UNCF
Institute for
Capacity Building

Career Pathways Initiative

Presented by the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute

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LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Let there be no doubt. Lilly Endowment Inc.'s galvanizing support of $50 million for the Career Pathways Initiative established the foundation for the unprecedented institutional transformation now underway at UNCF and with Black colleges and universities across the country.

With this support, UNCF's Institute for Capacity Building was able to work directly with the CPI-24, a diverse group of 23 HBCUs and one PBI, and help create a trailblazing blueprint for deep transformation efforts now supported by other blue-chip funders. This investment was critical to our own rethinking of roles and strategies, allowing us to focus on what became our key interventions: deep support, shared services, endowments, public policy and narrative-building.

Together, we are building a mutually-supporting ecosystem for Black colleges and universities, characterized by a networked approach to achieving strategic priorities that each institution sets, where shared services and innovative collaborations among institutions are the norm.

Together, we are ensuring our collective futures with targeted endowment campaigns and the scaling right-sizing of federal policies and support after generations of historic underfunding.

Together, we are shaping the HBCU narrative so we can amplify awareness of our outsized impact as we continue to strive for racial justice and educational equity.

Lilly Endowment Inc.'s investment in CPI took us a significant way down the road to a future where every Black college and university has the tools and resources to thrive. More needs to be done and more partners need to pick up the mantle, but we are grateful for the milestones we have been able to reach in delivering on the promise of Black higher education.

Dr. Michael L. Lomax
UNCF President and CEO

Executive Summary

Lilly Endowment Inc. awarded the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) $50 million to increase the number of Black HBCU graduates working in meaningful careers six months post-graduation. Through the establishment of the UNCF® Career Pathways Initiative (CPI), 23 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and one Predominantly Black Institution (PBI) participated in a five-year grant program which they created programs, policies, and processes focused on infusing the three-pronged approach of career pathways in their curriculum and strengthening their career development operations.

In addition to funding, each institution participated in protrusive (proactive and intrusive) engagement with UNCF's Institute for Capacity Building (ICB). Funds from this grant were critical in the expansion of ICB, resulting in this department providing culturally-affirming technical assistance and support to enhance the institution's career and workforce preparedness programming. The UNCF® Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute conducted the evaluation of CPI. This evaluation was designed to assess how the 24 institutions created innovative programs and processes to meet the grant objectives and outcomes by creating a detailed picture of their innovation. This evaluation will provide an in-depth review with examples of how the institutions met the seven grant objectives in relation to ICB's three-pronged approach (Guided Pathways, Curricular Enhancements, and Integrated Co-curricular Engagement).

Findings from the Innovation Survey, focus groups (student, staff, and faculty), institutional data metrics, and grant reports illuminates the significant impact the CPI grant has had on enhancing the career development of HBCU college students. Key findings from the report illuminate the following:

Institutional Data Metrics

Job Placement: There was a 27% increase in median job placement between the baseline years (2014-15 to 2016-17 academic years) and post-pandemic periods (2021-22 academic year).

Median Salary: There was a 21% increase in median salary between the baseline and post-pandemic periods.

Service Learning: CPI institutions experienced a 184% increase in service-learning between the baseline and post-pandemic period.

Internship: CPI institutions experienced a 40% increase between the baseline and post-pandemic periods.

Research Experience: CPI institutions experienced a 100% increase between the baseline and post-pandemic periods.

Guided Pathways

CPI institutions created and implemented various programming initiatives focused on centering student success at their respective institutions. CPI funds were used by the institutions to purchase Student Success Management Systems (SSMS) to create alumni surveys to gain critical insight on their post-graduation experience. Data obtained from the SSMS was used to create cross-institutional buy-in and engagement.

Each CPI institution established new partnerships with various local and national employers. These local and national employer partnerships resulted in institutions creating business advisory councils to provide insight into the workforce needs of their region. Funds from the grant were used to expand the human capital of their career development offices. Lastly, the incorporation of career maps, certifications and the creation of interdisciplinary courses were designed to align curricular and co-curricular activities to prepare students for the 21st-century workforce.

Curricular Enhancements

Institutions were asked to identify and establish clearly defined professional pathways to the highest-need career fields in their region including, but not limited to, aligning majors and curricula. Institutions established or deepened connections between curricula and career by launching a business advisory board, which was formed to advise institutions on efforts to create pathways toward relevant industries and to advance alignment with workforce demands. On average, 83% of CPI institutions implemented a Business Advisory Board from 2017–18 until 2021–22.

The most common aspect of success that faculty and administrators noted across the institutions within the Curricular Enhancement prong was the incorporation of workplace skill development into the curriculum. On average 88% of CPI institutions (i.e., 21 out of 24) worked on the integration of soft skills into their curriculum from 2017–18 until 2021–22. On average, 75% of CPI institutions (i.e., 18 out of 24) implemented some form of market informatics from 2017–18 until 2021–22.

This allowed students to have career information directly available to them while also receiving information about programs and opportunities offered across campus. About 88% of other institutions, on average, implemented project-based learning opportunities from 2017–18 until 2021–22.

Integrated Co-Curricular Engagement

CPI institutions enhanced students' skill development and competencies by creating intentional, strategic, and comprehensive personal and career development pathways for students. CPI revealed a pattern across institutions: career pathways begin when students arrive on campus and institutions integrate career preparation into curricula and co-curricular programming. Eighty-eight percent of CPI institutions (i.e., 21 out of 24) implemented experiential learning opportunities or capstone projects from 2017–18 until 2021–22.

In addition to the efforts described above, 83% of the CPI institutions (i.e., 20 out of 24) implemented service-learning opportunities, and 50% of CPI institutions (i.e., 12 out of 24)

increased student access to apprenticeships and co-curricular transcript opportunities from 2017–18 until 2021–22.

Another indicator of the CPI institutions' efforts in developing and implementing effective training programs to foster students' employment skills was the execution of various intervention programs. On average, 88% of CPI institutions (i.e., 21 out of 24) implemented interview training, networking opportunities, and resume/portfolio development from 2017–18 until 2021–22.

UNCF Institute for Capacity Building

Launched in 2006 by Dr. Michael L. Lomax, who had taken over the UNCF helm the previous year, UNCF's Institute for Capacity Building (ICB) underwent its own remarkable transformation through the seven-year Career Pathways Initiative, well-positioning ICB to be the powerhouse intermediary it needs to be to support the vital transformations now underway at many more than the 24 Career Pathways Initiatives partner institutions.

Future Plans and Sustainability

The CPI grant has assisted participating HBCUs and PBIs by fortifying career preparation within their organizational culture, curriculum, and co-curricular activities. The progress these institutions have made is significant and has been designed from the outset to be long-term, cultural changes in the way partner institutions think and perform.

Each of the schools created mechanisms to sustain their progress beyond the grant cycle by embedding career pathways into their strategic planning, developing, and maintaining formalized communication processes between academic and student affairs, and maintaining their local and national partnerships.

Additionally, we were able to leverage the $50 million support from Lilly Endowment to attract other donors. To name a few, Ascendium, Gates, JPMC, Capital One, and Blue Meridian Partners are new partners that have invested in UNCF ICB's institutional transformation at Black colleges and universities.

Introduction and Background

Through a $50 million, seven-year grant from Lilly Endowment, UNCF's Institute for Capacity Building (ICB) has continued to provide services and support to 24 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs). This has been carried out to increase the number of Black college graduates who transition to meaningful careers or attend graduate or professional school.

In these seven years, UNCF has provided technical assistance, thought partnership, critical thinking, and financial support to assist these institutions in creating innovative programs and practices that meet the goals and objectives of the grant. UNCF expanded the goals and objectives of this grant to include guiding these institutions in transformation work geared to identifying and dismantling silos, increasing cross-collaborations between academic and student affairs, and cross-collaboration among institutions.

This report covers the entire grant cycle (2016-17 to 2021-22 academic years). The organization of this report will consist of a brief overview of the CPI grant, its purpose, and objectives. The report will also examine UNCF's Institute for Capacity Building, its three-pronged approach, and how they managed the COVID-19 pandemic. Each grant objective will be reviewed with institutional highlights and data metrics.

Implementing the grant impacted not only the institutions' organizational structure but the organizational structure of UNCF through the re-establishment of UNCF's Institute for Capacity Building (ICB). Thus, current and former UNCF employees deeply engaged in this grant will reflect on their experiences and CPI's impact on UNCF as an organization. Lastly, we will discuss various ways these 24 institutions are sustaining the tremendous impact this grant has had on their campus and students.

CPI Overview

The Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) seeks to help four-year Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly Black institutions (PBIs) strengthen their academic delivery and operational model to improve student success, graduation, career, and institutional outcomes. CPI is housed within UNCF's Institute for Capacity Building and was designed to be delivered and strengthened by an intentional emphasis on ensuring institutions develop and execute integrated change strategies and institutions are supported with targeted capacity-building efforts and provided with continuous feedback.

To help institutions prepare their graduates for the 21st-century workforce, CPI employed a three-pronged approach to career pathway development. This institution-wide approach was co-designed to shape an undergraduate experience that results in "Students Engaged to Learn" and "Graduates Ready to Earn."

The three prongs are 1) Guided Pathways, 2) Curricular Enhancements, and 3) Integrated Co-Curricular Engagement. Figure 1 on the next page details each of these strategies, including illustrative approaches from CPI institutions, aspirations, and intermediate and long-term impact metrics. Table 1 on page 13 provides additional details regarding the 23 HBCUs and one PBI participating in CPI.

UNCF Institute for Capacity Building Career Pathways Initiative

	Completion-focused	Career-focused	
KEY STRATEGIES	**GUIDED PATHWAYS** Direct students' choices and academic behaviors to maximize efficiency and effectiveness of credit accumulation and credential completion.	**CURRICULAR ENHANCEMENT** Equip students with applied knowledge, skills, and abilities the market demands.	**INTEGRATED CO-CURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT** Equip students with experiences that enable academic and career success.
INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES	*Credit completion acceleration* 1. First & second-year experiences 2. 15-to-finish 3. Block schedules 4. Flat-rate tuition 5. Predicted course performance *Wasted credit prevention* 6. Prescriptive degree maps 7. Default course registration 8. Seamless alternative majors 9. Intrusive advising 10. Meta majors 11. Co-requisite courses	1. Market informatics 2. Soft skills integration 3. Project-based learning 4. Industry aligned outcomes/evaluations 5. Stackable credentials 6. Faculty professional development 7. Personalized learning 8. Digital courseware	*Competency development experience* 1. Program add-ons 2. Service learning 3. Capstone projects 4. Peer/faculty mentoring *Employment experience* 5. Resume/portfolio development 6. Professional development 7. Networking/interviewing 8. Experiential learning
GOAL	**Students Engaged to Learn**	**Graduates Ready to Earn**	
INTERMEDIATE IMPACT	• Retention rates • Persistence rates • Average time-to-degree	• Employer partnerships • Employer satisfaction rates • Competency gains	• Internship/co-op placement rates • Competency gains • Activity/event participation rates
LONG-TERM IMPACT	✓ *Graduation Rates*	✓ *Job Placement Rates (at time of graduation)*	✓ *Career/Employment Rates (within 6-12 months of graduation)*

FIGURE 1: Strategies, Approaches, Applications, and Intended Impact

23 HBCUs and one PBI[1] participated in this initiative. Table 1 provides additional details regarding the participating institutions.

TABLE 1: Alphabetical list and locations of CPI Institutions

Benedict College Columbia, SC	**Jarvis Christian College** Hawkins, TX	**Talladega College** Talladega, AL
Claflin University Orangeburg, SC	**LeMoyne-Owen College** Memphis, TN	**Tennessee State University** Nashville, TN
Clark Atlanta University Atlanta, GA	**Morehouse College** Atlanta, GA	**Tougaloo College** Tougaloo, MS
Dillard University New Orleans, LA	**Morgan State University** Baltimore, MD	**Voorhees University** Denmark, SC
Fayetteville State University Fayetteville, NC	**Norfolk State University** Norfolk, VA	**Wilberforce University** Wilberforce, OH
Fisk University Nashville, TN	**Oakwood University** Huntsville, AL	**Wiley College** Marshall, TX
Florida Memorial University Miami Gardens, FL	**Rust College** Holly Springs, MS	**Xavier University of Louisiana** New Orleans, LA
Huston-Tillotson University Austin, TX	**Spelman College** Atlanta, GA	**University of West Alabama**[1] Livingston, AL

[1] Predominantly Black Institution

Purpose

The purpose of the Career Pathways Initiative is to assist four-year Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) in (1) aligning their curriculum with local and national workforce needs and (2) strengthening their career services operations.

Goal

The goal of this grant is to increase the number of Black undergraduates who are immediately transitioning into meaningful careers in their chosen field. This goal will be achieved by reaching the objectives below.

Objectives

I. Align majors, coursework, and co-curricular activities with workforce needs, industry expectations, and high demand growth fields.

II. Create intentional, strategic, and comprehensive personal and career development pathways for students that integrate career preparation into both the curriculum and co-curriculum, which begins from the moment students arrive on campus.

III. Collect baseline data on universities' alumni in order to learn more about their post-graduate placement, work experience, employment trends, and graduate school pursuits in hopes of better informing students' career planning efforts.

IV. Identify the highest need career fields in universities' regions and establish clearly defined professional pathways toward them, including, but not limited to, aligning majors and curricula.

V. Establish stronger connections between campus career services and local and national employers that will lead to a 15-percentage point increase in job placement within a year of graduation for HBCU and PBI alumni.

VI. Develop and implement effective training programs to foster employment skills in students that allow them to be better prepared to immediately enter the world of work.

VII. Improve overall operational performance by building staff capacity, procuring new technology, and improving access to external career service experts, who can train and/or consult on new and innovative ways to increase the post-graduate employment rate.

Institute for Capacity Building's Three-Pronged Approach

The implementation of the Career Pathways Initiative was the catalyst for fortifying UNCF's Institute for Capacity Building (ICB) at UNCF. UNCF's Institute for Capacity Building (ICB) provides targeted, capacity-building resources to assist UNCF's member institutions in improving admission, retention, and the graduation rate in three critical areas: enrollment management, institutional advancement, and fiscal and strategic technical assistance.

ICB applied a three-pronged approach to implementing the Career Pathways Initiative grant. This three-pronged approach focused on providing resources and technical assistance on Guided Pathways, Curricular Enhancements, and Integrated Co-Curricular Engagement to shape students' undergraduate experience.

Guided Pathways

Placing student success at the center of institutional operations by engaging students in their learning journey and ensuring they get on, stay on and graduate from an academic pathway that facilitates personal and professional growth.

Curricular Enhancements

A collaborative redesign of current curricula to streamline course and program offerings and embed 21st-century competencies in students' learning outcomes.

Integrated Co-Curricular Engagement

Integration of learning activities from outside the classroom with coursework that increases students' skill development and competencies.

Using the three-pronged approach as their guide, each institution used funds from the grant to implement programs, policies, and processes to increase the number of Black students in meaningful careers after graduation.

Career Pathways Initiative Evaluation Overview

A mixed-method approach was applied to examine the execution of this initiative. Quantitative and qualitative approaches in the form of institutional progress reports, surveys, focus groups, institutional data metrics, and the Innovation Survey were collected and analyzed to examine the participating institutions' approach to developing career pathways for their students.

The evaluation is broken down into three phases: planning, implementation, and outcome. The purpose of the evaluation is different in each phase. The evaluation phase is geared towards stakeholder inclusion in the planning stage to assess challenges, best practices, and accountability structure in the program planning process.

In the implementation stage, the evaluation holistically assesses the implementation process, including identifying and solving ongoing challenges, measuring the quality of program implementation and ability to serve stakeholder needs, monitoring campus progress, and capturing data benchmark measures for participating institutions.

In the current outcome phase, this evaluation will illuminate the grant's impact in changing the organizational and administrative structure of the institution and produce recommendations for promoting sustainability and scaling of the initiative at the participating institutions. Most importantly, this evaluation will describe the various practices implemented at the institutions to meet the grant objectives.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Grant Implementation

The COVID-19 pandemic, an increased awareness of racial injustice, and social uprisings tremendously impacted the grant implementation for UNCF and the participating institutions. During this tumultuous time, UNCF modified its programmatic requirements and provided online training and support for faculty, staff, and students.

Additionally, UNCF partnered with Blue Meridian and a global consulting firm, McKinsey, to support its crisis management efforts. Please see Appendix B for additional information regarding how UNCF fulfilled the needs of the grantee institutions.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation questions that guided this report reflected the current implementation phase of this grant cycle. In this phase, our questions focused on identifying how the institutions fulfilled the grant goals and objectives. The evaluation questions for this report are as follows:

1. *In what ways have the institutions implemented programs, policies, or initiatives to fulfill the grant's goals and objectives?*

2. *How have student successes been affected by the implementation of the initiative?*

3. *What strategies did institutions use to sustain the progress made through the CPI grant?*

Methods

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to execute this evaluation. Table 2 displays the research methods, corresponding data sources, and evaluation questions.

TABLE 2: Summary of Research Methods, Data Sources, and Research Questions

RESEARCH METHODS	DATA SOURCE	QUESTION(S) ADDRESSED
Qualitative Inquiry	CPI Faculty, Staff, and Student Focus Groups Final Grant Report	In what ways have the institutions implemented programs, policies, or initiatives to fulfill the grant's goals and objectives?
Continuous Improvement Study	Final Grant Report Innovation Survey	What strategies are institutions using to sustain the progress made from the CPI grant?
Benchmarking Study	Innovation Survey Institutional Data Metrics	How has student success been affected by the implementation of the initiative?

Data Collection and Analysis

All 24 institutions participated in all or some of the data collection processes for this report. Data for this report consisted of the following:

CPI Focus Groups

Institutions were randomly selected to participate in interviews and focus groups with campus administrators, faculty members, and students to discuss their experience leading or participating in Career Pathways Initiatives at their institution. The 18 institutions selected to participate were:

Benedict College
Claflin University
Clark Atlanta University
Dillard University
Fayetteville State University
Fisk University

Florida Memorial University
Huston-Tillotson University
Jarvis Christian College
LeMoyne-Owen College
Morehouse College
Morgan State University

Norfolk State University
Oakwood University
Tennessee State University
Tougaloo College
Voorhees University
Xavier University of Louisiana

Innovation Survey

The Innovation Survey is a tool used to assess current student participation across various programs and offerings. This survey provides institutions with an instrument to measure their ability to foster student support and engagement at their campus. This survey was completed by the respective campus change agents actively engaged in student success initiatives at their institution.

Institutional Data Metrics

Institutions submitted the student outcomes. The 2013-14 through 2021-22 academic years were reported for this administration. The following data highlights the tremendous work these institutions have contributed toward executing this initiative. This report examined comparison data between specific years during the grant period (See Figure 2 below).

FIGURE 2: Grant Implementation Periods

	2014-15 to 2016-17	2017-18 to 2019-20	2021-22
Baseline to Pre-Pandemic Periods	✓		
Baseline to Post-Pandemic Periods	✓		✓
Pre-Pandemic to Post-Pandemic Periods		✓	✓

The comparison data between the baseline years (2014-15 to 2016-17) and pre-pandemic implementation years (2017-18 to 2019-20), between the baseline years (2014-15 to 2016-17) and post-pandemic implementation year/last grant year (2021-22), and between the pre-pandemic implementation years (2017-18 to 2019-20) and post-pandemic implementation year/last grant year (2021-22) were examined. The pandemic years (2020-21) were excluded from the analysis since the data may not be reliable. Please note that only institutions with completed data were used for this analysis.

Final Grant Report

Each institution submitted its final grant report, which provided a thorough review of the institution's progress in fulfilling the grant goals and objectives. Additionally, the institutions reported on their successes, challenges, and how they plan on sustaining their progress following the conclusion of the grant.

Findings and Reflections

Institutional Outcomes[2]

Enrollment

The CPI cohort experienced a 9% decrease in median enrollment between the baseline and pre-pandemic periods, a 19% decrease between the baseline and post-pandemic periods, and a 3% decrease between the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods. Talladega College (37%), Xavier University of Louisiana (25%), and Morehouse College (21%) experienced the most enrollment growth between the baseline and post-pandemic year/last grant year.

Median Cohort Retention Rate

There was an overall 1% decrease in the median retention rate between the baseline and pre-pandemic periods, a 5% increase between the baseline and post-pandemic periods (Figure 3), and a 1% increase between the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods. Florida Memorial University (25%), Talladega College (14%), Tougaloo College (13%), and Benedict College (7%) experienced the most retention rate growth between the baseline and post-pandemic year/last grant year.

Median Cohort Persistence Rate

The CPI cohort experienced a 4% increase in median persistence rate between the baseline and pre-pandemic periods, an 8% increase between the baseline and post-pandemic periods (Figure 3), and a 4% increase between the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods. Talladega College (244%), Voorhees University (51%), and the University of West Alabama (23%) experienced the most persistent rate growth between the baseline and post-pandemic year/last grant year.
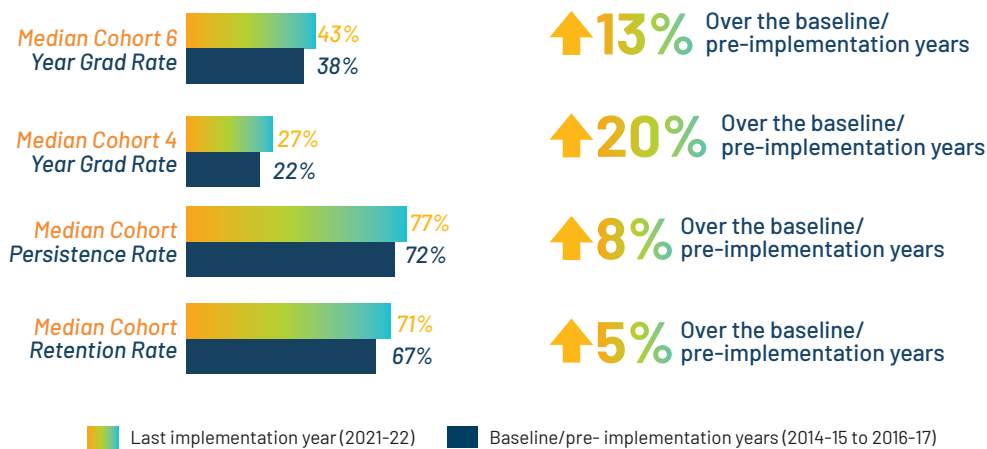
Median Four-Year Graduation

There was an overall 20% increase in the median four-year graduation rate between the baseline and pre-pandemic periods, a 20% increase between the baseline and post-pandemic periods (Figure 3), and a 6% increase between the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods. Rust College (175%), Wiley College (160%), Oakwood University (138%), and Morgan State University (101%) experienced the most significant four-year graduation rate growth between the baseline and post-pandemic year/last grant year.

Median Six-Year Graduation

The CPI cohort experienced an 8% increase in the median six-year graduation rate between the baseline and pre-pandemic periods, a 13% increase between the baseline and post-pandemic periods (Figure 3), and a 6% increase between the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods. Rust College (116%), Wiley College (42%), and the University of West Alabama (34%) experienced the most significant six-year graduation rate growth between the baseline and post-pandemic year/last grant year.

FIGURE 3: Progress of Institutional and Student Outcome Metrics

| Metric	Last implementation year (2021-22)	Baseline/pre-implementation years (2014-15 to 2016-17)	Change
Median Cohort 6 Year Grad Rate	43%	38%	↑13% Over the baseline/pre-implementation years
Median Cohort 4 Year Grad Rate	27%	22%	↑20% Over the baseline/pre-implementation years
Median Cohort Persistence Rate	77%	72%	↑8% Over the baseline/pre-implementation years
Median Cohort Retention Rate	71%	67%	↑5% Over the baseline/pre-implementation years

[2] Baseline consisted of the 2014-15 to 2016-17 academic years; Pre-pandemic Implementation consisted of 2017-18 to 2019-20 academic years; Post-Pandemic Implementation consisted of the 2021-22 academic year.

Median Job Placement

There was a 36% increase in median job placement between the baseline and pre-pandemic periods, a 27% increase between the baseline and post-pandemic periods (Figure 5), and a 7% increase between the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods. Rust College (153%), Clark Atlanta University (66%), and Xavier University of LA (59%) experienced the most job placement growth between the baseline and pre-pandemic periods. Furthermore, Rust College (165%), Dillard University (50%), Fayetteville State University (15%), Talladega College (11%), and Claflin University (10%) experienced the most job placement growth between the baseline and post-pandemic year/last grant year (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4: CPI Institutions with Highest Increase in Median Job Placement

+10%   +11%   +15%   +50%   +165%
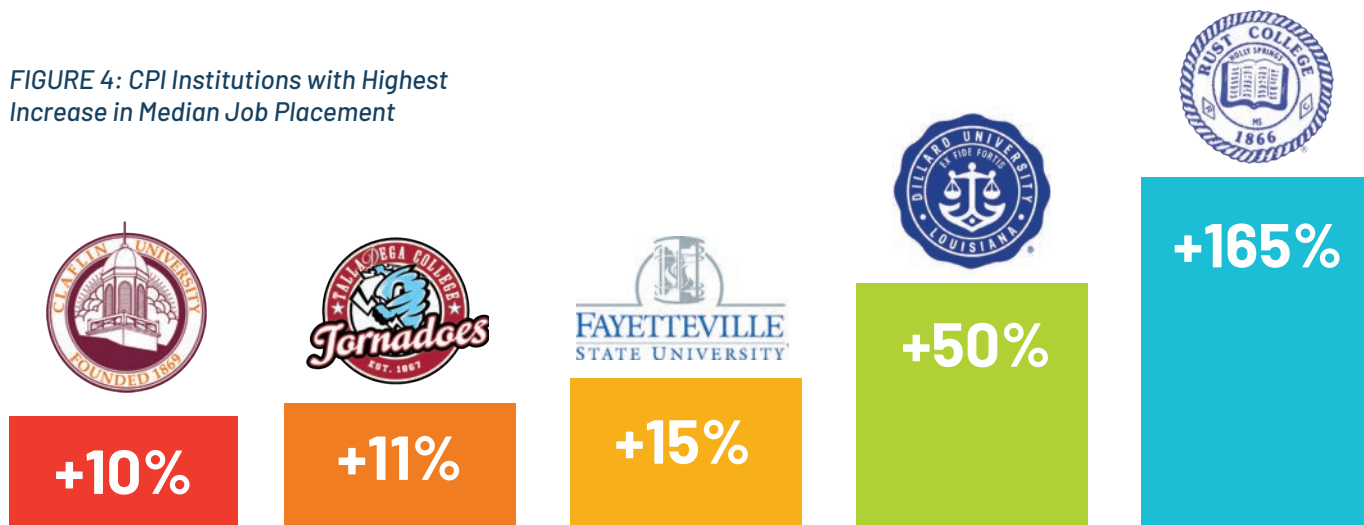
Median Salary

The CPI cohort experienced a 15% increase in median salary between the baseline and pre-pandemic periods, a 21% increase between the baseline and post-pandemic periods (Figure 5), and a 10% increase between the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods. Fayetteville State University (55%), Morehouse College (30%), and Dillard University (22%) experienced the most salary growth between the baseline and post-pandemic year/last grant year.

Student Loan Default

There was a 1% decrease in the median student loan default rate between the baseline and pre-pandemic periods, a 26% decrease between the baseline and post-pandemic periods (Figure 5), and a 12% decrease between the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods. Dillard University (-100%), Morehouse College (-100%), Wiley College (-67%), Spelman College (-64%), and Rust College (-56%) experienced the most decreases in student loan default rates between the baseline and post-pandemic year/last grant year.
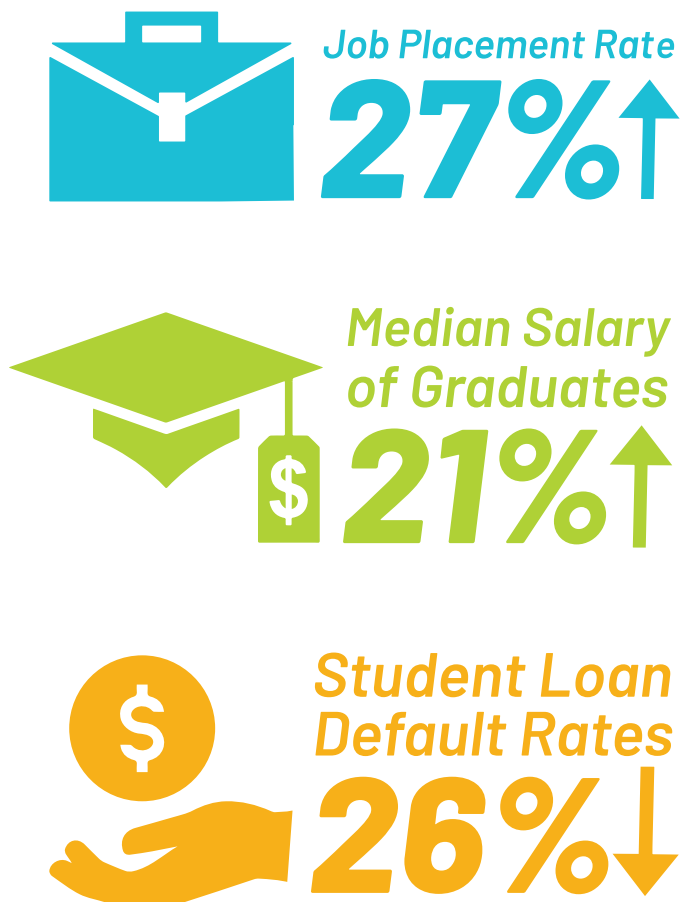

Job Placement Rate
27% ↑

Median Salary of Graduates
$21% ↑

Student Loan Default Rates
26% ↓

FIGURE 5: Student Outcome Measures

High Impact Practices

Study Abroad

The CPI cohort experienced a 12% increase in median study-abroad participation completed between the baseline and pre-pandemic periods. Tougaloo College (1 to 10, i.e., 900%), the University of West Alabama (3 to 5, i.e., 43%), Xavier University of Louisiana (38 to 40, i.e., 5%), Clark Atlanta University (45 to 129, i.e., 187%), and Morgan State University (68 to 145, i.e., 113%) experienced the most growth during this time.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic impacted students' ability to participate in study abroad programs. There was a 100% decrease in the median study-abroad participation completed between the baseline and post-pandemic periods (Figure 6) and a 60% decrease between the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods. Nonetheless, Tougaloo College (1 to 40), the University of West Alabama (3 to 15), and Florida Memorial University (4 to 6) experienced growth during this time.

Service Learning

There was a 155% increase in median service-learning participation completed between the baseline and pre-pandemic periods, which was a 184% increase between the baseline and post-pandemic periods (Figure 6), and a 10% increase between the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods. Morehouse College (80 to 1176, i.e., 2120%), Oakwood University (24 to 275, i.e.,1046%), Talladega College (7 to 20, i.e., 186%), Florida Memorial University (4 to 8, i.e., 100%), and Benedict College (1114 to 1271, i.e., 14%) experienced the most growth between the baseline and post-pandemic year/last grant year.

Internship

The CPI cohort experienced a 3% increase in the median number of internships completed between the baseline and pre-pandemic periods, a 40% increase between the baseline and post-pandemic periods (Figure 6), and a 35% increase between the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods. Morehouse College (20 to 200, i.e., 900%), Xavier University of Louisiana (37 to 160, i.e., 332%), Tougaloo College (64 to 275, i.e., 330%), Florida Memorial University (177 to 400, i.e., 126%), and Norfolk State University (172 to 354, i.e., 106%) experienced the most growth between the baseline and post-pandemic year/last grant year.

Research Experience

There was a 65% increase in median student research participation, which was completed between the baseline and pre-pandemic periods, a 100% increase between the baseline and post-pandemic periods (Figure 6), and a 29% decrease between the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods. Norfolk State University (7 to 90, i.e., 1186%) and Florida Memorial University (5 to 20, i.e., 300%) experienced the most growth between the baseline and post-pandemic year/last grant year.

FIGURE 6: Overall Statistics for Integrated Co-Curricular Engagement

Internships
+40%

Service-Learning
+184%

Study Abroad
-100%
Likely due to COVID-19

Research Experience
+100%

Data collected using the methods discussed above reveal the pioneering ways these 24 institutions have created programs, policies, and initiatives to prepare Black students to compete in the 21st-century workforce. The findings below provide a thematized summary of the innovative practices used at the institutions to meet the seven grant objectives under UNCF's Institute for Capacity Building's three-pronged approach. Please see Table 3 to review the assigned objectives relevant to their respective three-pronged approach.

TABLE 3: Assigned Objective by Three-Pronged Approach

Guided Pathways

The placement of student success at the center of institutional operations by engaging students in their learning journey and ensuring that they get on, stay on and graduate from an academic pathway that facilitates personal and professional growth.

Objective I: Inform and elevate students' career planning efforts in addition to collecting baseline data on 1) alumni to learn more about their post-graduate placement, work experience, employment trends, and graduate school pursuits and 2) high-need career fields in specific states and regions of the country and the institutions' placement of graduates in specific fields.

Objective II: Establish stronger connections between campus career services, local partners, and national employers, which has the aim of increasing job placement within a year of graduation for HBCU and PBI alumni.

Objective III: Align majors, coursework, and co-curricular activities with workforce needs, industry expectations, and high-demand growth fields.

Objective VII: Improve overall operational performance by building staff capacity, procuring new technology, and improving access to external career service experts who train and/or consult on new and innovative ways to increase the post-graduate employment rate.

Curricular Enhancements

A collaborative redesign of current curricula focused on streamlining course and program offerings and embedding 21st-century competencies in students' learning outcomes.

Objective IV: Identify and establish clearly defined professional pathways to the highest-need career fields in the institution's region, including, but not limited to, aligning majors and curricula.

Integrated Co-Curricular Engagement

Integration of learning activities from outside the classroom with coursework that increases students' skill development and competencies..

Objective V: Create intentional, strategic, and comprehensive personal and career development pathways for students. These pathways begin when they arrive on campus and involve integrating career preparation into curricula and co-curricular programming.

Objective VI: Develop and implement effective training programs to foster employment skills in students that allow them to be better prepared to enter the world of work immediately.

Guided Pathways

The placement of student success at the center of institutional operations is imperative. This is accomplished by engaging students in their learning journey and ensuring they get on, stay on, and graduate from an academic pathway that facilitates personal and professional growth.

Each Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) institution centered student success within its institutional practices by establishing innovative programs and processes that assisted students in multiple ways. Throughout the initiative, institutions established career planning baseline data regarding students' post-graduate placements (Objective I), strengthened their connections with local partners and national employers (Objective II), and aligned their curricular and co-curricular needs to prepare students for the 21st-century workforce (Objective III).

In addition, many institutions enhanced the operational capacity of their career services departments, which positively impacted their ability to support students and find innovative ways to increase post-graduate outcomes (Objective VII).

Using and incorporating data was essential in measuring the goals and outcomes of the CPI grant. Each institution established a data collection process to ensure their programs, practices, and initiatives resulted in the proliferation of Black college graduates who are prepared for the 21st-century workforce. The key to establishing the data processes was purchasing Student Success Management Systems (SSMS) to streamline the data collection process for various student success entities. Notable SSMS software purchased amongst the institutions were EAB Navigate, Purple Briefcase, and Handshake.
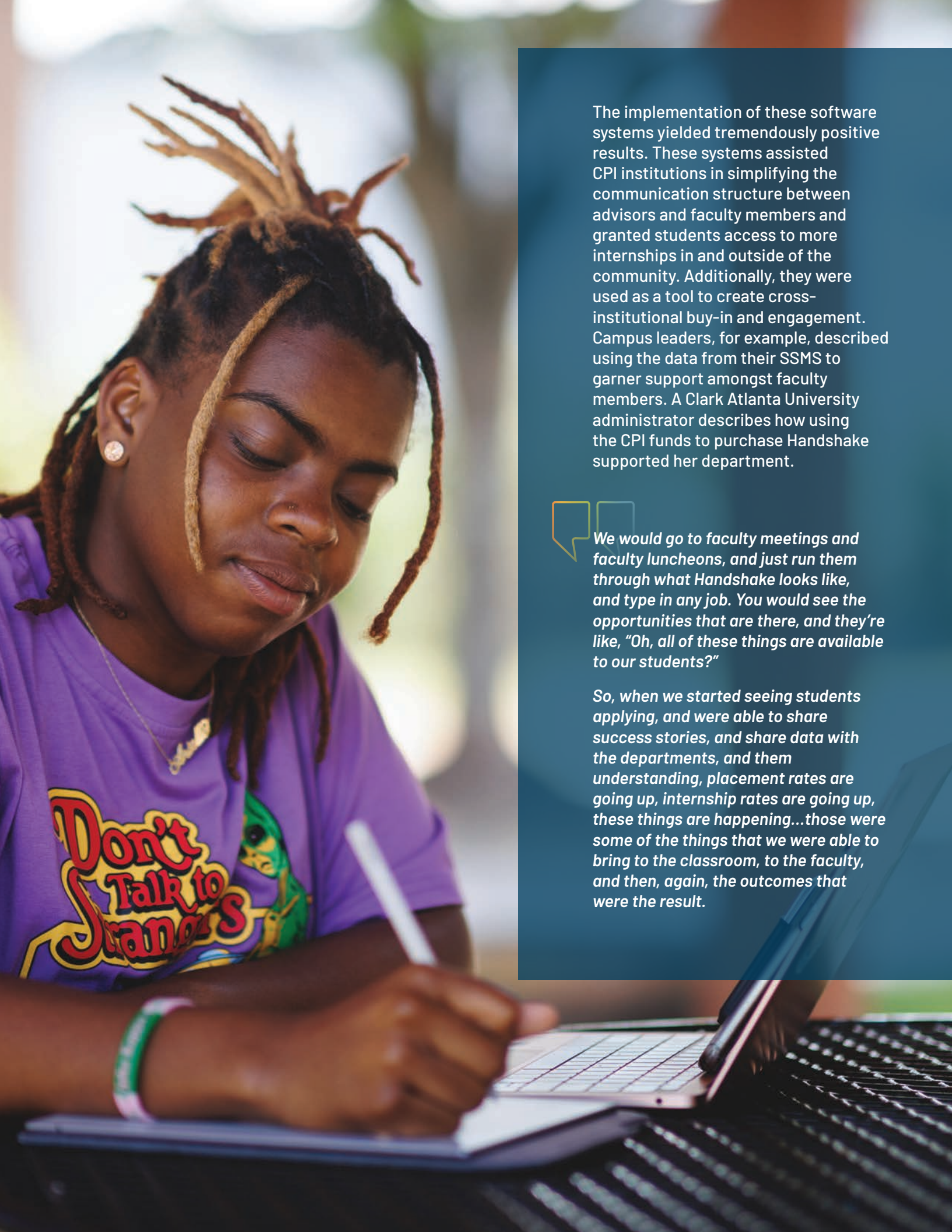
The implementation of these software systems yielded tremendously positive results. These systems assisted CPI institutions in simplifying the communication structure between advisors and faculty members and granted students access to more internships in and outside of the community. Additionally, they were used as a tool to create cross-institutional buy-in and engagement. Campus leaders, for example, described using the data from their SSMS to garner support amongst faculty members. A Clark Atlanta University administrator describes how using the CPI funds to purchase Handshake supported her department.

We would go to faculty meetings and faculty luncheons, and just run them through what Handshake looks like, and type in any job. You would see the opportunities that are there, and they're like, "Oh, all of these things are available to our students?"

So, when we started seeing students applying, and were able to share success stories, and share data with the departments, and them understanding, placement rates are going up, internship rates are going up, these things are happening...those were some of the things that we were able to bring to the classroom, to the faculty, and then, again, the outcomes that were the result.

With the support of the grant, leveraging data has assisted these institutions in gaining critical insight into the post-graduate experience. Institutions such as Morgan State University and Clark Atlanta University created exit surveys for graduating seniors to help gauge their next steps post-graduation and establish alumni connections. This data was subsequently shared across departments and helped inform critical institutional decisions.

The University of West Alabama (UWA), a Predominantly Black Institution, is another noteworthy institution using data to track its alumni. UWA used funds to administer the NACE First Destination Survey to track their graduates. The data from this tool has helped improve their current curriculum based on employer needs and better prepare their students for graduate programs and the workforce.

Understanding student career needs through data and post-graduate outcomes made institutions very intentional about establishing fruitful relationships with local and national employers. Regardless of rural or urban locale, institutions created innovative programs and initiatives to strengthen their employer relationships and create pipelines for critical jobs in their communities. One notable partnership is the South Carolina Cluster.

Recognizing the rurality of their institutions and its ability to hinder their students' access to career opportunities, the South Carolina Cluster, a partnership between Benedict College, Voorhees

College (now University), and Claflin University, was established. This partnership is affectionately known as the Carolina Cluster, which is designed to advance region-wide academic programs, student internships, and industry partnerships to address the workforce needs of South Carolina.

Notable programs established through this partnership were the creation of the Executive Advisory Council and the HBCU Career Talent Showcase. Forty-one executive-level leaders from various industries assembled the Executive Advisory Council to provide insight into the workforce needs of their South Carolina region. The information garnered from the council was used to enhance the institutions' curriculum to scale career readiness skills, establish a communication pipeline between the institutions and the industries, and provide advice and guidance on the institution's student workforce competencies and employability. This was done with the aim of improving recruitment and job placement prospects.

Another notable program is Tennessee State University's (TSU) partnership with JCPenney, which improved students' marketability through the Suit Up! event. For this event, the local JCPenney closed the store to allow TSU students to shop for business and interview attire at a discounted rate. In addition to shopping, students attended panel discussions led by JCPenney corporate leaders and TSU alumni as they addressed various career development topics.

Strong relationships with employers guided institutions in implementing various strategies to align their curricular and co-curricular needs for the 21st-century workforce. In fact, 79% of CPI institutions (i.e., 19 out of 24) implemented a version of Career Maps from 2017-18 until 2021-22. Institutions were able to improve student pathways by embedding certifications in their curriculum, reducing general education requirements, and restructuring freshmen and sophomore seminar courses. Two institutions that stood out in this respect were Oakwood University and Tougaloo College.

Oakwood University enhanced the competitiveness of its students by embedding workplace certification courses in the curriculum. Funds from the CPI grant enabled students to obtain various certifications, including First-Aid, Essential to Corrective Exercises, and CITI certifications, for little to no cost. The results from this program have been tremendous, as Oakwood University students have earned over 13,000 certificates in multiple subject areas. Recognizing the financial needs of its student demographic, Oakwood University created the Oakwood University Care Advancement and Readiness Education (C.A.R.E.) program.

OU C.A.R.E. is a micro-internship program whose goals were to reduce four-year education debt by 68% and provide career-oriented, service-learning and work internship experience based on the student's major. Through this program, first-year students are exposed to employers, graduate programs, and entrepreneurial education that will result in them graduating in four years with $10,000 or less in personal student debt, which is significantly lower than the average Oakwood University student and the average American college student debt.

Tougaloo College reduced its general education requirements to allow students to earn a certification, pursue a minor, and engage in interdisciplinary courses led by faculty members from different disciplines. The benefits of Tougaloo College's interdisciplinary courses were critical to the initiative. The faculty found it supported more career exploration, promoted a greater appreciation for other majors, and enhanced vital critical thinking skills for the students.

I think one of the biggest things that I've seen from my majors and non-majors who have taken general education is an appreciation for other majors.

Sometimes you get so caught in your own major. For biology majors, you may fail to appreciate the depth and breadth of readings that psychology majors have to do or the type of critical analysis that humanity majors have to do. I think that helps to give an appreciation for other majors. I think one of the things that I have also observed is that it stretches their ability to think critically.

— Tougaloo Faculty Member

Funds from the grant were also essential in increasing institutions' career services, human capital, and thus, operational capacity. Clark Atlanta University hired an additional staff member, for example, to assist the director in strengthening the Career Services department's relationship with faculty. A CAU administrator emphasized this point:

I had an additional person in my office; I wasn't stuck at my desk. I could go to these different meetings. I could go to classrooms. I could go and be around campus, engage with people, show my face, and build those relationships authentically. I think that was definitely helpful, ...to not just have to be at my desk all day and stuck answering phones and emails.

This quote reveals how the grant was instrumental in providing CAU leadership with the time needed to establish cross-departmental relationships between academic and student affairs. The relationships cultivated amongst these departments resulted in the Career Services department actively participating in the university Council of Dean's meetings. One staff member recounted the refreshing changes that were made because of this shift in availability due to scaled human resources:

I've always had a seat at the Council of Deans meeting where I go in and talk about student initiatives. However, one thing that changed immediately is career and professional development is now a placeholder in discussions on a bi-weekly basis. That was something that was never there before. We had the attention of the deans that we did not have before.

It's one thing to send an email or a flyer electronically to a dean, but it's a different thing to have a person do an actual presentation, and get that dean to ask questions, and then have that dean share information with the department chairs, with the faculty, and that type of thing.

The importance of departmental collaboration amongst academic affairs and student affairs was illuminated across all the institutions. Another example is Xavier University of Louisiana (XULA) experiencing tremendous success in cross-collaboration by using grant funds to extend their career development services by embedding career services advisors in the Norman C. Francis Building and the Xavier South academic buildings. The close connections cultivated with faculty and students resulted in career opportunities that were more closely aligned with students' majors, interests, and goals. A XULA student described the experience below,

I attend[ed] the Career Expo my freshman year, and I saw something that I honestly hadn't seen before. There was a whole section of booths for education majors. They wanted a whole bunch of teaching fellows for each program. And they were there to ask me what my plans were after college.

How I wanted to complete my residency and all those things. But usually, when I had gone to career fairs previously, they were looking for the science majors and things like that. So, when I went there and saw that there were so many options for education, I was like, "This is new. This is interesting." And after that, I started to do research on my own about those teaching fellows.

One innovative result of increased operational capacity was institutions' use of funding for fortifying their alumni connections and enhancing their alumni programs and activities, bringing the guided pathways work full circle. On average, 79% of CPI institutions (i.e., 19 out of 24) implemented an intervention that involved alumni student pairing from 2017-18 until 2021-22. One notable program is Oakwood University's Alumni 360 program. Grant funds were used to strengthen Oakwood University's alumni engagement with its current student population.

Oakwood University alumni return to their *alma mater* to provide career readiness advising, mentoring, and job placement opportunities to current students. In addition, this institution added an alumni experience feature to the Oakwood University app for alumni to post career and job shadowing opportunities.

Since the launch of the Oakwood Alumni 360 initiative in the spring of 2019, there have been a total of 113 career readiness events with over 3,557 participants, which included 2,690 students and 867 alumni. This program has made current students view alumni as an information source on careers. One student characterized OU's alumni as *"very helpful in sending us [the students] internships and telling us about how life is after college for the job field. Having their input on top of our advisor is good."*

Curricular Enhancements

A collaborative redesign of current curricula to streamline course and program offerings and embed 21st-century competencies in students' learning outcomes.

Institutions were asked to identify and establish clearly defined professional pathways to the highest-need career fields in their region, including, but not limited to, aligning majors and curricula (Objective IV). Ultimately, they were tasked with investing in the collaborative redesign of current curricula to streamline course and program offerings. In addition, they were charged with embedding 21st-century competencies in students' learning outcomes.

One of the ways institutions established or deepened connections between curricula and careers was by launching a business advisory board to advise institutions on efforts to create pathways toward relevant industries and to advance alignment with workforce demands. On average, 83% of CPI institutions implemented a Business Advisory Board from 2017-18 until 2021-22.

Among the schools that elected to form a board, Benedict College, Claflin University, Fayetteville State University, Jarvis Christian College, Oakwood University, Rust College, Tennessee State University, Tougaloo College, University of West Alabama, Voorhees University, and Xavier University of Louisiana reported having moderate to a high level of engagement with their respective advisory board.

At Jarvis Christian College, for example, the faculty and administration established a faculty employer advisory board, which included 30 companies and resulted in an expansion of career opportunities for students. The companies selected cater to all the areas of study currently available for students, such as Oncor Electric Delivery and STEM-related opportunities. The employer advisory board has assisted faculty members and the administration in introducing students to career services earlier in their academic experience.

Such exposure offers various career pathways to students through programming and other opportunities. As a result, students expressed feeling more prepared for the various career environments they might encounter.

For many institutions, there was an emphasis on aligning 21st-century workplace skills with the curriculum in more traditional ways. Dillard University, Fayetteville State University, Jarvis Christian College, Morehouse College, Rust College, Talladega College, Tennessee State University, and Tougaloo College stood out in their efforts to do so.

Institutions used tools such as evaluations to ensure they were aligning curriculum to industry needs. On average, 83% of CPI institutions (i.e., 20 out of 24) used industry-aligned outcomes and evaluations from 2017-18 until 2021-22. However, the most common aspect of success that faculty and administrators noted across the institutions within the Curricular Enhancement prong was the incorporation of workplace skill development into the curriculum.

On average, 88% of CPI institutions (i.e., 21 out of 24) worked on integrating soft skills into their curriculum from 2017-18 until 2021-22. This emphasis improved the overall quality of academics at various institutions. Voorhees University, for example, implemented the Career Pathways Seminar. This course is for students of all levels and addresses the hard and soft skills necessary to be successful in any career field. It has allowed for a connection between career services and students' core curriculum. One respondent from Voorhees University described it as,

Every course [and] every classification has a Career Pathways Seminar... That's where a lot of the connecting of the dots between their core curriculum and their majors and the different competencies related to career pathways in their chosen areas are connected. So, CPI is integrated throughout the entire curriculum in several ways.

One is we're very proud that every major has where there's not just a program of study, but then there are implications for the different opportunities they're going to have in their majors. That is all very clearly delineated and laid out... CPI is integrated into the institution. No new programs are developed without considering the career opportunities this particular major can create.

Faculty and administrators outlined some steps institutions took that contributed to this success and noted that the funds received from CPI were instrumental in bringing about curriculum changes. Institutions evaluated their teaching strategies and found methods for improving classroom instruction because of the CPI presence on campus. Meanwhile, other institutions focused on providing faculty support and professional development to bring curricular improvements.

Recognizing the importance of data science, Spelman College partnered with National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago to train their faculty on incorporating data science into their curriculum. This training resulted in the creation of two courses, Data Science for Economics and Management and Data Science for Social Sciences, for their students. The success of this program has been tremendous and has resulted in expanding data science to the humanities departments at Spelman: two digital humanities courses were created, with 24 faculty participating and creating the various modules of the course.

The participating institutions also incorporated career web services or created an online presence for career services, which aligned the career services department, students, recruiters, and the curriculum. On average, 83% of CPI institutions (i.e., 20 out of 24) implemented some form of blended learning from 2017-18 until 2021-22. Furthermore, 79% of CPI institutions (i.e., 19 out of 24) implemented digital courseware from 2017-18 until 2021-22. At Benedict College, one staff member reflected on measures they instituted to expose students to potential employers through curriculum.
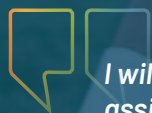
I will refer back to the professional pathways course that we had implemented and one of the assignments is [purple briefcase engagement]. Students have to actually upload a profile picture into their purple briefcase account. They have to complete or add up to three tiles. It's supposed to be like their resume, so you look at them. It's like certain background information. They have their major and GPA. It's certain things that stand out to you.

At the minimum, we know they are introduced to the purple briefcase as freshmen…We ask them to continue to use it. As they build their profile and get to their junior and senior year, colleges or potential employers look at their information, make sure it looks professional, the way they want it to look or the way they want it to be presented as they're looking for a job or an internship or whatever it is.

Finally, some changes were implemented to assist students even further by providing them with opportunities to choose what is best for them based on exploration opportunities and information provided by their institution. On average, 75% of CPI institutions (i.e., 18 out of 24) implemented some form of market informatics from 2017-18 until 2021-22.

This allowed students to have career information directly available while also receiving information about programs and opportunities offered across campus. On average, about 88% of other institutions implemented project-based learning opportunities from 2017-18 until 2021-22. Among those schools were Clark Atlanta University, Fayetteville State University, Fisk University, Morehouse College, Oakwood University, Rust College, Talladega College, Tennessee State University, and University of West Alabama, all of which stood out in their commitment toward project-based learning throughout the grant cycle.

At Xavier University of Louisiana, for example, the career services department created the Revolutionary Lives project, where students participated in a project-based learning activity that exposed them to Latin American history. The project also supported students in developing soft skills they can use along any career pathway. A faculty member described the experience that students participated in as follows.

...For the Revolutionary Lives Project, each student had to assume the identity of a historical character in one of three Latin American revolutions, Haiti, Mexico, or Cuba... And so there, all these skills were embedded in different parts of that class and parts of the project.

This project was a result of a push for further implementation of career development skills into courses and curricula.

Integrated Co-Curricular Engagement

Integration of learning activities from outside the classroom with coursework that increases students' skill development and competencies.

Career Pathways Initiative institutions enhanced students' skill development and competencies by creating intentional, strategic, and comprehensive personal and career development pathways for students. Institutions ensured these services began at matriculation by integrating career preparation into curricula and co-curricular programming (Objective V). They also developed and implemented effective training programs to foster employment skills in students that allow them to be better prepared to enter the workforce successfully after graduation (Objective VI).

The grant funds were essential in creating and clarifying strategic educational pathways for students and improving the curriculum (Objective V). Claflin University, for example, supported clarifying educational pathways for students and improved the curriculum of the first- and second-year courses. This was done to streamline the curriculum and make the content more cohesive. Proactive and appreciative advising approaches were developed to establish and deepen student-advisor relationships. These approaches enabled Claflin University to effectively assist students with developing an education and action plan.

Claflin also created a portal where students can track their engagement with academic programs and experiential learning. Furthermore, students and academic departments were provided with clear processes for monitoring and tracking experiential learning activities (e.g., student research, co-curricular transcripts, capstone projects, internships/co-ops, service-learning, and more). Experiential learning processes were also disseminated to the campus community through multimedia communications. With the ambition of improving the curriculum, Claflin University has successfully embedded workforce competencies such as analytical and computational skills in all its academic programs.

Creating and clarifying educational pathways for students was emphasized across all the institutions. For instance, by using grant funds, Fisk University formed visualization balance sheets and developed color-coded maps to aid students in tracking their progress through the institution. These balance sheets and maps proved to be very beneficial, as described by Fisk University staff.

One of the most valuable aspects of the CPI was the formation of our balance sheets. And even though we have a curriculum map, it wasn't brought to a full visualization with the students until we started to [design] these maps.

Working with faculty across the institution, we've developed these color-coded maps, allowing the students to track their progression through the institution. In the event that anything happens to any faculty member, they will not have a lapse in knowledge about the courses they have to take for the four years they have been at the institution.

A student also emphasized the benefits of these maps:

After major maps, it was a lot better because you could look at the classes you have taken and what else you needed to take to ensure you're on track.

Institutions intentionally developed and implemented various comprehensive career development pathways for students that cater to the plethora of student career goals. The CPI initiative revealed a pattern across institutions: career pathways begin when students arrive on campus and institutions integrate career preparation into curricula and co-curricular programming.

Eighty-eight percent of CPI institutions (i.e., 21 out of 24) implemented experiential learning opportunities or capstone projects from 2017-18 until 2021-22. Institutions allowed students to learn by doing, through experience, and by pursuing independent research on problems of their choice. Fayetteville State University, Claflin University, Benedict College, Morehouse College, Rust College, Talladega College, and Tennessee State University leveraged their students' participation in experiential learning. Rust College, for example, set up on-campus recruitment events and established numerous partnerships with employers to provide students with internship opportunities.

They arranged company campus visits, for example, that allowed students to interact with various companies on a personal level. In addition, 71% of CPI institutions (i.e., 17 out of 24) implemented micro-internships from 2017-18 until 2021-22. There was a 10% increase in the average level of participation in the 2021-22 academic year, the final year of CPI, compared to the 2017-18 academic year. Meanwhile, LeMoyne-Owen College, Morgan State University, Oakwood University, Tennessee State University, Spelman College, and Talladega College prioritized their focus on their students' micro-internship participation.

Tennessee State University (TSU) has provided networking opportunities, increased informational interviews, and modified the Freshman Orientation course to inform new students about the resources at the Career Development Center and the multitude of electronic resources (e.g., Handshake) available. These efforts were carried out so students were encouraged to actively consider internship opportunities. TSU has also participated in the "College Internship Study: A Longitudinal Mixed Methods Study Exploring the Impacts of College Internships on Student Outcomes at TSU."

This study provided their school with new data and related insights while confirming previously held data points that alluded to the existing barriers TSU's student body had in securing internships. The institution shared this and other relevant data with the Career Development Center in supporting their efforts to develop and expand an internship tracking system.

In addition to the efforts described above, 83% of the CPI institutions (i.e., 20 out of 24) implemented service-learning opportunities, and 50% of CPI institutions (i.e., 12 out of 24) increased student access to apprenticeships and co-curricular transcript opportunities from 2017-18 until 2021-22. Institutions combined learning objectives with community service, promoted on-the-job-training and provided access to the accompanying coursework necessary for success on those jobs. Institutions also advanced the practice of including relevant accomplishments outside the classroom on academic transcripts, allowing students to present all of their accomplishments to employers.

Institutional data metrics also revealed that the CPI cohort experienced growth in high-impact areas that integrate career preparation with curricula and co-curricular programming. Integrating co-curricular engagement in these high-impact areas (i.e., service-learning, internships, and research participation) involved increasing student access to opportunities that would develop them along their career pathways.

Overall, there was a 40% increase in the median number of internships completed, a 100% increase in median student research participation, and a 184% increase in median service-learning participation between the baseline years (2014-15 to 2016-17) and the post-pandemic implementation year/last grant year (2021-22).

Morehouse College, Oakwood University, Talladega College, Florida Memorial University, Benedict College, Xavier University of Louisiana, Tougaloo College, and Norfolk State University were among the institutions that experienced significant growth in these high-impact areas. For instance, Morehouse College reported a 2,120% growth in service-learning participation (80 to 1,176 participants) between the baseline period and the final grant year. As another example, Norfolk State University experienced a 1,186% growth in students' research participation (7 to 90 participants) between the baseline period and the final grant year.

The grant funds were also essential in developing and implementing effective training programs to foster employment skills in students. This allows students to be better prepared to immediately enter the workforce (Objective VI).

The faculty and administrators across the institutions noted that the most common success with integrating co-curricular engagement opportunities was increased student marketability and the availability of opportunities for students to increase their satisfaction with their experience.

Various opportunities were offered at different institutions, including internships, conferences, company visits, and experiential learning. Florida Memorial University (FMU), for example, developed a relationship with the Talent Development Network (TDN), which was done to increase paid internship opportunities in Miami Dade County.

This network provided online and in-person workshops for FMU students. In addition, TDN selected seven FMU students for its mentorship program called "CEO for a Day." Institutions also provided professional development opportunities through resume building, interview prepping, and crafting elevator pitches. Additionally, campus events at all institutions (e.g., the Suit Up! event) were highly regarded by all. Many deemed them a great opportunity to teach the importance of a professional appearance and initiate conversations about career planning.

Another indicator of the CPI institutions' efforts in developing and implementing effective training programs to foster students' employment skills is the execution of various intervention programs. On average, 88% of CPI institutions (i.e., 21 out of 24) implemented interview training, networking opportunities, and resume/portfolio development from 2017-18 until 2021-22.

Morehouse College, for example, used Portfolium, an e-portfolio network that enables students to showcase skills employers may desire through writing assignments, creative visual projects, coding samples, and more. Additionally, 71% of CPI institutions (i.e., 17 out of 24) implemented some form of alternative credentials from 2017-18 until 2021-22. Alternative credentials include non-degree awards such as badges, nanodegrees, micromasters, and certificates.

There was a 42% increase in the average level of student participation and a 20% increase in the number of institutions implementing alternative credentials during the 2021-22 academic year (final year of CPI) compared to the 2017-18 academic year. Florida Memorial University, for example, offered LinkedIn Learning, which provides access to the learning suite of LinkedIn to deliver career readiness micro-credentials. LinkedIn Learning also provided the foundation of FMU's e-Badge curriculum.
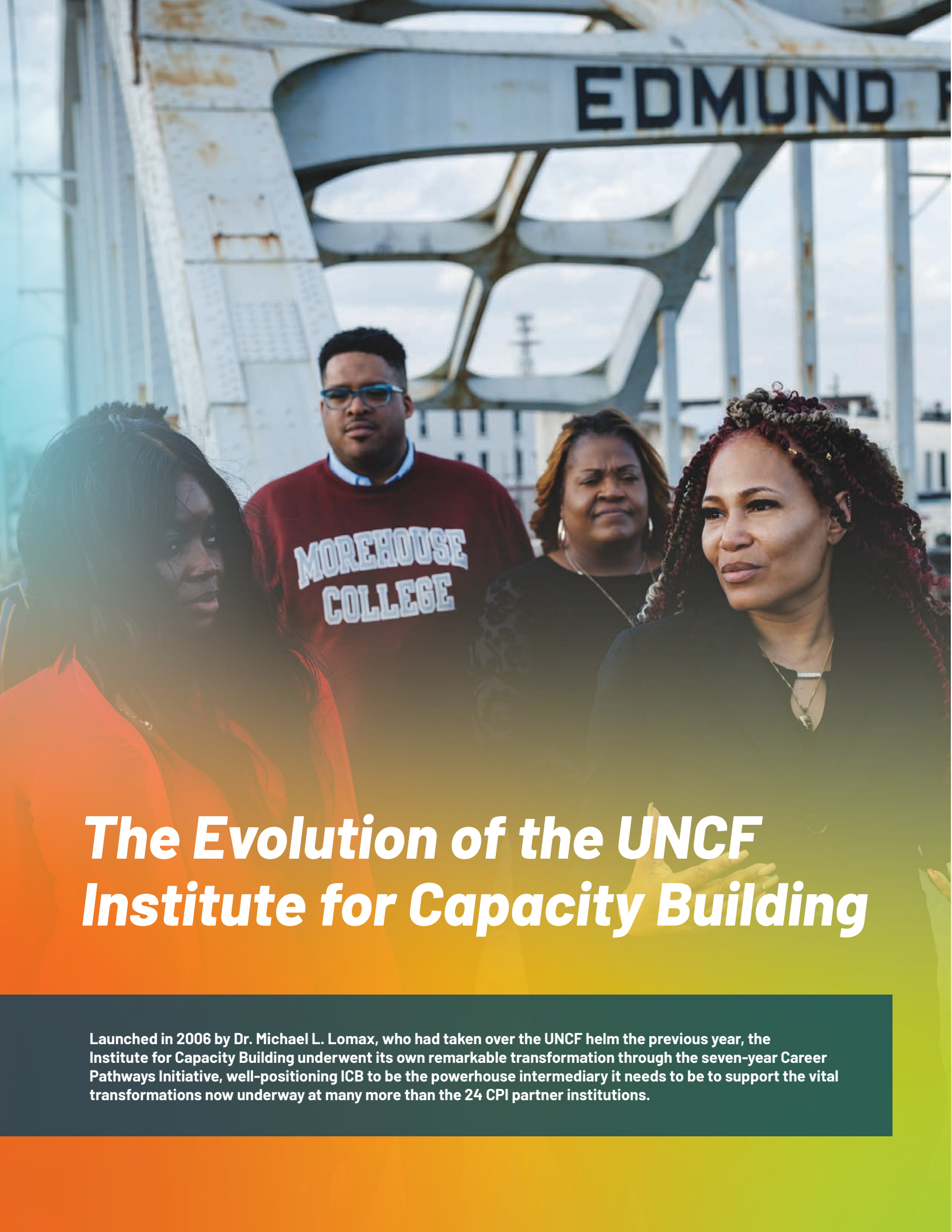
The Evolution of the UNCF Institute for Capacity Building

Launched in 2006 by Dr. Michael L. Lomax, who had taken over the UNCF helm the previous year, the Institute for Capacity Building underwent its own remarkable transformation through the seven-year Career Pathways Initiative, well-positioning ICB to be the powerhouse intermediary it needs to be to support the vital transformations now underway at many more than the 24 CPI partner institutions.

Transformation Phases

Phase 1: 2006-2015
UNCF CEO Michael Lomax launches ICB to teach best practices, develop human capital, invest in system supports, and improve operations.

Phase 2: 2016-2019
ICB extends reach and deepens impact supporting Career Pathways Initiatives at 24 institutions with guided pathways, curricular enhancements, and co-curricular engagement.

Phase 3: 2019-2023
ICB advances institutional transformation, partnering now with 42 Black colleges and universities.

Phase 4: 2024-2034
ICB powers the new era for Black colleges and universities, expanding reach to all 102 HBCUs and 64 PBIs, driving breakthrough outcomes for students, institutions and communities. Students anywhere can now tap into this educational excellence through HBCUv.

The Career Pathways Initiative played a pivotal role in both the development and execution of our strategic plans, its impact shaping virtually all aspects of the Institute for Capacity Building.

Targeted Outcomes

In partnering with 24 institutions to create new career pathways to meaningful careers for graduates of Black colleges and universities through this initiative, it became clear we had to expand our targeted outcomes.

Broadly and strategically referred to as INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION, target outcomes as defined by partner colleges and universities now include digital solutions, knowledge management, fundraising goals, financial management, and ongoing accreditation.

Theory of Change

The new set of targeted outcomes required ICB to revise its theory of change through an intensive business-planning process that was supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Where CPI focused on the three-prong institution-led intervention strategies (guided pathways, curricular enhancements, and integrated co-curricular enhancements), our new theory of change for student success, institutional resilience, generational-poverty disruption, racial-justice equity, and remediation of systemic racism through the transformation of Black colleges and universities calls for six steps:

1. **Identify partner institutions** committed to transforming the lives of marginalized students.

2. **Develop an impact strategy for each partner institution**, maximizing institutional value and plan for long-term resilience and sustainability.

3. **Support institutional priorities**, addressing inefficiencies and bolstering accelerators.

4. **Build institutional capacity**, investing in capabilities to support sustainable transformation.

5. **Co-create, learn, and iterate to promote knowledge sharing**, ensuring partners benefit individually and collectively.

6. **Disrupt generational poverty**, building promising, scalable practices that address systemic educational issues for Black and other underrepresented students.

CPI is a catalyst for this in that now [Funders] are approaching us based on our institutional engagement strategy and are asking us to facilitate those types of engagements with institutions that they, of course, would like us to work with. But even with that, they're allowing us to address the institutions and make recommendations, and while they may have their priorities that they would like us to focus on, they still also are incorporating our work and our theory of change with these institutions. So, I think it's very important to know that we are also shifting the mindset of our donors to support institutions in the way that is most beneficial to the institution.

–ICB Leadership Member 2

What We Do

To continuously activate our theory of change on institutional transformation, we focus on three simple, but profound objectives:

Build capacity. Prioritize people, processes and technologies required for providing high-quality educational experiences.

Ensure sustainability. Identify sponsored, grant-funded or revenue-generating activities.

Advance collective learning. Insist on network-wide sharing of knowledge at scale.

Our Approach

Through the implementation of the CPI, we developed a fundamental belief that, for institutional transformation to occur, our team must be both proactive and intrusive.

Our intrusiveness sometimes made our stakeholders uncomfortable, because they had to tell us the good, the bad, and the ugly; however, to be an effective support, we knew we had to understand the gaps, roadblocks, and bottlenecks. Only then could we be proactive.

For far too long, we have been reactionary to the needs of our institutions. We determined that we needed to get in front of our institutional challenges, ideate avenues to solve those issues, develop initiatives, and deliver those initiatives through intentional execution of the work.

From the beginning of our engagement, we asked institutions to trust us. It took us a long time to build to the level of trust and transparency needed to work with our institutions effectively; during the last couple of years, we have started seeing the exciting results.

Our institutions have embraced the network approach and willingly share their promising practices and lessons learned with each other. Not only are they sharing this information, but they are also sharing their pain points and asking for each other's support.
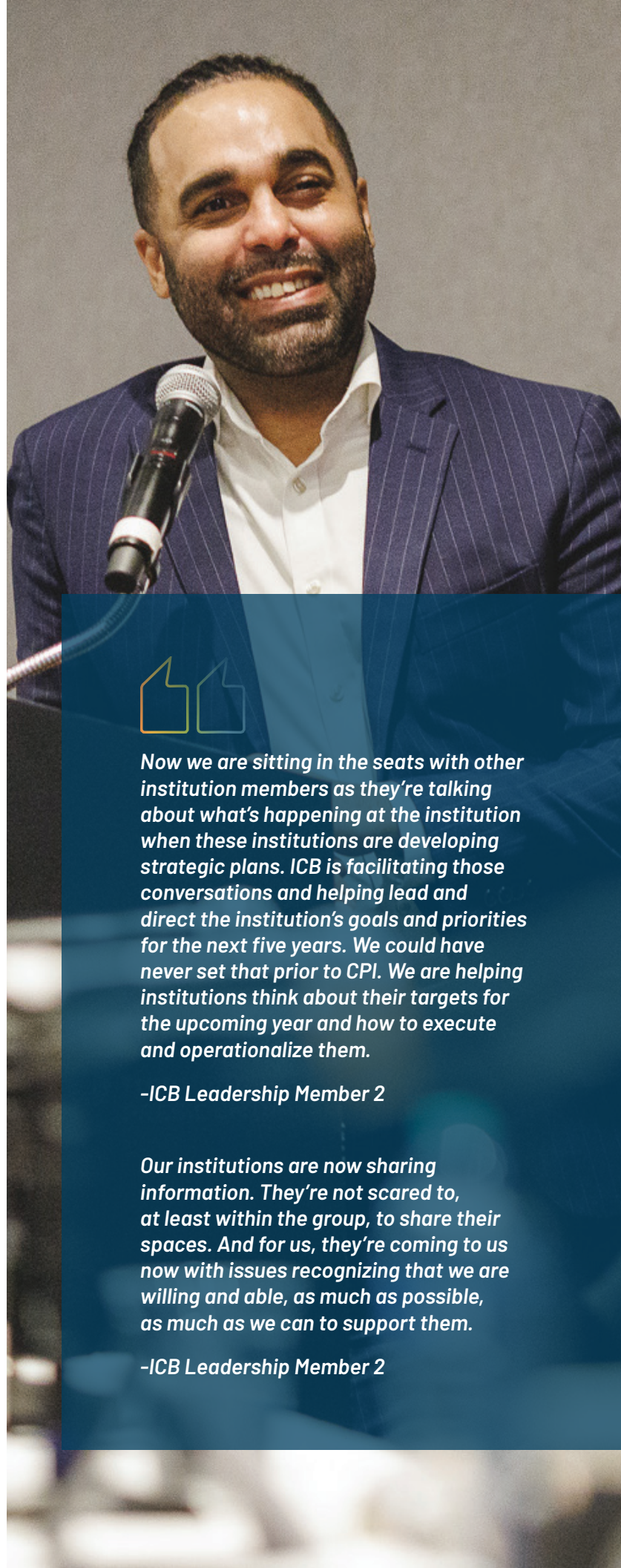
> *Now we are sitting in the seats with other institution members as they're talking about what's happening at the institution when these institutions are developing strategic plans. ICB is facilitating those conversations and helping lead and direct the institution's goals and priorities for the next five years. We could have never set that prior to CPI. We are helping institutions think about their targets for the upcoming year and how to execute and operationalize them.*
>
> *–ICB Leadership Member 2*

> *Our institutions are now sharing information. They're not scared to, at least within the group, to share their spaces. And for us, they're coming to us now with issues recognizing that we are willing and able, as much as possible, as much as we can to support them.*
>
> *–ICB Leadership Member 2*

The pro-trusive approach that characterized the CPI (one where each party is equally proactive and intrusive in reaching shared goals) served as a perfect precursor to an emotional intelligence framework that we now apply to all our institutional transformation efforts.

We understand that facilitating our institutions in uncomfortable spaces alone is not sufficient. We recognize the need to sit in a place of discernment and emotional intelligence. Most institutional stakeholders manage multiple titles and responsibilities, which leads invariably to working with a different set of abilities, needs, and contexts for each institution. By applying the ACT (Authentic, Compassionate, and Transparent) Rules of Engagement emotional intelligence framework, we ensure we uncover, consider, and realize the potential opportunities of our institutional partners.

Our ACT (Authentic, Compassionate, and Transparent) Rules of Engagement

We are AUTHENTIC. We are open to building humanity and decreasing power dynamics, understanding rapport, and creating personal connections.

We are COMPASSIONATE. We can discern and truly see the needs of the stakeholder to support them; closely listening both to what is being said and not being said.

We are TRANSPARENT. We exude and expect honesty and humility in order to help our partner institutions in all facets.

I think, prior to CPI, there wasn't really a major Black college transformation initiative that I can think of in the way that everyone's moving towards this transformative change agenda today. And CPI was our way into those conversations.

So rather than just focus on career services, which much of the grant alluded to as the level of change that we could make to improve those student outcomes, we tried to take just a much more comprehensive approach and thereby allow our institutions to start aligning to where the field was and how the field talked about institutional improvement and transformation. $50 million gives you a platform on which to say those things.

–ICB Leadership Member 1

If you were to ask the donor, it would be the student success outcomes. How do we support our institutions to be more sustainable and develop processes at the institution that would help them to not always focus on the band-aids or fixing the little problems, but really think about what are some solutions that would be systematic or systemic throughout the institution?

It was our initiation into our holistic approach to institutional engagement. How do we look at each institution in its totality to support the students that they serve? For us, it was moving away from the way we piece-meal our support to helping the institution see what integration looks like and how to break down silos within the institution to ensure that everyone is talking to each other and really thinking about the co-dependencies that come with student success.

–ICB Leadership Member 2

The initial part of the grant was really ... developing relationships with institutions because there's a lot of that groundwork that needs to be laid to gain things like trust and just overall cooperation and buy-in. I think it was also us figuring out all of our processes, what worked, what was the best cadence of talking to institutions and delivering things.

Was it webinars? Did we need to be in person? And learning the nuances of some campuses in that importance was maintained throughout the rest of the execution as well. But I would say that it was extensive planning and learning, like an exploration of the campuses for what we called a continuous improvement on their end, but ours as well in terms of execution.

–ICB Leadership Member 3

Leadership, Size and Structure

From a team of four, ICB grew to a formidable division of 27 committed to delivering on the promise of Black higher education, including three elite presidents-in-residence to support ICB's executive leadership team. They are quickly growing to a team of 38 with the FTEs already approved by UNCF management.

Now serving 42 institutions, ICB is led by Edward Smith-Lewis, UNCF Vice President of Strategic Partnerships and Institutional Programs, a Morehouse College graduate (and current University of Pennsylvania School of Education doctoral candidate), and a well-respected HBCU content and management-consultant expert.

ICB is now structured as seven director-led "service verticals" with clear objectives: two focused on core capabilities of institutions (strategy development and transformation support), four on subject matter expertise (executive leadership, financial sustainability, digital solutions, and knowledge management) and one on back-office business operations.

We are exploring adding two service verticals: one focused on student success and another on content creators to expedite the telling of the HBCU narrative.

Institutional Transformation Team

The Transformation Support team leads the institutional transformation efforts by providing guidance, leadership, and thought partnership. We start by setting up a Transformation Office and helping institutions identify a Transformation Officer, empowered by institutional leadership to drive the transformation process and serve as a conduit for change between the institution's president and the relevant stakeholders.

Transformation Officers—change agents who are influential, relational, visionary, flexible, knowledgeable, and systematic—are often supported by a team composed of Sprint Leads, Initiative Owners, and their ICB Transformation Support Program Manager. Transformation Officers best suited for the role often also serve as chief of staff or special assistants to the President.

Sprint Leads are responsible for making decisions and executing a targeted effort over a specified short period. An institution's transformation team, for example, may tap the Vice President of Human Resources to lead a sprint focused on faculty development. Any one individual cannot serve as both the Transformation Officer and Sprint Lead.

Initiative Owners drive day-to-day implementation of targeted efforts, supporting further stakeholder engagement.

ICB Transformation Support Program Managers help connect institutional partners with one another, UNCF ICB, and other divisions and funders. They also provide best practices and external perspectives, sharing promising practices and lessons learned from Black higher education.

Transformation in Action

The lean transformation teams at each institution conduct functional sprints, build business cases, and execute on targeted initiatives. ICB implemented WAVE, a program management platform, to organize and track systematic implementation of institutional transformation efforts, including sprints and business cases.

Sprints help institutions focus on a specific problem, developing an institutionally-accepted approach to resolve the challenge or realize an opportunity. Sprints include:

- **Target Setting** to delineate the institution's goals and the president's priorities.

- **Stakeholder Interviews** to discover the institution's unique challenges and specific gaps.

- **Data Collection** to drive ideation through metrics.

- **Data Analytics** on the HBCU and higher education comparison landscape.

- **Ideation Journey** to determine the opportunities.

- **Initiative Agreement** to review and prioritize strategies and determine the feasibility.

Business Cases, once sprints have been determined, present the challenge or opportunity, detailing every component to successfully implement an initiative on campus. Business cases include:

- **Executive Summary**, a high-level description of the initiative.

- **Financial Impact**, a breakdown of the financial ask of the institution or funders and any projected revenue.

- **Milestones**, a list of all the steps to successful implementation.

- **Key Performance Indicators**, a list of outcome measures of success.

Transformation Implementation. The ICB Transformation Support team scheduled weekly meetings with the Institution Transformation Officers, ensuring the effective and timely implementation of agreed-upon activities, including financial expenditures. If an institution's transformation team experiences any roadblocks, gaps, or bottlenecks, they will work together with ICB to meet and overcome those challenges as they occur.

CPI is a catalyst for this in that now [Funders] are approaching us based on our institutional engagement strategy and are asking us to facilitate those types of engagements with institutions that they, of course, would like us to work with. But even with that, they're allowing us to address the institutions and make recommendations, and while they may have their priorities that they would like us to focus on, they still also are incorporating our work and our theory of change with these institutions. So, I think it's very important to know that we are also shifting the mindset of our donors to support institutions in the way that is most beneficial to the institution.

–ICB Leadership Member 2

The answer is there if you listen. I think we often come in with these preconceived solutions on how things should be solved, and it may not fit that particular institutional organization. But if you actually took time to listen and decipher what they're telling you, you can find the answer within.

–ICB Leadership Member 3

I just know we were better off the more we communicated with our institutions; the more communicative institutions were easier to support and better prepared for things that might come.

We were just in a better space, so I think that communication piece is really big. I also think, as time progressed, the tools we developed and created to help us communicate better with our institutions also grew. So, we were just more informed about certain things [and] weren't caught off guard. I think it also allowed us to be more proactive than reactive to what was going on at our institutions throughout the grant process.

–ICB Leadership Member 4

Operations

The Career Pathways Initiative was instrumental in helping ICB integrate new program management systems, including: a milestones tracker on institutional progress, making it possible to hold institutions more accountable; a playbook of tools, developed with the Monitor Institute by Deloitte, for institutions to support their communications with us and timely submissions; and an institutional engagement strategy that structured meeting cadence, risk mitigation, and UNCF responsibilities.

Structure and flexibility aren't diametrically opposed. You can have a program that structures your learning process, in this case, the three-pronged approach that allows institutions to operationalize that based on their context.

So really stepping away from telling institutions what to do and instead focusing on the principles of what you want to accomplish allows people to build a community around language. And, therefore, I think they align in similar processes and approaches, which helps accelerate change because you have more than one institution going at it alone. But it also allows for the institution to feel like they can still solve their real challenges while doing the work.

–ICB Leadership Member 1

Branding, Communications and UNITE 2023

Funding support from Lilly Endowment provided ICB with the opportunity to solidify its own branding and communications with clear articulations of our mission, vision, and belief statements and the launching of a new website (uncficb.org).

Our Mission. We partner with Black colleges and universities to propel our shared pursuit of student success, community advancement, and the fight for racial-justice equity.

World Vision. Black colleges and universities proudly see themselves and each other as strategic partners and business innovators in the pursuit of academic excellence, community liberation, racial equity, and social justice. HBCUs and PBIs are household names, recognized by all as gold standards for educational achievement and career advancement for a diverse student population.

Beliefs. We believe in: the incomparable value of Black colleges—historically, today, and in the future; investment in excluded populations can help redress centuries of trauma; racial justice and the remediation of systemic racism.

We also more than doubled attendance to UNITE, our annual gathering of Black higher education leaders.

We also integrated into our transformation support efforts intensive, all-day media shoots at our partner institutions, providing, to date, 12 Black colleges and universities with high-quality photography and videography to support their ongoing transformation efforts, including those tied to advancement and enrollment.

Future Plans and Sustainability

The CPI grant has assisted participating HBCUs and PBIs by fortifying career preparation within their organizational culture, curriculum, and co-curricular activities. The progress these institutions have made is significant and has been designed from the outset to be long-term, cultural changes in the way partner institutions think and perform.

Each of the schools created mechanisms to sustain their progress beyond the grant cycle by embedding career pathways into their strategic planning, developing, and maintaining formalized communication processes between academic and student affairs, and maintaining their local and national partnerships.

Recognizing the positive impact of cross-collaboration, the institutions have formalized communication processes between academic and student affairs. Institutions, for example, have established quarterly meetings between academic and student affairs. The impact of collaboration is now embedded into the fabric of these institutions in a very intentional manner. Moreover, each institution has prioritized the maintenance and development of partnerships with local and national corporations to continue the progress of Black students in meaningful careers post-graduation.

Universally, these cross-collaborations have resulted in more communication between departments, which helps create a more positive and engaging college student experience. By embedding career preparation into the curriculum development process, including such things as creating career development courses, interdisciplinary classes, career maps, and embedding certifications, each of the schools has made permanent changes to the way they approach career pathways.

For many institutions, this initiative was the catalyst for strengthening partnerships with local and national corporations. Partner institutions had the time and resources to establish business advisory boards, create high-need career pipelines and strengthen their alumni programming. The establishment of these co-curricular programs resulted in more students engaging in experiential learning, internships, research experiences, and professional development programs—changes we expect will continue well into the future.

The impact of the CPI grant has been tremendous, and will be ongoing. ICB continues to partner with 17 of the CPI 24 cohorts as a part of our institutional transformation work that also includes 25 additional schools, for a total of 42 Black colleges and universities. Though unfunded, we also continue to provide services, as well as access to the WAVE program management platform, to: Fayetteville State University, Morgan State University, Norfolk State University, University of West Alabama, Wilberforce University, and Xavier University of Louisiana.

We remain aware that all our institutions have experienced many decades of inequitable funding at the state and federal levels. Ongoing funding from the Lilly Endowment grant and other mission-aligned funding institutions will be imperative to maintain and build upon the progress made thus far.

We were able to leverage the $50 million support from Lilly Endowment Inc. to attract other donors. To name a few, Ascendium, Gates, JPMC, Capital One, and Blue Meridian Partners are new partners that have invested in UNCF ICB's institutional transformation at Black colleges and universities.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The impact of the Career Pathways Initiative has been undeniably transformative, reshaping the lives of students, institutional cultures, and our own understanding of capacity building.

While celebrating our collective success, however, we must also recognize that more catalytic, longer-term investments are needed to build on this momentum, pushing the higher-education field forward—just as Lilly Endowment did with CPI.

CPI, with its $50 million grant, provided a platform that gave us the permission to think beyond traditional boundaries and reimagine career pathways in a broader context. We were able to engage in larger conversations, sparking institutional transformation among our Black college and university partners and beyond.

Through a process of building trust and engaging in continuous improvement, we immersed ourselves in the organizational cultures of our partner institutions, working across departments and usual silos. This open approach gave us not only a seat at the table, but often a facilitation role in strategic opportunities and sensitive challenges. Prior to CPI, such engagement would have been difficult to imagine.

Furthermore, our institutional partners now embrace the spirit of sharing information among themselves, becoming models of networked best practices for higher education. Together, we are continuously affirming HBCU culture and the outsized impact of our institutions on American progress.

CPI, as the largest institutional support grant in UNCF history at the time of funding, has also taught us the breadth and depth of our role as catalysts for institutional transformation. Indeed, we have become a blueprint for intermediaries serving marginalized institutions and recognized as field experts. This new clarity of our value proposition has made us more appealing to prospective funders.

We must, however, acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead, particularly considering the recent Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action and ongoing racial inequities in funding.

As we reflect on our achievements with CPI, let us remain committed to building upon our successes, leveraging partnerships, and advocating for equitable resources.

Together, we can and must deliver on the promise of Black higher education.

Ed Smith-Lewis
UNCF Vice President of Strategic Partnerships and Institutional Programs

Appendix A:
Institutional Profiles

The Institutional Profiles provide brief information about the 24 institutions included in the Lilly Endowment Career Pathways Initiative grant. Under each institution, the website, geographical location, institutional history, recent available IPED enrollment numbers (2021), notable alumni, and highlighted programs are provided. The highlighted programs demonstrate the work that was done by each institution as part of the Lilly Endowment grant.

Despite the struggles and challenges each institution faced, they were able to demonstrate their strengths and provide services and opportunities for their students. Many institutions focused on re-evaluating, re-envisioning and re-designing their existing programs and services, while other institutions focused on providing new programs and services to their students. Additionally, institutions found new ways to provide highly desirable work skills for their students through online certificates, e-badges, research opportunities, micro-internships, and entrepreneurship programs.

Throughout the entire grant, institutions saw success in what they were doing and fully incorporated these programs into their academic curriculum.

Benedict College

Website: www.benedict.edu
Location: Columbia, SC
Enrollment (2021): 1,908

Founded in 1870, Benedict College is a private, liberal arts institution that offers more than 25 majors in the areas of business and entrepreneurship; science, engineering and technology; education, and human services; and the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Since its inception, Benedict has been "a power for good" for many, including its 17,000 alumni in South Carolina and across the United States. Benedict has received national recognition for its commitment to volunteerism, cutting-edge research, and cultivating social mobility among low-income students.

Program Highlights:

Before 2018, Benedict College (BC) was an open-enrollment college with slightly higher tuition than its peers. With the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant, BC established a holistic "Career Engagement Matrix" that ensures students and graduates leave the institution as career-ready as possible.

BC performed intensive research and found that students were not receiving the desired career skill sets and competencies from traditional academic experiences. As a result, they proposed a plan to improve the career-related training and placement of students by providing curricular and co-curricular scholarships designed to facilitate academic, social, cultural, and civic development.

BC established programs in highly desired fields such as Cybersecurity, Supply Chain Management and General Business, and Sports Management; it became accredited for its Environmental Engineering program (EEP) and even ventured into the new industry of Esports.

BC partnered with major corporations and partners such as BlueCross BlueShield, INROADS, Palmers, FBI, Dominion Energy, Mozilla, and Savannah River Nuclear Solutions to provide students with virtual and in-person student and professional development programs, internships, mentorships, and scholarships.

With these newly developed partnerships, BC saw a 27% increase in student participation in internships from 2017 to 2022. Similarly, with the addition of the new programs, BC saw a 13% increase in its retention rate during the same period.

BC has transitioned from the "traditional" career management services model to a more holistic, 100% student-focused engagement "consulting" service. This new model begins with deep conversations during freshman year to discover who the student is, determine their passions and strengths, and figure out how they connect with the world. These students are connected to an advisor, mentor, and coach who prepare

them to navigate a path of personal and career development during and after their college careers. This model focuses on personalized engagement with students and captures inputs from alumni and employers around desirable career-ready skills and knowledge that could be provided at Benedict. This transformation work occurs in the virtual space, as well.

In partnership with Aperion Global Institute (AGI), BC launched a series of online, non-credit courses designed to prepare professionals, entrepreneurs, small business owners, students, and lifelong learners for today's competitive and changing global market. Upon completing these courses, students receive professional development certifications in Cybersecurity, Digital Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Supply Chain Management, and more. These specialized professional certifications can help build sustainable and resilient career paths.

CPI programs and experiences equip students to articulate their employability skills by allowing them to use their voices at every stage of the experiential development framework, from investigation to demonstration. The experiential framework is designed to allow students to look at career development through the lens of their academic knowledge and to address skills utilizing framework components of investigation, preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration. Students are provided opportunities to give reflection and insight at various stages of their learning.
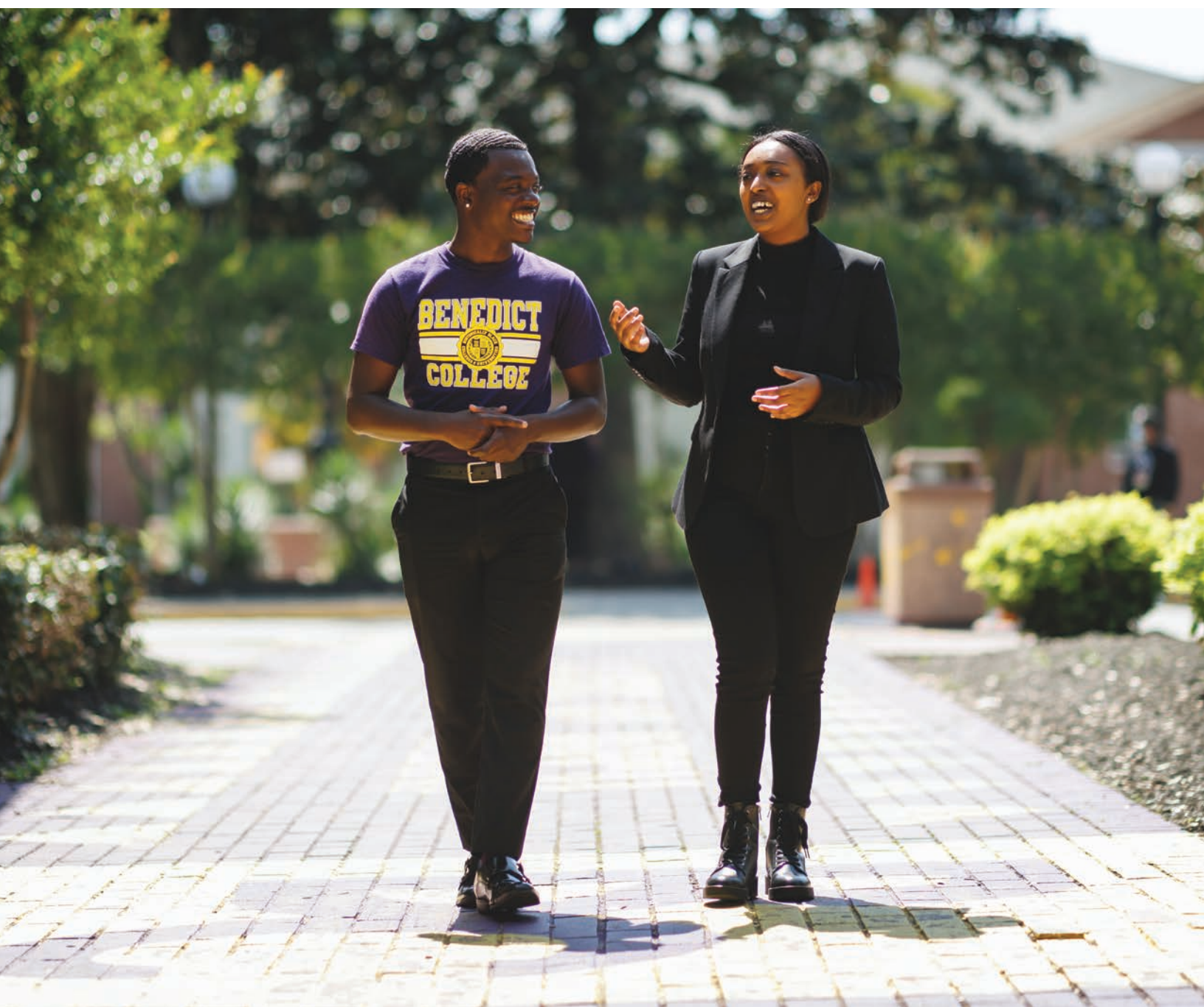
Claflin University

Website: www.claflin.edu
Location: Orangeburg, SC
Enrollment (2021): 1,866

One hundred and fifty years ago, Claflin broke down barriers in higher education, making it the first South Carolina-based university open to all, regardless of race. Today, Claflin continues to welcome exemplary students of all races and genders. They believe most leaders are made rather than born. They believe students with passion, integrity, and a willingness to work hard have an innate capacity to become visionary leaders. Claflin students are challenged to realize their full potential and leave with an unparalleled education that will serve them well in graduate school, their careers, and life.

Program Highlights:

The objectives of the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) at Claflin were to reduce the number of undecided first-year students, increase the number of students who enroll with a well-defined career goal, increase the percentage of students who graduate on time, and increase the percentage of graduates who secure employment in their fields within a year of graduation. To achieve this, Claflin created five key components to its career pathways: first-year academic advising, a career exploration portfolio, a career pathway plan, faculty academic advising, and career counseling.

Academic advising is crucial to a student's academic career because students arrive on campus with different backgrounds and needs. Therefore, first-year advisors at Claflin use theories of student development to promote student learning, development, and personal growth. To achieve this, Claflin's advisors employ proactive and appreciative approaches to help students develop educational goals and explore majors and careers related to their interests and abilities. As students advance through their academic journey, their progress (completion of coursework, student engagement and extra-curricular activities) is regularly tracked by their advisor using a continuous advising mapping approach, student journey maps and the guided career pathway portal.

Under the CPI grant, Claflin obtained two career software programs, Focus 2 Career and Handshake, to emphasize two primary functions. Focus 2 Career is an online career exploration software designed to assess work interests, personality, values, skills, and career planning readiness, and Handshake is a career development portfolio. Students begin the career exploration process before enrollment, upon confirmation of admission. Evaluation results are matched to Claflin's majors and high-demand career options;

academic advisors then use these results to help students determine a major and identify career goals. From there, students create a career development portfolio using the Handshake software program. From the continuous use and monitoring of these two tools, from the beginning to the end of the student's academic years, Claflin saw an 11% increase in student job placement from -2017 to 2022.

Claflin's majors have been mapped to learning outcomes that created holistic guided pathways to program completion. These major maps are then used to create individual Career Pathway Plans (CPPs). Each CPP is tailored to the individual student, positioning them on a clear path to on-time program completion. The curriculum, courses, and co-curricular activities match the student's interests and abilities.

Faculty advisors track each student's progress and seek appropriate academic and student development support. They assist the students with planning appropriate experiential learning activities for their career goals, finalizing guided CPPs, selecting additional co-curricular activities based on career goals, and monitoring student progress to achieve goals.

The career counselor provides students the support they need to secure experiential learning opportunities. This support includes resume review, cover letter and personal statement creation, mock interviews, workshops, and career preparation seminars.

Under the CPI grant, Claflin phased in a holistic model in which students are guided through academic paths (curricular and co-curricular) to prepare them for the workforce. Their career pathways are designed to simplify students' decision-making; increase awareness of high-paying, high-growth occupations; and create a more structured approach to program completion.

Due to the consistent guidance students received, Claflin saw a 3% increase in their persistence rate. Students are more inclined to move forward and continue their education under the holistic model.

Additionally, together with Benedict College and Voorhees University under the Carolina Cluster or SC Cluster, Claflin achieved its objectives. More information about the SC cluster is provided at the end of Appendix A.

Clark Atlanta University

Website: www.cau.edu
Location: Atlanta, GA
Enrollment (2021): 4,055

Clark Atlanta University (CAU) is a historically Black, private institution that offers undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees to a diverse body of students. CAU offers students from around the nation and many other countries the opportunity to explore 38 fields of study, including business, education, and social work at all levels. Leveraging its distinctive history, CAU is an urban research university that transforms the lives of students and their communities by preparing citizen leaders to be problem-solvers through innovative learning programs; supportive interactions with faculty, staff, and students; exemplary scholarship; and purposeful service.

Program Highlights:

For more than 150 years, Clark Atlanta University (CAU) and its parent institutions have served as a catalyst for social, economic, and political change.

Upon entering the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant, CAU understood that the funds provided by UNCF were catalysts to support CAU in implementing its vision to educate current and future generations of students and to help them harness their immense power to improve the lives of the citizens of the United States and the world.

Hence, key themes of CAU's effort were developed and implemented to ensure the long-term sustainability of the institutional change inspired by the UNCF CPI project. These themes included 1) faculty development to better understand and serve students, 2) leveraging the UNCF CPI support to garner additional resources to support and sustain CAU's vision, 3) curriculum reforms and course redesign to improve teaching and student learning outcomes, 4) implementation of stackable credentials, 5) introducing students scholarly inquiry throughout their undergraduate curriculum to improve student learning, enhancement and display of their creative works, performance, and research, 6) developing

and implementing career preparation plans for students, laying out specific professional development activities that each student must engage in for each year (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior) of their matriculation at CAU, 7) improving student advisement, 8) employing technology to support teaching and learning, 9) increasing student engagement in their education, and 10) utilizing resources and workshops provided by UNCF's Institute for Capacity Building to enhance CAU's faculty, staff, and administrators ability to meet students' needs.

CAU revised and implemented many initiatives to better serve their students during the CPI grant. They conducted comprehensive reviews and evaluations of their curriculum and student performance in all gateway courses. As a result, some of the curriculum's credit hours were reduced, several courses were redesigned to better suit the needs of the students, new courses were implemented, and the first-year seminar was enhanced to better address relevant, real-world and research-rich educational experiences.

CAU focused on improving internal infrastructures to make their students more well-rounded and skilled for the real world. In doing so, they created the Center of Undergraduate Research and Creativity (CURC).

The CURC was a campus-wide initiative of undergraduate research across the curriculum. It is an operational center on campus under the direction of the Office of the Provost. The focus of the CURC is (1) to incorporate research and creativity into the first-year experience for students, (2) to promote research opportunities for CAU students both on and off campus, (3) to offer one-on-one mentoring opportunities with faculty, and (4) to encourage faculty to bring research practices into the classroom.

The CURC manages seven communication monitors that display research opportunities on and off campus in various locations around campus. The monitors are located near the bookstore, the research building, one of the on-campus eateries, and other classroom buildings. The CURC used student workshops and student research ambassadors to encourage involvement in undergraduate research.

From 2016 –2021, CAU reported 62 oral presentations, 254 poster presentations, and 31 creative works, with 790 undergraduate students and 253 mentors participating in the symposium created by CURC. With this success, CURC has become integral to the first-year experience. By deciding to improve internal infrastructures and redesigning the curricula to better suit their students, CAU saw a 3% increase in their enrollment numbers from 2017 to 2022 and maintained a consistent retention rate during those same years. This shows that students saw the steps CAU was taking to provide them with the best resources and experiences, leading them to continue their journey at CAU after their first year.

Dillard University

Website: www.dillard.edu
Location: New Orleans, LA
Enrollment (2021): 1,202

Since its founding in 1869, Dillard University has been dedicated to providing students with a quality four-year liberal arts education. Dillard is a fully accredited private, historically Black university located on a beautiful 55-acre campus in a residential area of New Orleans, Louisiana. Serving more than 1,300 students, Dillard strives to produce graduates who excel, become world leaders, are broadly educated, culturally aware, and concerned with continuous improvement of the human condition.

Program Highlights:

The Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant allowed Dillard to decide on its priorities and provided the flexibility to adjust as needed. As a result, Dillard shifted from its initial focus on its Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD) to a greater emphasis on the academic side and removing silos between the two to improve student outcomes.

As a result, Dillard's CPI initiatives focused more on a campus-wide growth mindset, which centered on understanding how perspectives and neuroplasticity, the nervous system's ability to change its activity in response to intrinsic or extrinsic stimuli by reorganizing its structure and function after injuries, influence effort and success.

With that mindset, Dillard began to address the severe verbal deficiencies their students came in with and the development of an English co-requisite to address the problem.

While Dillard had a required essay exam for all students, no pre-existing exam documented a student's skill in writing mechanics (grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, etc.).

During a pilot run for this initiative in 2017-2020, Dillard administered pre-tests to its freshman class and found that most students (88%) arrived at Dillard with writing skills below the appropriate level for college freshmen. It became apparent that students in all the required core English curricula needed assistance. This changed with the Verbal Assessment and Support initiative, supported by Merit software and offered in five courses (ENG110, ENG111, ENG112, ENG200, ENG 201/202).

Pre-tests were administered at the start of a student's English journey producing a start/end score documenting their progress in each class. Then post-tests were administered in ENG 201/202 to check their final levels. In the interim, each student could work individually at their own pace and identify their level within the Merit software.

Even though Dillard's goal was to have 75% of all students at the appropriate level, they reported a 29% improvement during the initiative, with 41% of the post-tests reaching the appropriate level. This reflected a 242% increase in students' skill sets campus-wide. With such high results, Dillard restructured their English courses to provide more support and brought students up to speed in Verbal Assessment and Support while reducing the time students would have spent taking the development classes they ordinarily would have been assigned. This ultimately improved both the retention and graduation rates in the long run.

With the success of the Verbal Assessment and Support initiative, the question arose: How can Dillard motivate students to understand their capabilities and make more of an effort to overcome this major deficiency? From that, Dillard began their commitment to a growth mindset and started training faculty and staff; introduced this PR campaign to their students and the modules in the First-Year Experience; and asked that all courses in every program, during every semester, use reminders or short activities to keep this campaign top-of-mind.

Additionally, Dillard committed to ensuring students seek internships as early as possible. This meant that each of Dillard's programs committed to include career-course modules.

Outside of their programs, Dillard established partnerships with companies locally and nationwide to provide employer relationships sessions, collaborative career fairs (in-person and virtual), career coaching events, career shadowing programs and volunteer opportunities for their students. Some of these partnerships include Forte, HBCU Heroes, HBCU All-Star, Louis Vuitton, NASA, ASM Global, Amazon x HBCU Heros Career Summit on the Bayou, 2022 Essence Festival and Move.

Through these strategic partnerships and early career exposure, Dillard saw an increase of 18% in its student job placement after graduation and a 9% increase in students participating in internships from 2017 to 2022.

Fayetteville State University

Website: www.uncfsu.edu
Location: Fayetteville, NC
Enrollment (2021): 6,748

Fayetteville State University (FSU), founded in 1867, is an HBCU with a rich legacy. FSU serves a highly diverse population of approximately 6,500 students with 41 undergraduate and graduate degree programs and various concentrations, minors, and certificate offerings. FSU, a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina System, equips graduates with the skills to succeed in careers and life. This includes opportunities to explore critical emerging new fields. Eight academic departments are rated as among the nation's best for academic excellence and affordability.

Program Highlights:

Under the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant, Fayetteville State University (FSU) accomplished many of its milestones and objectives.

One of their major accomplishments was incorporating certifications and badges from leading technology companies (such as IBM and Dell) in courses like artificial intelligence, design thinking, and data science. Students from any degree program can obtain technology certifications and demonstrate competencies in high-demand digital skills. Through these certifications, students could access these high-potential job opportunities, particularly those with a non-STEM background.

Through this grant, FSU enhanced its employer recruitment relationships to increase FSU student recruitment and job placement.

FSU also established a deep partnership with 20 employers, while 100 were identified for prioritized contact. With these partnerships, FSU maintained and expanded its series of employer information/interview sessions.

In the Fall of 2022, FSU held 10 FSU-specific employer information sessions with over 200 participants during the career fair. During this time, FSU also launched its virtual career fair with 53 employers and 170 students participating. These numbers grew as spring progressed to six FSU-specific employer in-person information sessions with 400 participants and 68 employers and 134 students' virtual participation.

As a result of these partnerships and sessions, FSU saw a 63% increase in students' internships and a 10% job placement increase from 2017 to 2022. With consistent exposure to various employers, FSU students can explore various careers available to them and establish relationships that can help them obtain a career after graduation.

Fisk University

Website: www.fisk.edu
Location: Nashville, TN
Enrollment (2021): 942

Founded in 1866, Fisk University is historically Black and the oldest institution of higher learning in Nashville, Tennessee. Each year Fisk's exceptional students, staff, and faculty members continue to strengthen the University's reputation for excellence inside and outside the classroom. This is confirmed annually by the pool of talented applicants, high-achieving students, and the large percentage of alumni who become leaders and scholars in their fields.

Program Highlights:

Fisk University's Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) work has made a significant impact on the university. There was an intentional focus on retention and graduation data; academic alignment to co-curricular activities; new degree and industry-specific programs, and implementation of electronic processes and technical platforms. All these items allowed Fisk to become more innovative and efficient over the last few years.

During the grant cycle, Fisk University had quite a few successes, particularly developing the new student orientation and its accompanying branding, the P.A.W.S. (Preparing and Welcoming Students) Experience. This cross-collaborative effort includes all departments and disciplines across the campus, which allows students to register for classes and meet with advisors. It is a dedicated week that has been reimagined and rebranded over the last few years to serve as a direct connection with incoming students. Students are connected to the Office of Career Planning and Development that week and exposed to a career alignment discussion and assessments.

During welcome week, first-year students connect with their future classmates, prepare for life inside and outside the classroom, and learn to navigate campus life. Workshops and sessions provided by the three offices support and answer questions about academics, health, safety, college transitions, and support services. The opportunity to meet with academic departments, an overview of university resources and technology, and a chance to interact with multiple university offices are included in this week.

Additionally, preparing and advising became a virtual one-stop shop, where students meet with various key offices to complete their financial clearance process and academic advising before the semester begins.

Essentially, P.A.W.S. is intended to help first-year students make a smooth transition to college, become used to the community on campus, and familiarize themselves with the resources and support that Fisk University will provide during their journey.

Florida Memorial University

Website: www.fmuniv.edu
Location: Miami Gardens, FL
Enrollment (2021): 1,028

Dating back to 1879, Florida Memorial University is a private, co-educational, Baptist-affiliated institution located in Miami Gardens, Florida. As the only historically Black university in South Florida, Florida Memorial University is a diverse institution that strives to improve the lives of its students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community members to help create a future for people from many races, ethnicities, countries, religions, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Program Highlights:

The Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) proposed by Florida Memorial University (FMU) aimed to create an enhanced student experience and increase retention rates using state-of-the-art and interactive technology, data-informed decision-making, and professional development to institutionalize learning.

FMU focused on sustainable improvements to the quality of academic advising, the first-year experience curriculum, and career services through an initiative called IROAR (Intentional Readiness for Occupational Acquisition and Retention).

The first-year experience at FMU begins with an enhanced and mandatory New Student Orientation (NSO), followed by intentional and intrusive academic advising when the first 30 to 45 credits are completed. It also includes a two-part freshmen seminar with multiple career readiness (IROAR) components infused into the curriculum. IROAR activities begin at NSO, are integrated into the first-year curriculum [FMU 101 and (discipline-specific) XXX-102], and continue through the student's academic life cycle in the form of employer-led co-curricular engagements, readily available on-campus and provided weekly.

At FMU, the IROAR career development program begins as early into the student's academic career as possible and spans throughout their academic life cycle. In addition to drop-in career advising and assistance, students are encouraged to participate in employer-led, on-campus or virtual events. These include "Tabling Tuesdays" (community partners in the dining hall at lunch), "Workshop Wednesdays" (skills-building with community partners), and "Thriving Thursdays" (professional tips offered by community partners).

Special events such as "SURGE" (Seniors Readiness for Gainful Employment and Graduate Education) have also gained popularity, bringing over 30 employers and graduate schools to campus and featuring a panel of 10 experts in its first year.

During the CPI grant, FMU obtained multiple partnerships from various local and nationwide corporations to increase paid internship opportunities for their students. These partnerships include the Miami Heat, Coca-Cola, the Department of Health, the Office of Miami Dade County State Attorney Melba Pearson, Rap Snacks/Boss Up, Flying Classroom, Generation USA, NextGenFlorida, Shuckin and Jivin, Se7en, Broward County Human Resources, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Republica Havas, Northwestern Mutual, The Angel Investment Club – Black Angels Miami (BAM), 13 Pista, and Parker Dewey. Through these new partnerships, FMU saw their students' internship participation increase by 38% and a 9% increase in job placement from 2017 to 2022.

Not only has FMU invested in external initiatives, but they also invested heavily in front-loading research-proven student success initiatives into their first-year experience. Some of these initiatives have been incorporated as a graded requirement into the FMU 101 and XXX-102 courses. Examples include an enhanced "Career Kick-Off" All-Freshmen Forum, a four-year career development plan, IROAR "Roar in 4!" pledge, career aptitude assessments, e-badges completion, Handshake registration, and career counseling.

These activities provide materials and activities for FMU's students to explore and connect relevant career information to their freshmen studies and activities. Through the e-badges, students can earn micro-credentials from LinkedIn Learning on various skills to become well-prepared for their internships and careers post-graduation.

As a result, FMU saw a 167% increase in its service-learning section, where students could use the skills they learned from LinkedIn Learning and apply them to the careers they obtained from employer partnerships.

By incorporating career readiness requirements into the first-year experiences, cultivating relationships directly with employers, and allowing students to earn credentials beyond the traditional academic setting, students have expressed they feel FMU has prepared them well for their careers.

Huston-Tillotson University

HUSTON-TILLOTSON
UNIVERSITY
1875   AUSTIN, TEXAS

Website: www.htu.edu
Location: Austin, TX
Enrollment (2021): 1,001

Huston-Tillotson University is a private, historically Black university in Austin, Texas. Established in 1875, HTU is recognized as Austin's oldest institution of higher learning. HTU offers 18 major programs and six minor programs to its 1,100 students to nurture its legacy of leadership and excellence in education, connecting knowledge, power, passion, and values.

Program Highlights:

Under the CPI grant, Huston-Tillotson (HTU) was able to begin work on redesigning the curricula for eight disciplines, Business Administration, Communication, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, Education, Kinesiology, Math, and Music. These eight disciplines are 50% of the total disciplines offered at HTU.

With the grant, HTU provided monthly professional development sessions to faculty, staff, and administration to address how students learn, learning outcomes, career competencies, curricula development and use of technology in the classroom.

In areas like Kinesiology, curricular pathways were created to provide students with a clear map to career expectations, career success and higher education in the respected field. Students in this major were provided with internships and other opportunities that would aid them in receiving hands-on experience after their fall/ first semester at HTU.

Additionally, multiple speakers working in allied health, sports exercise, athletic training, and other careers aligned with kinesiology were invited to speak about their experiences to the students, exposing them to other careers that were atypical for kinesiology majors.

In Communications, since all majors were expected to take Comm 1315, a public speaking course, the curriculum for Comm 1315 was modified to emphasize "professional" speaking and writing. Attendance, punctuality, and professional dress became a weighted element in the class. Attendance and punctuality counted towards 20% of the final grade as opposed to previously being 10% and professional dress was required during all class-delivered speeches.

Additionally, the concepts taught in Communications became more rigorous and included topics related to the social/ economic paradigm. Students were asked to consider the differences between "free" media and paid services and if they are consumers or products in using these media. Students' engagement in using the equipment from the Communication Lab increased as the curriculum changed, more projects were incorporated into the course content, and clubs were formed.

In Education, students were the ones assisting in improving the curriculum. When HTU moved to an online environment, students were asked to use the online environment to assist in developing online learning modules for instruction, forcing them to consider various learning styles and teaching modalities. The flipped classroom model demonstrated students' ability to work in small groups.

During the virtual environment, HTU utilized Microsoft Teams to place students in small groups and assigned a chapter from the designated textbook to each group to present. The curriculum included teaching students how to develop a rubric and connect content to assessments. Students were challenged to think outside the box when asked what educators can do regarding assessment when students may not have the same access to resources and what rubric can be developed to determine student success in asynchronous and synchronous online learning environments. Students had to consider the resources, learning styles, and grade integrity and efficacy.

With the CPI grant, HTU was able to provide various improvements in the curricula and therefore improved students' academic outcomes.

Jarvis Christian University

![JARVIS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY logo]

Website: www.jarvis.edu
Location: Hawkins, TX
Enrollment (2021): 721

Jarvis Christian University is a historically Black, liberal arts institution, located one mile east of Hawkins, Texas. JCU opened its doors in 1913 to an initial class of 12 students and has since grown to a total enrollment of over 900 students. The mission of the University is to prepare a diverse population of lifelong learners intellectually, socially, spiritually, and personally by providing interactive services and using varied modalities of instructional delivery.

Program Highlights:

All Hands-on Deck in Achieving Academic Excellence was the theme that guided efforts carried out by Jarvis Christian University (JCU) during the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant. Every faculty member, staff, and administrator was expected to provide students with the tools, skills, and experiences they needed to succeed post-graduation.

During the CPI grant, JCU was able to accomplish many feats. Such success can be found in curriculum enhancement, the establishment of the badging program, and the creation of the Faculty Employer Advisory Committee (FEAC).

Like many institutions under the CPI grant, JCU had to re-evaluate its strategic plan and determine how it could provide career readiness to the student body beyond having an Office of Career Services.

One of the areas that JCU re-designed with this goal in mind was the curriculum. Currently, career readiness is integrated into 40% of JCU's curriculum, which cuts across all majors and levels, and 50% of faculty members have been trained to infuse career readiness into their courses.

Alongside this integration, JCU established the badging program to prepare students for their careers. Students can earn up to 13 digital badges in career readiness at a master's level. JCU also made modifications to its advising model. Students with 59 hours or less are now advised by professional advisors who support students through their sophomore year. This model allows them to work closely with the same advisor while that advisor prepares them to transition to their major.

At the start of the grant, JCU instituted the Faculty Employer Advisory Committee (FEAC). This committee was formulated to establish partnerships with industries that provide internships for its students and inform faculty on the skills students need to succeed in their respective career pursuits. Through this committee, students and faculty are in direct contact with employers such as PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), BNY Mellon, Takeda Pharmaceuticals, 2022 Jenzabar, Old Dominion Freight Line, Inc., Citigroup in New York, Ernst & Young (EY), and Oncor, Inc.

Students and faculty members will do what's needed to achieve and provide success at JCU and beyond. By fostering these connections early, students are exploring different careers, expanding their network, receiving mentorship, and ultimately becoming more well-rounded in areas outside of their majors.

LeMoyne-Owen College

Website: www.loc.edu
Location: Memphis, TN
Enrollment (2021): 613

LeMoyne-Owen College is a four-year, historically Black, liberal arts college that provides a transformative experience to its students in the heart of Memphis, Tennessee. The liberal arts core curriculum equips students with important skills in the business world. Since opening its doors in 1914, LeMoyne-Owen has provided educational opportunities for students of all ages and backgrounds to prepare them for professional success. The college also has a proud tradition of educating notable alumni, which include doctors, lawyers, and politicians.

Program Highlights:

Before the Career Pathways Initiative(CPI) grant, LeMoyne-Owen College (LOC) implemented two associate degrees at the institution. Due to this implementation, "A degree for your Future" became the major goal for LOC under the CPI grant.

LOC tackled this goal with two sides: one focused on students who may or may not want to pursue the four-year degree or students who accumulated so many hours and are out of financial aid at the end of their academic career. This goal ensured these students would still leave with a degree in hand.

The other side focused on redeveloping the curriculum to provide stronger career pathways based on students' majors. Essentially, both sides targeted how LOC can support successful students academically and professionally.

To achieve their goal, LOC created initiatives that targeted re-developing their curricular enhancement, identifying internships and certificates, establishing workforce partnerships, and utilizing technology. Under the curricular enhancement, career readiness objectives were embedded in classes beyond the freshman level. This allowed students to understand what opportunities were available in the workforce and how they could begin focusing on them and refining their skills to be prepared.

Additionally, internships became a graduation requirement for students during their junior and senior years. During this grant, LOC noticed a shift in employer partners accepting students in their freshman years. As a result, LOC began to integrate career pathways more intentionally during freshman year by having incoming students take a career evaluation test. Afterward, students met with career services and had a one-on-one conversation about the results, examined the possible pathways available, determined the requirements needed to get a job or get into graduate school, and mapped their curricular and career pathways.

Under the CPI grant, LOC expanded its community partnerships in different industries. Whether attending a company engagement or doing graduate school tours, LOC found that having their students exposed to and engaged in these activities promoted key discussions regarding postgraduate plans.

Morehouse College

Website: www.morehouse.edu
Location: Atlanta, GA
Enrollment (2021): 2,554

Founded in 1867 and located in Atlanta, Georgia, Morehouse is an academic community dedicated to teaching, scholarship, service, and the continuing search for truth as a liberating force. The mission of the college is to develop men with disciplined minds who will lead lives of leadership and service. A private, historically Black, liberal arts college for men, Morehouse realizes this mission by emphasizing its students' intellectual and character development. For more than 150 years, Morehouse has sought students who are willing to carry the torch of excellence and willing to pay the price of gaining strength and confidence to wear the moniker of "Morehouse Man."

Program Highlights:

From 2016 to 2022, Morehouse has embraced its mission to develop men with disciplined minds who will lead lives of leadership and service. This is carried out by emphasizing the importance of intellectualism and character development among its students and assuming a special responsibility for teaching the history and culture of Black people.

Under the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant, Morehouse was committed to institutional transformation; the proposed transformation consisted of re-envisioning career services. This involved moving it from the 20th-century career planning and placement office to a more innovative 21st-century career and professional development ecosystem, which operates as much in the virtual realm as the real world.

To begin this transformation, Morehouse had to re-envision its General Education program. Previously, the General Education program required students to complete 52 credit hours. Now the new program has a focus on Black Life, History, and Culture (BLHaC), reduced its credit hour requirement to 33-48, and transitioned from a prescriptive model to a more distributive one with a broader array of courses from which students can select to meet the new thematic requirements. These courses include skill building in writing, foreign language, mathematical and quantitative literacy, health and wellness, arts and literature, ideas and ethics, society and culture, and the scientific discovery that will allow the students to expand their knowledge beyond an academic environment.

The Crown Forum and first-year experience have also been incorporated into the General Education program. The Crown Forum was designed to create a learning community that evokes Morehouse's mission of character development, social justice, leadership, and teaching Black history and culture. It would allow the students to better understand themselves, a deeper appreciation of the Morehouse experience, and a greater commitment to servant leadership and global citizenship. On theme with the Crown Forum, Morehouse's first-year experience, unlike other institutions, focuses on exploring thematic areas in Black History, notable people, cultures, themes, intellectual traditions, the African diaspora, and the world.

Due to the redesign of its General Education course, Morehouse saw a 1676% increase in its service-learning section from 2017 to 2022. This showed that with this transformation, Morehouse was able to equip its students with the ability to explore themes of social justice, equity, and protest across various disciplines while also demonstrating continuous learning and development of new skills. Additionally, it shows that students from Morehouse can integrate the knowledge and skills from their academic and co-curricular experiences into their everyday life.

Morgan State University

Website: www.morgan.edu
Location: Baltimore, MD
Enrollment (2021): 8,469

Morgan State University, founded in 1867, is a Carnegie-classified doctoral research institution that provides instruction to a multi-ethnic, multiracial, multinational student body. It offers more than 100 academic programs that lead to degrees from the baccalaureate to the doctoral level. As Maryland's preeminent public urban research university, Morgan fulfills its mission to address the needs and challenges of the modern urban environment through intense community-level study and pioneering solutions.

Program Highlights:

The Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant, under the guidance of Morgan State University (MSU), paved the way for a more holistic approach to student career preparedness and illuminated the valuable work of the Center for Career Development. The leadership acknowledged that one small office could not drive the necessary change alone. As a result, a major cultural change was facilitated at Morgan State, unlike any other.

At the start of the grant, students' post-graduate success was largely the responsibility of the understaffed Center of Career Development at MSU. However, with the grant, MSU completely expanded its student career preparedness beyond the Center of Career Development office by embedding career specialists in the schools and in one of the colleges. All career specialists were assigned multiple faculty liaisons, and it became their responsibility to meet regularly with their assigned contacts or designers to provide custom in-class programming on career development topics such as resume development, internship/job search, networking, and other topics.

This integration created a natural nexus for students and a great workflow, which increased student appointments, faculty interactions, and classroom outreach. This increase was due not only to the relationships that were intentionally identified and assigned but through the natural relationships that arose from the career specialists' physical presence in each school.

Deans, faculty, and staff partners found that their career specialists helped bridge the gap between the Center for Career Development and the academic units, providing a more seamless process for career development for the students. Alumni and employer partners expressed that the career specialist had improved their relationship with the institution and improved the support they could provide to students. As a result, MSU found that student job placement increases to 26% with the aid of career specialists, and due to this major impact, MSU plans to institutionalize the career specialist positions at their institution.

Additionally, due to the high turnover rate, MSU demonstrated that the work was not the responsibility of just one person but the responsibility of multiple individuals. This led to MSU, Norfolk State University, and Tennessee State University's creation of the HBCU Consortium, better known as the C3 cluster. More information about the C3 cluster is provided at the end of Appendix A.

Norfolk State University

![Norfolk State University logo]

Website: www.nsu.edu
Location: Norfolk, VA
Enrollment (2021): 5,458

Since its 1935 founding, Norfolk State University (NSU) has been committed to transforming students' lives through exemplary teaching, research, and service. As a comprehensive, urban institution of higher education, Norfolk State University offers 50-degree programs and a supportive and diverse environment for all. NSU seeks to empower its students to realize their aspirations by achieving their full potential as well-rounded and resourceful citizens and leaders in the 21st century.

Program Highlights:

The Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant at Norfolk State University (NSU) has been very beneficial in establishing and sustaining career development initiatives. This partnership supported NSU for students to continue their success in college and as they transition toward being productive citizens in society and the workplace. It has provided NSU with opportunities to develop activities focusing on workplace talent development, holistic student cultivation, career pathway model implementation, and early career intervention.

Above all, NSU adopted the three-prong strategy as a framework to establish, revise, and improve programs and services that focus on students' holistic development for postgraduate success. Such programs include the establishment of the Student Pathways & Academic Formation Pathways and revamping the Spartan Seminar Series (SEM).

Student Pathways & Academic Formation strategies support students' transition to the institution and enhance their holistic development toward improving postgraduate outcomes. Many activities were designed using guided and career pathway models that lead learners to reach their academic and career goals.

Student Pathways & Academic Formation worked closely with multiple academic and student affairs departments to ensure students received the support they needed for success. These departments included career services, financial aid, and other support areas under the umbrella of the Office of Academic Engagement. Career services meet annually with SEM students to interpret the results of their career assessments. Additionally, they organized employer information panels for them.

Through the Student Pathways & Academic Formation, students can earn micro-credential digital badges in their SEM courses. These micro-credential digital badges allow students to communicate competencies and achievements and assist students with developing skills, which enhances their workplace marketability.

The Spartan Seminar Series (SEM 101, 102, 201) requires general education courses that focus on assisting students in making a successful transition to college life and making positive career connections early on in their academic careers.

SEM 101 explores the overall building blocks for students' personal growth and development through academic success strategies and campus resource awareness so that students can reach their academic and personal goals. Its goals were to support students' transition and connection to the campus community, provide academic success tools critical to student academic performance, and engage students in self-initiated, autonomous learning through self-regulatory strategies.

SEM 102 provides information on discipline-based concepts for students' academic programs and major choices. The goals of SEM 102 were to create a connection between personal skills and goals to major exploration and career choices; explain the relationship between academic plans, degree completion, and career choices;

and share the value of developing skills required for the modern-day workforce. Finally, SEM 201 introduces students to social science research methodologies and ethnographic techniques by investigating various workplace practices, norms, and customs so students can make informed decisions about their major and career paths. The course goals were to provide a contextualized understanding of the workplace through observation and apply analytical and critical thinking skills to course activities.

Though SEMs are required courses at NSU, students can be exempted from taking them (only under specific circumstances, i.e., if they are transfers, veterans, active military, or ROTC students). The students who have taken SEM have agreed that activities under SEM have enhanced their academic integration and provided them with skills and experiences for the 21st-century workforce. This can be seen with the data provided by NSU, which showed an increase in internships of 48%. Students could demonstrate the skills and experiences they learned from SEMs to obtain an internship in their desired career.

Alongside these programs, NSU became a part of the HBCU Consortium or C3 Cluster with Morgan State University and Tennessee State University. More information about the C3 cluster is provided at the end of Appendix A.

Oakwood University

Website: www.oakwood.edu
Location: Huntsville, AL
Enrollment (2021): 1,452

Oakwood University, located in Huntsville, Alabama, transforms and develops leaders through meaningful Christian education. For 120 years, Oakwood University has excelled in its commitment to integrity and its focus on educational excellence.

Program Highlights:

Student Success is one of the highest priorities at Oakwood University (OU). Through the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant and other institutional strategies (2017-2022), OU created programs and partnerships that helped increase student success and ensure students achieved gainful employment after leaving OU. The impact of the CPI grant has been indicated in multiple student-related outcomes as it relates to ensuring persistence, developing employable skill sets, and achieving gainful employment.

One of the programs that OU created was the OU Launchpad Entrepreneurship Center. OU partnered with Unity, the world's leading platform for creating and operating real-time 3D content. Creators, ranging from game developers to artists, architects, automotive designers, filmmakers, and others, use Unity to make their imaginations come to life.

Through the OU Launchpad Entrepreneurship Center, OU is the only HBCU to become a Unity Authorized Training Partner, making them one of 17 in the country. This partnership is groundbreaking as it increased the need for organizations such as Apple, IBM, and HP to partner with more HBCUs. Collaborations of this nature demonstrate the openness of these companies to making diversity and inclusion partnerships a permanent part of their brand and culture.

Another major program OU established was the micro-internships program (OUCARE). This program was developed to lower educational debt by providing financial assistance and career-oriented, service-learning and work internship experiences based on a student's field major. It allowed students to achieve competency in employer-desired work skills while being able to finance their education and graduate after four years with a reduced debt load.

Through OUCARE, students were able to gain the desirable work skills they need to obtain full internships and show employers how knowledgeable they are in their field majors. By offering this program, OU found that their students' internship participation increased to 64%, and they maintained a consistent job placement rate of 49% from 2017 to 2022.

During the pandemic, like many institutions, OU had to close its doors for the health and safety of its students, faculty, and staff. For everyone to stay connected with each other, OU established an internal social media platform (OU APP/GEMconnect) that made it easier for students, faculty, staff, and alumni to connect and share campus life anywhere in the world. Like other social media platforms, users shared photos, images, videos, and text statuses; on the back end, the app was used to gauge and monitor campus engagement and create opportunities for deeper connections among the campus community.

During the CPI, OU established programs focused on creating a better student environment. These programs proved effective as they provided a space for students to foster their skills, inspire success, establish connections with alumni, and gain experience from major corporations.

Rust College

Website: www.rustcollege.edu
Location: Holly Springs, MS
Enrollment (2021): 768

Rust College is a historically Black, liberal arts institution founded in 1866 that offers quality academic programs and prepares students for leadership and service in a global society. Rust College is located in Holly Springs, Mississippi, and offers more than 20 degree programs to students regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, gender, or origin.

Program Highlights:

As a small liberal arts college located in Holly Springs, Mississippi, the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant had a major impact on Rust College (RC).

With the CPI grant, RC ensured students understood the essential elements to compete in a global workforce. The grant provided students with a well-defined career path, the resources, and the tools to meet employers' needs and cultivate crucial desirable skills such as critical thinking and verbal and written communication.

Resources such as workshops, career, and graduate school fairs, resume building, and company and business exposure to the workforce were all reinforced during this period.

Additionally, the active engagement of major divisions and faculty enhanced the students' ability to prepare for their careers and graduate school.

The impact of the CPI grant at RC was all due to the Office of Career Pathway's mission to prepare the students with the necessary resources and information to compete in a global economy. They were responsible for ensuring students completed their journey at RC with digital resumes, LinkedIn pages, and endorsements relevant to their major.

Like other institutions, Career Pathways began during freshman year for the RC student body. From the beginning, students were provided with individual career counseling, guidance with HandShake, career exploration, exposure, and graduate programs and school exploration.

During the grant, RC established partnerships with local and nationwide corporations from various sectors to provide their students with the experiences they needed upon graduating from RC. These corporations include ALSAC/St. Jude Hospital, Amazon, Atmos Energy, AutoZone, Bank of America, Beverly Davis Accounting Firm, CVS, City of Holly Spring, City of Memphis, Enterprise Holdings, FedEx Corporation, Lowes, and many more.

With these new workforce opportunities, RC saw an increase of 5% in its student job placement from 2017 to 2022. Additionally, these companies provided more than just internships and career opportunities after graduation; they also provided professional skills training, financial literacy courses, mentorships, donations, landscaping for RC, leadership programs, guest speakers, and recruitment activities.

Due to these added values, RC offered their students; RC also saw an 8% increase in its persistence rate. The impact of CPI was shown by addressing the needs of students to focus on workforce learning outcomes. This required a complete culture shift at RC to allow the students, faculty, and administration to see the importance of the CPI work. Once that was achieved, RC created a seamless pathway from college to career for its students.

Spelman College
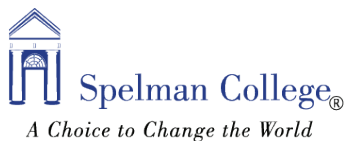
Website: www.spelman.edu
Location: Atlanta, GA
Enrollment (2021): 2,417

Spelman College is a historically, Black liberal arts college for women in Atlanta, Georgia. Founded in 1881, Spelman is a global leader in educating women of African descent and offers over 30 academic programs in various disciplines to 2,100+ students from 43 states and 10 foreign countries. Spelman empowers women to engage the many cultures of the world and inspires a commitment to positive social change through education, leadership, and service.

Program Highlights:

Spelman's slogan, "Careers to Curriculum," captures the core of their Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) activities. The college brought cutting-edge skills that would benefit students in building careers into the classroom through a continuous plan of faculty workshops and training on data science, digital humanities, designing your life (DYL), and career advising. In addition, Spelman designed the grant to ensure that the staff and faculty involved in the success of CPI funding worked together to impact student careers and post-graduation success by breaching existing "silos" that might adversely impact students. Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Admissions (Career Planning and Development CPD), and Student Services came together to provide the best results for the students.

Spelman realized that as an institution in higher education, its students should have the most innovative skills being sought after within the marketplace. Under the CPI grant, Spelman incorporated new programs and courses into their curriculum. Spelman pioneered the program "Designing Your Life" (DYL) career thinking under the CPI grant.

Through hands-on exercises and scenarios, DYL allows students to reimagine their career and life aspirations. Following the recognized Stanford University "D-School" model, training workshops were held for faculty across all disciplines. One hundred and twenty faculty members were trained through seven DYL workshops during the grant cycle. In addition, 15 DYL modules were created in the majors of those faculty members. Since its incorporation, DYL courses have received high praise from students who have cited its utility in helping them discover their life and career passions.

Spelman created a few new courses during this grant period. It identified data science and digital humanities as emerging technologies/skills that are highly desirable and cross-disciplinary within the workforce. Numerous workshops were done to train faculty in these areas. As a result, two data science courses were created: Data Science for Economics and Management and Data Science for Social Science. The success of these two courses led Spelman to create six data science modules and 18 digital humanities modules incorporated into the majors and curriculum.

By creating these programs and courses focusing on career knowledge, exploration and highly desirable skills and incorporating them into the curriculum, Spelman ensured the continuity of the CPI work beyond the grant period.

The results of the programs and courses can be seen in the total number of internships obtained by Spelman's students, consistent over the grant period (2017 to 2022). Spelman recorded over 2000 internships by their students. The additions of these programs and courses to the curriculum attracted more students to Spelman, and it saw a 13% growth in enrollment from 2017 to 2022.

Talladega College

Website: www.talladega.edu
Location: Talladega, AL
Enrollment (2021): 1,203

Talladega College is a private, four-year liberal arts institution in the historic district of Talladega, Alabama. Founded in 1865, Talladega College was the first institution in Alabama to admit qualified persons regardless of race or ethnic origin. Talladega College offers 17 academic programs and one graduate program to over 1000 students and strives to prepare its graduates for a global community through academic excellence, moral values, community service, and professional development.

Program Highlights:

Relationships, resources, and resilience were key themes important to the work being done under the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant at Talladega College (TC). As new changes were occurring, failure was not an option. TC pushed to achieve its goals and established a foundation to build great students. The vision of TC during the CPI grant was focused on providing a liberating formal and informal educational experience that exceeds the former standard.

Furthermore, the vision centered on engaging 21st-century college students as willing participants in designing career blueprints that lead to professional success. Students graduating from TC were positioned as an asset to the corporate community while gaining the combined educational and professional development that enhances life-long professional accomplishments.

To ensure that all students are engaged in career pathways that would lead them toward professional success, TC's curricular enhancements plan involved working with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and prospective employers to assist students in gaining knowledge, skills, and the ability to compete in a global economic society. With that in mind, TC coined the phrase, "RAISING THE B.A.T.O.N.," as the core initiative for the CPI grant. The keyword in the phrase is B.A.T.O.N. which means "Bridging Alumni Through Ongoing Nurturing."

Career pathways were implemented during freshman year orientation in four phases and designed for students as they progress through each academic year. Each module phase intentionally integrates career pathways initiatives such as career assessments, resume writing, and the development of needed soft skills such as conflict resolution, customer service, oral and written communication skills, social media presence, technology skills, time management, and financial management.

Support from the administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, employers, corporate, and community partners will ensure the success of the curricular enhancement plan.

Under the CPI grant, TC focused on a student-centered initiative that included all students, from incoming freshmen to graduating seniors. By showing that no students will be left behind, TC was able to transcend departmental and major barriers to create a college community from which all students would benefit.

The results of these efforts can be seen in their retention and persistence rate. From 2017 to 2022, TC has kept a consistent retention rate of over 60% and saw a 12% growth in its persistence rate. As TC continues to build an inclusive environment, students feel that TC offers them a strong sense of belonging and therefore are more inclined to continue their academic career at TC.

Tennessee State University

Website: www.tnstate.edu
Location: Nashville, TN
Enrollment (2021): 8,077

Tennessee State University, founded in 1912, is Nashville's only public university. It is a premier, historically Black university and land-grant institution that offers 38 bachelor's degree programs, 24 master's degree programs, and seven doctoral degrees. TSU is a comprehensive research-intensive institution with an R-2 Carnegie designation. With a commitment to excellence, Tennessee State University provides students with a quality education in a nurturing and innovative environment that prepares them as alumni to be global leaders in every facet of society.

Program Highlights:

Participating in the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant helped Tennessee State University (TSU) foster a greater sense of community, identify and validate innovations, amplify and scale some best practices, and support efforts to disseminate what was learned.

Under this grant, TSU joined forces with Norfolk State University and Morgan State University in a cluster partnership called the HBCU Consortium or C3 Cluster. More information about the C3 Cluster is provided at the end of Appendix A.

Under the CPI grant, TSU created programs that allowed students to engage, interact, and become aware of the numerous educational and academic resources available on campus. Such programs include tutoring, job shadowing, and alumni mentoring.

Though some programs are currently paused due to personnel turnover, department realignments, time and assorted natural disasters, TSU found great success in its "Embedded Tutoring Program."

The Embedded Tutoring Program was created to decrease the high failure rate for TSU math courses. The program was successfully implemented in Fall 2020 and used peer tutors. Since Fall 2020, 50-55% of students attending tutoring received a C grade or higher. Those who returned to tutoring were measured, and TSU saw that an average of 43% of students returned for two or more sessions. This indicated that attending these sessions was helpful in some way in improving students' math grades.

Tougaloo College

Website: www.tougaloo.edu
Location: Tougaloo, MS
Enrollment (2021): 713

Tougaloo College is a historically Black, liberal arts institution in Tougaloo, Mississippi, that "prepares its graduates to be productive in their time and lead the change for a better world." Tougaloo offers undergraduate and graduate programs to encourage students to apply critical thought to all areas of life; acquire a basic knowledge of the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences; develop skills required in selected professions; and provide leadership and service in a changing world.

Program Highlights:

Upon receiving the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant, Tougaloo College entered a cluster partnership with two other HBCU institutions, Oakwood University and Talladega College. Located in Alabama and Mississippi, these three institutions formed the TOT Cluster. More information about the TOT Cluster is provided at the bottom of Appendix A.

Under the CPI grant, Tougaloo created many successful initiatives that will impact the institution long term. These successes focus on three key topics: guided pathways, curricular enhancements, and co-curricular engagement.

With guided pathways, Tougaloo emphasized redesigning the general education curriculum and assessing the first-year experience program to increase retention. They began with implementing a faculty/staff advisory committee to examine general education course requirements (C.O.R.E.) and made recommendations based on the CPI support. Based on those recommendations, Tougaloo adopted a new general education requirement that reduced the number of C.O.R.E. requirements from 57 to 36 credit hours.

Additionally, Tougaloo implemented appreciative intrusive advising during the first-year program. This kind of advising allows advisors to adapt their framework to meet and provide students with a trusting relationship with their advisors. As a result, Tougaloo found that from 2017 to 2022, its retention and persistence rate has been over 70% each year. This shows that by using this advising method, students develop a strong and understanding relationship with their advisors, ensuring they would continue their academic career at Tougaloo to maintain this relationship.

Tougaloo sought to increase student readiness for curricular enhancements by providing students with a 21st-century curriculum that builds collaborative learning and problem-solving skills. The school achieved this by first developing professional training sessions for staff to impact student engagement, assist faculty in curriculum review, support faculty development opportunities regarding interdisciplinary teaching, and develop technology-infused teaching and 21st-century learning methodologies.

Next, Tougaloo made professional and program certifications available for its students in select programs. Some certifications are Child Development, Social Justice and Restorative Practices, Laboratory Techniques, Tax Preparation, Disaster Coastal Studies in conjunction with the Department of Homeland Security, and Microsoft Excel. Tougaloo's inclusion of these certificates led to a 100% growth in their student job placement from 2017 to 2022.

Finally, Tougaloo created an Employer-Faculty Advisory Council to connect with employers to gain market needs first-hand.

For co-curricular engagement, Tougaloo used their Employer-Faculty Advisory Council to annually meet to review and discuss curricula for all academic divisions and expand their certificates to all programs at the institution.

Under the CPI grant, Tougaloo provided its students with the environment, experiences, and opportunities necessary to succeed after graduation. The values of what was provided can be seen as students continue choosing to attend Tougaloo each year.

University of West Alabama

Website: www.uwa.edu
Location: Livingston, AL
Enrollment (2021): 5,594

The University of West Alabama was chartered in 1835 as a religious female academy and admitted its first students in 1839. Today, UWA serves over 5,100 students and offers over 90 fields of study at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels. UWA believes college is about more than what happens in the classroom and works to provide its students with extracurricular and experiential learning opportunities, which include student organizations, internships, and study abroad programs to enrich their college experience.

Program Highlights:

Through the success created during the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant, The University of West Alabama (UWA) created a long-term impact on UWA's strategic plan alignment, career services and student engagement, and data-driven decisions. One program that contributed largely to UWA's success was the "College to Career" (C2C) program.

This program was designed to enhance current career placement activities to prepare graduates to transition immediately into the workforce post-graduation. The work was accomplished by providing clearly defined career pathway programs, creating an intentional career development pathway for students throughout their college career, integrating career preparation into curricula, and providing additional staffing to assist students and colleges better as they prepare students for the workforce.

The C2C program provided a comprehensive range of career preparation activities, which included graduating senior career development boot camps, career development mentorship programs, standard career pathways planning courses, individual career staff assistance, and new software and tracking procedures to enhance graduate employment and graduate school track.

As the work for C2C progressed over the years, UWA moved Career Services from Student Affairs to Academic Affairs to better meet students' needs. With this transition, UWA found that student engagement increased by 155% throughout the life of the C2C grant. As a result of this pivot, UWA had more partnerships with faculty members, additional staffing to meet one-on-one with students, and implemented virtual programming.

With the two offices working together, UWA's job board had over 1,200 job postings. From 2017 to 2020, UWA saw a consistent increase of over 600 recorded internships its students had from 2020 to 2022, this number decreased, partly due to COVID-19, but UWA was able to record that its students obtained over 500 internships.

Additionally, UWA improved the way it collects data from post-graduates. This success is due to disseminating information from Career Services to the Office of the Provost. Once this occurred, UWA found that the response to the First Destination Survey increased significantly, and used the information collected to improve its current curriculum based on employer needs and student preparedness for graduate programs.

By tailoring the curricula to suit the workforce and employers, UWA obtained more partnerships with these employers and workforce partners, which led to increased internships and co-op opportunities and faculty promotion from the classroom of the field experience. Faculty who could engage with employer partners were most likely to participate in the training in the workforce.

Additionally, they were better advocates for students to participate in on-campus recruiting events and learning opportunities to prepare for the job search and interviewing. By experiencing the workforce first-hand, faculty members can bring back their experiences directly into their classroom and consider employer needs as they mold their curriculum each year.

Through these partnerships, UWA established strong relationships with these companies (locally and nationwide) from an institutional and student perspective.

Throughout the CPI grant, UWA recognizes the importance of incorporating career components into the curriculum. They are now incorporating career and work skill assessments into the curriculum during freshman year, and continuing into sophomore year, to instill in students that the process of obtaining employment starts in the first year of college.

These innovative academic changes now offer curricular options for students, especially those pursuing high-demand occupations, to complete a degree faster by utilizing various learning platforms and thus get into the workforce sooner.

As a result, UWA saw a 44% growth in its four-year graduation rate and a 22% growth in its six-year graduation rate from 2017 to 2022. Prior to the CPI grant, these numbers were only 13% (four-year graduation rate) and 10% (six-year graduation rate). The CPI work was a university-wide effort and the faculty and staff at UWA have contributed immensely to providing a better college experience for their students.

Voorhees University

Website: www.voorhees.edu
Location: Denmark, SC
Enrollment (2021): 402

Voorhees University (VU), under the leadership of Interim President, Dr. Ronnie Hopkins, is a four-year liberal arts institution in Denmark, S.C., that was founded in 1897 by Elizabeth Evelyn Wright-Menafee. VU was the first Historically Black College and University in SC accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. VU's mission is to produce highly qualified graduates that leverage intellect and faith to pursue lifelong learning, healthy living, the betterment of society, and abiding faith in God.

Program Highlights:

The Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant provided Voorhees University (VU), previously known as Voorhees College, an opportunity to build upon their mantra: The next level of excellence: Begin. Believe. Become.

Students at VU begin their journey toward accessing unlimited careers in their very first year of college. VU believes strongly that its students can go anywhere they desire. Through strategized curriculum enhancements and co-curricular engagement from freshman through senior year, the guided career pathways provide the career keys and professional competencies necessary for students to be successful in college, which has the potential to lead to unlimited career choices.

The ultimate goal is for each student to graduate and become the next generation's greatest professionals.

In addition to expanding their mantra, VU, Claflin University, and Benedict College developed the South Carolina Career Cluster Pathways Program (SC-CCCP) or the South Carolina Cluster. More information about the SC Cluster is provided at the end of Appendix A.

Under the CPI grant, VU established the Talent Improvement Program (TIP) to prepare students to transition into their chosen careers. Under this initiative, many programs and courses were created and re-evaluated. VU's General Education Core credits were reduced from 50 to 44 credit hours.

The Career Pathways First-year seminar course was redesigned to include the instruction of courses by CPI staff members, fostering opportunities for onboarding career inventory and early career engagement. In addition to that, the Career Pathways First-year course became a requirement for all first-year students and provided exposure to career exploration and preparation. It helped students navigate systems and resources to achieve academic and career goals.

Follow-up courses called the CPI Professional Career Pathways courses became a requirement for all sophomores, juniors, and seniors. They were designed to enhance students' knowledge and transition into the workforce; topics addressed include career exploration, employability skills, financial literacy, and life skills. VU established a 120-credit hour experiential learning as a graduation requirement for all students obtaining a bachelor's degree. This allowed the students to have experiences in their desired field during every year they were enrolled in college.

Additionally, curriculum maps were created for students to seamlessly guide them through the program curriculum, designed around their career track of choice. These curriculum maps provide the students with a high-level view of what they need each year and allow them to plan according to their schedule and anticipated time of graduation. By ensuring that career engagements were a requirement from the beginning of the student's academic career, Voorhees saw a 21% growth in the recorded number of internships its students participated in from 2017 to 2022.

Prior to the CPI grant, Career Pathways was virtually a foreign concept to the institution, but as the year progressed, everyone at the institution, from faculty, staff, and students, recognized the importance of the CPI work.

Since then, the CPI has become a strategically integrated component of the institutional culture and a critical aspect of the very fabric of the university. In 2022, VU's name change from Voorhees College to Voorhees University signaled how strong its commitment to progress is, a true reflection of its willingness to embrace new and worthwhile changes that serve its students.

Wilberforce University

Website: www.wilberforce.edu
Location: Wilberforce, OH
Enrollment (2021): 557

Wilberforce University, founded in 1856 as the nation's first historically Black university, is a premier liberal arts institution with career development and entrepreneurial intention focused on students with high potential. Wilberforce University offers 20 undergraduate programs of study, one master's program in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and an accelerated adult learner program, Center for Leadership in Management and Business (CLIMB).

Program Highlights:

Located in Wilberforce, Ohio, Wilberforce University (WU) experienced many changes while leveraging the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant. Despite these changes, WU established and met its CPI goals. They successfully created a first-year program and a college readiness course series and incorporated a career success course into the first-year experience to provide its students with the skills and experiences needed for the real world.

Under the guidance of the CPI grant, WU established the Wilberforce University Entrepreneurial Mindset in the First-Year Experience Program. It is characterized by eight skills that each student will practice and master as part of their university experience. The acquisition of these skills is designed to facilitate students' viability in their chosen career(s), graduate/professional schools, and/or entrepreneurship as early on in their college career as possible.

The program follows five core competencies: self-assessment, career awareness, goal setting, skill development, and career management. However, these competencies do not only occur in the traditional classroom experience. Under guided practices, WU's students were engaged in numerous experiential learning opportunities through intentional partnerships and assessment.

The First-Year Experience Program was designed to retain students at a higher rate and graduate them at a higher rate and in a more realistic timeframe. To achieve this, first-year students received intrusive advising in multiple areas that connected their curricular and co-curricular experience to a guided career map. Participants had multiple opportunities early in their collegiate careers to encounter intentional and directed internships that connect students with post-graduate employment in their chosen field of study. Students were also slated to be tracked throughout their collegiate careers using a network system of academic coaches and career strategists to measure the outcome of these efforts.

By instilling the Entrepreneurial Mindset as early into their academic and professional career as possible, WU provides each of their students with guided workplace experiences to ensure they are well-prepared for career success after graduation.

Wiley College

Website: www.wileyc.edu
Location: Marshall, TX
Enrollment (2021): 665

Established in 1859, Wiley College is a historically Black, private, four-year college located in Marshall, Texas. Wiley has a long history of activism and continues to be a consistent force for social change. Wiley College offers 20 baccalaureate degrees to the citizens of Texas, the nation, and the world, through four academic divisions.

Program Highlights:

Prior to the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant, Wiley College focused primarily on getting its students to graduate school. Now, Wiley has opened an entire world of opportunities to students by integrating graduate school and career/professional opportunities. Wiley critically looked at itself and envisioned the benefits students could gain by redesigning and reimagining its freshman seminar course (GESS).

Previously, GESS was simply a Wiley 101 course where students learned about the history of Wiley College. After the redesign, it has become a comprehensive, all-around life "Skills for Success" course with weekly lessons on financial literacy and career services and has been fully integrated into the core curriculum.

Students are introduced to all the offices on campus, ranging from financial aid to career services, and are given tools such as time management and note-taking to help them succeed. Then, they are introduced to the GESS, split into two sections: a two-credit section focused on Skills for Success and a one-credit section dedicated to financial literacy. Topics covered during the financial literacy section focus on credit, credit cards, and investments rather than the psychology of money.

The addition of financial literacy as a part of the GESS course was a way to ensure all Wiley students leave Wiley with some knowledge of how to handle money. Prior to adding it to the GESS course, financial literacy workshops were given throughout the semester and primarily targeted business students who often attended as part of their coursework for various classes in their major.

With the move to the GESS course, all freshman and transfer students take financial literacy. The addition to the GESS course showed Wiley that any and all courses created should not depend on one person. As leadership changes, the courses will still be taught and continue to be fully integrated into the core curriculum.

Under the CPI grant, Wiley transformed its focus into something more than producing students ready for graduate school. They created a well-rounded curriculum that provides students with life-long skills that teach them how to be successful in professional settings, use their money wisely and their talents to lead and create social good in the world. Wiley's effort resulted in an 8% growth in its retention rate from 2017 to 2022. From this shift in focus from graduate school prep to more life-learning, students are receiving more than what was previously offered before the CPI grant.
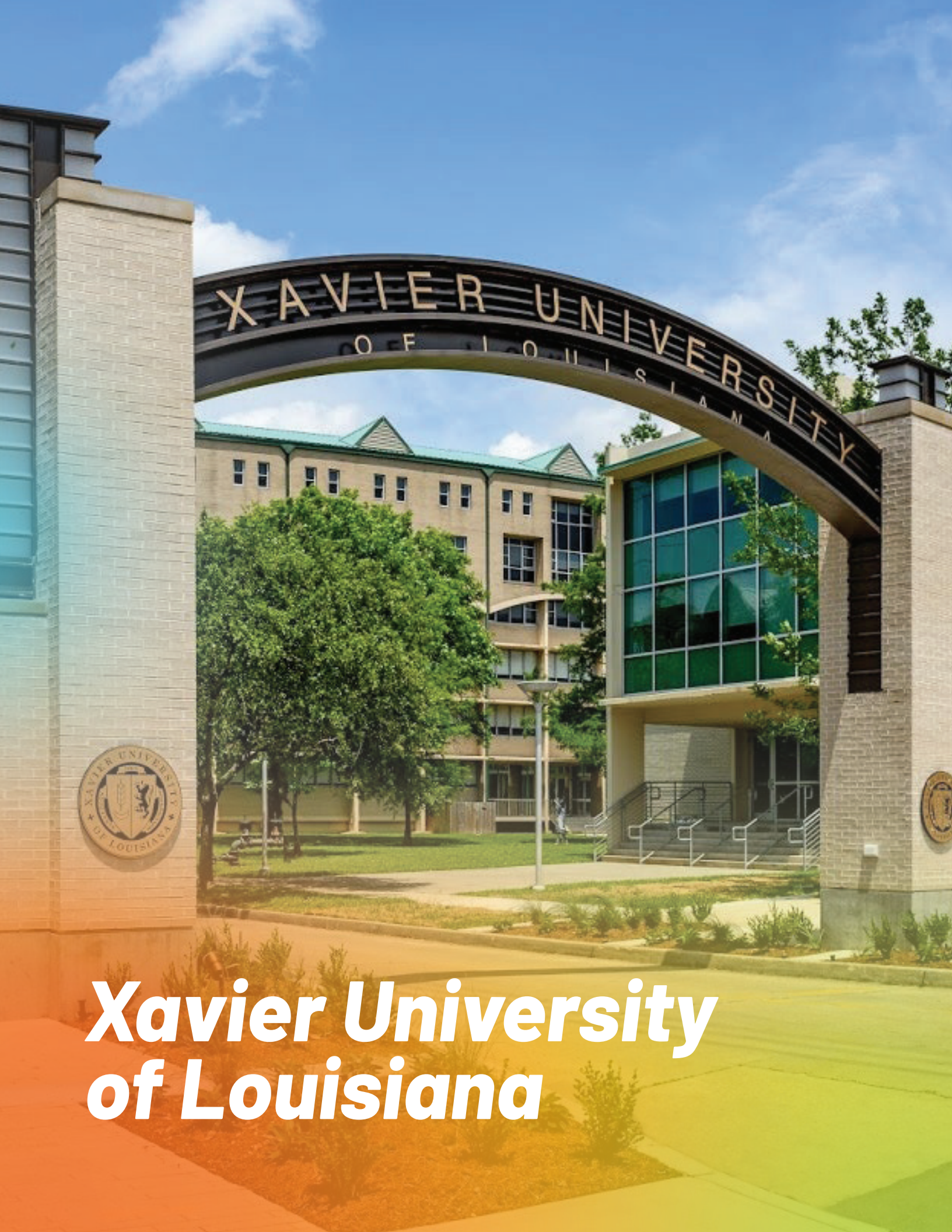
Xavier University
of Louisiana

Website: www.xula.edu
Location: New Orleans, LA
Enrollment (2021): 3,604

Xavier University of New Orleans, Louisiana, is the nation's only historically Black and Catholic university. It was founded by St. Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament in 1925 to promote a more just and humane society. Xavier prepares its students in a diverse learning and teaching environment that incorporates all educational means, including research and community service, by preparing them for leadership and service in a global society.

Program Highlights:

The overall goal for the Xavier University of Louisiana (XULA) Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) was to create a comprehensive strategy for career preparation for its students through the development and implementation of curricular enhancements, co-curricular engagements, and guided pathways.

To accomplish this, XULA established XULAWorks!, a professional development program comprising a range of academic programs, student internships, industry partnerships, and faculty development efforts.

The programs that were implemented under XULAWorks! were XULAWorks! and A Step Above!. XULAWorks! provided students with structured opportunities for personal exploration and developed key skill sets valued by employers.

A Step Above! is a one-day intensive career preparation conference for college juniors on internship preparation and participation. Additionally, XULA increased its engagement with alumni to support career mentoring and to develop a pipeline of relationships with employers. These programs and engagement opportunities allow students to explore their desired careers and skills, gain experiences and network for secure job placement.

Additionally, XULA redesigned and created courses that would assist students in directly connecting the skills cultivated through a liberal arts education and necessary workplace competencies. Such courses commence at the beginning of the student's college career by embedding career topics in the first-year curriculum, increasing the number of employment opportunities available, and making career advisors more accessible to the students. This is accomplished by embedding them into academic buildings rather than housing them in a central building, as traditionally done.

These changes recorded from the graduating student survey illustrate the impact of the CPI grant at XULA. Prior to the grant, the percentage of students with bachelor's degrees in 2017 seeking employment at the time of graduation was 39.5%.

By 2021, the percentage for the graduating class was 15.5%, which suggests that, through the programs and courses XULA implemented, roughly 53% of graduates reported job placement. XULA also saw a higher increase in its reported internships. Prior to the implementation of the grant, the total number of internships from 2014 to 2016/2017 averaged out to 32. With the added programs from 2017 to 2022, this average increased to 87 internships.

XULA's CPI work focuses on providing opportunities and support for students to prepare them for their desired post-graduation plans. The result of XULA's work can be seen in its graduating classes, as students have either entered the workforce or attended graduate/professional school within six months after graduation.

C3 Cluster:

The HBCU Consortium is the creation of the C3 Cluster, a collaboration between Morgan State University (MSU), Norfolk State University (NSU), and Tennessee State University (TSU). Through the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) grant, this cluster serves approximately 20,000 students and 1,000 faculty members among the three institutions. The C3 institutions' collaboration is based on commonalities in the following areas: being geographically located in an urban region, developing connections to growing industries, identifying similar academic profiles of students, and having a strong alumni base.

SC Cluster:

The Carolina Cluster Career Pathways Program is a consortium of three core Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in South Carolina: Voorhees University, Claflin University, and Benedict College. It was designed to develop career-ready students by implementing curriculum enhancements in programs of study, providing ongoing co-curricular engagement, and establishing guided pathways for students to navigate freshman year until graduation.

The work done by the Carolina Cluster was overseen by the State Office, which engaged the Cluster Member to design and facilitate the implementation of a range of academic programs, student internships, industry partnerships, and faculty development. The State Office also focused on strengthening and expanding employer relationships to gain insight into workforce needs and foster increased student opportunities. Employer information has been utilized to direct Cluster Members' future curriculum decisions. This was done to continue improving the professional readiness of all Cluster Members' students.

Under the CPI grant, cluster members were able to incorporate new technology, strengthen joint professional development, and promote institutional engagement. Additionally, they combined the Executive Employer Advisory Council, combined the HBCU Career Talent Showcase, and provided cross-institutional engagement.

TOT Cluster:

The TOT Cluster is a consortium of three Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs): Tougaloo College, Oakwood University, and Talladega College. Collectively they sought to build shared pathways toward career success for their institutions' students, strengthen career guidance and discernment, and enhance the liberal arts experiences of students at HBCUs.

Each institution was responsible for various initiatives. Tougaloo serves as the technology lead of the ConneXions web portal and provides the necessary foundation (API) to Oakwood University to develop the GEMConnect mobile application. Additionally, Tougaloo was the Professional Certification Lead and worked with partners to impact student development and build certificate courses.

Oakwood serves as the technology lead of the TOT cluster website and mobile application, GEMConnect. Additionally, it provides the necessary mobile application resources to each cluster member. Oakwood was also the Faculty Professional Certification lead, working toward impacting faculty development as a key ambition.

Finally, Talladega serves as the employment and internship lead, which provides resources to students, and facilitates NACE competencies (soft skills) in student professional development training and opportunities.

Appendix B: UNCF's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

In response to COVID-19, UNCF partnered with several organizations to provide participating institutions with the necessary support to fulfill the grant requirements (even when modifications were necessary), given the unique circumstances. Through funding from Blue Meridian and the global consulting firm McKinsey, UNCF collaborated with 16 UNCF member institutions, which included 11 CPI institutions, to support their needs related to crisis communications, enrollment management, re-opening strategies, financial contingency plans, and emergency management centers.

Additionally, with the gracious support from Lilly Endowment Inc., UNCF partnered with four different providers (Arizona State University, Blackboard, John Gardner Institute, and Strategic Education Inc.) to facilitate professional development training for 700+ HBCU faculty members.

Each organization provided either two-, four-, or six-week courses to train faculty members for free on online teaching and learning.

Data collected from Strategic Education showed that after taking the program, faculty members felt confident and well-prepared for designing online learning activities and guiding and maintaining online discussions.

This new development shifted how faculty thought about traditional and online learning. As they experienced the benefits of online learning, faculty began to look for ways to incorporate virtual learning (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI) into their classroom. Institutions such as Morehouse College and Clark Atlanta University are leading the way in incorporating digital learning and new technology into their coursework.

As a result of COVID-19, UNCF revised its institutional engagements with our partnering institutions to provide an intimate community in the "new" remote environment. Several components of UNCF's Institutional Engagement Strategy were revised:

Annual Convening: In 2020, the annual convening, HBCU Converge 2020 "One Mission. One Voice," where we hoped to illuminate HBCU's commonalities and united purpose while highlighting how different functional areas across an institution work toward similar goals of access and its success was canceled due to the health and safety of our institutions. In 2021, UNCF held the annual convening virtually for the first time in its history. The theme was "HCBUs Converge: Charting the Future of Black Higher Education." It was structured as a four-day event, where UNCF sought to leverage the unique experience of HBCUs and explore the changing needs of the 21st century in a broader context of systemic, cultural, and societal change. With the purpose of "Delivering on the Promise of Black Higher Education," UNCF's 2022 annual convening returned as an in-person event.

On-Campus Site Visits: At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNCF pivoted away from performing in-person site visits altogether and instead engaged in virtual site visits designed to last approximately four hours. In 2021, UNCF gave the institutions the option to either perform the site visit virtually or as a more traditional in-person site visit. As of 2022, UNCF converted to in-person site visits across all institutions.

30-Minute Check-in Calls: Originally, monthly check-in calls were designed to last 30 minutes. However, due to the pressure COVID-19 caused on the institutions, UNCF extended these calls to 60 minutes. The calls were hosted on Zoom and leveraged to discuss the CPI work and general issues concerning the campus community's health.

Town Hall Meetings: UNCF established monthly town hall meetings for institutional partners to openly discuss challenges and opportunities as they continue their efforts toward individual and collective transformation. Each month discussion topics varied as the faculty and staff relied upon these monthly town halls to stay connected and address professional and personal challenges associated with work and the broader societal climate.

Bi-Weekly Digest: To provide institutions with relevant information in an organized and timely manner, UNCF designed and published a bi-weekly digest to share news, insights, and opportunities in the spirit of supporting participating institutions.

Webinar Series: UNCF created a webinar series to inform institutions about best practices that support their efforts and share information about what is happening at their campuses. This is a monthly webinar series where UNCF invites various corporations (Grays Associates, Lightcast, Anthology, UNCF, and Inside Track) and higher education leaders to speak on their expertise. The most recent theme for the webinar series focuses on "The State of Enrollment at HBCUs and PBIs: Challenges, Trends, and Opportunities in 2022."

UNCF plans to continue these engagements with their participating institutions beyond the grant period. Additionally, many, if not all, of the institutions have expressed their appreciation for the engagements outlined above for providing a safe space to express their concerns, excitements, and key partnerships with their peers.

UNCF

A mind is a terrible thing to waste®

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