The **Heart** Work of **Hard** Work

Black Teacher Pipeline Best Practices at HBCU Teacher Education Programs

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report by the UNCF Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute examines the best practices implemented at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) teacher preparation programs, which result in these institutions being significant producers of Black teachers for America's public education system.

This report builds on the HBCU teacher preparation program scholarship by providing a snapshot of the recruitment, curricular, and co-curricular practices implemented at these institutions to strengthen the Black teacher pipeline. Through the voices of faculty, staff, and students at four HBCU teacher preparation programs, this report will introduce practices that support their Black pre-service teachers.

RECRUITMENT
The institutions in this study leveraged various networks to inspire and recruit Black teachers. The recruitment strategies included outreach by teacher preparation program staff and faculty, establishing community communication partnerships, and the provision of financial aid.

CURRICULAR
Across four institutions, UNCF identified four prominent curricular activities leveraged by faculty members, which can be attributed to their successful production of Black teachers. These curricular activities included the use of an early alert system, intentional cultivation of relationships with students, use of a culturally responsive curriculum, and tending to the socio-emotional needs of students.

CO-CURRICULAR
Lastly, a significant contributor to retaining Black teachers was establishing a positive student-faculty relationship through existing mentorship programs at HBCUs. Through one-on-one engagement, faculty went above and beyond their role to provide individualized tutoring, financial support, and professional development. Additionally, these institutions established partnerships and professional development opportunities to introduce their students to the teacher education culture.

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Introduction

P-12 Black teachers are essential to the educational, social, and emotional development of Black students (Gershenson, 2018; Madkins, 2011; Mitchell, 1998). Literature shows that Black teachers have the cultural and linguistic capital to engage positively with Black students (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Milner, 2006). This capital allows students to engage in familiar interactions with their teachers. Black students are introduced to role models that can inspire them to attain a higher education; additionally, Black educators often operate as cultural ambassadors for other white teachers and administrators offering insight into the culture of Black students (Gershenson, 2018; Griffin & Tackie, 2016). The research displays the tremendous impact Black teachers have on the educational experience and development of Black students. More research must be done to strengthen the Black teacher pipeline by examining culturally affirming best practices that inspire, retain, and graduate Black teachers. These best practices will, in turn, assist colleges and universities in strengthening the Black teacher pipeline. This study aimed to identify the policies, practices, and processes implemented at four Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) that were structured to enhance the Black teacher pipeline or designed some unique measures to raise the profile of teaching among Black college graduates.

Literature Review

There has been a significant decline in Black teachers since desegregation. Following the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* case, insidious racist and exclusionary practices resulted in a significant decrease in the availability of jobs for Black educators (Madkins, 2011). Numerous programs and initiatives, such as alternative certification programs, have been created in the spirit of increasing the number of Black teachers in urban cities. However, there continues to be a shortage of Black teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Chin & Young, 2007). This scarcity of Black teachers may be attributed to several factors, inclusive of inadequate educational opportunities to prepare Black students for college, competing for opportunities in lucrative fields, standardized teaching and testing requirements (Madkins, 2011). Therefore, colleges and universities must develop strategies and apply best practices focused on recruiting, retaining, certifying, and graduating Black teachers.

HBCUs have consistently punched above their weight class in the proliferation of Black graduates. HBCUs account for only 3% of colleges and universities, yet they produce 15% of Black graduates and 50% of all Black educators (UNCF, n.d.; National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, 2008).

Recognizing HBCUs' track record in graduating Black teachers, researchers and practitioners from other institutions must acknowledge how HBCU policies, processes, and culture yield powerful best practices that can strengthen the Black teacher pipeline and decrease America's teacher shortage.

The American P-12 student demographic has become incredibly diverse, yet the teacher population is predominately white and female. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) shows that eight in ten (79%) of U.S. public school teachers identified as non-Hispanic White (Schaeffer, 2021). In 2015, Black students comprised 15% of public school students, yet Black teachers only represent 7% of the teaching workforce (NCES, 2019; NCES, 2019a). The inequitable representation of Black teachers in the workforce is problematic. Ultimately, this disparity hinders Black students' access to Black teachers, who may act as role models and advocates for Black students.

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Historical Issues Impacting the Black Teacher Pipeline

Desegregation contributed as a catalyst for the decline of Black teachers in the workforce (Barnes-Johnson, 2008; Fairclough, 2000; Madkins, 2011). Being a teacher was a highly accessible and respected profession amongst members of the Black community, which resulted in the proliferation of college-educated Black teachers (Fairclough, 2000; Madkins, 2011). HBCUs were key in the proliferation of Black teachers as their mission largely focused on the upward mobility of the Black community through education (Barnes-Johnson, 2008; Fairclough, 2000). Black teachers were role models for their community and the students they served. In their classroom sessions, Black teachers used their meager resources and nurturing demeanor to prepare their students to navigate both a racist and hostile environment to achieve economic and social mobility for themselves and their broader community (Barnes-Johnson, 2008; Fairclough, 2000; Madkins, 2011; Morris, 2004).

Black teachers experienced a significant decline in employment following the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* ruling. Between 1954 and 1964, the number of Black teachers and administrators decreased from 82,000 to 38,000 across 17 southern and border states (Tillman, 2004). State governments leveraged the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision to remove all of its Black teachers (Barnes-Johnson, 2008;

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Hudson & Holmes, 1994; Madkins, 2011; Milner & Howard, 2004). State and local governments implemented racist policies that resulted in the mass firing of Black teachers. Black teachers were fired based on their membership in Black organizations and their engagement in civil rights activism for everything from protesting to voting (Barnes-Johnson, 2008; Charron, 2012). Displaced teachers were then left to find work elsewhere as they were barred from seeking employment at white schools, even though Black teachers were more likely than their white counterparts to have a bachelor's degree and possess advanced teacher licensure (Barnes-Johnson, 2008; Milner & Howard, 2004).

More insidious racist measures were taken to deny employment to Black teachers. Tillman's (2004) review of the impact of Brown on Black educators revealed that Black teachers experienced license revocation, the elimination of teacher education programs, and the incorporation of standardized tests at a higher rate than their counterparts (Tillman, 2004). Changes in education policy and the increase in teachers' salaries resulted in state departments requiring their teachers to take and pass the

teacher certification exam in the 1970s and 1980s (Madkins, 2011). This had a significant effect on the Black teacher pipeline as the teacher certification requirements resulted in the elimination of almost 100,000 minority teachers in 35 states between the late 1970s and the early 1990s (Oakley, Stowell, & Logan, 2009; Smith, 2000; Tillman, 2004). An example of the negative influence this had on the teaching community is described in Fenwick's (2021) quote below,

> Only one weapon was more powerful than the White principal's power to declare the Black teacher incompetent, and that was the National Teacher Examination (NTE). During [the] desegregation heyday, about 40% of the test's use was in the southeastern states. (p. 12). The NEA and Black educators noticed the increased use of the test in southern states and concluded that it was being used as "a punitive measure to justify the racial imbalance in hiring practices" (Fultz, 2004, p. 26). For the first time, state-derived cutoff scores were linked to teacher certification and, in some cases, salary level. Richard Majestic, NTE program director for the Educational Testing Service, recognized that the NTE was being used to rid southern systems of Black teachers: "You can build the best test available," he said, "but if there's malice in somebody's heart, it can be used to eliminate Blacks" (Fenwick, 2021, p. 6).

The ambiguity of implementing Brown vs. Board of Education ultimately resulted in white schools manipulating its interpretation to support the purging of Black educators. The implicit and explicit racist practices post-Brown have negatively impacted the Black teacher pipeline in the 21st Century.

> **Additionally, Black students who enroll in college now have more majors to choose from than were available to them in the past (Gold, 2020).**

Current Issues Impacting the Black Teacher Pipeline

Madkins (2011) cites contemporary issues facing Black students before and during college that disadvantage the Black teacher pipeline. These issues consist of inadequate college preparation resources, greater availability of more opportunities in lucrative fields, and standardized teacher certification requirements. Black students are often enrolled in school systems that need more resources and are underfunded. Their enrollment in these underfunded schools tremendously influences their ability to be prepared for the academic rigor of college. Black students enrolled in these institutions often encounter higher student-to-counselor ratios, less access to essential college preparation courses (Advance Placement, upper-level math, and science courses), and are taught by less qualified teachers (Bryant, 2015; Roderick, Coca, & Nagaoka, 2011; Smith, 2000).

Additionally, Black students who enroll in college now have more majors to choose from than were available to them in the past (Gold, 2020). Teacher education programs have to compete against majors such as business, math, technology, and the sciences, making Black students less interested in the teaching profession. These majors often grant Black students access to more lucrative jobs than the teaching profession (Gold, 2020; Madkins, 2011; Smith, 2000).

Teacher certification exams, such as the Praxis 1, continue to hinder Black students' ability to become certified teachers (Madkins, 2011; Petchauer, 2016; Smith, 2000). Research has indicated that subpar psychometric practice and bad social policy were and continue to be mainstays of such examinations (Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010; Haertel, 1987; Petchauer, 2016; Smith, 2000). Research confirms that teacher certification exams have no predictive validity (D'Agostino & Powers, 2009). In fact, the Educational Testing Service, the developers of the Praxis II tests, claim that this exam may not have great predictive power for teachers who

score above a state's minimum required score (Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010). Furthermore, analysis of the predictive validity of Praxis exams by race shows that teacher certification exams are not ideal tools used to screen effectiveness in subjects such as reading (Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010).

Additionally, the content, concurrent, and construct validity have been highly questioned within the field as Haertel's (1987) comprehensive review of state teacher certification exams found that "the use of these tests [admission and certifications tests] without stronger evidence of validity is bad psychometrics practice" (p. 61). Murray (1989) states,

> The rule, confirmed repeatedly, is the best predictor of performance in a situation is the most recent past performance in that situation or a similar situation. The best predictor of teaching performance is past teaching performance, and no other factor or combination of factors will yield a better prediction (p. 36).

In essence, teacher certification exams are used at the state level to control the color of the teachers that serve their students. Moreover, the use of these exams affects minority teacher representation, which further hinders the educational experience and success of minoritized populations. Research continues to show how teacher representation, in particular, Black teacher representation is essential to Black student educational development.

Black Teachers Impact on Black Student Educational Development

The research is clear. Black teachers matter. Scholarship repeatedly illuminates how Black teachers have a deep understanding of Black students and their lives in and outside of the classroom (Egalite & Kisida, 2018; Milner, 2006; Siddle-Walker, 1996). Data examining the impact of Black teachers on Black students yield positive results as they serve as role models

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and improve the school experiences of Black students (Milner, 2006).

Black teachers are aware of the systemic social and economic barriers that influence Black students outside the classroom. Black teachers are knowledgeable of these barriers; however, they do not grant students "permission to fail," Instead, they maintain high expectations of their students (Milner, 2006; Siddle-Walker, 1996). Furthermore, Black teachers' understanding of the Black experience results in their ability to incorporate culturally affirming pedagogical techniques and strategies, resulting in a more positive experience for Black students (Egalite & Kisida, 2018; Siddle-Walker, 1996). Additionally, Black teachers embed what Foster (1990) defines as a hidden curriculum into their lessons. This involves focusing on developing the self-esteem and pride in Black students' racial identity, promoting connectedness within the Black community at large, and increasing student's awareness of the political and social reasons to attain an education (Foster, 1990; Wilkerson, Stanislaus, & Hodge, 2021).

Gershenson and colleagues (2017) found that Black students who have at least one Black teacher in elementary are more likely to graduate high school and enroll in college than those who are not taught by a Black teacher. Moreover, Black students experience an increase in state reading and mathematics test scores by three to four percentage points, respectively, when taught by a Black teacher (Dee, 2004). Further analysis of the influence of Black teachers on math demonstrated that Black student enrollment in Algebra II increased after being taught by a Black mathematics teacher (Klopfenstein, 2005). Edmond (2022) expanded Klopfenstein's (2005) study by examining the

impact of having an HBCU-trained teacher on Black student outcomes. Using end-of-grade math exams from North Carolina elementary schools, Edmond's (2022) two-way fixed effective regression estimate found that Black students taught by HBCU-trained teachers have higher end-of-year grades than Black teachers from non-HBCUs. The data illuminate the significant contribution Black teachers bring to the educational enrichment of Black students. Yet, since *Brown vs. Board*, there continues to be a decrease in Black teachers.

Black Teacher Recruitment Strategies

State governments, foundations (i.e., Ford Foundation and the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Foundation), colleges and universities have created various programs, initiatives, and recruitment strategies to diversify the teacher workforce (Carver-Thomas, 2018). For example, the cost of traditional teacher preparation programs and the debt that ensued

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can tremendously deter Black students from becoming teachers (Fiddiman, Campbell, Partelow, 2019; Hershcopf et al., 2021). To mitigate these issues, there has been an increase in Black and other minority groups enrolling in alternative certification programs (Carver-Thomas, 2019; National Center for Education Statistics, 2022; Woods, 2016). In addition, state and local governments have alleviated the financial burden of teacher preparation programs by creating service scholarships and loan forgiveness programs, where a portion of a student's tuition is reimbursed if they commit to teach in a high-need school for a period of time (Carver-Thomas, 2019; Podolsky et al., 2016).

School districts and universities are collaborating to create teacher residencies. Students participating in these programs spend a one-year apprenticeship with a teacher mentor while completing coursework with the partnering university. In addition to the apprenticeship, financial support (stipend and tuition assistance) is provided (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Guha, Hyler & Darling-Hammond, 2016). Other recruitment tools being implemented across the country consist of completing high-touch recruitment methods, strengthening articulation agreements with community colleges to streamline the

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teacher preparation process, and cultivating programs focused on the recruitment of Black male teachers, such as the Call Me MISTER program founded at Clemson University (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Jones, Holton & Joseph, 2019). These programs have been effective in increasing the number of Black teachers. However, more needs to be done to close this gap. The literature shows that the practices of Historically Black Colleges and Universities can assist in closing this gap if they are emulated by other institutional types (i.e., large state-funded historically white institutions).

The Role of HBCUs in Cultivating the Black Teacher Pipeline

Recognizing HBCUs' track record in graduating Black teachers, researchers, and practitioners from predominantly white institutions (PWIs) and other minority-serving institutions (MSIs) must acknowledge how HBCUs yield powerful best practices to strengthen the Black teacher pipeline and mitigate America's teacher shortage. A review of the Black teacher pipeline literature recognizes HBCUs' tremendous impact in cultivating Black teachers. Yet, few have conducted an in-depth analysis of the best practices applied at the very institutions that yield such an indispensable contribution to the American education system. This study seeks to address the gap in the literature by answering the following question:

What recruitment, curricular, and co-curricular best practices are implemented at Historically Black Colleges and Universities responsible for their role as a major producer of Black teachers for the American education system?

Theoretical Framework

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Ladson-Billings' (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) and Valenzuela's (1999) authentic caring are the theoretical frameworks leveraged in this study. CRP was coined through Ladson-Billings' (1995) study examining practices implemented by successful teachers of Black students (Ladson-Billings,1995). In her observation and engagement with teachers, Ladson-Billings (1995) identified instructional characteristics exhibited by successful teachers that affirmed their students' cultural backgrounds. The three tenets of CRP center on (1) high levels of academic achievement, where students are active participants in their learning; (2) cultural competence, where a student's cultural integrity is affirmed; and (3) critical consciousness, which consists of an environment where a student's ability to understand and critique their world is developed.

Teachers implementing a culturally relevant pedagogical approach had educational expectations that demanded, produced, and reinforced academic excellence from their students (Ware, 2006). This teaching approach is defined as embodying a "warm demander" stance (Ware, 2006). The literature on the warm demander approach defines it as a stance grounded in social justice, where teachers balance the use of care and authority to create a structured, disciplined, and affirming classroom experience for their students (Bondy et al., 2013; Hambacher et al., 2016; Ross et al., 2008; Ware, 2006). A key feature of a warm demander approach is an insistence, which stems from the educator's belief that "children can and must learn and that it is the teacher's responsibility to teach them" (Hambacher et al., 2016, p.5).

Teachers exhibit insistence, or authoritative posture, in the classroom by holding students accountable and reminding them of and reinforcing the classroom expectations. Hambacher and colleagues (2016) demonstrated how a warm demander approach could be observed among elementary pre-service teachers. In this case study, the expression

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cultural and psychological well-being to survive their educational experiences (Fordham, 1988; Lawless & Bogard, 2022). Black students use survival tactics such as social isolation from other African-American peers and silencing their voices to navigate the school environment and avoid alienation (Fordham, 1988). By using affirming instructional practices such as providing opportunities for the student's community to participate in classroom activities or infusing hip hop in the curriculum students develop the ability to navigate between their home and school culture (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

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The final tenet of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy focuses on developing a student's social consciousness. In applying the first two tenets, having high expectations and embedding cultural competence in the curriculum, teachers can create a foundation that encourages their students to identify, comprehend, and critique social inequities (Allen et al., 2017, Skepple, 2014). Applying a CRP approach requires the teachers to intentionally use and support the language and cultural tools of the students they teach. Moreover, teachers must believe these practices are critical in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Skepple, 2014). Within teacher education programs, developing the social consciousness of pre-service teachers requires creating a space where they engage in self-reflection to achieve "an understanding that can lead to a change in thought or behavior" (Gay & Kirkland, 2003, p. 182. Gay and Kirkland (2003) write that teacher programs should cultivate a department-wide expectation "where self-reflection and culturally critical consciousness are part of the routine, normative demands of students" (p. 184). Pre-

of care varied amongst the pre-service teachers. It consisted of the educators actively engaging with the family and community toward supporting the teachers' goal of creating a culturally affirming lesson plan, establishing an emotional connection with their students through developing positive and fluid relationships, and scaffolding instructional techniques to serve the diverse needs of their students (Hambacher et al., 2016). Insistence was expressed by the pre-service teachers' refusal to settle for less than the students' best performance. This was accomplished through verbal and non-verbal cues that communicate student expectations and create a safe, supportive environment where all students can learn and demeaning the students is avoided (Hambacher et al., 2016).

Applying a culturally relevant approach in the classroom, the second tenet of CRP consists of incorporating pedagogical strategies that affirm and celebrate a student's culture while also learning about the rich culture of their peers (Durden et al., 2015; Ladson-Billings,1995). This approach centers on students' lived experiences and uses them as a vehicle for learning. Embedding cultural competence is critical, especially when scholarship examining the academic success of African Americans often identifies the unfortunate consequence of this demographic having to sacrifice their

service teachers are encouraged to reflect on the topics they are studying and how to apply them in their instruction. In addition to critical self-reflection, Gay and Kirkland (2003) recommend teacher education programs encourage critical conversations among students about various topics that center on racial and cultural dilemmas in education. Lastly, teacher education faculty must model the application of culturally relevant pedagogy in their courses and within their department (Gay and Kirkland, 2003).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy must be embedded in America's teacher education program. A review of the teacher education accreditation reveals that diversity is briefly mentioned in the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Moreover, the standards do not explicitly require teacher candidates to participate in diverse field experiences; they are not required to serve the underrepresented and underserved student populations, nor are they obligated to learn and apply culturally relevant practices (Allen

et al., 2017). However, it is essential that CRP be embedded in the curriculum of the teacher education program to ensure an equitable and affirming environment for minoritized students. In addition, these programs must incorporate strategies that develop teacher candidates' critical reflection and critical consciousness.

Allen and colleagues (2017) propose a framework that encourages the use of critical questions to deconstruct the dominant education narratives. Critical questioning is defined as "inquiry that promotes a deeper understanding of power structures within methods and pedagogical course" (Allen et al., 2017, p. 17). Utilizing critical questioning, teacher preparation educators can deconstruct status quo curriculum offers, content, and instructional practices while highlighting the voices of underrepresented students (Allen et al., 2017) at the macro-level of teacher education programs.

Role of Caring

This study also draws from the works of feminist care-centered frameworks with a particular focus on Valenzuela's (1999) authentic care. Nodding (1984) views caring as displayed when a person genuinely cares about an unjust situation and actively works to change it. This definition of care entails an individual actively investigating and investing in making a change for their fellow peer (Bass, 2009). Yet, care theories are often critiqued as they are rooted in a color-blind framework, which seeks to affirm the cultural assumptions of the white middle and upper class, and thus do not recognize the role of care for minoritized populations (Thompson, 1998; Zhu, 2019).

Valenzuela (1999) expanded Nodding's (1984) caring by distinguishing between two forms of caring in education: aesthetic and authentic. Through her ethnographic study on the schooling of U.S.-Mexican youth, Valenzuela (1999) defined aesthetic caring as focusing solely on the instructional relationship between the teacher and their students. This form of caring seeks to establish no other form of a relationship with the students outside of an instructional one. On the contrary, authentic

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care seeks to foster a reciprocal student-teacher relationship. This form of care extends beyond the instructional relationship to one that accepts students' cultural backgrounds and values within the relationship (Valenzuela, 1999; Zhu, 2019).

Valenzuela's (1999) authentic caring approach aligns with HBCUs' mission to educate all students regardless of their background. Using this mission as their guide, HBCUs are cognizant of the socio-economic factors that can act as barriers to student educational attainment. It is important to note that racism and white supremacy were at the core of the founding of HBCUs. Thus, the consideration of race and racism is essential when examining the forms of care and how they are applied to students currently. Yet, instead of ignoring these factors, HBCUs take a holistic approach to their engagement that works on elevating the student's educational standing while providing support services to alleviate these barriers. Additionally, applying this model will guide our study in revealing formal and informal care strategies used in HBCU teacher education programs that affirm and support Black teacher education majors.

For this study, we seek to identify how the tenets of Ladson-Billings's (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy and Valenzuela's (1999) authentic caring are exhibited in recruitment, curricular, and co-curricular programs, policies, and initiatives. In addition, recognizing the history of these institutions, we aim to identify how these institutions apply care in their engagement with their students.

Methodology

This research study used a qualitative, multiple-case approach to explore the HBCU Black teacher pipeline. As prescribed by methodology literature, case study research designs aim to present an understanding of an issue, problem, or topic within its social context. This study explores a real-life, bounded system through multiple forms of data (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). It may also be characterized as a multilayered, multiple-case study approach utilized to examine four bounded cases of a similar phenomenon. This includes four teacher education programs at HBCUs responsible for contributing toward a high production of Black teachers. This study sought to deepen the knowledge of how the Black teacher pipeline is supported at our selected institutions from several perspectives. Each of the teacher education programs was reviewed by faculty members, administrators, and students. As a result, we identified the best practices, processes, and initiatives that result in the recruitment, matriculation, certification, and graduation of Black teachers.

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Data Collection

The primary mode of data collection was one-on-one semi-structured interviews, which lasted approximately one hour. The approach was aligned with Ladson-Billings' (1995) Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and involved developing an interview protocol to investigate the ways in which authentic caring and culturally relevant pedagogy were incorporated into the teacher education program. There was a special interest in reflecting on these two approaches' connection to the successful production of Black teachers. Each interview group had an interview

protocol tailored to their scope of involvement in the teacher education program. Faculty and administrator interviews sought to explore how the institution and department culture and curricular and co-curricular activities assisted in recruiting, matriculating, certifying, and graduating Black teachers. Student interviews centered upon their overall experiences in the teacher education program. Students emphasized their inspiration toward their pursuit to teach, engagement with their respective faculty members, and acknowledgments of how their racialized identity impacts their teacher education identity. In total, 37 faculty, staff members, and students participated in an approximately one-hour interview. Faculty and staff were given $50 virtual Visa gift cards for participation, while students were supplied with a $25 virtual Visa gift card. Each interviewee was provided a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Inductive and deductive coding strategies were used for the data analysis process. Please see Table 1 below for examples of inductive and deductive coding.

Specifically, this research focused mainly on the development of Black teachers through the lens of culturally relevant pedagogy and authentic caring. As such, we established a set of predetermined codes based on the theories applied.

Aligned with case study methods analysis, each institution's interview data was assessed individually to develop the preliminary codebook. The research team conducted two rounds of coding per transcript to ensure the reliability of the codes. At the end of each institution's coding cycle, the research team discussed the preliminary codes in relation to the research questions.

Once each institution's coding was completed, the research team conducted a cross-case analysis to compare the teacher education programs' approaches to developing Black teachers. Several trustworthiness strategies were employed throughout the data analysis process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Two such strategies utilized throughout the process were numerous peer-debriefing sessions, and at least two authors coded each transcript to ensure inter-coder agreement. Finally, the findings from the report were emailed to the teacher education department leadership for review.

TABLE 1. Examples of Deductive and Inductive Coding

DEDUCTIVE CODING	INDUCTIVE CODING
Expectation of high levels of achievement (CRP tenet)	Recruitment strategy
Development of cultural competency (CRP tenet)	Curriculum strategy
Raising students' critical consciousness (CRP tenet)	Co-curriculum strategy
Authentic caring	Community Partnership

Institutional Setting

The institutions selected for this study were based on National Center for Education Statistics data. The research identifies the top 25 four-year Historically Black Colleges and Universities that produce Black teacher college graduates in the field of special education, early child, preschool or kindergarten, elementary, middle school (junior or intermediary), and secondary majors between the 2015-16 to 2019-20 academic year. At the time of this study, data from the 2020-21 academic year was not available for analysis. Recognizing the diversity of our institutions in enrollment sizes, institutions in which 5% or more of the graduating class were education majors were included between the same timeframes. Each institution's college of education dean and department chair were contacted via email to invite them to participate in the study. Following the recruitment process, four institutions decided to participate in our study. These four institutions are Alabama A&M University, Albany State University, Fayetteville State University, and Huston-Tillotson University.

UNCF's Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute is incredibly thankful to these institutions for prioritizing time to meet with us. Many institutions were in the process of institutional or department accreditation while balancing the Covid-19 pandemic and bomb threats. The next section presents the mission of each institution,

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followed by a brief review of the history and teacher education programs offered.

▶ Alabama Agriculture & Mechanical University

MISSION: Alabama A&M University Department of Teacher Education and Leadership seeks to provide instruction for undergraduate and graduate teacher candidates as well as other school personnel in the areas of educational history, theory, philosophy, methods and materials, research, and policies and procedures impacting K-12 schools and educational agencies. In addition to teaching subject matter content, the faculty places emphasis on candidate mastery of techniques and strategies geared towards integrating technology into teaching subject matter to a diverse population of students. The department faculty also conducts research and provides professional services to schools, community agencies, and professional organizations and associations (Alabama A&M University Teacher Education and Leadership, n.d.- a).

Alabama Agriculture and Mechanical University (AAMU), formerly the State Normal and Industrial School, was founded in 1875 in

> **ASU serves over 6,200 undergraduate and graduate students and awards degrees at the associate's, bachelor's, and master's level.**

Huntsville, Alabama. Alabama A&M University is a 4-year, public, land-grant university that currently serves a population of an estimated 6,000 students. This institution awards degrees at the bachelor's, master's, post-masters, and doctoral levels (U.S. Department of Education, 2022a). The College of Education, Humanities, and Behavior Sciences houses the Teacher Education and Leadership department, which offers degrees in pre-elementary education, elementary education, and special education at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral level (Alabama A&M University Teacher Education and Leadership, n.d.- b).

▶ **Albany State University**

MISSION: Albany State University's key objective is to prepare teachers, leaders, counselors, and other professionals that reflect on pedagogical and content knowledge, transform educational and clinical environments with research-based practices and skills, demonstrate culturally responsive dispositions, and integrate technology into teaching and learning process to improve educational opportunities and enhance the well-being of the community (Albany State University, n.d.).

Albany State University (ASU) is a four-year public HBCU in Albany, Georgia. Albany State University, formerly the Albany and Manual Training Institution, was founded in 1903 as a teaching college. Since its founding, Albany has been critical to the production of Black teachers (Albany State University, 2022). Data from the National Center for Education Statistics shows that ASU's teacher education program is among the top five highest-producing programs for Black teachers (Walker, 2015). ASU serves over 6,200 undergraduate and graduate students and awards degrees at the associate's, bachelor's, and master's levels. The Department of Teacher Education awards bachelor's degrees in early childhood, middle grades education, and

secondary education (U.S. Department of Education, 2022b)

▶ **Fayetteville State University**

MISSION: Fayetteville State University's College of Education (COE) prepares knowledgeable, reflective, and caring professionals in the fields of education, research, and service. Their highly qualified faculty ensure that their candidates participate in prescribed activities and cutting-edge instructional practices offered through multiple modes of delivery, ongoing assessments, and field-based internships. As a result, [students] have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to support student learning within a framework of family and community and can participate in a diverse, technological, and global society. The COE proudly prepares transformational educators and leaders through licensure-only options and degrees at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels for the southeastern region of the state, nation, and global community. (Fayetteville State University, n.d.).

Fayetteville State University (FSU) is a four-year public HBCU in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Fayetteville State University, formerly known as Fayetteville State Teachers College, was founded in 1867. In 1877, Fayetteville State University became the state's first teacher-training institution for African Americans (Fayetteville State University, 2022a). FSU currently serves over 6,700 undergraduate and graduate students at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree levels (U.S. Department of Education, 2022d). The Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle Grades, Reading, and Special Education offers three degrees at the baccalaureate (birth-to-kindergarten teaching, birth-to-kindergarten non-teaching, and elementary education) and two degrees at the master's level (Master of Teaching and Master of Education) with various concentrations (Fayetteville State University, 2022b).

▶ Huston-Tillotson University

MISSION: The Huston-Tillotson University Educator Preparation Program (HTU-EPP) prepares candidates for meaningful careers in the field of education. Building upon a solid liberal arts foundation framed within a social justice perspective, the HTU-EPP mission is to assist candidates in developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to become effective, caring, data-driven teachers in an ever-changing and diverse society. Candidates are prepared to become effective educators who are technology-focused, reflective, and lifelong learners that are actively (re)defining their professional teaching identity coupled with engagement in active advocates for students, parents, and communities (Huston-Tillotson University, n.d.).

Huston-Tillotson University (HTU), formerly known as the Tillotson Collegiate and Normal Institute, is the oldest institution of higher education in Austin, Texas. HTU is a private four-year institution serving 1,000 undergraduate and graduate students at the associate's, bachelor's, and master's levels. In addition, the College of Arts and Sciences houses the Department of Educator Preparation, where they award a Bachelor of Arts in Education and a Bachelor of Arts or Science in an academic major with an education minor. The programs are offered both through their traditional and alternative teacher certification program. Additionally, this institution wishes to produce 25 Black male teachers in the teacher workforce through their partnership with the Apple Pre-Education Scholars program. This program provides financial support to African American males pursuing a career in Education (Huston-Tillotson University, n.d.).

> **The Huston-Tillotson University Educator Preparation Program prepares candidates for meaningful careers in the field of education.**

Findings

The faculty, staff, and student interview findings reveal a holistic approach to their recruitment, curricular, and co-curricular best practices.

Recruitment Strategies

The recruitment strategies primarily consisted of the teacher education faculty and staff's use of their personal and professional networks, establishing community partnerships to recruit paraprofessionals, and establishing a high school pipeline.

RECRUITMENT THROUGH PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

Faculty, staff members, and administrators mentioned that leveraging their personal and professional networks was an essential recruitment strategy. A significant portion of the interviewees have considerable experience working in the P-12 setting. Thus, they used their established networks to identify prospective students. This was described in greater detail by an Albany State University faculty member:

> I've worked in [the] public school system for…34 years, to be exact. When I know that I have contacts in the school system, the school system where I worked, just for my area, I have had opportunities to have conversations with administrators that have people working in their schools that are working in a para pro [paraprofessional] position. And I make sure that I always make them aware of our program…I let them know that we have this program, and these are the hours that it takes. And these are the courses, and it's offered…I make them aware of where the students can enroll to get into the program.

In this quote, this interviewee describes how they used the social capital they have attained

Faculty, staff members, and administrators mentioned that leveraging their personal and professional networks was an essential recruitment strategy.

through their decades of teaching to assist the HBCU in identifying potential students for their program. However, institutions have taken a more formalized approach toward using their network to recruit students by leveraging grant funding. For example, Sarah, a staff member from Alabama A&M University, describes how they used grant funds to hire teachers to assist them in recruiting their students for the *Teacher Champions* program,

> We just started a program we call *Teacher Champions* with one of our school districts. Their school district [is] broken into regions, so we've asked for one teacher per region to be a teacher champion to recruit for us out in the school. The teacher champions can blast emails out about Alabama A&M. Orientation starts this day, and they're looking for teacher candidates. Here's the scholarship information that's available,' or that they talk at a PTA meeting, that they're the teacher champion recruiter for Alabama A&M, and they just want to let the parents know that the Alabama A&M teacher education program is ready for their seniors to graduate and come to them to be classroom teachers.

ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS TO RECRUIT NON-TRADITIONAL AND TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

Another essential recruitment tool for these institutions was using their long-standing community partnerships to recruit paraprofessionals into their traditional or non-traditional alternative certification programs. Each of the institutions used their ongoing relationship with the local public school system, which was particularly beneficial in recruiting paraprofessionals, individuals working in the school system but that are not licensed to practice as fully certified teachers. These ties between the HBCUs and public schools provide the infrastructure for the local teacher pipeline for their area school district. They have used this relationship to provide professional development opportunities for the educators working in their public school system. Teacher education faculty and staff led various workshops and seminars on various topics that concluded with a review of the programs offered at their institution and the available financial aid opportunities. Joanne, a faculty member at Fayetteville State University, describes how she used these opportunities to start conversations with paraprofessionals, as many were unaware of the opportunities available to them.

> I have also recruited by working with those candidates who are employed as teachers but [sic] don't have a license, having those one-on-one conversations about adding on these courses to get [their] initial license. Sometimes [there] is just a gap because [they] never went through the educational department.

The Black church community and local community college partnerships were another tool leveraged to recruit Black teachers. Similar to their partnerships with the school system, these institutions had long-standing relationships with nearby religious institutions that enabled institutions the opportunity to discuss their program and financial aid offerings during the services. For example, Alabama A&M University

created a Memorandum of Understanding agreement with the area churches. Likewise, partnerships with HBCUs' local community colleges were advanced by creating articulation agreements between them and teacher education faculty and staff participating in informational events and open houses.

Recruitment programming and initiatives were designed to assist these institutions in inspiring and recruiting Black teachers at the high school level. At the core of these partnerships, there is an existing need for these programs to have a direct relationship with prospective students that may aspire to teach. Thus, teacher education faculty participate in recruiting events like career fairs and open houses to provide opportunities for students and their parents to learn about the field of education and the teaching programs at the respective institutions. Institutions also established programs like the Future Teachers of America chapters at local high schools to recruit aspiring teachers.

The Black church community and local community college partnerships were another tool leveraged to recruit Black teachers.

FINANCIAL AID

The institutions recognized the financial toll attaining a college degree often has on their students. Thus, financial aid has been utilized as a recruitment tool. Faculty, staff, and students agreed that the numerous tests and certification fees were a significant barrier to becoming a teacher. In conjunction with the state and grant funding, each institution has provided varying degrees of financial assistance to help support their students. For example, financial aid assistance has been used in particular to recruit Black male teachers. Through the state and grant funds, each institution created a program to provide financial, academic, and social support to Black males pursuing a degree in education. Alabama A&M University's Males for Alabama Education (M.AL. E) is a program focused on recruiting undergraduate and graduate students who are minority men interested in teaching students in Alabama's public school system. Students have up to two years of tuition assistance, funding, test preparation support, mentorship, and professional development. Huston-Tillotson University established the African American Male Teacher Initiative in partnership with the Apple Pre-Education Scholars program. This initiative aims to produce 100 Black male teachers by covering all tuition, fees, room, and board over a five-year period. In addition to the financial support, the participants engage in service learning, social activities and become Apple certified.

> **Faculty, staff, and students agreed that the numerous tests and certification fees were a significant barrier to becoming a teacher.**

In addition to funding the recruitment of Black male teachers, these institutions' grant funds have been used to establish resources for test preparation and programs to help their students pass the teacher certification exam. Grant funding assisted Fayetteville State University in creating the Broncos Test Preparation program as Evelena, a Fayetteville State University faculty member, describes the program,

> We have what we call Bronco test prep. It's funded through Title III. For the last four years, we have been doing workshops every semester on math, reading, and writing. They work on writing for four weeks, then math, reading. They do 12 weeks worth of intensive test prep and receive a voucher to take the test, so they don't have to pay for it if they've done everything they're supposed to.

Curricular

EARLY ALERT SYSTEM

The teacher education faculty at these institutions, known for their cultivation of Black teachers, operationalize care in their curricular activities. In doing so, they take a holistic approach to getting to know their students and identifying their needs. Some schools leverage

their early alert systems to identify students needing additional assistance. For example, Albany State University and Fayetteville State University use an early alert system university-wide to notify faculty and staff when students are consistently absent or late for classes. This system signals their respective education departments to reach out to students and see how they can mitigate such behavior and/or offer assistance. At Fayetteville State University, during the education department's meetings, faculty are encouraged to identify students who may need additional support so that the department can work together to provide the resources necessary. To meet the needs of students, faculty and staff often partner across departments within the school and, at times, the greater community to ensure their students have access to the necessary resources. An administrator confidently stated, "If a student says, 'I'm homeless,' we find people, we call churches, we do whatever we have to do to help with that." To get ahead of the challenges students may face, faculty often freely share their space and time with students. This is done in addition to their primary responsibilities by engaging in informal check-ins, especially during busy times such as final exams and when students are preparing for their certification exams. Finally, faculty offer office hours for students to discuss their academic and non-academic concerns.

INTENTIONALLY CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

Faculty are often looking for opportunities to get to know their students personally by creating space to listen and learn about their students' familial backgrounds. Put simply, they wish to learn who their students are outside of the classroom. These are intentional practices by faculty members done to demonstrate their care and compassion. Faculty often go out of their way to acknowledge milestones in students' lives, such as birthdays, new parenthood and even attend recitals for their students. Faculty are also there for encouragement during the death of a family member, medical diagnosis or

to provide a safe space for students to share their thoughts on issues such as police brutality. For example, Angela, an Albany State University professor, made time and space in her classroom to discuss the implications of the bomb threats happening at HBCUs.

> We were one of the campuses hit with the bomb threat. Sometimes the curriculum gets put on hold so that we can unpack the social implications of those kinds of events, help the students navigate their feelings about the events, [and] talk about what it means to be a teacher in that kind of context.

MAINTAINING HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Since many faculty members are often alumni of their current institutions, they are keenly aware of the historical importance of HBCUs. Additionally, many of the highlighted HBCUs were founded as teacher colleges for the intentional preparation of Black educators. This history often serves as a guiding force for faculty's interactions with students. This includes setting and maintaining high expectations for their students. Students are constantly reminded of the history of their university and the pride that students should have in continuing the legacy of their respective institutions by educating future generations. As Brittany, an administrator at Fayetteville State University, stated,

> We always go back to the beginning, how we started as an education program for the Black community. We always reference that to [the students]. This is what Fayetteville State is built on. We're founded on this. We infuse our philosophy to motivate and move our culture forward. We let our students know it's not going to be easy, [and] it's going to require work, but if you want it bad enough, you will get it.

Additionally, many of the highlighted HBCUs were founded as teacher colleges for the intentional preparation of Black educators.

Teacher education faculty and staff exhibited a warm demander behavior in hopes of engaging with the students toward driving their success at a high level. Chase, a student at Huston-Tillotson, describes how his professors' high expectations made him a better teacher,

> I had a presentation one time where I was supposed to have a lesson plan for sixth graders. I pretty much was trying to teach a whole three chapters, versus trying to teach one part of one chapter. So, my professors were saying, 'Hey, you're going to have to tone it down and slow it down to make sure that they can grasp what you are teaching, and you're not just running while they're trying to take baby steps and get to your level.' So, that's what I mean when I say raw, is they're not trying to say, "Okay, that was 80% good, but 20% bad." If mine was 20% good and 80% bad, that's what I'm going to get graded. So, I just appreciate how in the beginning I kind of took the criticism one way, but I developed and learned that hey, they're telling you this because you need to know that. You need to know how to develop a way for kids to understand.

CULTURALLY AND HISTORICALLY RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM

Considering the history of HBCUs and their legacy of uplifting and affirming Black students' identities, faculty have embedded culturally affirming literature and theoretical frameworks into their curriculum. Faculty members are intentional about incorporating curricular activities, which encourage their students (who are also prospective educators) to think critically about issues that affect them. As a result, faculty often practice using culturally affirming pedagogical practices to serve as models for their students to emulate. They know the challenging terrain they will navigate confronting issues such as banning critical theories in education. As a result, incorporating African American literature such as Nikole Hannah-Jones's *The 1619 Project* in the curriculum and culturally responsive pedagogical practices, such as class debates or infusing hip-hop pedagogy, prepare future educators for the realities they will encounter in the classroom. A faculty member at Albany State University emphasized this point,

> One of the topics that we talked about in my curriculum class is what are the core books that you can bring into your classroom as primary resources for your students to read... the new teacher will say, 'Well, I don't know what good books are on World War II. I don't know what good books and reading selections there are for the Civil Right Movement'...I will gather some different readings on how you can teach the Civil Rights Movement. And we'll read [Martin Luther King Jr.'s] *Letter from Birmingham Jail.*

Faculty are also conscious that their curriculum is not without flaws. As a result, they conduct curriculum reviews to revise their syllabi, readings, and activities to meet the needs of students today. Curriculum improvement also includes listening to students and adjusting curriculum delivery as needed. For example, one professor was approached by students

As a result, faculty often practice using culturally affirming pedagogical practices to serve as models for their students to emulate.

about his classes' assignment load. This faculty member cared for his students' well-being and built a level of trust that made them comfortable enough to approach him regarding their concerns. This faculty member stated, "...so I heard what they said because I want them to have a voice, and so I modified the entire list..."

ATTENDING TO THE SOCIOEMOTIONAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS

A distinguishing factor between Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Predominately White Institutions is the level of care these institutions provide, especially their faculty members. Faculty members understand that the students who enter their classrooms come with academic, mental, and emotional well-being that holistically needs to be catered to, especially considering the social climate. As a result, some faculty have encouraged an environment of safety within their classrooms using reflective journaling and informal mental health check-ins throughout the semester. An example of how a professor leads a mental health check-in with their students prior to starting their formal lesson is outlined below:

> Using the educational platform Padlet and asking students...I just want one or two words to describe how you're feeling today. We do a mental checklist. And I ask them to make it anonymous if they want...And I take maybe the first five minutes of class just to acknowledge it. If they seem stressed or overworked or can't manage time or

whatever, that lets me know some things that I need to work on. Perhaps I need to find someone to speak with my students. Perhaps I need to find out who needs that help with time management.

Through these practices and guidance provided by faculty members, students are encouraged to become self-sufficient as they move in their next journey of life, which includes developing soft skills such as empathy, taking care of oneself within the field of education, and other socio-emotional skills required as educators.

Co-curricular

Across the four teacher education programs explored, our research highlights several co-curricular practices that contribute to the successful production of Black educators at these institutions. Two salient co-curricular experiences across the four institutions are mentoring and professional development opportunities, which bolster the student experience. It is important to note that these practices are individualized to the needs of the specific student population being served and the resources available at each institution.

MENTORING

The most common co-curricular experience across all the educational programs was intentional mentoring and role modeling. Each education program discussed how mentoring and role modeling are actively incorporated

into the student experience. In the student focus group interviews, we explored from the student perspective how mentoring and role modeling has enhanced their educational experience and preparation for their careers as educators. Several students shared that building connections with their faculty members was a source of inspiration. For instance, an Albany State University student shared the following sentiments about one of her professors, "… I've instantly felt a connection with her. She's so passionate and intelligent about her job and her art of working as an educator. She's definitely someone I look up to as a mentor, and her history throughout education and all that she's done, I'm inspired by her and look up to her". Similar sentiments were shared across all the student focus groups. They highlighted mentoring as an integral part of their support system.

As a customary element of the familial culture of HBCUs, faculty, and administrators discussed how mentorship is an integral part of the student support system, which can help ensure that their students have all the resources they need to succeed. For example, faculty and administrators would support students by utilizing their personal funding to supplement costs related to certification exams and individualized tutoring support that was not provided by the institution. As an administrator from Fayetteville State University explained, "Mentoring is to motivate them (the students) … advocate for them as they start going into their experience

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of professional classes…I also try to get tutoring system supports for them to be successful and connect them up with another educator, alumni, or another student that just graduated." This sentiment summarizes well the common philosophy behind the approach and investment of faculty and administrators in their students' success.

PREPARING STUDENTS TO TRANSITION TO THEIR ROLE AS EDUCATORS

Another way faculty operationalize care for students is by preparing them for their future as educators through partnerships with outside organizations. The education department at Huston-Tillotson University has partnered with Apple to increase the number of Black male teachers and to remain ever mindful of the influence of technology in classrooms today and in the future. This partnership also allows them to meet the needs of students in today's K-12 classrooms by preparing their educators to be Apple certified. Another existing partnership HTU is engaged in is with the Austin Area Urban League. Through this partnership, they have provided professional attire for their students,

such as suits and dress shoes, which are often needed as future teachers complete their field experiences in the classroom.
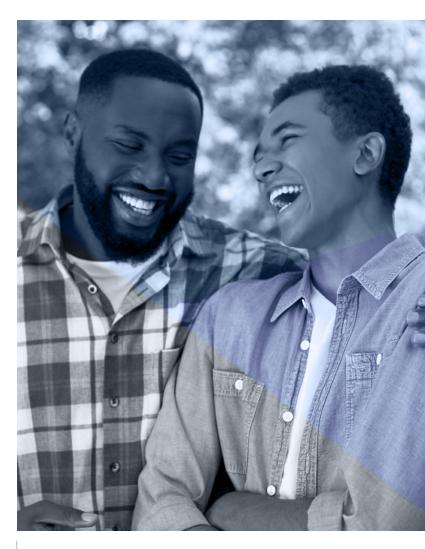
All the HBCUs offer lecture series for students, where individuals from school districts, their institution, and other educational figures speak with their prospective educators to provide learning opportunities for them and expose them to job opportunities. Conversations in these lectures have even led to some districts changing their policies to appeal to students, as described by Shawn, a Huston-Tillotson University professor,

> "…we had one district come in. Another thought it was their day, so they just sat in, and then based upon what they learned [from] the [other] district, they went back and actually changed and expanded a lot of their mentorship and added signing bonuses or expanded or increased their signing bonuses based upon what the other district did.

These opportunities allowed students to engage in topics with peers across the various education specializations in a more relaxed atmosphere. For instance, an Albany State University faculty shared how their professional development opportunities are structured to engage students on topics ranging from their personal well-being to real-world challenges related to education that they may face.

> We invite a speaker to come and speak on a particular area focused around education, whether it's the state standard, whether it has to do with the teacher evaluation system, differentiated experiences… We also do something called the Brown Bag Initiative, which is focused on a weekly lunch and learn with teachers to learn different tricks, tips, and tools for self-care and to manage their health as they're going through the program.

These intimate meetings with current educators and educational stakeholders are also used as opportunities for students to gain insight into what to expect from a salary perspective,

how their mentorship might be structured during their first few years of teaching, and other pertinent information that may help them successfully make an informed decision regarding their first full-time teaching position. When describing the purpose of these interactions, a faculty member at Huston-Tillotson University stated, "We have to get back to the point of letting people know how valuable it is, and not just in the African American community but to the greater society. There's a need for us. There's a place for us. Really, we are the one institution that has promoted the ideals of what we call a democratic society."

We have to get back to the point of letting people know how valuable it is, and not just in the African American community but to the greater society.

Discussion

Reviewing the findings from Ladson-Billings's (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy and Valenzuela's (1999) authentic caring illuminates how HBCUs provide culturally relevant authentic care in their recruitment, curricular, and co-curricular activities. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy tenets center on (1) maintaining higher levels of student academic achievement, (2) instilling cultural competence, and (3) raising students' ability to understand and critique the world around them. A review of the best practices discussed in this study highlights how these teacher education departments intentionally applied an approach of authentic care toward their engagement with their students. As discussed earlier, authentic caring seeks to create a reciprocal relationship between teachers and students. This form of caring goes beyond the more instructional teacher-student relationship (aesthetic caring) toward one that consists of the acceptance of a student's cultural background and values within the relationship (Zhu, 2019). In applying an authentic caring approach, teacher education faculty and staff create an educational environment that promotes and validates their students' cultural values and beliefs. Under this premise, this form of caring encompasses culturally relevant pedagogy, which desires to "empower students,

intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 382).

The teacher preparation faculty and staff at these four Historically Black Colleges and Universities centered on and affirmed their student's Black identity. This was largely done by creating a space where the students and their community are centered. In essence, these programs take a both /and approach to their engagement with their students by preserving their student's fidelity to their community. This study sought to identify the best practices at four HBCUs' teacher preparation programs. Through faculty, staff, and student interviews, we identified best practices in recruitment, curriculum, and co-curriculum activities that inspire, prepare, certify, and graduate Black teachers. These institutions created formal and informal recruitment practices to assist them in inspiring traditional and non-traditional students into the teaching profession. Faculty and staff used their professional networks to recruit students, created community partnerships with local Black churches and their school districts to

As discussed earlier, authentic caring seeks to create a reciprocal relationship amongst teachers and students.

recruit traditional and non-traditional students, and created Future Teachers of America chapters at their local high school to recruit aspiring teachers. Lastly, using grant funds to provide a full-ride or subsidize the cost of attendance is another recruitment tool used. These findings confirm the findings of James and colleagues (2020) quantitative study, which found that faculty use of personal and professional social contacts, financial aid awards, and community partnerships were identified as the most effective strategies used at HBCUs to recruit Black teachers.

These institutions' historic role as teacher colleges for formerly enslaved persons is not lost on the faculty interviewed for this study. This fact was clearly used as a source of motivation and pride for the students they served. Faculty described embedding and modeling culturally relevant pedagogical techniques, such as introducing their students to African American education theorists and literature in the coursework. In addition, faculty members routinely addressed the socio-emotional needs of their students by providing time and space in the classroom to discuss social issues that were impacting their educational experience. HBCU teaching program educators prioritized creating a supportive and affirming space for their students to express their social and emotional needs; this common occurrence confirms

These institutions' historic role as teacher colleges for formerly enslaved persons is not lost on the faculty interviewed for this study.

scholarship that suggests that these spaces are essential in creating an environment where students can be vulnerable and authentically exchange thoughts, ideas, and opinions (Ali, 2017). To more accurately portray the level of safety and affirmation that these institutions provide, Solorzano and colleagues (2000) coined the term "counter-spaces" to describe their significant impact. Counter-spaces are defined as "sites where deficit notions of people of color can be challenged and where a positive collegiate racial climate can be established and maintained" (Solorzano et al.,2000, p. 70).

Finally, the results are consistent with previous research that displays the tremendous impact mentoring has on students' academic achievement, emotional support, and professional socialization (Hawkey, 2006; He, 2009; Schwille, 2008). Mentorship and creating external partnerships for their students to engage in were the two most common best practices used amongst these four institutions. Embedding a mentoring component in the program was viewed as critical in establishing a positive and engaging relationship between students and their assigned faculty members. Students identified their mentors as a primary source of information and motivation throughout the program. In addition to providing guidance, the teacher education programs provided their students with opportunities to engage in professional development programming and seminars in the spirit of gaining further insight into the teaching profession.

Mentorship and creating external partnerships for their students to engage in were the two most common best practices used amongst these four institutions.

Implications for Policy and Practice

RECRUITMENT

Each institution leveraged its personal and professional networks, established community partnerships, and connected with local high schools to create pipelines to recruit prospective Black educators to teacher education programs. We recommend the following implications for policy and practices based on our findings.

1 **Encourage and incentivize teacher education faculty and staff to use their networks.** UNCF's findings reflect that the highlighted institutions' education faculty utilized their personal and professional networks to recruit students for their education program. As former educators working in many of the P-12 schools within their local districts, faculty have benefitted from these existing relationships with schools, which has enabled them to identify students for their teacher preparation programs. We encourage higher education institutions to continue cultivating their relationships with their local school districts and to use formal recruitment programs, which draw on their partnerships to recruit students and avoid burnout among faculty.

> We encourage higher education institutions to continue cultivating their relationships with their local school districts and to use formal recruitment programs, which draw on their partnerships to recruit students and avoid burnout among faculty.

2 **Establish community partnerships to recruit traditional and non-traditional students.** Historically Black Colleges and Universities understand the importance of the communities they are a part of and should continue to use these community partnerships with churches and community colleges to recruit prospective educators. Despite the teacher shortage, there are many committed individuals working in schools and attending community colleges who may have the passion but lack certification. These HBCUs have stood in the gap to provide opportunities for traditional and non-traditional students to become fully certified teachers. We encourage the continued use of these community partnerships to recruit teachers and development of more formal pathways for paraprofessionals, community college students, and others passionate about working with children to become certified educators.

3 **Create of pipelines for Black educators from high school.** A best practice UNCF observes among HBCUs is the development of a pipeline of educators as early as high school. Getting in front of students early, offering them opportunities to experience working with children early, and maintaining these relationships to guide them from high school to the completion of their teacher certification program may help build strong bridges to increase the teacher pipeline. Thus, we recommend institutions continue to look for ways to build and sustain these relationships. They should also consider providing opportunities for their students (educators in training) to interact with high school students in the spirit of inspiring them to potentially help decrease the teacher shortage that is being experienced nationwide.

4 **Increase financial aid opportunities for students.** Each institution emphasized the need for additional financial assistance for their students. As prospective educators, these students are required to pay for tuition and fees in addition to certification exams, professional attire for field experience, travel costs to commute to their field experiences, and other expenses. Thus, we highly encourage organizations such as Voya Financial to continue to invest in teacher education programs to help alleviate the mounting cost of college attendance for prospective educators.

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CURRICULAR

Across the four HBCUs studied, the education departments utilize the institutions' early alert systems, foster relationships with students, maintain high expectations, implement culturally and historically responsive curriculum, and attend to the socio-emotional needs of students in an effort to prioritize and address students' needs through their curricular offerings.

1 **Monitor students' progress through institutions' early alert system.** Across the institutions, we saw intentional use of their early alert systems to identify students in need, reach out to them, and find resources to support them. We applaud these institutions' ability to engage in inter- and cross-departmental collaboration and engagement with their greater community organizations to meet students' needs. We recommend that institutions continue to leverage their existing institutional databases to monitor students' progress and formally create programs within their departments and across their institutions to support the emerging needs of students through small grant funding opportunities, accessible school pantries, school-based professional closets, etc.

2 **Intentionally cultivate relationships with students.** Faculty members understand the importance of getting to know their students outside of the classroom and staying abreast of what occurs within and beyond the confines of their institutions. They often consider how these factors may impact students and address these challenges within their classrooms. We applaud these efforts and encourage faculty to continue to look for ways to analyze and discuss current topics that impact their students in their curriculum.

3 **Maintain high expectations of students.** As inheritors of culturally responsive educational practices, faculty maintain high expectations of their students and do their best to use these expectations to guide their interactions with students. These high expectations motivate students to perform their best in the classroom and often inspire the expectations that prospective educators have of their future students, which continue the legacy of high standards.

4 **Incorporate culturally and historically responsive curriculum.** There is intention behind the books and articles students read, and the assignments students are required to complete as faculty aim to provide culturally and historically responsive curriculum to their students. UNCF found that these practices may not be a consistent fixture in their curriculum. As a result, it is recommended that education departments evaluate their books, assignments, articles, and other materials that students interact with to ensure that they are responsive to the needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse student populations that are in their teacher preparation programs and the students these future educators will teach.

5 **Attend to the socio-emotional needs of students.** We encourage these institutions to take the lead in such efforts and look for formalized ways to nurture the socio-emotional needs of students through the curriculum, similar to how students' academic needs are treated.

CO-CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES

As UNCF noted, each institution implemented the above co-curricular experiences based on their student demographics and human resources. As such, we recommend the following implications for policy and practice based on our evaluation of our findings.

1 **Develop mentoring relationships with current alumni or teachers within surrounding school districts.** The efforts of the faculty and administrators at these institutions are admirable. Many of these individuals were managing multiple roles at the institution. We know that operating in various capacities can lead to burnout and departure from the education field altogether. Thus, we strongly encourage departmental leadership to consider ways to develop mentoring partnerships with education program alumni and educators within the surrounding districts to expand student support networks with the purpose of supporting recruitment efforts beyond existing relationships dependent upon individuals.

> As inheritors of culturally responsive educational practices, faculty maintain high expectations of their students and do their best to use these expectations to guide their interactions with students.

2 **Increase departmental funding sources for certification exams, professional development opportunities, and overall support.** UNCF's findings illuminate the reality of the lack of funding experienced by many students pursuing postsecondary education. The inability of many to pay for certification exams, tutoring support, or other auxiliary costs integral to their academic success can deter many students from completing their degree programs. In many instances, faculty and administrators have found themselves filling the financial gap. This approach is not sustainable, and UNCF advocates for increased funding sources in order to assist academically promising students' supplemental funds to mitigate the high cost of postsecondary education. One suggestion could be to create funding grants specifically catering to HBCU teacher education programs.

3 **Increase human resources to support programs and student needs.** As mentioned, many faculty and administrators in HBCU education programs held multiple operational roles at their institutions. We urge leaders and those who fund the missions of these indispensable institutions that these dynamics can lead to burnout or ineffectiveness of faculty and administrators over time. Thus, we encourage university leaders to consider how to effectively support these critical programs with staffing resources comparable to the scale of the operation.

Conclusion

The findings from this study highlight the innovative and affirming practices applied at HBCU teacher education programs that result in these institutions serving as the backbone of the Black teacher pipeline. Using their supportive and culturally affirming authentic care as an approach to learning, faculty, and staff develop recruitment, curricular, and co-curricular practices that center the Black teacher identity. While this study provides key insights into the best practices used at four HBCU teacher education programs, it is important to note that HBCUs are not monoliths. Thus, we encourage our fellow scholars to build upon our research by including other Historically Black Colleges and Universities in their analysis. Additionally,

> **This data collection method will be particularly beneficial in identifying the strategies used within the teacher education programs to raise their pre-service teachers' critical consciousness.**

the institutions provided numerous examples of how Ladson-Billings' (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy tenets were enacted throughout the teacher preparation program. We encourage in-depth study to gain more insight into the application of this framework through incorporating class observations and document analysis of course syllabi to gain a broader view of how this framework is embedded in their departments. This data collection method will be particularly beneficial in identifying the strategies used within the teacher education programs to raise their pre-service teachers' critical consciousness. Lastly, we encourage research that examines how care is operationalized at PWIs and HBCUs. The results from this study can assist PWIs in operationalizing empirically supported care practices and affirm their student racial and ethnic identity.

This study reveals the affirming and supportive best practices that result in HBCUs being integral to the Black teacher pipeline for America's P-12 education system. In praising the work of these inspiring institutions, we must not forget that their continued financial support is paramount for them to continue to meet the educational needs of students. Systemic and long-term institutional funding inequities have hindered these institutions from continuing to impact our society in the way they are fully capable. In the realm of teacher preparation, financial support is needed to increase human capital, provide additional financial aid assistance, and strengthen student support services. Many of these services are largely grant-supported.

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