite economic outputs; they were established to provide leadership, access, and transformation. Equity must be understood in relation to that historical mandate. Metrics that center only salary, selectivity, or STEM output risk distorting the very purpose of these institutions.

Second, institutions must be protected from political overreach. Performance-based funding models and classification systems must account for institutional history, capacity, and mission—not just compliance with shifting state agendas. Without such contextualization, policy reform becomes a tool of erasure rather than empowerment.

Third, new metrics like the Carnegie Student Success classification must explicitly integrate racial equity. As this study illustrates, graduate education plays a central role in institutional transformation—but only if it is recognized and supported in ways that reflect

HBCU realities. Metrics that ignore racialized barriers or silence liberatory intent will reproduce RAC under a different name.

Fourth, multi-year and mission-sensitive funding commitments are essential. HBCUs cannot plan, adapt, or innovate if funding is held hostage to annual political whims. Long-term investments—indexed to both need and impact—are a prerequisite for sustainable growth.

Fifth, system leaders and policymakers must be held publicly accountable for equity outcomes. While mandatory anti-racist training may be politically infeasible in some states, alternative mechanisms—such as transparency mandates, community-informed review boards, and public equity audits—can serve as partial checks against the misuse of reform narratives. Accountability should not rely on institutional contortion, but on structural alignment with equity goals.

Finally, policy reforms must be monitored for differential impact. Institutions like FAMU or PVAMU may have the infrastructure, legacy recognition, and community leverage to maneuver within new reforms. But smaller or more vulnerable institutions—such as WSSU, ECSU, and TSU—often operate under tighter constraints with fewer buffers. Policymakers must ensure that well-intentioned reforms do not reinforce existing inequities by demanding innovation without capacity, or compliance without context. The burden of proving worth should not fall heaviest on those already navigating the steepest structural disadvantages.

Receipts and Resistance

This dissertation began with a question about how institutions adapt—but the journey led to something deeper. What emerged was not just a study of institutional adaptation, but a ledger

of strategic maneuvers, discursive re-framings, and structural negotiations. These are not speculative claims; they are grounded in two decades of strategic plans, program catalogs, rhetorical pivots, and coded documents. What this research uncovered were not just signs of adaptation, but *receipts*—evidence that public HBCUs are engaging in complex forms of survival, translation, and resistance within a landscape governed by Racialized Academic Capitalism (RAC).

At first, I approached graduate education as a potential marker of expansion—a STEM versus non-STEM question, or a reflection of institutional growth. But as the analysis deepened, that binary collapsed. Graduate education, it turns out, is neither a luxury nor a neutral tool. It is a site of strategic negotiation, a mechanism of institutional positioning, and—at times—a boundary line for resisting neoliberal encroachment. Programs are not added or removed in isolation; they are crafted, preserved, or sacrificed in ways that reflect deep tensions between mission, identity, and policy expectations. This realization reframes graduate education not as a technical endeavor but as a political strategy—especially for institutions navigating volatile environments where legitimacy must constantly be re-earned.

Through this lens, adaptation is not weakness—it is clarity. Institutions like FAMU, PVAMU, and WSSU do not simply follow policy—they maneuver within it, flip its language, and sometimes ghost it entirely. Strategic ambiguity becomes a tool, not of avoidance, but of preservation. This is where *institutional code-switching* comes into focus: a form of rhetorical and structural alignment that allows HBCUs to survive within systems never designed for their success. Like the linguistic form it draws from, institutional code-switching is layered—it masks, reveals, protects, and disrupts depending on context and audience. And like all code-switching, it

comes at a cost. It demands stamina, creativity, and the emotional labor of never being fully seen on one's own terms.

RAC continues to evolve. Equity reforms are being rebranded in race-neutral terms. New metrics—like Carnegie's "Student Success" classification—emerge just as DEI policies are dismantled. These contradictions are not accidental; they are symptoms of a system in which equity is tolerated only when it doesn't threaten capital. As scholars, we too are asked to navigate these contradictions—to speak liberation in a language that systems will fund, publish, or protect. In that sense, *we* are also doing institutional code-switching.

Yet this work also affirms that policy does not have the final word. The presence of HBCUs across generations, despite every structural incentive for their disappearance, is a radical act. Their graduate programs, strategic plans, and public commitments are not just administrative documents—they are acts of refusal, blueprints of care, and declarations of worth. In this way, resistance lives not only in what is said but in what is preserved: the programs not eliminated, the missions not rewritten, the faculty who stay, and the students who continue to demand an education that sees them fully.

Looking forward, this study suggests that new alliances will be critical. Flagship HBCUs—particularly those with more political leverage or infrastructure—can help scaffold smaller institutions through inter-institutional consortia, shared graduate programming, or joint funding initiatives. But solidarity must be rooted in shared mission, not just shared identity. Representation without accountability is not resistance. Leadership that mimics power structures while wearing the face of the community risks replicating the very logics it should disrupt.

As Luvvie Ajayi Jones (2021) writes in *Professional Troublemaker*, "We must say the hard things. Especially when we are scared. Especially when the world wants us to whisper." HBCUs have never whispered their worth—not when they were founded, not during segregation, and not now. The work ahead requires co-conspirators who are willing to speak hard truths, challenge the performance of reform, and disrupt systems that only value Black excellence when it is stripped of its radical roots.

The legacy of public HBCUs is not just one of endurance; it is a blueprint for what is possible when education is anchored in justice. These institutions have never had the luxury of neutrality. Their future, like their past, will be shaped not just by how they adapt—but by how they *refuse* to become what the system demands.

APPENDIX A

List of HBCUs by State: Institutional Overview for Contextual Reference

This table provides a list of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) located in Florida, North Carolina, and Texas. It includes institutional characteristics such as founding year, location, institutional type, and policy context. While the study focuses on selected public institutions, the full list offers contextual insight into the broader higher education landscape within each state.

State	Institution	Founded	Institutional Type	Location	Focus Area(s)
Florida	Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU)	1887	Public, Land Grant	Tallahassee	Performance-Based Funding
	Bethune-Cookman University	1904	Private, Non-Profit	Daytona Beach	
	Edward Waters University	1866	Private, Non-Profit	Jacksonville	
	Florida Memorial University	1879	Private, non-profit	Miami Gardens	
North Carolina	North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University	1891	Public, Land Grant	Greensboro	Centralized Governance[14]
	Winston-Salem University	1892	Public, Land Grant	Winston-Salem	
	Bennett College	1873, 1926[15]	Private, Non-Profit	Greensboro	

[14] In April 2022, North Carolina University System was approved to transition to a formal PBF model. This dissertation will focus on centralized governance.
[15] Bennett College became an all women's college in 1926.

	Fayetteville State University	1867	Public, Land Grant	Fayetteville	
	John C. Smith University	1867	Private, Non-Profit	Charlotte	
	Saint Augustine's University	1867	Private, Non-Profit	Raleigh	
	Barber Scotia College[16]	1867, 1916	Private, Non-Profit	Concord	
	Shaw University	1865	Private, Non-Profit	Raleigh	
	Elizabeth City State University	1891	Public, Land Grant	Elizabeth City	
	North Carolina Central University	1910	Public, Land Grant	Durham	
Texas	Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU)	1876	Public, Land Grant	Prairie View	Workforce Development & Healthcare
	Texas Southern University (TSU)	1947	Public, Land Grant	Houston	
	Huston-Tillotson University	1875	Private, Non-Profit	Austin	
	Paul Quinn College	1872	Private, Non-Profit	Dallas	
	Wiley College	1873	Private, Non-Profit	Marshall	
	Jarvis Christian University	1912	Private, Non-Profit	Hawkins	

[16] Barber Scotia College is unaccredited. Established as a seminary in 1867 before becoming a college in 1916.

APPENDIX B

List of Acronyms

This list serves as a reference guide for the acronyms used throughout this dissertation.

ACE: American Council on Education

ACLS: American Council of Learned Societies

APLU: Association of Public Land-Grant Universities

BLS: Bureau of Labor & Statistics

BOG: Board of Governors

BS-MS: Bachelor of Science to Master of Science pathway

CRT: Culturally Responsive Teaching

DBA: Doctor of Business Administration

DEI: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

DNP: Doctor of Nursing Practice

DOE: Department of Education

ECSU: Elizabeth City State University

EDD: Doctor of Education

EMBA: Executive Master of Business Administration

EMPA: Executive Master of Public Administration

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

ESSA: Every Student Succeeds Act

FAMU: Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

FSU: Fayetteville State University

LSAMP: Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation

MA: Master of Arts

MBA: Master in Business Administration

MEd: Master of Education

MHA: Master of Health Administration

MPA: Master of Public Administration

MS: Master of Science

MSEIP: Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program

MSN: Master of Science in Nursing

MSOT: Master of Science in Occupational Therapy

MSRC: Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling

MUREP: Minority University Research and Education Project

NASA: National Aeronautics and Space Administration

NCAT: North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

NCCU: North Carolina Central University

NIFA: National Institute for Food and Agriculture

NIH-RIMI: National Institutes of Health's Research Infrastructure in Minority Institutions Program

NMAAHC: National Museum of African American History & Culture

NSF: National Science Foundation

NRC: National Research Council

PBF: Performance-Based Funding

PhD: Doctor of Philosophy

PVAMU: Prairie View A&M University

R1: Research 1 Classification

R2: Research 2 Classification

SFSF: State Fiscal Stabilization Fund

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

STEM-US: HBCU STEM Undergraduate Success Research Center

SUS: State University System of Florida

t-DPT: Transitional Doctor of Physical Therapy

TAMUS: Texas A&M University System

THECB: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

TMCF: Thurgood Marshall College Fund

TSU: Texas Southern University

TQRP: Teacher Quality & Retention Program

UNC: University of North Carolina System

WSSU: Winston-Salem State University

APPENDIX C

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University's Graduate Catalog

The table below presents revisions made for Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University's (FAMU) graduate catalog from 2014-2024. The table is formatted to reflect the graduate catalog archives.

Major	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Architecture (M.Arch)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Agricultural Science, Agribusiness (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Agricultural Science, Animal Science (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Agricultural Science, Entomology (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Agricultural Science, Food Science (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Agricultural Science, Plant Science (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Agricultural Science, Social & Water Science (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Architecture (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Biology (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Biomedical Engineering (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Biomedical Engineering (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chemical Engineering (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chemical Engineering (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chemistry (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Civil Engineering (MEng)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Civil Engineering (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Civil Engineering (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Community Psychology (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Computer Science (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Counselor Education (M.Ed.)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Counselor Education (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Curriculum & Instruction, Instruction, Learning and Assessment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

(M.Ed.) Curriculum & Instruction, Minority and Urban Education (M.Ed.)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Educational Leadership (M.Ed.)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Educational Leadership (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Educational Leadership (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Electrical Engineering (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Electrical Engineering (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Elementary Education (M.Ed.)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Elementary Education (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Entomology (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Environmental Science (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Environmental Science, Aquatic and Terrestrial Ecology (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Environmental Science, Biomolecular Sciences (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Environmental Science, Environmental Biotechnology (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Environmental	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Science, Chemistry (PhD)										
Environmental Science, Environmental Policy and Management (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Environmental Science, Environmental Policy and Management (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Environmental Science, Environmental Restoration and Waste Management (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Environmental Science, Marine and Estuarine Environments (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Environmental Sciences (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Environmental Sciences, Radiation Protection (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Health Care Administration (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Health Care Administration (MHA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X
Industrial Engineering (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Joint MS Supply Chain Management (MBA,MS)	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X
Law (JD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Materials Science and Engineering	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

(PhD)										
Mechanical Engineering (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mechanical Engineering (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mechanical Engineering, Sustainable Energy Specialization (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nursing, AGPCNP and WHNP (MSN)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nursing (PhD)	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-
Occupational Therapy (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Master of Business (MBA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public Health (MPH)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pharmaceutical Sciences, Environmental Toxicology (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pharmaceutical Sciences, Health Outcomes Research and Pharmacoeconomics (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pharmaceutical Sciences, Health Outcomes Research and Pharmacoeconomics (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pharmaceutical	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Sciences (MS)										
Pharmaceutical Sciences, Medicinal Chemistry (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pharmaceutical Sciences, Medicinal Sciences (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pharmaceutical Sciences (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pharmaceutical Sciences, Pharmacoeconomics (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pharmaceutical Sciences, Pharmacology/ Toxicology (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pharmaceutical Sciences, Pharmacology/ Toxicology (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pharmacy (PharmD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
PharmD/MBA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Physical Therapy (DPT)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Physics (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Physics (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Professional MBA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public Health, Behavioral Science & Health Education (DrPH)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public Health, Behavioral										

Science & Health Education (MPH)										
Public Health, Environmental and Occupational Health (MPH)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public Health, Epidemiology and Biostatistics (DrPH)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public Health, Epidemiology and Biostatistics (MPH)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public Health, Health Policy and Management (MPH)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social Science, Criminal Justice (MA)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Social Science, Global Security and International Affairs (MA)	X	X	X	X	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X
Social Science, History (MA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social Science, Political Science (MA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social Science,	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Public Administration (MA)										
Social Work (MSW)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Software Engineering (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sport Management (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Supply Chain Management (MS)	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X
Systems Engineering (MS)	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X

APPENDIX D

Fayetteville State University's Graduate Catalog

The table below presents revisions made for Fayetteville State University's (FSU) graduate catalog from 2016-2024. The table is formatted to reflect the graduate catalog archives.

Major	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Educational Leadership, Higher Education (EdD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Educational Leadership, PK-12 (EdD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Business Administration, Business Intelligence and Data Analytics (MBA)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X
Business Administration, Cyber Security Management (MBA)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X
Business Administration, Digital Enterprise and Cloud Management (MBA)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X
Business	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Administration, Entrepreneurship (MBA)								
Business Administration, Finance (MBA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Business Administration, General (MBA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Business Administration, Health Informatics (MBA)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X
Business Administration, Healthcare Management (MBA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Business Administration, International Business (MBA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Business Administration, Management (MBA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Business Administration, Marketing (MBA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Business Administration, Project Management (MBA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Birth through	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X

Kindergarten, PK-K (MAT)								
Criminal Justice, Comprehensive Exam (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-
Criminal Justice Enhanced Coursework (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-
Criminal Justice, Professional Option Thesis (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X
Criminal Justice, Thesis (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Elementary Education, K-6 , Project-Portfolio (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Elementary Education, K-6 (MEd)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X
Elementary Education, K-6 , Thesis (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Elementary Education, Math, Science, or Language Arts (MAT)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-
Elementary Education, K-6 (MAT)	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X
Elementary Education, Reading	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-

Education K-12, Project-Portfolio (MEd)								
Elementary Education, Reading Education K-12 (MEd)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X
Elementary Education, Reading Education K-12, Thesis (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Elementary Education, K-12 (MEd)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-
K-12 Special Subjects, Health and Physical education, Spanish, Music, or Art (MAT)	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	
Master of School Administration	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Middle Grades 6-9, Language Arts, Portfolio-Project (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Middle Grades 6-9, Language Arts, Thesis (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Middle Grades 6-9, Language (MEd)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X
Middle Grades 6-9, Mathematics, Portfolio-Project (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-

Middle Grades 6-9, Mathematics, Thesis (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Middle Grades 6-9, Mathematics (MEd)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-
Middle Grades 6-9, Science, Portfolio-Project (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Middle Grades 6-9, Science, Thesis (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Middle Grades 6-9, Science (MEd)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-
Middle Grades 6-9, Mathematics (MEd)	-	-	**-**	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X
Middle Grades 6-9, Language Arts, Portfolio-Project (MAT)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Middle Grades 6-9, Language Arts, Thesis (MAT)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Middle Grades 6-9, Language Arts, (MAT)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-
Middle Grades 6-9, Mathematics, Portfolio-Project (MAT)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Middle Grades 6-9, Mathematics, Thesis (MAT)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-

Middle Grades 6-9, Mathematics, (MAT)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-
Middle Grades 6-9, Science, Portfolio-Project (MAT)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Middle Grades 6-9, Science, Thesis (MAT)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Middle Grades 6-9, Science, (MAT)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-
Psychology, Counseling (MA)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Psychology, Experimental (MA)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Nursing, Patient Safety and Quality (MSN)	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X
Psychology (MA)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X		
Secondary Education, 9-12, Biology, Project-Portfolio (MAT)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Secondary Education, 9-12, Biology, Thesis (MAT)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Secondary Education, 9-12, Biology, (MAT)			**ADDED**	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-

Secondary Education 9-12, Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts, or Social Studies (MAT)	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X
Secondary Education, 9-12, Mathematics, Project-Portfolio (MAT)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Secondary Education, 9-12, Mathematics, Thesis (MAT)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Secondary Education, 9-12, Mathematics, (MAT)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	-	-	-	-
Secondary Education, 9-12, Sociology, Project-Portfolio (MAT)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Secondary Education, 9-12, Sociology, Thesis (MAT)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Secondary Education, 9-12, Sociology, (MAT)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-
Secondary Education, 9-12, Biology, Project-Portfolio (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-

Secondary Education, 9-12, Biology, Thesis (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Secondary Education, 9-12, Biology, (MEd)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X		
Secondary Education, 9-12, Mathematics, Project-Portfolio (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Secondary Education, 9-12, Mathematics, Thesis (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Secondary Education, 9-12, Mathematics, (MEd)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-
Secondary Education, 9-12, Sociology, Project-Portfolio (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Secondary Education, 9-12, Sociology, Thesis (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Secondary Education, 9-12, Sociology, (MEd)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-
Secondary Education, 9-12, Comprehensive Science, (MEd)	-	-	**-**	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X

Social Work, Children and Family Advanced (MSW)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social Work, Children and Family (MSW)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social Work, Mental Health Advanced Standing (MSW)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social Work, Mental Health Standing (MSW)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sociology, Non-Thesis (MA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**
Sociology, Practicum (MA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**
Sociology, Thesis (MA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**
Sociology (MA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**
Special Education K-12, Project-Portfolio, Current License in SPED (MEd)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Special Education K-12, Project-Portfolio, Current License not in SPED (MEd)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Special Education K-12,Thesis,	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Current License in SPED (MEd)								
Special Education K-12,Thesis, Current License not in SPED (MEd)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Special Education, General Curriculum K-12 (MAT)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

APPENDIX E

Elizabeth City State College University's Graduate Catalog

The table below presents revisions made for Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) graduate catalog from 2015-2024. The table is formatted to reflect the graduate catalog archives.

Major	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Elementary Education (MEd)	X	X	X	X	N/A	X	X	X	X
Elementary Education, Teacher Leader (MEd)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X
School Administration (M)	X	X	X	X	N/A	X	X	X	X
Biology, Biological Sciences (MS)	X	X	X	X	N/A	X	X	X	X
Biology, Biology Education (MS)	X	X	X	X	N/A	X	X	X	X
Mathematics, Applied Mathematics	X	X	X	X	N/A	X	X	X	X

(MS)									
Mathematics, Community College Teaching (MS)	X	X	X	X	N/A	X	X	X	X
Mathematics, Remote Sensing (MS)	X	X	X	X	N/A	X	X	X	X
Mathematics, Education (MS)	X	X	X	X	N/A	X	X	X	X

APPENDIX F

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University's Graduate Catalog

The table below presents revisions made for North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University's (NCAT) graduate catalog from 2005-2024. The table is formatted to reflect the graduate catalog archives.

Major	2005/ 2007	2007/2008	2008/2010	2010/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Accountancy (MAcc)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X
Adult Education (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (PhD)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X
Agribusiness, Applied Economics and Agriscience Education, Agricultural Economics (MS)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agricultural and Environmental Systems, Agribusiness & Food Industry Management (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Agricultural and Environmental Systems, Integrated Animal Health Systems (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Agricultural and Environmental Systems, Natural Resources and Environmental Systems (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Agribusiness, Applied Economics and Agriscience Education, Agricultural Education (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Agricultural Education,	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Professional Service (MS)																
Applied Mathematics (MS)	X	X	X	X	**X**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Animal Health Science (MS)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bioengineering (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Biology (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Biology, Industrial Biosciences (PSM/MS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Biology Education (MA Teaching)	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Biology, Secondary Education (MS)	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Business Education (MA Teaching)	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chemical Engineering (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chemistry (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chemistry, Applied Chemistry and Chemical Sciences (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chemistry Education (MA Teaching)	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chemistry, Secondary Education (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Child Development, Early Education and Family Studies Birth-Kindergarten (MA Teaching)	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Civil and Environmental Engineering (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Community Counseling (MS)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Computational Science & Engineering	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

(MS)																	
Computational Science and Engineering (PhD)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Computer Science (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Computer Science (PhD)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Construction Management and Occupational Safety and Health, Construction Management (MS)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Construction Management and Occupational Safety and Health, Environmental and Occupational Safety Health (MS)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Construction Management and Occupational Safety and Health, Occupational Safety and Health (MS)	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Counselor Education (MS)	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Counselor Education and Supervision (PhD)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**
Data Science and Engineering (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X
Data Science and Engineering, Systems Engineering (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X
Electrical and Computer Engineering (MS)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Electrical Engineering (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Electronics and Computer Technology, Information technology (MS)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Electronics and Computer Technology, Electronics and Computer Technology (MSIT)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Electronics and Computer Technology, Information Technology (MSIT)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Elementary Education (MS)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Elementary Education, General (MA Teaching)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Energy and Environmental Studies (PhD)	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Energy and Environmental Systems, Atmospheric Sciences (PhD)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Energy and Environmental Systems, Energy and Environmental Sciences and Economics (PhD)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Energy and Environmental Systems, General (PhD)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Energy and Environmental Systems, Sustainable Bio Products (PhD)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
English and African American Literature (MA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
English Education (MA Teaching)	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
English, Secondary Education (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Family and Consumer Sciences (MA Teaching)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Food and Nutritional Science (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Food and Nutritional Sciences,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**

Dietetics (MS)																	
Graphic Communication Systems and Technological Studies, Graphic Communication System (MSIT)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Graphic Communication Systems and Technological Studies, Technology Education, Teaching (MS)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Graphic Communication Systems and Technological Studies, Trade and Industrial Education, Teaching (MS)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Graphic Communication Systems and Technological Studies, Training and Development for Industry (MS)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Graphic Communication Systems and Technological Studies, Workforce Development Director (MS)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health Psychology (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X
History Education (MA Teaching)	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
History, Secondary Education (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Human Performance and Leisure Studies (MA Teaching)	-	**ADDED**	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Human Resources Management (MSM)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Human Resources, Agency Counseling (MS)	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Human Resources, Rehabilitation Counseling	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

(MS)																	
Industrial and Systems Engineering (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Industrial Engineering (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Industrial Management (PhD)	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Instructional Technology (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-
Leadership Studies (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Management Information Systems (MSM)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Management, Accounting (MS)	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Manufacturing Systems (MSIT)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manufacturing Systems, Construction Management (MS)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manufacturing Systems, Graphic Communications Systems (MS)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manufacturing Systems, Occupational Safety and Health (MS)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Math Education (MA Teaching)	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mathematics, Secondary Education (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mechanical Engineering (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mechanical Engineering (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nanoengineering (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nanoengineering (PhD)	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Physical Education (MS)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Physical Education, Non-Teaching (MA Teaching)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Physical Education, Teaching (MA Teaching)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Physics (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Plant and Soil Science (MS)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reading Education (MA Ed)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
School Administration (MSA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
School Counseling (MS)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social Work (MSW)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social Work (PhD)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X
Special Education (MA Teaching)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Supply Chain Management (MS)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Technology Education 9-12 (MA Teaching)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Technology Management (MS)	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Technology Management, Construction Science and Management (PSM/MS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-
Technology Management (PhD)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trade and Industrial Education, Teaching (MA Teaching)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Training and Development for Industry (MA Teaching)	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Transportation and Business Logistics (MSM)	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

APPENDIX G

North Carolina Central University's Graduate Catalog

The table below presents revisions made for North Carolina Central University's (NCCU) graduate catalog from 2013-2024. The table is formatted to reflect the graduate catalog archives.

Major	2013/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Adapted Physical Education (MS)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	-
Assistive Technology for Visually Impaired (MEd)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	N/A	X
Biological and Biomedical Sciences (MS)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Biology (MS)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	-
Business Administration (MBA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Business Administration, Real Estate (MBA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	N/A	X
Business Administration, Wealth Management (MBA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	N/A	X
Career	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X

Counseling (MA)										
Chemistry (MS)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	-
Chemistry and Biochemistry (MS)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Communications Disorders (MEd)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Community Agency Counseling (MA)	-	-	**ADDED**	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	N/A	-
Counselor Education (MA)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Criminal Justice (MS)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Earth Science, Applied Earth Sciences, (MS)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Earth Sciences (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Earth Sciences, General Earth Sciences	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Education (MEd)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Education Technology (MA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	
English (MA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X

English Secondary Education (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	-
Executive Master Of Public Admin (EMPA)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	-
Family and Consumer Sciences (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Higher Education Administration (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	N/A	X
History (MA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Information Sciences (MIS)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	N/A	X
Integrated Biosciences (PhD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Jazz Studies (MM)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Joint MBA/ Master of Information Science (MBA/MIS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Kinesiology and Recreation Administration (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	N/A	X
Law (JD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Law Librarianship (Joint	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	N/A	X

JD/MLS)										
Law Enforcement and Corrections (MS)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	-
Library Science (MLS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Library Science, Academic Libraries (MLS)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	N/A	X
Library Science, Archives and Records Management (MLS)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	N/A	X
Library Science, Digital Library (MLS)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	N/A	X
Library Science, Public Libraries (MLS)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	N/A	X
Library Science, School Media Coordinator/ School Librarian (MLS)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	N/A	X
Library Science, Special Libraries(MLS)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	N/A	X

Library Science, Teacher Librarianship (MLS)	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	N/A	X
Mathematics (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Mental Health Counseling (MA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Nutritional Sciences (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	N/A	X
Pharmaceutical Sciences (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Physical Education (MS)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	-
Physical Education, General (MS)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	N/A	-
Physical education and Recreation, Physical Education (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	N/A	**REMOVED**
Physical Education and Recreation, Recreation Management (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	N/A	**REMOVED**
Physical Education and Recreation, Recreational Therapy (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	**REMOVED**	N/A	-
Physics (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	N/A	X

Psychology (MA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Psychology, Clinical (MA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	N/A	X
Public Administration (MPA)	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	N/A	X
Recreation Administration (MS)	X	X	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	N/A	-
School Administration (MSA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
School Counseling (MA)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	-
Social Work (MSW)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Special Education (MAT)	X	X	**REMOVED**	X	X	X	X		N/A	
Special Education-Blind and Visually Impaired (MEd)	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	-
Special Education, Behavioral/ Emotional Disabilities, Learning Disabilities (MAT)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Special Education, Behavioral/ Emotional	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X

Disabilities, Learning Disabilities (MEd)										
Special Education, Visual Impairment Education (MEd/MAT)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Special Education, Visual Impairment MEd)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Teaching (MAT)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X
Visual Impairment (MAT)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	N/A	-
Visual Impairment, O&M Focus (MEd)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	N/A	-
Visual Impairment, TVI Focus (MEd)	-	-	**ADDED**	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	N/A	-

APPENDIX H

Winston-Salem State University's Graduate Catalog

The table below presents revisions made for Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) graduate catalog from 2007-2024. The table is formatted to reflect the graduate catalog archives.

Major	2007/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2015/2017	2017/2019	2019/2021	2021/2023	2023/2024
5-Year (4+1) BS-MS Computer Science and Information Technology (MCST)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X
Business Administration (MBA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Computer Science and Information Technology (MCST)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X
Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Elementary Education (MEd)	X	X	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-
English as a Second Language and Applied Linguistics (MA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-
Healthcare Administration (MHA)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Nursing (MSN)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Occupational Therapy (MSOT)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Physical Therapy (MPT)	X	X	X	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rehabilitation Counseling (MSRC)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Teaching (MAT)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Transitional Doctor of Physical Therapy (t-DPT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	X	X	X

APPENDIX I

Prairie View A&M University's Graduate Catalog

The table below presents revisions made for Prairie View A&M University's (PVAMU) graduate catalog from 2012-2024. The table is formatted to reflect the graduate catalog archives.

Major	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Accounting (MSA)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Agriculture, Agricultural Economics (MS)	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agriculture, Animal Science (MS)	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agriculture, Social Sciences (MS)	x	**REMOVED**	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Architecture (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Behavioral Sociology (MA)	-	-	**ADDED**	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Business Administration (DBA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	x	x
Business Administration (MBA)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Chemistry (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Clinical Adolescent Psychology (MS, PhD)	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Community Development (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Computer Information Systems (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Computer Science (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Counseling (MA)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Curriculum and Instruction (MEd, MAEd, MSEd))	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Curriculum and Instruction-Reading Education (MSEd, MEd)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Educational Administration (MSEd, MEd)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Educational Leadership (PhD)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Electrical Engineering (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Electrical Engineering (PhD)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Engineering (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Executive Business Administration (EMBA)	-	**ADDED**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Family Nurse Practitioner (MSN)	-	**ADDED**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Health Education (MSEd, MEd)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Human Sciences (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Human Sciences, Family	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

& Consumer Studies (MS)												
Human Sciences, Interdisciplinary Studies in Human Sciences (MS)	x	x	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Human Sciences, Marriage and Family Studies (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-
Juvenile Forensic Psychology (MS)	-	**ADDED**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	**REMOVED**
Juvenile Justice (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Juvenile Justice (PhD)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Mathematics (MS)	x	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	x
Nurse Administration (MSN)	-	**ADDED**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Nurse Education (MSN)	-	**ADDED**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Nursing (DNP)	-	**ADDED**	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	x
Physical Education (MSEd, MEd)	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Political Science (MA)	-	-	**ADDED**	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social Work (MSW)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	x
Sociology (MA)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Special Education (MSEd, MEd)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

APPENDIX J

Texas Southern University's Graduate Catalog

The table below presents revisions made for Texas Southern University's (TSU) graduate catalog from 2006-2024. The table is formatted to reflect the graduate catalog archives.

Major	2006/2008	2008/2010	2012/2014	2016/2018	2018/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Administration of Justice (MAJ)	-	**ADDED**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Administration of Justice (PhD)	-	**ADDED**	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Biology (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Business Administration (EMBA)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	x	x	x	x	x
Business Administration (MBA)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x[17]	x	x
Chemistry (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Clinical Sociology (MA)	x	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-
Communications (MA)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x[18]	x	x
Computer Science (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

[17] Business Administration Concentrations: Accounting, Health Care Administration, Management Information Systems, and Business Analytics
[18] Communication Concentrations added: Health Communication, Media Studies, Organizational Communication, Professional Communication and Digital Media, Sports & Entertainment

Counselor (MEd)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x[19]	x	x
Counselor Education (EdD)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Curriculum and Instruction (EdD)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Curriculum and Instruction (MEd)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x[20]	x	x
Educational Administration (EdD)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x[21]	x	x
Educational Administration (MEd)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
English (MA)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Environmental Toxicology (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Environmental Toxicology (PhD)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
General Sociology (MA)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Health (MS)	x	x	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Health & Human	-	-	-	**UPDATED**	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-

[19] Counseling Concentrations explicitly listed: Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Rehabilitation Counseling, School Counseling

[20] Curriculum & Instruction Concentrations: Bilingual Education, Early Childhood Education, Instructional Technology, Reading Education, Secondary Education, and Sports Studies

[21] Educational Administration Concentrations: Human Resources and Higher Education, Community College Leadership, and Higher Education

Performance (MS)									
Health & Kinesiology (MS)	-	-	-	-	**UPDATED**	x	x[22]	x	x
Healthcare Administration (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
History (MA)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Human Performance (MS)	x	x	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-
Human Services & Consumer Sciences (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Industrial Technology (MS)	x	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-
Law (JD)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Management and Information Systems (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Mathematics (MS)	x	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	**ADDED**	x	x
Performing Arts/ Music (MFA)	x	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pharmaceutical Science (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Pharmaceutical Science (PhD)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

[22] Health & Kinesiology Concentrations: Health Education and Kinesiology

Pharmacy (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**	x	x
Pharmacy (PharmD)	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Psychology (MA)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x[23]	x	x
Public Administration (EMPA)	-	-	-	**ADDED**	x	x	x	x	x
Public Administration (MPA)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x[24]	x	x
Sports Studies and Sport Leadership (MS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**ADDED**[25]	x	x
Teaching Mathematics (MEd)	x	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transportation Planning & Management (MS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Urban Education (EdD)	x	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-
Urban Planning and Environmental Policy (MUPEP)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x[26]	x	x

[23] Psychology Concentrations: Clinical Community and School Psychology
[24] Public Administration Concentrations: Human Resources, International Resources, Public Policy, and Urban Planning and Environmental Policy
[25] Sports Studies Concentrations: Sport Management and Sport Administration
[26] Urban Planning Concentrations: Community Development and Housing, Spatial Analysis and Mobility Planning, and Sustainable Environmental and Land Use Planning

Urban Planning and Environmental Policy (PhD)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Urban Sociology (MA)	x	x	**REMOVED**	-	-	-	-	-	-

REFERENCES

Chapter 1

Alkateb-Chami, M. (2023). Theorizing Resistance in Education Research: An Introduction to the Reprint of Giroux's "Theories of Reproduction and Resistance in the New Sociology of Education." *Harvard Educational Review*, *93*(3), 391–395. https://doi.org/10.17763/1943-5045-93.3.391

Allen, D. (Director). (1987–1993). *A Different World* [TV series]. Carsey-Werner Company.

Allen, W. R., Jewell, J. O., Griffin, K. A., & Wolf, D. S. (2007). Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Honoring the past, engaging the present, touching the future. *The Journal of Negro Education, 76*(3), 263–280.

America COMPETES Act of 2007, Pub. L. No. 110-69, 121 Stat. 572 (2007). https://www.congress.gov/110/plaws/publ69/PLAW-110publ69.pdf

Blake, J. (2024, October 16). *Report shows state of humanities at hbcus*. Inside Higher Ed. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/institutions/minority-serving-institutions/2024/10/16/report-shows-state-humanities-hbcus

Brocato, B. R. (2023). Academic Capitalism And Historically Black Colleges And Universities: Institutional Conflict. The Journal of Public and Professional Sociology, 15(1), 2.

Casey, Z. A. (2016). *A pedagogy of anticapitalist antiracism : whiteness, neoliberalism, and resistance in education*.

Florida, R. (2002). *The rise of the creative class: And how it's transforming work, leisure, community, and everyday life.* Basic Books.

Garcia, G. A., Núñez, A.-M., & Sansone, V. A. (2019). Toward a Multidimensional Conceptual Framework for Understanding "Servingness" in Hispanic-Serving Institutions: A Synthesis of the Research. *Review of Educational Research*, *89*(5), 745–784. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654319864591

Garcia, G. A. (2020). *Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs) in practice : defining "servingness" at HSIs*.

Gasman, M., & Nguyen, T. H. (2015). Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs): Leading our nation's effort to improve the educational outcomes of African American males. *American Journal of Education, 121*(2), 241–263.

Golde, C. M., & Walker, G. E. (Eds.). (2006). *Envisioning the future of doctoral education: Preparing stewards of the discipline.* Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Gumport, P. J. (2000). Academic restructuring: Organizational change and institutional imperatives. *Higher Education, 39*(1), 67–91.

Hammond, Z. (2021). Liberatory education: Integrating the science of learning and culturally responsive practice. *American Educator*, *45*(2), 4.

Hampton, R., & University of Toronto. Library, funder. (2020). *Black racialization and resistance at an elite university*.

Harper, S. R., Patton, L. D., & Wooden, O. S. (2009). *Access and Equity for African American Students in Higher Education: A Critical Race Historical Analysis of Policy Efforts*. The Journal of Higher Education, 80(4), 389–414. https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.0.0052

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom.* Routledge. hooks explores the liberatory potential of education, particularly in non-STEM fields, emphasizing its role in challenging systemic inequalities.

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers college record*, *97*(1), 47-68.

Louten, J. (2024). Fostering Persistence in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM): creating an equitable environment that addresses the needs of undergraduate students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, *26*(1), 283-302.

Melamed, J. (2015). Racial Capitalism. *Critical Ethnic Studie*s, 1(1), 76–85. https://doi.org/10.5749/jcritethnstud.1.1.0076

Merriweather, Lisa, Lambert, Marah, Casey, Shaunelle, Howell, Cathy, & Douglas, Niesha. *Invisibilized Hypervisibility: Black STEM Doctoral Students, HBCUs, and Mentoring*. *ASEE Annual Conference proceedings*, (2022). Retrieved from https://par.nsf.gov/biblio/10422250.

Mitchell, M., Leachman, M., & Saenz, M. (2019). State higher education funding cuts have pushed costs to students, worsened inequality. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 24, 9-15.

Owens, E. W., Shelton, A. J., Bloom, C. M., & Cavil, J. K. (2012). The significance of HBCUs to the production of STEM graduates: Answering the call. *Educational Foundations*, *26*, 33-47.

Robinson C. J. (1983). *Black Marxism: The making of the Black radical tradition*. University of North Carolina Press.

Ross, S. N. (2009). Critical race theory, democratization, and the public good: deploying postmodern understandings of racial identity in the social justice classroom to contest academic capitalism. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *14*(5), 517–528. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510903186709

Roth, M. S. (2014). *Beyond the university: Why liberal education matters.* Yale University Press. This book discusses the relevance of liberal arts education in developing critical thinking and ethical reasoning.

Stevens, P. A. J., Vryonides, M., & Dworkin, A. G. (2018). Problems in education. In A. J. Treviño (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of social problems* (pp. 513–530). Cambridge University Press.

The United States Government. (2024, May 16). *The economics of hbcus*. The White House. https://www.whitehouse.gov/cea/written-materials/2024/05/16/the-economics-of-hbcus/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Thurgood Marshall College Fund. (2021). *Teacher Quality and Retention Program (TQRP)*. Retrieved February 28, 2025, from https://www.tmcf.org/students-alumni/tqrp/

Toldson, I. A., Mugo, M., Hudson, J., Megra, M., & Overton, C. (2022). HBCUs as a Pathway to Becoming a Scientist: Institutional Characteristics of HBCUs That Are among the Top Baccalaureate Origins of Black Doctorate Recipients in STEM. In *Black college leadership in PK–12 education* (pp. 98-122). Brill.

Tracking the health of the humanities at hbcus. American Academy of Arts & Sciences. (2025, January 6). https://www.amacad.org/publication/tracking-health-humanities-hbcus

Upton, R., & Tanenbaum, C. (2014). The role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities as pathway providers: Institutional pathways to the STEM PhD. *American Institutes for Research*.

Chapter 2

Aka, J., Smith, R., & Johnson, T. (2024). *The distribution of competitive research grants from the National Institute for Food and Agriculture: A comparison of 1862 land-grant universities, 1890 land-grant universities, and other institutions.* ResearchGate. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376561763_The_distribution_of_competitive_r

esearch_grants_from_the_National_Institute_for_Food_and_Agriculture_A_comparison_of_1862_land_grant_universities_1890_land_grant_universities_and_other_institutions

Al Ariss, A., Özbilgin, M., Tatli, A., & April, K. (2014). Tackling whiteness in organizations and management. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 29*(4), 362–369. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-10-2013-0331

Allen, B. C. M., & Esters, L. T. (2018, July 15). *PWIs and HBCUs need to create partnerships, not competition*. Diverse Issues in Higher Education. https://www.diverseeducation.com/institutions/hbcus/article/15102689/pwis-and-hbcus-need-to-create-partnerships-not-competition

Allen, W. R., Jewell, J. O., Griffin, K. A., & Wolf, D. S. (2007). Historically Black colleges and universities: Honoring the past, engaging the present, touching the future. *Journal of Negro Education, 76*(3), 263–280.

Alonso, J. (2024, December 16). *How the battle over DEI shook out in 2024—and what's to come*. Inside Higher Ed. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/diversity-equity/2024/12/16/how-battle-over-dei-shook-out-2024-and-whats-come

American Academy of Arts & Sciences. (2024). *Tracking the status of humanities degrees at HBCUs.* Retrieved from https://www.amacad.org/sites/default/files/publication/downloads/2024_hi_research-brief_hbcus.pdf

American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS). (2023). *ACLS HBCU Faculty Fellowship and Grants Program.* Retrieved from https://www.acls.org/programs/acls-hbcu-faculty-fellowship-and-grants/

American Council on Education (ACE). (2021). *Exposing the gap: Addressing funding and endowment disparities for HBCUs and its impact.* Retrieved from https://www.higheredtoday.org/2021/10/06/exposing-the-gap-addressing-funding-and-endowment-disparities-for-hbcus-and-its-impact/

American Council on Education (ACE). (2023). *ACE brief illustrates HBCU funding inequities.* Retrieved from https://www.acenet.edu/News-Room/Pages/ACE-Brief-Illustrates-HBCU-Funding-Inequities.aspx

Anderson, J. D. (1988). *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935.*

Andrews, D. R., No, S., Powell, K. K., Rey, M. P., & Yigletu, A. (2016). Historically Black colleges and universities' institutional survival and sustainability: A view from the HBCU business deans' perspective. *Journal of Black Studies*, *47*(2), 150-168.

AP News. (2024). *Savannah State University cuts humanities programs amid financial constraints.* Retrieved from https://apnews.com/article/bede3d8935ecb1a4f9b50018fbc8fa61

Bell, E., Seymore, K., Breen, S., & McCullough, M. (2022). Empowering Black scientists in STEM: early success of the Black Biomechanists Association. *Biomedical Engineering Education*, *2*(2), 113-121.

Bensimon, E. M., & Malcom, L. E. (2012). *Confronting equity issues on campus: Implementing the equity scorecard in theory and practice*. Stylus.

Black Enterprise. (2023). *HBCU underfunding lawsuit quietly dismissed in Georgia.* Retrieved from https://www.blackenterprise.com/hbcu-underfunding-lawsuit-quietly-dismissed-in-georgia/

Bloom, P. (2017). The Ethics of Neoliberalism: The Business of Making Capitalism Moral (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315619019

Boland, W., & Gasman, M. (2014). America's public HBCUs: A four state comparison of institutional capacity and state funding priorities. *Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions*, (340).

Boncana, M., McKayle, C. A., Engerman, K., & Askew, K. (2021). "What is going on here"? Exploring Why HBCU Presidents are Successful in Producing STEM Graduates. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *90*(3), 277–287.

Bonilla-Silva, E., & Baiocchi, G. (2001). Anything but racism: How sociologists limit the significance of racism. Race and society, 4(2), 117-131.

Brown, J. T. (2021). The evolving missions and functions of accessible colleges and universities. In *Unlocking Opportunity through Broadly Accessible Institutions* (pp. 65-81). Routledge.

Cabrera, N. L. (2014). Whiteness in higher education: The invisible missing link in diversity and racial analyses. *ASHE Higher Education Report, 40*(6), 1–123. https://doi.org/10.1002/aehe.20017

Callahan, R. F. (2020). Addressing complex, societal challenges through interdisciplinary research. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Sciences*, *4*(2), 6-10.

Carter, D. J. (2018). The role of HBCUs in a post-Ferguson world: Can Black colleges empower Black youth to combat systemic racism? *Journal of Negro Education, 87*(2), 123-138.

Centers, J., & Balazs, M. A., & Ogunyale, T. (2024, June), *Understanding Federal STEM Education Initiatives* Paper presented at 2024 ASEE Annual Conference & Exposition, Portland, Oregon. 10.18260/1-2--48191

Chan, R. Y. (2016). Understanding the purpose of higher education: An analysis of the economic and social benefits for completing a college degree. *Journal of Education Policy, Planning and Administration*, *6*(5), 1-40.

Chronicle of Higher Education. (2023). *States, courts push back after the education dept. cites $1.2 billion funding disparity for HBCUs.* Retrieved from https://www.chronicle.com/article/states-courts-push-back-after-the-education-dept-cites-12-billion-funding-disparity-for-hbcus

Cornell Law School. (2025). *Ayers v. Fordice.* Retrieved from https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/505/717

Cote, J., & Allahar, A. L. (2011). *Lowering higher education: The rise of corporate universities and the fall of liberal education*. University of Toronto Press.

Crewe, S. E. (2017). Education with intent—The HBCU experience. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 27*(5), 355–359. https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2017.1296720

Dancy, T. E., & Adams, M. (2013). White institutional presence: The impact of whiteness on campus climate. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 6*(3), 212–226. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034902

Dennis, A. (2024, October 17). *Report: HBCU humanities programs show resilience amid national decline*. Diverse Issues in Higher Education. https://www.diverseeducation.com/institutions/hbcus/article/15706192/report-hbcu-humanities-programs-show-resilience-amid-national-decline

DeTurk, S., & Briscoe, F. (2020). From Equity and Enlightenment to Entrepreneurialism: An HSI's Pursuit of "Tier-One" Status in the Neoliberal Era. Review of Higher Education.

DuBois, W. E. B. (1932). Education and work. *Journal of Negro Education*, 1(1), 60–74.

DuBois, W. E. B. (2001). *The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques, 1906–1960*. NYU Press.

Elfman, L. (2019, October 1). *Report—HBCUs produce more upwardly mobile graduates than PWIs.* Diverse Issues in Higher Education. Retrieved from https://www.diverseeducation.com/leadership-policy/article/15105512/report-hbcus-produce-more-upwardly-mobile-graduates-than-pwis

Ellison, S., & Allen, B. (2018). Disruptive innovation, labor markets, and Big Valley STEM School: network analysis in STEM education. *Cultural Studies of Science Education*, *13*, 267-298.

Ely, R. J., & Thomas, D. A. (2019). Whiteness in organizations: From white supremacy to allyship. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Business and Management*. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190224851.013.195

Encyclopedia of Alabama. (2022). *Knight v. State of Alabama.* Retrieved from https://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/knight-v-state-of-alabama/

Escobar, M., Qazi, M., Majewski, H., Kotoye, C., & Barfield, J. (2023). Barriers and facilitators to obtaining external funding at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). *Journal of STEM Education: Innovations and Research*, *24*(1).

Evans, E. C., Brown, B. D., & Bussey, K. (2021). HBCUs in a New Decade: A Look at 2010 to 2020 and Beyond. In *Reimagining Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Survival Beyond 2021* (pp. 29-40). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Ferguson, R. A. (2012). *The reorder of things: The university and its pedagogies of minority difference*. University of Minnesota Press.

Fitch, S. (2024, March 13). *Good news in the progress toward top-tier research status for hbcus?*. Center for Security and Emerging Technology. https://cset.georgetown.edu/article/good-news-in-the-progress-toward-top-tier-research-status-for-hbcus/#:~:text=Under%20the%20current%20Carnegie%20classifications,the%20nation's%20146%20R1%20universities.

Fleming, G. C., Patrick, A. D., Grote, D., Denton, M., Knight, D., Lee, W., ... & Murzi, H. (2023). The fallacy of "there are no candidates": Institutional pathways of Black/African

American and Hispanic/Latino doctorate earners. *Journal of Engineering Education*, *112*(1), 170-194. https://doi.org/10.1002/jee.20347

Dickens, D. (2021). Changing the face of STEM: Review of literature on the role of mentors in the success of undergraduate black women in STEM education. Journal of research initiatives, 5(3).

Favors, J. (2019). Shelter in a time of storm: How Black colleges fostered generations of leadership and activism. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Favors, J. M. (n.d.). *Five contributions HBCUs have made to social movements in America*. National Museum of African American History & Culture. https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/five-contributions-hbcus-have-made-social-movements-america

Fakayode, S. O., Snipes, V., Kanipes, M. I., Mohammed, A. K., & Wilson, Z. S. (2017). Use of innovative pedagogies and creative partnership strategies to promote undergraduate STEM education at an HBCU. In Educational Leadership and Administration: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 1120-1151). IGI Global.

Ferguson, R. A. (2012). *The reorder of things: The university and its pedagogies of minority difference*. University of Minnesota Press.

Garcia, G. A. (2018). Decolonizing Leadership Practices: Towards Equity and Justice at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Emerging HSIs (eHSIs. *Journal of Transformative Leadership & Policy Studies*, *7*(2), 25-39.

Garcia, G. A., Núñez, A.-M., & Sansone, V. A. (2019). Toward a Multidimensional Conceptual Framework for Understanding "Servingness" in Hispanic-Serving Institutions: A

Synthesis of the Research. *Review of Educational Research*, *89*(5), 745–784. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654319864591

Garcia, G. A. (2020). *Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs) in practice : defining "servingness" at HSIs*.

Gardner, B. T. (1975). The Educational Contributions of Booker T. Washington. *Journal of Negro Education*, 44(4), 449–457.

Gasman, M., & Commodore, F. (2014a). Opportunities and challenges at historically Black colleges and universities. *Teachers College Record, 116*(10), 1–34.

Gasman, M., & Commodore, F. (2014b). The history of historically Black colleges and universities: A tradition rich in leadership and resilience. In M. Gasman & F. Commodore (Eds.), *Opportunities and Challenges at Historically Black Colleges and Universities* (pp. 21–32). Palgrave Macmillan.

Gasman, M., & Commodore, F. (2014c). The state of research on historically Black colleges and universities. *Journal for Multicultural Education*, *8*(2), 89-111.

Gasman, M., & Nguyen, T. H. (2016). Engaging voices: Methods for studying STEM education at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). *Journal for Multicultural Education*, *10*(2), 194-205.

Gasman, M. (2013). The changing face of historically Black colleges and universities. *The Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions.*

Gerrard, J., Sriprakash, A., & Rudolph, S. (2022). Education and racial capitalism. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *25*(3), 425-442.

Gibbs, A., & Bruns, L. (2023). *Suit filed in Florida concerning HBCUs.* Retrieved from https://www.gelaw.com/suit-filed-in-fla-concerning-hbcus-press-release

Green, Y. J. (2023, October 18). *HBCU enrollment continues to rise, reaching Historic Heights*. The HBCU Career Center. https://www.thehbcucareercenter.com/blog/hbcu-enrollment-continues-to-rise-reaching-historic-heights#:~:text=New%20data%20from%20the%20National,investment%20from%20Blue%20Meridian%20Partners.

Greer, P., and C. Horst. 2014. Mission Drift: The Unspoken Crisis Facing Leaders, Charities, and Churches. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers

Gretzinger, E., Hicks, M., Dutton, C., & Smith, J. (2025, January 24). *Tracking higher ed's dismantling of DEI*. The Chronicle of Higher Education. https://www.chronicle.com/article/tracking-higher-eds-dismantling-of-dei

Guthrie, R. V. (2004). Even the rat was white: A historical view of psychology. Pearson Education.

Gwen, G**.** (2024, September 17). *HBCUs experience a surge following ban on affirmative action in admissions policies.* Blue Ridge Public Radio. Retrieved from https://www.bpr.org/2024-09-17/hbcus-experience-a-surge-following-ban-on-affirmative-action-in-admissions-policies?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Hardy, P. M., Kaganda, E. J., & Aruguete, M. S. (2019). Below the surface: HBCU performance, social mobility, and college ranking. *Journal of Black Studies, 50*(5), 468–483. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934719847910

Harper, S. R. (2012). Race without racism: How higher education researchers minimize racist institutional norms. *The Review of Higher Education, 36*(1), 9–29. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2012.0047

Harper, S. R., & Simmons, I. (2019). Black students at public colleges and universities: A 50-state report card. *Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education.*

Harper, S. R., & Simmons, I. M. (2019). Black students at HBCUs: The post-Ferguson effect. In J. L. Palmer & R. T. Palmer (Eds.), *Racial battle fatigue in higher education* (pp. 99-119). Springer.

Harper-Anderson, E., & Hagedorn, L. (2024). *Land-grant but unequal: State one-to-one match funding for 1890 land-grant universities.* APLU. Retrieved from https://www.aplu.org/wp-content/uploads/land-grant-but-unequal-state-one-to-one-match-funding-for-1890-land-grant-universities.pdf

Harriot, M. (2023). Black AF History: The Un-whitewashed Story of America (p. 432). New York: Dey Street Books.

Harris, A. (2019, May 16). Why America needs its HBCUs. *The Atlantic.* Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2019/05/howard-universitys-president-why-america-needs-hbcus/589582/

Howarth, D. (2024). *Discourse, framing and narrative: Three ways of doing discourse analysis*. *Journal of Language and Politics, 23*(1), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2024.2326936

Jaquette, O. (2013). Why Do Colleges Become Universities? Mission Drift and the Enrollment Economy. *Research in Higher Education*, *54*(5), 514–544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-013-9283-x

Jaeger, E., McKayle, C. A., Engerman, K., Boncana, M., Joseph, C., & Askew, K. (2021). Institutional and Leadership Predictors of HBCU Success in Broadening Participation in STEM. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *90*(3), 371–382.

Jenkins, D., & LeRoy, J. (Eds.). (2021). *Histories of Racial Capitalism*. Columbia University Press. https://doi.org/10.7312/jenk19074

Johnson, G. S., Gray, V., Gray, L. D., Richardson, N. L., Rainey-Brown, S. A., Triplett, K. L., & Bowman, L. E. (2017). Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the twenty first century: An exploratory case study analysis of their mission. *Race, Gender & Class*, *24*(3-4), 44-67.

Jones, M. B. (2007). The multiple sources of mission drift. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 36*(2), 299–307. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764007300385

Kendricks, K., Nedunuri, K. V., & Arment, A. R. (2013). Minority student perceptions of the impact of mentoring to enhance academic performance in STEM disciplines. Journal of STEM Education: Innovations and Research, 14(2).

King, C. R., Springwood, C. F., & Scriven, D. D. (2009). An empirical assessment of whiteness theory: Hidden from how many? *Social Problems, 56*(3), 403–421. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2009.56.3.403

Knox, L. (2024). *Interest in hbcus surges after affirmative action ban*. Inside Higher Ed | Higher Education News, Events and Jobs. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/admissions/traditional-age/2024/09/11/interest-hbcus-surges-after-affirmative-action-ban#:~:text=Initial%20data%20for%20the%20Class,in%20applications%20since%20last%20year.

Kraatz, M. S., Ventresca, M. J., & Deng, L. (2010). Precarious values and mundane innovations: Enrollment management in American liberal arts colleges. Academy of Management Journal, 53(6), 1521-1545.

Kumar, R., & Hill, D. (2012). Introduction: Neoliberal capitalism and education. In *Global neoliberalism and education and its consequences* (pp. 21-31). Routledge.

Labaree, D. F. (1997). Public goods, private goods: The American struggle over educational goals. *American Educational Research Journal, 34*(1), 39–81.

Laster Pirtle, W. N. (2020). Racial capitalism: A fundamental cause of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic inequities in the United States. *Health Education & Behavior, 47*(4), 504–508. https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198120922942

Lee, J. M., & Keys, S. W. (2013). Repositioning HBCUs for the future. *Access, success, research & innovation. Washington, DC: Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities*.

Lee, J. M. Jr., & Keys, S. W. (2013). Repositioning HBCUs for the Future: Access, Success, Research & Innovation. *Institute for Higher Education Policy.*

Leong, N. (2012). Racial capitalism. *Harv. L. Rev.*, *126*, 2151.

Li, A. Y. (2020). Performance funding policy impacts on STEM degree attainment. *Educational Policy*. *34(2). 312-349*.

Ma, A. (2019, December 11). *HBCUs produce nearly half of all Black teachers in the U.S.* PBS NewsHour. Retrieved from https://www.pbs.org/newshour/education/hbcus-produce-nearly-half-of-all-black-teachers-in-the-u-s

Marable, M. (1976). *Booker T. Washington and African Nationalism*.

Matthews, P. H., & Jones, B. C. (2021). HBCUs in a STEM-focused era: Balancing the mission with evolving priorities. *Journal of Education Policy Analysis, 12*(3), 203–218.

McGee, E. O. (2020). Interrogating structural racism in STEM higher education. *The Review of Higher Education, 43*(4), 1333-1361. https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2017.1357097

McGee, E. O., & Martin, D. B. (2011). "You would not believe what I have to go through to prove my intellectual value!" Stereotype management among academically successful Black mathematics and engineering students. *American Educational Research Journal, 48*(6), 1347–1389.

McLean, D. (2024, March 17). *Some hbcus are seeing enrollment surge. Here's why.* Higher Ed Dive. https://www.highereddive.com/news/hbcus-enrollment-surge-why/710494/

Melamed, J. (2015). Racial Capitalism. *Critical Ethnic Studies, 1*(1), 76–85.

Miller, P. A. (2020). Understanding critical whiteness studies: Harmful or helpful in the pursuit of social justice in education? In T. C. Howard, A. T. Spencer, & A. Lewis (Eds.), *Critical perspectives on education and social justice* (pp. 421–432). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-65668-3_21

Mitchell, M., Leachman, M., & Saenz, M. (2019). State higher education funding cuts have pushed costs to students, worsened inequality. *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.*

Mitchneck, B., Crockett, J. S., Franco, M., Núñez, A. M., & Endemaño Walker, B. L. (2023). Assessing Institutional Change Toward Servingness in Hispanic-Serving Institutions. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, *55*(6), 37–45. https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2023.2263192

Mobley, C. (2025, February 13). *Howard University receives Research One Carnegie Classification, indicating highest-level research*. The Dig at Howard University. https://thedig.howard.edu/all-stories/howard-university-receives-research-one-carnegie-classification-indicating-highest-level-research

Morton, T. R. (2021). A Phenomenological and Ecological Perspective on the Influence of Undergraduate Research Experiences on Black Women's Persistence in STEM at an HBCU. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, *14*(4), 530–543. https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000183

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. (2024). *Federal obligations for science and engineering support to HBCUs.* Retrieved from https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf24325

National Endowment for the Arts. (2022). *HBCU grants report (February 18, 2022)*. U.S. Government. Retrieved February 27, 2025, from https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/HBCU-Grants-2.18.2022.pdf

National Endowment for the Arts. (n.d.). *Reaching out to HBCUs.* U.S. Government. Retrieved February 27, 2025, from https://www.arts.gov/reaching-out-hbcus

National Endowment for the Humanities. (n.d.). *Awards for faculty at historically Black colleges and universities.* U.S. Government. Retrieved February 27, 2025, from https://www.neh.gov/grants/research/awards-faculty-historically-black-colleges-and-universities

National Endowment for the Humanities. (n.d.). *Humanities initiatives at historically Black colleges and universities.* U.S. Government. Retrieved February 27, 2025, from

https://www.neh.gov/grants/education/humanities-initiatives-historically-black-colleges-and-universities

Orphan, C. M. (2018). Public Purpose under Pressure: Examining the Effects of Neoliberal Public Policy on the Missions of Regional Comprehensive Universities. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *22*(2), 59-101.

Owens, D. L., Shelton, J. B., Bloom, T., & Cavil, J. K. (2012). Historically Black colleges and universities: Pathways to STEM success. *The Journal of Negro Education, 81*(2), 123–135.

Patton, L. D. (2016). Disrupting postsecondary prose: Toward a critical race theory of higher education. *Urban Education, 51*(3), 315–342. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085915602542

Peteet, B. J., & Lige, Q. (2016). Beyond a bachelor's: Implementing a graduate school preparation program. *Journal of Black Studies, 47*(2), 95-112. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934715614206

Pinheiro, R., Charles, D., & Jones, G. A. (2016). Equity, institutional diversity and regional development: A cross-country comparison. *Higher Education*, *72*, 307-322.

Pusser, B. (2006). Reconsidering higher education and the public good: The role of public spheres. In W. R. Tierney (Ed.), *Governance and the public good* (pp. 11–28). SUNY Press.

Reidy, D.A. (2014). Social Justice, the University, and the Temptation to Mission Creep. In: Shefner, J., Dahms, H.F., Jones, R.E., Jalata, A. (eds) Social Justice and the University. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137289384_7

Richards, D. A., Awokoya, J. T., Bridges, B. K., & Clark, C. (2018). One size does not fit all: A critical race theory perspective on college rankings. *The Review of Higher Education*, *42*(1), 269-312.

Rhoades, G. (2003). Democracy and Capitalism, Academic Style: Governance in Contemporary Higher Education.

Ro, H.K., Aguilar-Smith, S., Anderson, S.Y. *et al.* Attending to STEM education in servingness at Hispanic-serving institutions: a systematic review of more than a decade of scholarship. *IJ STEM Ed* 11, 33 (2024). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-024-00489-0

Robinson C. J. (1983). *Black Marxism: The making of the Black radical tradition*. University of North Carolina Press.

Rodgers, A. J., & Liera, R. (2023). When race becomes capital: Diversity, faculty hiring, and the entrenchment of racial capitalism in higher education. *Educational Researcher*, *52*(7), 444-449.

Rosette, A. S., Leonardelli, G. J., & Phillips, K. W. (2008). The White standard: Racial bias in leader categorization. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 93*(4), 758–777. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.4.758

Salazar, K. G. (2022). Recruitment Redlining by Public Research Universities in the Los Angeles and Dallas Metropolitan Areas. *The Journal of Higher Education (Columbus)*, *93*(4), 585–621. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2021.2004811

Salazar, K. G. (2019). *The Wealth and Color of Off-Campus Recruiting by Public Research Universities*. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

Schwarb, A. W. (2021, October 7). *How the HBCU experience builds leaders.* Strada Education Network. Retrieved from https://stradaeducation.org/employers/how-the-hbcu-experience-builds-leaders/

Shuler, H. D., Spencer, E. C., Davis, J. S., Damo, S., Shakespeare, T. I., Murray, S. A., Lee, D. L., & Hinton, A., Jr (2022). Learning from HBCUs: How to produce Black professionals in STEMM. *Cell*, *185*(16), 2841–2845. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cell.2022.06.013

Skloot, R. (2017). The immortal life of Henrietta Lacks. Broadway Paperbacks.

Slaughter, S., & Leslie, L. L. (1997). Academic capitalism: Politics, policies, and the entrepreneurial university.

Slaughter, S., & Rhoades, G. (2004). *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy: Markets, State, and Higher Education.*

Smith, K. C., Geddis, D., & Dumas, J. (2021). The role of the HBCU pipeline in diversifying the STEM workforce: Training the next generation of drug delivery researchers. *Advanced drug delivery reviews*, *176*, 113866.

Spinrad, M. L., Relles, S. R., & Watson, D. L. (2022). Not in the Greater Good: Academic Capitalism and Faculty Labor in Higher Education. *Education Sciences*, *12*(12), 912. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12120912

Stein, S. (2016). Universities, slavery, and the unthought of anti-Blackness. *Cultural Dynamics*, *28*(2), 169-187.

Taylor, B. J., & Cantwell, B. (2019). *Unequal higher education: Wealth, status, and student opportunity*. Rutgers university press.

Taylor, O. L., & Wynn, M. E. (2019). Leadership dimensions for broadening participation in STEM: Increasing the role of HBCUs and MSIs. In Growing diverse STEM communities: Methodology, impact, and evidence (pp. 177-195). American Chemical Society.

The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (n.d.). About Carnegie Classification. Retrieved (date optional) from http://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/.

The Century Foundation. (2023). *Achieving financial equity and justice for HBCUs.* Retrieved from https://tcf.org/content/report/achieving-financial-equity-justice-hbcus/

The Century Foundation. (2024). *Nourishing the nation while starving: The underfunding of Black land-grant colleges and universities.* Retrieved from https://tcf.org/content/report/nourishing-the-nation-while-starving-the-underfunding-of-black-land-grant-colleges-and-universities/

The White House**.** (2025, January 20). *Ending radical and wasteful government DEI programs and preferencing*. https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/ending-radical-and-wasteful-government-dei-programs-and-preferencing/

The White House Council of Economic Advisers**.** (2024, May 16). *The economics of HBCUs*. The White House. https://www.whitehouse.gov/cea/written-materials/2024/05/16/the-economics-of-hbcus

Toldson. I.A. (2013). Historically Black Colleges and Universities Can Promote Leadership and Excellence in STEM (Editor's Commentary). *The Journal of Negro Education*, *82*(4), 359–367. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.82.4.0359

Toldson, I. A. (2019). Cultivating stem talent at minority serving institutions: Challenges and opportunities to broaden participation in STEM at historically Black Colleges and universities. *ACS Symposium Series*, 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1021/bk-2019-1328.ch001

Toldson, I. A. (2016). The funding gap between historically black colleges and universities and traditionally white institutions needs to be addressed*(editor's commentary). *The Journal of Negro Education*, *85*(2), 97-100.

Totenberg, N. (2023, June 29). *The Supreme Court strikes down affirmative action in college admissions*. NPR. https://www.npr.org/2023/06/29/1181138066/affirmative-action-supreme-court-decision

U.S. Department of Education. (2006). *Economic impact of the nation\u2019s historically Black colleges and universities* (NCES 2007-178). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

U.S. Department of Education. (2023.). *White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (WHI-HBCUs)*. The White House. https://sites.ed.gov/whhbcu/

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Public Affairs. (2022, April 29). *HBCUs as a path to public service.* Retrieved from https://blog.dol.gov/2022/04/29/hbcus-as-a-path-to-public-service

Upton, R., & Tanenbaum, C. (2014). The role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities as pathway providers: Institutional pathways to the STEM PhD. *American Institutes for Research*.

Washington, B. T. (1994). *The Awakening of the Negro*.

Weissman, S. (2023, May 1). *New paper suggests PWIs learn from HBCUs*. Inside Higher Ed. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2023/05/01/new-paper-suggests-pwis-learn-hbcus

Wilcox, C., Wells, J., Haddad, G., & Wilcox, J. K. (2014). The Changing Democratic Functions of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. *New Political Science*, *36*(4), 556–572. https://doi.org/10.1080/07393148.2014.954793

Williams, D. A., Berger, J. B., & McClendon, S. A. (2005). Toward a model of inclusive excellence and change in postsecondary institutions. *Association of American Colleges and Universities.*

Winkle-Wagner, R., & McCoy, D. L. (2016). Feeling like an "Alien" or "Family"? Comparing students and faculty experiences of diversity in STEM disciplines at a PWI and an HBCU. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *21*(5), 593–606. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2016.1248835

Woods, T. (2017). *Racial Capitalism and the Rule of Law*. SSRC. https://items.ssrc.org/race-capitalism/racial-capitalism-and-the-rule-of-law/

Chapter 3

Bass, D., & Valdez, E. D. (2020). Promising Approaches to Workforce Development in Texas. Texas Public Policy Foundation.

Bastedo, Michael N (2009) Convergent institutional logics in public higher education: State policymaking and governing board activism. The Review of Higher Education 32(2), 209-34.

Boland, W., & Gasman, M. (2014). America's public HBCUs: A four state comparison of institutional capacity and state funding priorities. *Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions*, (340).

Borman, K. M., Clarke, C., Cotner, B., & Lee, R. (2012). Cross-case analysis. In *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (pp. 123-139). Routledge.

Brown-Grier, A. (2025, February 5). In a capitalist society, EQUITY is not the goal—it contradicts capitalism's very purpose. Capitalism thrives on [LinkedIn post]. LinkedIn. https://www.linkedin.com/posts/abrown-grier_the-problem-with-crt-was-that-it-highlighted-activity-7292926517829894144-unOU?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAABP4zG8BtNFqYzr7jTMaebev5oriGftwYeY

Cornelius, L. M., & Cavanaugh, T. W. (2016). Grading the Metrics: Performance-Based Funding in the Florida State University System. Journal of Education Finance, 42(2), 153–187. https://doi.org/10.1353/jef.2016.a649724

Coupet, J. (2017). Strings attached? Linking Historically Black Colleges and Universities public revenue sources with efficiency. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *39*(1), 40-57.

Dougherty, K. J., & Natow, R. S. (2020). Performance-based funding for higher education: how well does neoliberal theory capture neoliberal practice? Higher Education, 80(3), 457–478. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00491-4

Dougherty, Kevin J., Natow, Rebecca S., & Vega, Blanca E. (2012). Popular but unstable: Explaining why state performance funding systems in the U.S. often do not persist. Teachers College Record, 114(3), 1-41.

Florida A&M University. (2023–2024). Common Data Set 2023–2024. Office of Strategic Planning, Analysis, and Institutional Effectiveness. https://www.famu.edu/administration/strategic-planning-analysis-and-institutional-effectiveness/institutional-research/surveys/pdf/cds/CDS_2023-2024.pdf

Florida A&M University Foundation. (2024). Financial statements report (Updated November 1, 2024). Florida A&M University. https://www.famu.edu/administration/foundation/pdf/forms/financial-statements/FAMUF%202024%20FS%20Report%20Updated%20-%20November%201%202024.pdf

Florida Board of Governors. (1998). State University System of Florida strategic plan: 1998-2003. [PDF document]. Retrieved from https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/StrategicPlanFinal1998.pdf

Florida Board of Governors. (2005). State University System of Florida strategic plan. [PDF document]. Retrieved from https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/StrategicPlan_05-13.pdf

Florida Board of Governors. (2022). State University System of Florida 2025 strategic plan (Amended November 2022). [PDF document]. Retrieved from https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2025_System_Strategic_Plan_Amended_Nov_2022.pdf

Florida Board of Governors. (2024). Performance-based funding. Retrieved January 30, 2025, from https://www.flbog.edu/finance/performance-based-funding/

Ford, K. S., Patterson, A. N., & Griffin, K. A. (2019). “Cosmetic Diversity”: University Websites and the Transformation of Race Categories. Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 12(2), 99–114. https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000092

Gándara, D., & Rutherford, A. (2020). Completion at the Expense of Access? The Relationship Between Performance-Funding Policies and Access to Public 4-Year Universities. Educational Researcher, 49(5), 321–334. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X20927386

Governor Abbott announces 60X30 Higher Education Plan in McKinney. Office of the Governor | Greg Abbott. (2015, November 16). https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor_abbott_announces_60x30_higher_education_plan_in_mckinney

Gustafsson, J. (2017). Single case studies vs. multiple case studies: A comparative study.

Harris, A., & Tienda, M. (2010). Minority Higher Education Pipeline: Consequences of Changes in College Admissions Policy in Texas. The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 627(1), 60-81. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716209348740

Hearn, J. C., & Griswold, C. P. (1994). State-Level Centralization and Policy Innovation in U. S. Postsecondary Education. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 16(2), 161–190. https://doi.org/10.2307/1164316

Hillman, N., & Corral, D. (2017). The Equity Implications of Paying for Performance in Higher Education. The American Behavioral Scientist (Beverly Hills), 61(14), 1757–1772. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217744834

John, E. P. S., & Parsons, M. D. (Eds.). (2005). Public funding of higher education: Changing contexts and new rationales. JHU Press.

Kishi A, Green A. A Statewide Strategy for Nursing Workforce Development Through Partnerships in Texas. Policy, Politics, & Nursing Practice. 2008;9(3):210-214.

Krippendorff, K. (2019). Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology (Fourth edition.). SAGE Publications, Incorporated. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071878781

Laderman, S., Cummings, K., Lee, J. C., Tandberg, D., & Weeden, D. (2023). Higher education finance in the United States: Sources of funding and impacts of state investments. In Comparative Higher Education Politics: Policymaking in North America and Western Europe (pp. 157-187). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Liu, Y., P.H.D. (2011). Performance-based Funding And Budgeting In Higher Education. National Association of African American Studies.

Luger, M., Koo, J., Perry, J., & Billings, S. (2001). The economic impact of the UNC system on the State of North Carolina.

McCowan, T. (2015). Three dimensions of equity of access to higher education. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, *46*(4), 645–665. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2015.1043237

McLendon, M. K., Hearn, J. C., & Deaton, R. (2006). Called to Account: Analyzing the Origins and Spread of State Performance-Accountability Policies for Higher Education. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 28(1), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373702800100

Minor, J. T. (2008). Groundwork for studying governance at historically Black colleges and universities. *Understanding minority-serving institutions*, 169-182.

North Carolina A&T State University. (2024, September). 2024 enrollment update. [https://www.ncat.edu/news/2024/09/2024-enrollment.php](https://www.ncat.edu/news/2

024/09/2024-enrollment.php#:~:text=EAST%20GREENSBORO%2C%20N.C.%20(Sept.,and%20graduate%20applications%20for%20admission)

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and policy in mental health and mental health services research*, *42*, 533-544.

Postsecondary governance structures 2020 - Education Commission of the states. (2020, November). https://reports.ecs.org/comparisons/postsecondary-governance-structures-2020-all

Pusser, B., & Marginson, S. (2013). University Rankings in Critical Perspective. The Journal of Higher Education (Columbus), 84(4), 544–568. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2013.11777301???

Rubin, P.G. (2023). Politics of Higher Education Governance Reform in the United States. In: Jungblut, J., Maltais, M., Ness, E.C., Rexe, D. (eds) Comparative Higher Education Politics . Higher Education Dynamics, vol 60. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25867-1_3

Sav, G. T. (2016). Declining state funding and efficiency effects on public higher education: Government really does matter. International Advances in Economic Research, 22(4), 397-408.

Schlemmer, L. (2022, October 20). The UNC system is weighing how to fund universities based on performance. WUNC North Carolina Public Radio. https://www.wunc.org/education/2022-10-20/the-unc-system-is-weighing-how-to-fund-universities-based-on-performance

Schreier, M. (2012). Qualitative content analysis in practice.

Shin, J. C. (2010). Impacts of performance-based accountability on institutional performance in the U.S. Higher Education, 60(1), 47–68. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-9285-y

Sneed, S., Nguyen, C. H. P., & Eubank, C. L. (2020). An Introduction to Case Study Methodology: Single Case and Multiple Case Approaches. International Journal of Adult Education and Technology (Print), 11(4), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.4018/IJAET.2020100101

Suri, H. (2011). Purposeful sampling in qualitative research synthesis. *Qualitative research journal*, *11*(2), 63-75.

Taylor, B. J., Cantwell, B., Watts, K., & Wood, O. (2020). Partisanship, White Racial Resentment, and State Support for Higher Education. The Journal of Higher Education (Columbus), 91(6), 858–887. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2019.1706016

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2000). Closing the gaps by 2015: The Texas higher education plan. https://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/agency-publication/miscellaneous/closing-the-gaps-by-2015/

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2015). 60x30TX: Texas higher education strategic plan 2015-2030. https://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/agency-publication/miscellaneous/60x30tx-strategic-plan-for-higher-education/

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2022). Building a talent strong Texas: 2022 higher education strategic plan.

https://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/agency-publication/miscellaneous/building-talent-strong-texas/

University of North Carolina System. (2016.). UNC System strategic plan 2017-2022: Higher Expectations. [PDF document]. Retrieved from https://www.northcarolina.edu/wp-content/uploads/reports-and-documents/strategic-plan/unc_strategic_plan.pdf

University of North Carolina System. (2022). UNC System strategic plan 2022-2027. [PDF document]. Retrieved from https://www.northcarolina.edu/wp-content/uploads/unc-system-2022-strategic-plan.pdf

University of North Carolina System. (2024). Performance-based funding model overview. Retrieved January 30, 2025, from https://www.northcarolina.edu

University of Texas System. (2022). Population health strategic plan. https://www.utsystem.edu/offices/population-health/overview-0/ut-population-health-strategic-plan

Yin, R. K. (1984). Case study research : design and methods. Sage Publications.

Chapter 4

Coffin, S. V. (Ed.). (2023). *Overcoming the Educational Resource Equity Gap: A Close Look at Distributing a School's Financial and Human Resources*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Kamwangamalu, N. M. (2010). Multilingualism and codeswitching in education. *Sociolinguistics and language education*, *116*.

Lorde, A. (1984). *The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.* In A. Lorde, *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches* (pp. 110–114). Crossing Press.

Martin-Jones, M. (1995). Code-switching in the classroom: Two decades of research. *One speaker, two languages: Cross-disciplinary perspectives on code-switching*, 90-111.

McCluney, C. L., Robotham, K., Lee, S., Smith, R., & Durkee, M. (2019). *The costs of code-switching*. Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2019/11/the-costs-of-codeswitching

Salazar, K. G. (2022). Recruitment redlining by public research universities in the Los Angeles and Dallas metropolitan areas. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *93*(4), 585-621.

Chapter 5

Abdallah, C., & Langley, A. (2014). The double edge of ambiguity in strategic planning. Journal of management studies, 51(2), 235-264.

Ajayi Jones, L. (2021). *Professional troublemaker: The fear-fighter manual*. Penguin Life.

CollegeNET. (2024). *Social Mobility Index: College rankings by CollegeNET*. https://www.socialmobilityindex.org/

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, *43*(6), 1241–1299. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039

Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge.

Collins, P. H. (2019). The difference that power makes: Intersectionality and participatory democracy. In O. Hankivsky & J. S. Jordan-Zachery (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of intersectionality in public policy* (pp. 167–192). Palgrave Macmillan.

Davis, A. Y. (2011). *Women, race, & class*. Vintage.

Dorisca, S. (2025, April 4). *FAMU loses $16.3M grant that reportedly helped produce 60% of the nation's Ph.D. graduates in pharmaceutical sciences*. *AfroTech*. https://afrotech.com/famu-loses-16-3m-grant

Ecker, G. (1979). Administration in higher education: Making the most of ambiguity. The Review of Higher Education, 3(1), 23-31.

Giroux, H. A. (2013, April 9). *Angela Davis, freedom and the politics of Higher Education*. Truthout. https://truthout.org/articles/angela-davis-freedom-and-the-politics-of-higher-education/

Gumport, P. J. (2005). Graduate education and research: Interdependence and strain. American higher education in the twenty-first century: Social, political, and economic challenges, 2, 425-461.

Harney, S., & Moten, F. (2013). *The undercommons: Fugitive planning and Black study*. Minor Compositions.

Hurston, Z. N. (1942). *Dust Tracks on a Road*. J.B. Lippincott.

Jaquette, O. (2013). Why Do Colleges Become Universities? Mission Drift and the Enrollment Economy. *Research in Higher Education*, *54*(5), 514–544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-013-9283-x

Jean, T. (2025, April 2). *FAMU fighting for funds after pharmacy school loses $16.3M federal grant amid Trump cuts*. *Tallahassee Democrat*.

https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/famu-news/2025/04/02/trump-funding-cuts-hit-famu-pharmacy-school-with-16-3m-grant-loss/82754726007/

Jones, M. B. (2007). The multiple sources of mission drift. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 36*(2), 299–307. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764007300385

McLean, D. (2025, May 13). *How could cuts to the Education Department impact HBCUs? Higher Ed Dive*. https://www.highereddive.com/news/education-department-cuts-closure-hbcus/747708/

Mok, K. H., & Neubauer, D. (2015). Higher education governance in crisis: a critical reflection on the massification of higher education, graduate employment and social mobility. *Journal of Education and Work*, *29*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2015.1049023

Nichols, S., & Stahl, G. (2019). Intersectionality in higher education research: A systematic literature review. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *38*(6), 1255-1268.

Palmer, K. (2025, April 24). *Beyond 'prestige': New Carnegie Classification focuses on student success*. *Inside Higher Ed*. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/students/careers/2025/04/24/new-carnegie-classification-focuses-student-success

Pusser, B. (2006). Reconsidering higher education and the public good: The role of public spheres. In W. R. Tierney (Ed.), *Governance and the public good* (pp. 11–28). SUNY Press.

Sillince, J., Jarzabkowski, P., & Shaw, D. (2012). Shaping strategic action through the rhetorical construction and exploitation of ambiguity. Organization science, 23(3), 630-650.

Slaughter, S., & Rhoades, G. (2004). *Academic capitalism and the new economy: Markets, state, and higher education*. Jhu press.

Taylor, B. J., & Cantwell, B. (2019). *Unequal higher education: Wealth, status, and student opportunity*. Rutgers university press.

The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (n.d.). About Carnegie Classification. Retrieved (date optional) from http://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/.

The White House. (2025, April 23). *Fact sheet: President Donald J. Trump promotes excellence and innovation at HBCUs*. https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/04/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-promotes-excellence-and-innovation-at-hbcus/:contentReference[oaicite:5]{index=5}

Weissman, S. (2025, April 28). *After federal grant losses, HBCUs put hope in executive order*. *Inside Higher Ed*. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/institutions/minority-serving-institutions/2025/04/28/after-federal-grant-losses-hbcus-put

Woods, C. (1998). *Development arrested: The blues and plantation power in the Mississippi Delta*. Verso.

Woods, C. (2017). *Development drowned and reclaimed: The blues and bourbon restorations in post-Katrina New Orleans* (J. M. B. Curry, Ed.). University of Georgia Press.