

Amplifying Pittsburgh HBCU Narratives

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Motivation

Attention to HBCUs is timely, as public political debates on the relevance and impact of HBCUs intensify as there is also an upward climb in HBCU enrollment amid racial insurrections. And Vice-President Kamala Harris is the first HBCU alumna to hold the position. Now is a meaningful time to build and sustain connections and visibility of HBCU narratives, specifically those in Pittsburgh and the greater Allegheny County region.

I am a proud graduate of Tougaloo College, a Historically Black College in Tougaloo, MS. I have committed over a decade of study and advocacy to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and HBCU communities. Through my commitment to opportunities to showcase critical HBCU studies, my recent development of HBCU workshops for middle and high school students throughout the Allegheny County region, and the ongoing development of *Black on the Edge: HBCU Survival Rhetorics*, my book-length manuscript on HBCU narratives, I champion the role of HBCUs in understanding histories and futures of Black education.

Project Description

"Amplifying Pittsburgh HBCU Narratives" underscores the need for critical engagement and meaningful inclusion of a diverse range of voices and perspectives that might otherwise remain overlooked and unconnected. Such practices have lasted long enough, and we are seeing the excavation of formerly unknown histories that can transform language, periodization, and knowledge production. Throughout the one-year funding period, the project will focus on collecting HBCU stories and sharing them in order to enrich Pittsburgh's rich HBCU histories and increase the broader public's awareness.



“Amplifying Pittsburgh HBCU Narratives”

emboldens knowledge from Black communities that increase awareness of HBCU literacies, histories, and futures.



Context

HBCUs have been responsible for educating Black students and promoting Black intellectual life for nearly two centuries, as a corrective to the legacies of slavery. Yet many people still know very little about HBCUs. This project centers on the idea that HBCU histories already exist in Pittsburgh. The proposed project's focus on amplification is one of addition--what stories, perspectives, and experiences can be added to our conversations and knowledge on HBCUs. Specifically, the project aims to amplify Pittsburgh's connections to histories of Black education. This project brings together oral history methods and digital storytelling through podcasts, blogs, and data visualization in order to offer new pathways to knowledge about HBCUs.

Project Deliverables

By the end of 1-year funding period

- HBCU Voices Podcast
- Development of HBCU-centered publications
- Open Education Resources made available to the greater Pittsburgh community--middle and secondary educators and staff, families, and community members

Within 1-2 years of the funding period

- Completion of *Black on the Edge: HBCU Survival Rhetorics* book project
- Securing additional funding to support continued development of podcast, publications, and open education resources

Potential Impact

This project will...

- Connect the narratives of HBCUs to those of Pittsburgh, increasing visibility and awareness of HBCU communities.
- Develop and strengthen partnerships with the Western Pennsylvania Council for HBCUs and HBCUs across the US.
- Provide usable and timely research and writing connected to innovative critical HBCU scholarship.