

**University of Idaho**

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**From the Selected Works of Sydney Freeman Jr., PhD, CFD, COI**

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## Governing Boards at HBCUs

Sydney Freeman, Jr.

Adriel Adon Hilton

John M. Lee, Jr.



Available at: [https://works.bepress.com/sydney\\_freeman\\_jr/40/](https://works.bepress.com/sydney_freeman_jr/40/)

# The Governing Structures of State Supported Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Hilton, Freeman, Lee, & McClain

# Purpose

- To gather information regarding the policies that govern the selection of public HBCU board members.
- To examine the ways in which policies shape the quality of candidate selection.

# Significance

- The significance of this study stems from the immense pressure board governance at state colleges and universities have encountered as a result of declining state funding.

# Brief History of HBCUs

- Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) date back to pre-Civil War.
- During this era, only a handful of universities embraced the mission of educating and training newly freed and disenfranchised slaves.
- Post-Civil War, the number of HBCUs grew exponentially, with more than 200 institutions being found in the South five years following 1865.

# Brief History of HBCUs Continued

- It is not truly known how many HBCUs were established, but Marybeth Gasman in 2013 identified that there 105 HBCUs located in the United States.
- In March 2013 the U.S. Education Department designated the American Baptist College in Nashville, Tennessee as the country's 106<sup>th</sup> HBCU.
- In April 2015, Simmons College of Kentucky earned the designation of HBCU status making them the 107<sup>th</sup> such institution.

# Present Day

- HBCUs encompass less than three percent of all American colleges and universities.
- Presently, nearly 400,000 students attend HBCUs and nearly 17 percent of all bachelorette degrees that are awarded to African Americans come from HBCUs.

# Dissecting HBCU Governing Boards: Structures and Appointment

- While the state context of governance is different for each of the nation's 51 public HBCUs, they generally follow 3 distinct institutional governance structures: 1) *statewide*; 2) *local*; and 3) *shared*.

# Structures and Appointment

- *The Statewide Governance Model* is characterized by a single, state-level board that is vested with governing multiple institutions (including HBCU campuses) with the responsibilities for governance, control, and management of each institution under its purview.

This includes:

- The powers to hire presidents and chancellors;
- Set policies and procedures that govern all institutions;
- Approve the development of new degrees and programs;
- Set financial priorities for each campus and;
- Provide coordination for the entire system of colleges and universities.

# Structures and Appointment

- The *Local Governance Model* is described by a single, institutionally-based board that provides oversight over all aspects of the institution

This includes:

- Hiring of the president;
- Setting policies and procedure;
- Ensuring financial fidelity and;
- The authority to create new programs and degrees.

# Structures and Appointment

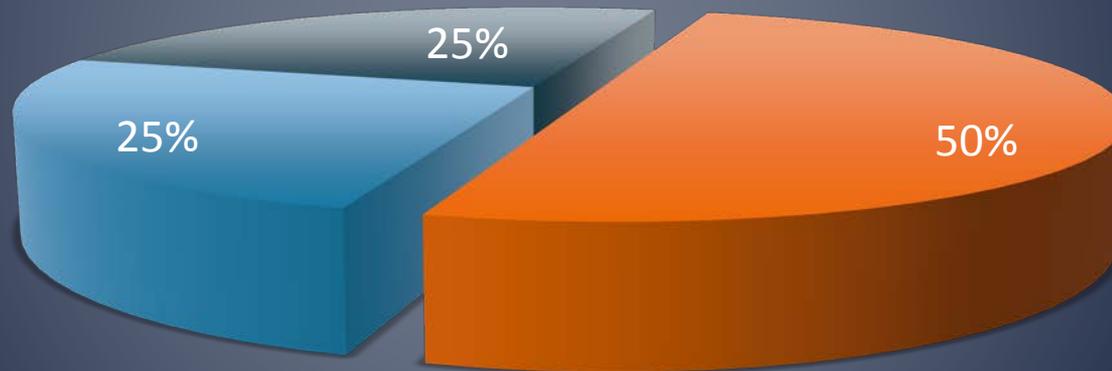
- The *Shared Governance Model* is blanketed by bicameral statewide and local boards that each exercise assigned governance functions for an institution of higher education. Institutions in this category usually have an institutionally-based governing board –usually a Board of Trustees- that has responsibilities to choose the president, ensure financial fidelity and to enact policies and procedures.

The responsibility of governance of the institution is also shared with a state coordinating board that usually has the power to:

- Confirm presidential selections by local board;
- Approve new academic programs and degrees;
- Set budgetary priorities and provide policies and procedures that set the parameters in which institutionally-based boards can operate.

## Public Historically Black Colleges by Governance Type, 2015

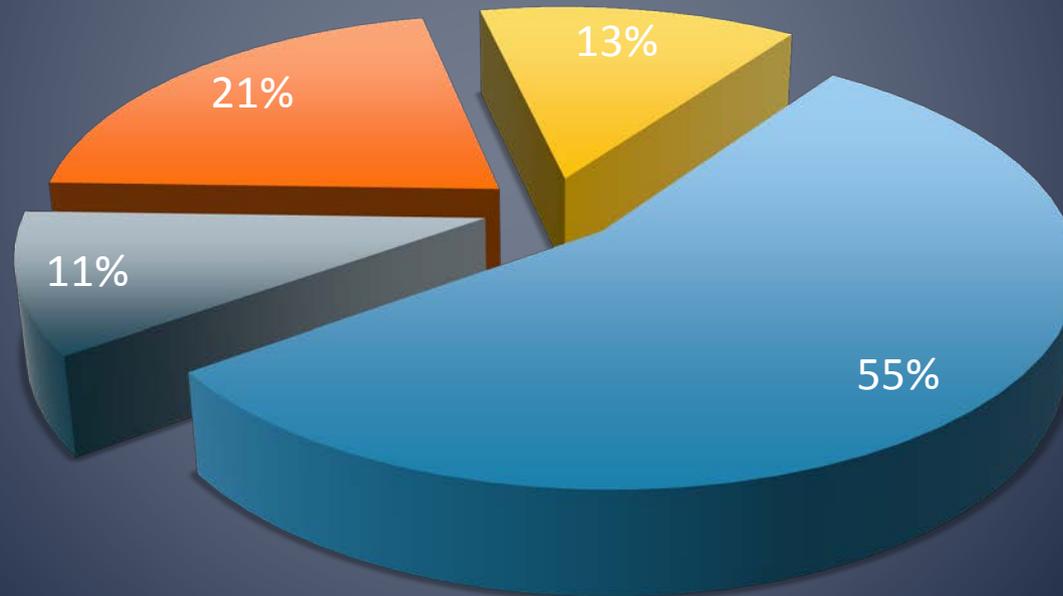
- Shared Governance
- Local Governance
- Statewide Governance Model



Statewide governance model is present at 26 (50 percent) public HBCUs institutions and across ten states (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, South Carolina, Oklahoma; Tennessee and Texas).

# Appointments to Statewide Governing Boards, 2015

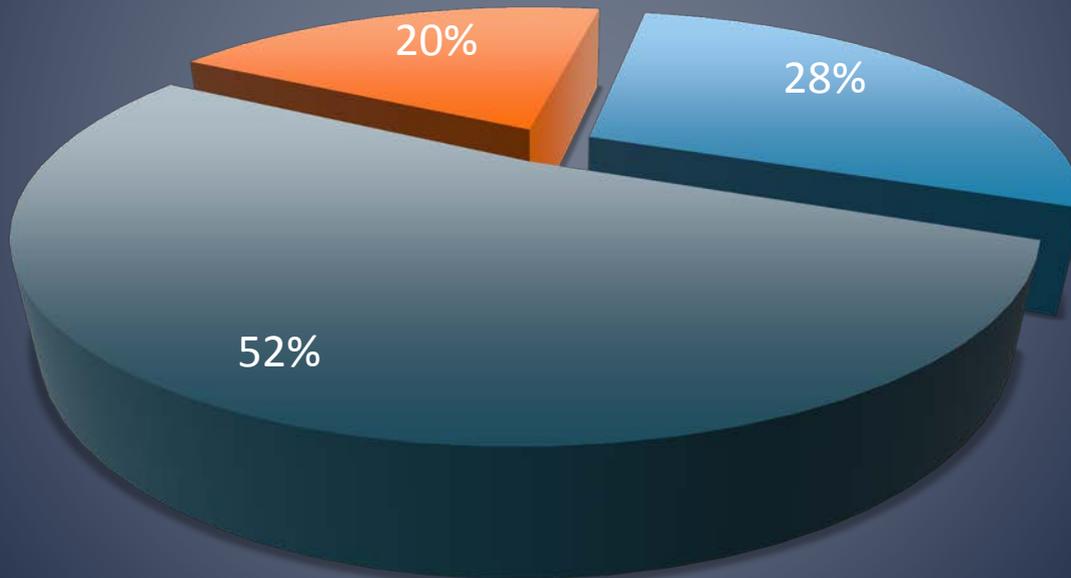
- Appointed Governor
- Appointment by Legislature
- Appointments by Governor and Other State Officers
- Appointments by Governor and Automatic Reps



In 100 percent of the cases where public HBCUs are governed by system-level coordinating boards- including both those that are part of the statewide and shared governance models- members are appointed to the boards according to state law.

## Appointments to Local Governing Boards, 2015

- Appointments by Governor/ Mayor and Automatic Reps
- Appointment by Governor
- Appointment by Legislature



100 percent of public HBCUs that have institutional-level governing boards appointment board members in accordance with state law.

# Dilemma

- Institutional mergers and closures at South Carolina State University and past items within the University System of Georgia boards.
- At South Carolina State University, oversight from board members caused institutional instability and statewide scrutiny. A recommended two-year closure was suggested by the South Carolina House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Higher Education for the institution in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 academic years.
- Upon analysis it was discovered that South Carolina State University, a land-grant institution, was underfunded by over \$6 million dollars from 2010 to 2012 by South Carolina legislatures.

# Recommendations

In order to select ideal board members, we recommend that institutions:

- Locate individuals who have shown a commitment to public education;
- Locate individuals who have a record of community service;
- Locate individuals who are competent with strategic planning, a record of integrity, and a willingness to work collaboratively across the board.

# THANK YOU!

Adriel A. Hilton

Assistant Professor & Director  
Higher Education Student Affairs Program  
Western Carolina University

Sydney Freeman, Jr.

Associate Professor of Adult,  
Organizational Learning and Leadership  
University of Idaho

John Michael Lee, Jr.

Assistant Vice President for  
Alumni Affairs and University Relations  
Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University

Kevin S. McClain

First Year Advising Graduate Assistant  
Department of Educational Services  
University of New Orleans