HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES – BOARDS OF TRUSTEES MATTER

by

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(Under the Direction of Libby V. Morris)

ABSTRACT

Governance is integral to the success of organizations. Understanding how successful organizations work and, more critically, what makes them effective relative to their targeted goals and objectives is essential for the successful execution of governance at institutions of higher education. This qualitative study sought to explore the training that trustees receive at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and their understanding of how it increased proficiency in their new roles. It extends what we know about trustees at HBCUs, specifically as it relates to the selection, training, development, and governance of board members.

INDEX WORDS: Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Trustees, Higher Education, Governance, Involvement, Adult Learning

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. The privilege of a living grandparent, no less the age of 102 at the commencement of the writing of this dissertation, was a blessing. My grandmother, Clemmie Dantzler Boyd, is a legend and was the epitome of grace. To my parents who are both in the nest of God - Maggie Boyd Mack and Willie Mack – you created me, and it is my prayer that I live in a manner that fully amplifies the wonders of what your imagination held in hopes for me and my existence. To my sisters and brother – Carmen, Candace, Curtis and Crystal, my gratitude is without limit for your words of encouragement and support. To my aunts, uncles, cousins and play cousins "love is truly what it is" and your love and support are priceless. To my Council of Men – my husband Gary (G1), and my sons, Garrett Connor (G2) and Garrison Boyd (G3) – **We Did It!** My successful completion of this body of work is because of your sacrifice and support.

Lord, I will lift mine eyes to the hills
Knowing my help is coming from You
Your peace,
You give me in time of the storm
You are the source of my strength
You are the strength of my life
I lift my hands in total praise to you
You are the source of my strength
You are the strength of my life
I lift my hands in total praise to you
Amen, Amen (Amen)
Richard Smallwood (1996)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Governance is integral to the success of organizations. Understanding how successful organizations work and, more critically, what makes them effective, relative to their targeted goals and objectives, is essential for the successful execution of governance at institutions of higher education. This paper will examine governance at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) with a specific focus on the role of training trustees to achieve effective boards.

Governance is essentially a decision process centered on the assumption that organizational members can cause desired results to occur by choosing appropriate courses of action (Renz, 2004). In higher education "shared governance" is often used to suggest collaborative management of an institution (Ramo, 1998). Governance and strategic leadership are focused on making informed choices about ensuring the ongoing viability of an entity and its ability to fulfill the purpose for which it exists, as well as the best ways to achieve those results.

This focus drives resource allocation decisions as well as resource requisition decisions in determining whether their choices are making a difference. Shared governance often means something different to each of the key stakeholders. When this is the case, at the first difficult decision, participants can become frustrated and sometimes walk away from a commitment to the value of governance. Worse yet, when this happens, there are mutual recriminations that can cripple the institution for years (Bahls, 2014). Effective governance begins with the clear

identification of strategic goals and objectives, as well as designating who is chiefly responsible for the execution and implementation of operational functions within an organization.

The governance approach varies from institution to institution, based on the traditions, history, and political structure of an institution (Legon, Lombardi, & Rhoades, 2013). There are typically multiple components to the structure of governance found in higher education. Among these components are the board of trustees, the senior administration, the president, and faculty. The governance structure and their decision-making processes greatly affect the life of the institution. Most specifically, the decisions of the board of trustees are important in that they are responsible for the mission and long-term health of the institution. In other words, governance and institutional purpose are related (Birnbaum, 2004).

The trends pressuring many colleges and universities are numerous, and they demand unprecedented cooperation and collaboration among boards, administrators, and presidents. They include: 1) heightened competition from institutions delivering online and non-traditional educational programs that require faculty and boards to develop timely, unified, and mission-sensitive responses; 2) calls for better student outcomes, including higher graduation and placement rates, which require building consensus among the board, administration, and faculty; and 3) affordability and accessibility issues that require all within the institution to focus on creating the best value for an increasingly diverse set of students (Bahls, 2014).

Chief among the responsibilities of trustees is a core obligation to serve the interest and welfare of the institutions for which they govern. Lack of clarity or consensus within boards on key stakeholder roles and responsibilities can be attributed to the absence of collaboration or failure to synchronize the efforts of the team. Preparedness to engage in deliberative conversations related to the long-term success and sustainability of the served institution seems

an intuitive requirement for those who would take on this charge. How these individuals, who accept the challenge of trusteeship, view their roles and responsibilities and how they are trained or otherwise learn to be effective trustees warrants exploration as an effective and responsive governance capability is vitally important during times of change in higher education.

Boards of Trustees are comprised of individuals with varied backgrounds and experiences, which, if properly leveraged, can prove advantageous to the institution. To serve effectively, trustees need to understand how institutions of higher education operate. The training and preparation of these individuals are critical since trustees are chiefly responsible for the stewardship of the academic institution to ensure the efficacy of the chosen path toward actualizing the mission of the institution.

Purpose of the Study

This study considered the role of trustees and the professional development activities offered to or required of trustees at selected private and public Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The purpose of this study is to explore the requisite preparation and support for members of the boards of trustees of HBCUs that would support their ability to enhance or become more effective and more highly functioning in their role as trustees. There is a limited body of research on HBCU senior leadership and, more specifically, on the board of trustees. The findings will add to the knowledge of trustee preparation and training and the relationship of such training and preparation to the effective governance of HBCUs.

While the findings may not be entirely generalizable to all HBCUs, the research should provide insights and understandings that may be useful to similar institutions. Trustees generally come from non-academic backgrounds, thus the preparation for the role and responsibility is of particular interest. The continued relevance and perhaps the survival of HBCUs hinge upon the

existence of engaged, resourceful, and trained boards of trustees who understand the complex regulatory environment, the intense competition for faculty and students, and the fiscal and operational demands of an academic institution. It is within this context that the adequacy and availability of professional development of HBCU trustees were explored in this research.

Research Questions

Arising from the purpose of this study is the requisite preparation and support provided to trustees of HBCUs that would support their ability to become effective contributors functioning in their role as trustees as they shape policy decisions of these institutions. There is a dearth of research relative to the governance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, more specifically as it relates to the boards of trustees of these institutions. This research will add to the knowledge of trustee preparation and training, and of the relationship such training and preparation have to the effective functioning of governance in HBCUs. The following research questions guided this study and contributed to the understanding of the training and development of trustees of Historically Black Colleges and Universities:

1. How do trustees at Historically Black Colleges and Universities view their specific roles and responsibilities?
2. What training is provided to prepare trustees for their fiduciary and other responsibilities?
3. What are the contextual factors at HBCUs that materially impact the ability of the board to serve as effective participants in the governance process?
4. What is the commitment of board members to their continued development as trustees in terms of their commitment of time and resources to the institutions they serve?

Significance of the Study

Organizational leadership at HBCUs tends to center on the role of the president. This limited view discounts the number of other essential participants in institutional governance within higher education. During periods of turmoil or when boards exercise their authority and remove a president, their power is recognized and scrutinized to assess the appropriateness of the actions of the board.

Recent examples of decisions made by boards of trustees that attracted attention and criticism included the notable leadership changes made between September and November 2016 when four HBCUs were without presidents by virtue of resignation or termination. These vacancies further exacerbated the need to examine boards, specifically how the trustees are appointed or selected, how they are trained, and the commitment required of the trustees to leverage their resources to advance the institutions they serve.

Houle (1962) states, "The widespread use of boards means they possess values which are apparently essential" (p. 8). In spite of the insightful thought on this matter over 50 years ago, the literature on trusteeship and governance remains minuscule in contrast to management or leadership. Chait, Ryan, and Taylor (2005) sought to push Houle's question of the importance of trusteeship further by examining why voluminous handbooks, pamphlets, workshops, and seminars for training exist, yet there is often disappointment with board performance and efforts to enhance board effectiveness.

Chait, Holland, and Taylor (1993) captured the dilemma of trustee performance in private colleges and universities in the book, *The Effective Board of Trustees*:

> Nearly all of these volunteers want to be effective board members, yet most are uncertain about how to do so for several reasons. First, the vast majority of trustees are not

systematically prepared for the role prior to their appointment to a governing board. Second, not many trustees have the benefit of thorough orientation or on-going board-development programs after joining a board. Finally, much of the "knowledge" about trusteeship might better be described as conventional wisdom that has not been empirically based or methodically tested. As a result, trustees and presidents must draw upon hand-me-down shibboleths rather than upon a solid body of knowledge about governance and its influence on not-for-profit organizations. Ultimately, therefore, many boards of trustees constitute a collection of successful individuals who do not perform well as a group. The sum is less than the whole. (p. 8)

Theoretical Framework

To address the purpose of this study, several theories were used to provide context to this research. Working cohesively, if not synergistically, with one another is required of members of boards of trustees, thus group socialization and development theory were explored to provide a framework for the analysis of information regarding how individuals form as members of a team to execute what is learned as part of their training and development.

Tuckman and Jensen's (1977) five stages of group development and Moreland and Levine's (1982) group socialization supported the examination of group development and growth over time. Chait et al. (1993) in their work, *The Effective Boards of Trustees*, explored six competencies required by members of governing boards: (a) contextual, (b) educational, (c) interpersonal, (d) analytical, (e) political, and (f) strategic. This study centered on the educational and interpersonal dimensions as these two dimensions offer an analytical framework through which to understand how boards aide trustees with the training and development required to carry out their responsibilities. Understanding that boards of trustees are composed

of a diverse set of individuals, it is essential that the group coalesces around a unified effort to achieve goals and objectives specific to the institutions they serve.

Summary

This study focused on the selection, training, and development of trustees serving on boards of Historically Black Colleges and Universities through qualitative design. Research that examines the governance of HBCUs is scarce. However, there are many challenges pertaining to trustees and presidents across HBCUs that warrant attention as to how individuals are selected and prepared to fulfill their roles as trustees. The role of HBCUs remains one of relevance to many, most specifically those within the African American community at large.

This dissertation consists of five chapters. In Chapter 2, the literature review frames the study and provides a historical overview of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, inclusive of the continued relevance of these institutions. Chapter 3 discusses the research design, offering a review of the qualitative process, the data sources, data collection, data analysis, and other considerations. Chapter 4 details the study's findings. Finally, Chapter 5 further explores the implications of the findings and provides recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study originated from the desire to add to the literature on training relative to the performance of boards of trustees at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The literature relevant to this study includes the history and contemporary status of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, an overview of governance practices and issues in higher education, research on roles and responsibilities of trustees, and issues of shared governance at HBCUs. This study examined the influence of factors related to the orientation and training of HBCU trustees. Based on the purpose of the study, no one overarching theory applies. Nonetheless, a focused effort has been made to select relevant concepts and theories from a few disciplines to provide an underpinning to the research.

Establishment of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, defines Historically Black Colleges and Universities as:

> …any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary [of Education] to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation. (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, 1965, p. 141)

The history of HBCUs is rooted in the Black community's commitment to racial uplift and community empowerment. This commitment has been particularly meaningful, given the sociopolitical policies and practices that deemed Black men and women incapable of succeeding as learners because of the unfounded belief that their race made them inferior and unable to appreciate the benefits of post-secondary education (Albritton, 2012). Efforts to understand the importance of HBCUs within the Black community must begin with a critical look at post-Civil War America.

Before the Civil War, few universities espoused the mission and goal of training and educating Black people. Namely, Lincoln and Cheyney Universities, in Pennsylvania, and Wilberforce University, in Ohio, were the only viable options for free Black men and women who wished to pursue a college education (Gasman & Tudico, 2008). However, the end of the Civil War yielded more opportunities for free Blacks to attain their education. The Freedman's Bureau, established by Congress in 1865 to help former Black slaves and poor Whites in the South in the aftermath of the U.S. Civil War, began opening colleges and universities to Black Americans via churches (Freedmen's Bureau - Black History - History.com., n.d.).

For example, Atlanta's Spelman Seminary, which later became Spelman College, received early support from the Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society (Laubach, 2007). "Churches such as the American Missionary Association, the Disciples of Christ, and the Methodist Episcopal Church founded colleges for religious education and training," including Dillard University, Tougaloo College, and Talladega College (Redd, 1998, p. 34). Like their White counterparts, these early Black colleges provided students with basic primary and secondary education skills (Gasman & Tudico, 2008).

Teaching such skills at HBCUs was especially important when one considered the number of newly-freed Blacks whose previous status as slaves had all but nullified any opportunity for them to receive a formal education. Mbajekwe (2006) notes that, “When the Civil War erupted in 1861, the majority of all African Americans were illiterate, and only 28% had received college-or-university-level training from an American institution” (p. 7). Although these institutions were classified as colleges or "institutes" from their founding, a major part of their mission in the early years was to provide basic primary and secondary education for students who had no previous formal education, including basic literacy (Office for Civil Rights, 2015). It was not until the early 1900s that HBCUs began to offer courses and programs at the postsecondary level. During this period, access to education enabled Blacks to experience and understand the world in ways that was once prohibited. As Blacks received a formal college education, they also acquired new skills to use in their fight for equality and justice (Roebuck & Murty, 1993).

Early financial support for HBCUs came from Black and White churches and religiously-affiliated organizations (Rovaris, 2005). Immediately following the Civil War, denominations such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African American Episcopal Zion Church, and the American Baptist Home Mission Society supported efforts to start and maintain Black colleges (Rovaris, 2005). This post-war phenomenon arose from various religious leaders’ desire to train and teach men and women who would ultimately take responsibility for spreading the message of the gospel. Gasman and Tudico (2008) noted that many White missionaries believed that their efforts to educate Blacks would create a class of morally upright citizens who knew how to live among White society and, therefore, sought to “Christianize the

freedman…and to rid the country of the 'menace' of uneducated African Americans" (p. 2). Browning and Williams (1978) also advanced the idea:

> The missionaries tended to mix social, economic, and religious ideas in their dedication to the task of uplifting the freed men and women. They were moved not only by their religious convictions but by the social and economic values that had produced the Yankee Protestant society of the North. They were in agreement that someone needed to demonstrate that former slaves could be remade into the idea of a Yankee, Calvinist, American citizen. Their common goals were to save the souls, educate the minds, care for the bodies and prepare the freedmen and women for their responsibilities as new citizens of the South. (p. 69)

Many White missionaries believed they had the best interests of Blacks in mind, and the efforts of the missionaries were met with resistance and a sense of mistrust (Browning & Williams, 1978). Perhaps this was as a result of the position that many Blacks felt that their souls were already "saved," although they appreciated the help of northern missionaries.

Blacks "desired not to change the system but to achieve greater participation in it as teachers, deans, presidents, and trustees" (McPherson, 1970, p. 1357). This struggle was exemplified at Howard University in 1877 when the need arose to select a new president. There was a battle between the institution's White and Black members of the board of trustees as to who their new president should be. Black trustees and students championed John Mercer Langston, dean of the law school, vice president of the university, and an African American. Many White supporters of the school did not believe that Langston was the appropriate person for the presidency (McPherson, 1970) and ultimately selected William Patton, a White

Congregationalist minister and abolitionist, as the school's next president. While Howard University continued to appoint White presidents at the end of Patton's tenure, the intense discussion and disagreement that ensued with the selection of subsequent presidents underscored the desire by many Blacks to assert more authority and control over their institutions (Albritton, 2012).

The passage of the Second Morrill Act in 1890 aided in the proliferation of HBCUs. This act targeted former Confederate states, required states to show that race was not a factor in already established universities' admissions criteria and/or to provide a separate land-grant institution for people of color. Specifically, the Second Morrill Act included a provision that stated:

> No money shall be paid out under the act to any State or Territory for the support and maintenance of a college where a distinction of race or color is made in the admission of students, but the establishment and maintenance of such colleges separately for white and colored students be held to be in compliance with the provisions of this act if the funds received in such State or Territory be equitable. (Second Morrill Act, 1890)

The Second Morrill Act supported the growth and advancement of HBCUs; however, inadequate funding undermined the proliferation of HBCUs and ensured that Black and White institutions remained separate. Even in their attempt to guarantee Blacks an education, sponsors of the Second Morrill Act adopted a contradictory stance that ensured that new land grant HBCUs would not be on equal footing with their White counterparts (Albritton, 2012). Insufficient financial support offered by individual states further impeded the institutional capacity for long-term financial solvency and the acquisition of physical resources equal to those

of predominately White institutions. Jenkins (1991) emphasized this, citing the 1919 Federal Bureau of Education Study of Alabama Colleges:

> State funding for Alabama's black land-grant institution remained constant at $4,000 annually. Unlike its White counterpart, whose state funding averaged $65,000 yearly between 1900 and 1916, at no time during the period did black colleges benefit from special appropriations to meet the growth in enrollment and the advancing cost of maintenance. (p. 66)

Such policies and practices as the discrepancies in funding hindered HBCUs throughout the South, limiting their capacity to provide the necessary resources to educate students and invariably rendering them financially inferior to their White counterparts for years to come. University records confirm that the composition of the trustees during this time and prior to the Second Morrill Act was primarily White and male. For example, Wilberforce University had both Black and White members of its leadership team as early as 1856 when it was founded by Methodist Episcopal Church leaders (Wilberforce University, 2017). Likewise Cheyney University, founded in 1837 as the Institute for Colored Youth, was initially led by a board of trustees comprised of 13 Quakers as cited in the will of the institution's founding philanthropist, Richard Humphreys (Cheyney University, 2017). While there is no clear indication that any of these trustees were of African descent, it cannot be assumed that there were none.

The other original HBCU was also heavily influenced by its White founders and supporters but soon found Black leadership to be viable and necessary. Founded as the Ashmun Institute by White missionaries affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in 1854, Lincoln University received its charter from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on April 24, 1854, making it the nation's first degree-granting Historically Black College and University (HBCU)

(Lincoln University, 2017). The first principal of the university was White but that role was filled alternately by White and Black male educators until 1880 when Inman E. Page was appointed President of the university. After him came a succession of Black administrators with only a couple of White educators taking on leadership. In 2005, Dr. Carolyn Mahoney became the first Black woman to serve as president of Lincoln University (Lincoln University, 2017).

HBCUs and Civil Rights Legislation

Leading up to the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s and despite the Fourteenth Amendment (1868) guaranteeing newly-freed slaves equal protection under the law (The Library of Congress, n.d.), Blacks were often treated differently from Whites in many parts of the country, especially the South. In fact, many state legislatures enacted laws that led to the legally mandated segregation of the races, including in education. These laws came to be known as Jim Crow laws (United States Courts). In 1892, Homer Plessy, a passenger on a Louisiana train, refused to sit in a Jim Crow car. Mr. Plessey was arrested. Ultimately, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) challenged Louisiana's state law in the United States Supreme Court because it conflicted with the 13th and 14th Amendments. Under Chief Justice Melville Fuller, the Court established the separate-but-equal rule.

The U.S. Supreme Court Decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (United States Courts, 1954) is one of the most pivotal opinions ever submitted by the Court and highlights its role in effecting changes in national and social policy. *Brown v. Board of Education*, acknowledged as one of the most important Supreme Court decisions of the 20th century, unanimously held that the racial segregation of children in public schools violated the Equal Protection Clause, which provides that no state shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction "the equal protection of the laws" as guaranteed by the United States Constitution (Fourteenth Amendmendment, Section I,

1789 (rev. 1992). While the decision was not successful in fully desegregating public education in the United States, it placed the Constitution on the side of racial equality (McBride, 2006). In 1954, the United States had racially segregated schools, made legal by *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which held that segregated public facilities were constitutional as the Black and White facilities were equal. However, by the mid-twentieth century, civil rights organizations established legal and political challenges to racial segregation (McBride, 2006).

In the early 1950s, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) brought a class action lawsuit on behalf of Black school children and their families in Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware, seeking court orders to compel school districts to let Black students attend White public schools (McBride, 2006). Chief among these class action cases, *Brown v. The Board of Education* was filed against the Topeka, Kansas, school board by representative-plaintiff Oliver Brown, parent of one of the children denied access to Topeka's White schools. The case was based on the claim that Topeka's racial segregation violated the Constitution's Equal Protection Clause because the city's Black and White schools were not equal to each other and never could be (McBride, 2006).

Subsequently, the federal district court dismissed his claim, ruling that the segregated public schools were "substantially" equal enough to be constitutional under the Plessy doctrine. The ruling was appealed to the Supreme Court, which consolidated and then reviewed all the school segregation actions together. The Court in a unanimous decision held that racial segregation of children in public schools violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, which states that "no state shall make or enforce any law which shall ... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws" (www.thirteen.org, n.d.).

The Court noted that Congress, when drafting the Fourteenth Amendment in the 1860s, did not expressly intend to require integration of public schools. Conversely, that Amendment did not prohibit integration. In any case, the Court asserted that the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees equal education today (United States Courts). The Court ruled that public education in the 20th Century had become an essential component of a citizen's public life, forming the basis of democratic citizenship, normal socialization, and professional training. In this context, any child denied a good education would be unlikely to succeed in life –denying a public good. However, the Court concluded that since a state assumes the responsibility for providing universal education, it must be equally afforded to both Blacks and Whites.

This seminal ruling, along with the social, political, and economic gains brought about as a result of the Civil Rights Movement, increased opportunities for Black students to attend schools once closed to them. This ruling resulted in Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) gradually offering admissions to more Black students. Before the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, 90% of Black college students were educated in traditionally Black schools (Fleming, 1984). By the early 1960s, the percentage of Black college students (approximately 100,000) attending HBCUs dropped from 90% to 70%. By 1980, only 20% of African Americans who attended college were enrolled in HBCUs (Freeman & McDonald, 2004).

The change in the higher education landscape, which resulted from the *Brown* decision, as well as the 1964 Civil Rights Legislation, created an unintended consequence: HBCUs were no longer the primary post-secondary educational option for Black students. Over time, this reality has challenged administrators at HBCUs to creatively think as they work to ensure that these schools remain relevant in an ever-changing American context (Prince & Ford, 2016). Efforts to achieve these goals demand that the men and women responsible for the administration

of HBCUs clearly define the institutional mission and, in so doing, set goals that lead to clearly defined outcomes (Albritton, 2012).

Today, there are over 100 HBCUs located in 19 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Of these, 51 are public and 49 are private nonprofit institutions. The number of students enrolled at HBCUs rose by 32 percent between 1976 and 2014, from 223,000 to 294,000 (U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, Higher Education General Information Survey, 2016). In comparison, total enrollment in degree-granting institutions increased by 84 percent, from 11 million to over 20 million, during that period (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). Figure 1 provides a geographical depiction of the location of Historically Black Colleges and Universities illustrating the predominance of these institutions in the southeastern United States.

Figure 1 Map of HBCUs (Map of HBCU Schools, n.d.)

What is Governance?

Peripherally, research on governance at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) has largely been ignored and differences that exist between HBCUs and predominately White institutions relating to decision-making are not well documented (Minor, 2004). This void in the research will be examined to add to the available literature on this critically important subject.

For decades, governance and decision-making at colleges and universities have been a contentious issue (Allan, 1971; Baldridge, 1982). Some HBCUs have been challenged by issues related to shared governance, ranging from boards that sometimes intrude on faculty roles and responsibilities to board interference with management. Inclusiveness and shared governance are essential elements of an effective higher-education leadership model. Schexnider & Ezell (2010) note that effective leadership in the presidency and strong board governance, along with a commitment to work together to fulfill the mission of the institution, are essential to the success of a college or university.

A president who dominates his or her board or a board that undermines its president will invariably lead to failure. There have been enough instances of this in past years that it has become increasingly difficult to recruit and retain outstanding higher-education leaders for some HBCU campuses. Similarly, getting the best talent to serve on all boards of trustees is also becoming more difficult, but as it relates to HBCUs, the difficulty is mainly due to the frustrations related to under-funding, politics, or a combination of both (Schexnider & Ezell, 2010).

Governance at HBCUs represents an enigma of sorts for the higher education community. Although many campuses promote the value of shared governance and faculty involvement in decision-making, the practice of such creates challenge due to multiple interpretations of what shared governance means and the structural complexity of many campuses (Baldwin & Leslie, 2001; Tierney & Minor, 2003). This is due, in part, to a lack of general understanding about the operations of HBCUs and a subsequent shortage of governance research within this institutional sector (Minor, 2008b). Many of the current hypotheses about the state of governance and decision-making at HBCUs are void of appropriate methods or theoretical frameworks for studying this population of institutions and those who lead them (Minor, 2004). An increasing body of K-12 literature suggests culturally sensitive methods of Afrocentric methods that take into account historical, cultural, and contemporary experiences of African Americans as central research paradigms (Kershaw, 1990; Tillman, 2002).

The president and the board should understand their respective roles, that is, the leadership of the institution by the president and governance and policy-setting by the board. Both the president and the board are charged with working collaboratively on behalf of the institution (Legon et al., 2013). As the Association of Governing Boards noted in its seminal 2006 report, *The Leadership Imperative*, integral leadership "links the president, the faculty, and the board together in a well-functioning partnership purposefully devoted to a well-defined, broadly affirmed institutional vision" (p 4).

For governing boards of Black colleges, the challenges are daunting. At many of the private institutions, governing boards are self-perpetuating. In some cases, these boards may be larger than necessary, and members may serve without regard to term limits, making it hard to recruit people with fresh perspectives and different backgrounds and expertise. An even bigger

challenge may be finding trustees who understand the role of the board (and the separate role of the president) and are willing to commit the time and resources—both intellectual and financial—to be effective (Schexnider & Ezell, 2010).

Further, Schexnider and Ezell (2010) assert that at public Black colleges, governing boards are appointed by elected officials and thus are highly susceptible to political and individual agendas. This interference has led to high turnover in the presidencies of several black colleges, and the resultant instability has rendered many of these institutions vulnerable to internal and external detractors. The greater their ability to influence an institution's budget determines the greater the official's influence. These factors and others contribute to the challenges these institutions face in recruiting leaders willing to serve as president or trustee (Schexnider & Ezell, 2010).

HBCUs are often scrutinized and criticized because of their lack of formal governance structures, especially when compared to Predominantly White Institutions (Billingsley, 1982; Guy-Sheftall, 2006; Phillips, 2002). Minor (2004) asserts that shared governance is often characterized as a tangible source of tension between faculty and administrators, where the latter is constrained by the history and tradition of HBCUs and are under pressure in some cases that leads to isolation and ostracism of outspoken faculty members. Boards of trustees at both private and public HBCUs continue to exercise a much tighter reign over their institutions than do their counterparts at White colleges. The public boards follow the wishes of racially insensitive legislatures and community leaders who may have no desire to see HBCUs expand their traditional missions while the private boards try to please wealthy benefactors (Chandler, 2006).

At the lower levels of institutional governance, where faculty may be involved in decisions about developing and revising handbooks, due process matters, salary and budget

issues, and administrative searches, the role of the faculty senate is often usurped by administrators who hand-pick the faculty representatives on the relevant committees. The shared governance process is further compromised by the faculty being greatly outnumbered on the decision-making bodies (Ramo, 1998).

Minor (2008b) has addressed criticism of HBCUs for autocratic governance by contending that the cultural context of HBCUs has been ignored. His survey of leadership supported the idea that strong Black HBCU presidents not only were essential for the operation of these institutions but also may have been their reason for survival (Gasman, 2009; Minor, 2008b)

The founding of Historically Black Colleges and Universities arose out of a recognized need for a formalized educational system in which to educate previously enslaved descendants of Africa, African Americans who were disallowed the privilege (Palmer & Gasman, 2008). This affected the early development of HBCUs and governance practice to this day. The teaching traditions of these institutions, the potential paradox their missions present, and the acknowledgment of a racialized climate are key to understanding governance and decision-making in this institutional sector (Palmer & Gasman, 2008, p. 58). Policymakers and practitioners who have an understanding of the context are likely to view governance at HBCUs more accurately than those with a limited understanding of and experience with the cultural perspective of an HBCU. Minor (2004) notes that those without an understanding of the context are susceptible to making unqualified comparisons between HBCUs and predominately White institutions that usually renders HBCUs deficient. The consequences of such may be apparent in the seemingly negative disposition many higher education leaders exhibit toward HBCUs. It is from this perspective that one must, as Minor (2004) states,

> Understand that the decision-making context can help higher education leaders and campus constituents more accurately assess the challenges associated with governance at HBCUs. For those outside these institutions, taking into account the context permits a fuller consideration of the challenges facing these institutions and offers insight into how they might be improved. (p.40)

Amid the significant internal and external changes impacting postsecondary institutions in the 21st century, the research suggests that HBCUs are among the most vulnerable, thus careful attention is warranted around the selection of presidents and how they lead these unique institutions (Mbajekwe, 2006). This admonition invariably translates into an imperative to purposively select and train trustees.

As the year 2016 closed, four HBCU presidents were terminated from the intuitions they led, which presented new leadership challenges at these HBCUs. Trustees are responsible for the hiring and firing of the president. The judgment exercised under the authority of the boards of trustees amplify the criticality of the selection, training, and development of trustees who personally commit to understanding and are willing to assume the responsibility for the role to ensure the best interest of the institutions they serve.

The Beginnings of Trusteeship in America

Emerging in America as part of the colonial colleges, the regard and imperative for boards of trustees is a mainstay of importance in higher education in the United States. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) highlight that "generally, scholars assume that university presidents are the key decision makers and institutional leaders" (p. 253). In truth, every institution has a board of trustees at the top of its hierarchy (Duryea & Williams, 2000; Kaplin & Lee, 2006).

The origination of the American college governance structure dates back to the founding of Harvard College, which in 1637 had its charter amended to include a provision for a committee to oversee the school (Morison, 1935; Duryea & Williams, 2000). Deemed the Board of Overseers in 1642, this group of six court magistrates and six ministers, all of whom were men, were tasked with providing oversight of the operations of the fairly new college. Subsequently, with the encouragement of the college president at the time, Henry Dunster, another charter was granted in 1650, which supported the creation of the Corporation, a governance group comprised of the president, treasurer, and five teaching fellows (Duryea & Williams, 2000). With the consent of the Board of Overseers, the Corporation was charged with initiating policy and action. Most specifically, the Corporation was to manage the affairs of the college, while the ex-officio Overseers were to provide accountability to the church and state (Hall, 1997).

Most institutions did not follow Harvard's bicameral governance model. Instead, Yale set the precedent that all other colonial colleges followed, and that is commonly observed among institutions today (Duryea & Williams, 2000). In May 1745, the Connecticut legislature approved an act for the full establishment of Yale College. The institution's charter sanctioned a single board, composed of the president and fellows, that granted rights to receive and manage bequests and donations, use a common seal, manage the school's affairs, and establish laws, rules, and regulations for the internal management, as well as confer honors, degrees, and licenses (Duryea & Williams, 2000).

Issues and challenges surrounding governance are relatively under-examined. A lack of clarity about one's role can be attributed to the absence of collaboration or failure to synchronize

the efforts of the team. Tierney and Minor (2003) found that campus constituents define shared governance in three ways:

> *Collaborative* – university constituents are collectively making decisions about the direction of the campus. *Stratified* – a system of governance where certain constituents make decisions according to the decision type (e.g., faculty decides on curriculum and administration determines policy and budgetary issues). *Consultative* – governance structures in which the president reserves decision-making authority with the expectation that he/she consult with the university constituents before making a decision (Tierney & Minor, 2003). With the three varied definitions of shared governance, it is not surprising that one might find the concept of shared governance ambiguous as it appears to mean something different at various times. (Keller, 2001).

While many institutions have established strategic plans and some have infused the stated goals and objectives throughout the institution, the notion of shared governance becomes problematic for each stakeholder to work in a unified manner, divided by specific constituencies, to drive the advancement of institutional goals, ensuring the sustainability of institutions. Few studies consider these contextual issues in which university decisions are made (Berdahl, 1991).

Structural governance is defined as hierachial, while decentralized structural governance is viewed as an informal decision-making and consensus-building process (Birbaum, 1988; Berdahl, 1991). The coordination of higher education systems is complex and difficult to analyze. Universities are unique organizations made up of academic subjects and niches, or academic tribes as (Becher, 1989) described them. This loose configuration has structural implications for internal dynamics, as it creates challenges for internal decision-making and institutional governance overall. Universities bring together groups of professionals, each doing

a different job, along with many decision-making processes and a variety of institutional outputs (Longin, 2002).

There is an organizational and functional complexity to universities, and, to grasp this complexity, some scholars have proposed terms such as multiversity (Kerr, 1963) or federal or conglomerate form of organization (Clark, 1995). Because of such features, universities are (or have been) considered a typical example of a loose-coupling organization or a form of organized anarchy. Universities as loose-coupling institutions are characterized by their causal indeterminacy and their external and internal fragmentation (Orton & Weick, 1990).

The effectiveness of governance structures has significant consequences for institutional performance (Mortimer, 1971). However, the literature offers few insights on how the configuration of governing bodies influences campus decision-making or institutional effectiveness. As the environment of higher education continues to change, governance structures have remained relatively static (Longin, 2002). Kezar & Eckel (2004) conclude, through a synthesis of the literature, that the majority of studies conducted on governance focus perhaps too heavily on the structure. Like other scholars, they suggest that cultural or social perspectives may be useful in understanding governance (Del Favero, 2003; Tierney, 2004).

In *Power and Conflict*, Baldridge (1971) presented the concept of the human side of governance, alluding to the notion of policy, values, and conflict arising from people, not structures. Kezar and Eckel (2004) address the imperative for new and innovative concepts that illuminate the complexity of governance in higher education. They assert that while there is a large body of research on governance, it is almost exclusively focused on structural theories with less of an emphasis on political theories and fewer still which focus on improving governance. Further, there is almost no research on how faculty senates and joint fiduciary committees

interact. This gap in the literature suggests the need for an open systems approach to the study of governance (Kezar & Eckel, 2004). Kezar and Eckel's (2004) work presents the clear and present recognition of the need for an alternate means to assess how well the key stakeholders within governance structures of institutions of higher education work together as a key indicator in measuring how effective the institution is in achieving favorable outcomes.

Few studies address the entire governance process as most scholarship focuses on subunits of analysis, such as student government, governing boards, or faculty senates. There is also virtually no scholarship on how these groups interact (e.g., faculty senates and joint fiduciary committees). As previously stated, much of the literature suggests that an open-systems approach to the study of governance is needed (Kezar & Eckel, 2004).

In commenting on shared university governance in the United States, Tierney (2004) addresses the lack of governance research utilizing a human relations perspective. He notes that this perspective could be used to evaluate issues associated with the participation of faculty and students in institutional governance, issues related to community members on state boards and the actions and behaviors of governing boards. This work went beyond a review and assessment of governance from a structural perspective and took into account the dynamics of individuals working together to achieve a common goal (Tierney, 2004). This work aids in the effort to close the gap in the literature as it pertains to scholarship on governance through a lens of human relations.

Hendrickson, Lane, and Harris (2012) provide a perspective that centers on how boards of trustees should work to foster relationships with internal and external stakeholders. Their work also offers developmental guidance on how to effectively discharge trustee responsibilities and how to develop their skills for managing critical relationships. This text projects the need for

a more concerted effort to engage the participants in governance structures to know their roles and understand the associated responsibilities inherent within their management of key decisions and their effect on the institutions they serve.

The Association of Governing Boards (AGB) (1996), an organization that supports the boards of directors for universities and colleges, provides an insightful viewpoint surmising that, while potentially time-consuming, neglecting work to foster relationships among stakeholders can prove detrimental. Although this may be perceived to lengthen the decision-making process of governing entities, the information still supports the conclusion that collegiality among stakeholders enhances performance. To that end, agility, flexibility, and expeditiousness are all tenets more commonly found in corporate governance (Capano, 2015).

Birnbaum (2004), a leading researcher in higher education, asserts that governance is more than a decision-making structure that is categorized as good, bad, effective, or ineffective. He postulates that the effectiveness of the institution is being abated when the administration is viewed as the primary driver in decision-making. A sense of urgency is present in much of the research as the discussion acknowledges the duty of those participating in governance to take advantage of a full process of assessing and evaluating essential elements within the academic environment (Birnbaum, 2004). It follows that an actively engaged faculty will afford an open and detailed assessment of matters of relevance to the institution. The text also provides insight in contrast with Bok's (1990) perspective that the rapidity with which decisions are made allows the institution an operational posture of an entrepreneurial presence more closely aligned with corporate organizations (Birnbaum, 2004).

Gasman and Commodore (2014) point to Beverly D. Tatum, the ninth president of Spelman College from 2002-2015, contending that as president of an HBCU, she enjoyed a

tenure at Spelman that demonstrated fundraising skills, a firm respect for faculty governance, and a commitment to student success. Tatum had also been a national voice on higher education issues, taking on a number of difficult topics, implying that forward-thinking presidents seemingly realize that everything evolves, including institutions, and that the goal is to facilitate an evolution that is progressive without being destructive. When Dr. Tatum arrived at Spelman, she came into an environment where shared governance had already been established as a part of the organizational culture and had proven to work well (Gasman & Commodore, 2014). Dr. Tatum did not have a need to change what was thought to be already working well, but rather to make sure to maintain the system's strengths and buttress its weaknesses. When President Tatum announced that the College surpassed its capital campaign goal of $157 million, she was accompanied by Spelman's chair of the Board of Trustees. This image served as validation of the need for a forward-thinking president to have the support and assistance of a board that is headed in the same direction (Gasman & Commodore, 2014).

Gasman and Commodore's (2014) research confirmed that teamwork and a supportive board and board chair are necessary. Nevertheless, being supportive is not synonymous with being yes-people. Gasman and Commodore (2014) do not suggest that board members should never question or disagree with a president's goals or the path to reach these goals, rather board members should not hinder or present themselves as obstacles to a president with well-intentioned proposals for the future of the institution. The board must play its part for the sake of the students (Gasman & Commodore, 2014). A relationship of mutual respect and support is one that a forward-thinking president understands and strives to create and foster.

Leading researcher Capano (2015) describes academic governance as more of a salient concept for policy-making rather than decision-making. Capano provides three specific aspects

of governance: dynamics, strategy, and capacity. The dynamics of governance suggest that modes of governance identified in earlier studies may not be stable, but rather fluid, meaning that there are no set governance arrangements within a given political system. These may change over the course of time, as institutions adopt different architectural features and mix policy tools in different ways. A model of governance, in this perspective, is an equilibrium moment, rather than a permanent, stable construct (Capano, 2015).

Governance strategy is a concept that reflects the ability of institutions to alter governance arrangements and give them their dynamic character. This suggests that governance requires a specific undertaking by different policy actors, as they seek the best governance arrangement to attain their purposes (Capano, 2015). This is particularly true of governments since they continue to be in charge of systemic responsibility and are the most powerful authoritative actors in virtually all societies.

Governance capacity is a third critical concept, one which emphasizes that not every choice of a governance mechanism is likely to be equally successful in terms of attaining government goals. Every governance arrangement must be effective; that is, capable of resolving political and policy problems. However, simply designating or advocating a specific arrangement does not ensure its success (Capano, 2015).

With regard to HBCUs, Minor (2004) explicitly states that:

> Because research on governance at HBCUs has been ignored, differences that exist between HBCUs and predominately White institutions, with respect to decision-making, are not well documented…..Determining contextual differences that influence decision making or leadership practices are important when assessing institutional effectiveness. (p.42)

Minor (2004) further argues that:

> …criticisms endured by HBCUs and their leaders have been made in the absence of contextual understanding that may shed a different light on the appropriateness of governance structures and decision-making practices used in these institutions. Unfortunately, scholarship on governance forces scholars, policymakers, and campus leaders to speculate about how well or poorly HBCUs are governed. (p. 42)

Simply stated, committee consensus is not what shared governance is; nor is it engaging faculty administrators to take on additional work. Instead, committee consensus is a multidimensional concept that balances essentially two academic tasks: administrative accountability with faculty and staff participation in planning and decision-making Chait et al., 2005). Effective faculty governance requires a focus on professional academic priorities and full administrative disclosure of all facets of governance (Guy-Sheftall, 2006).

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) supports the idea of interdependence and mutual support between the administration and faculty, and it states that they share primary responsibility for "curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process" (American Association of University Professors, 1966, p.13). While this may be the desired intent, it is not the reality for colleges and universities. Additionally, it also speaks of the college or university as being a joint enterprise. According to AAUP (1966), joint effort in an academic institution can take a variety of forms:

> In some instances, an initial exploration or recommendation will be made by the president with consideration by the faculty at a later stage; in other instances, a

> first and essentially definitive recommendation will be made by the faculty, subject to the endorsement of the president and the governing board. In still others, a substantive contribution can be made when student leaders are responsibly involved in the process. (p.13)

It is noted, however, that it is in the area of shared governance that HBCUs have been most criticized by those concerned with the state of the profession. The AAUP has censured several HBCUs for violations of academic freedom and shared governance: Clark Atlanta University (2010), Stillman College (2009), Benedict College (2005), Virginia State University (2005), Meharry Medical College (2004), Philander Smith College (2004), the University of the District of Columbia (1998), and Talladega College (1986). It is troubling to imagine that faculty members at HBCUs, although responsible for student learning, are not active in the leadership of these schools. Davenport (2015) asserts the lack of shared governance is one of the biggest barriers to faculty advancement and development at primarily African American institutions.

According to Hendrickson et al., (2012), the importance society ascribes to higher education and the benefits from it cannot be overstated, yet a huge responsibility for the operation, growth, and much of the success of our nation's colleges and universities falls to inadequately trained volunteers--the men and women who make up each institution's board of trustees. Boards of trustees hold in trust the financial, physical, and intellectual assets of the institution, a responsibility that cannot be delegated to others (Hendrickson et al., 2012).

The Role of Boards and Board Members

What is known is that faculty and trustees bring very different backgrounds, responsibilities, and skill sets. Trustees, as fiduciaries, bear ultimate responsibility for ensuring

sound financial decisions, as well as sound academic quality (Burns, 1966). However, not all trustees have institutional leadership experience in academic settings. Where there is a void of understanding of higher education governance, there is a need for education, training, and development for their role as trustees. In some cases, this leaves this core group frustrated by the pace of decision-making in the academic institutional setting (Hendrickson et al., 2012). They may expect the president to make decisions quickly with other administrators and "get results." Boards must approve and execute the institution's mission and enhance relationships among internal and external constituencies served by the organization. It is unrealistic to assume that volunteer board members, who often lack intimate knowledge of the nuances of shared governance and are most often not educators themselves, can fully understand and execute decisions in the best interests of the college or university they serve without some mechanism of expert support, especially when there is a lack of training and board meetings are convened only infrequently (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2010). Novak & Johnston (2005) explains:

> Trustees are guardians of the public trust in that boards of trustees, rather than government officials, govern our colleges and universities. They are responsible for ensuring that the institutions will serve the purpose for which they were designed, that they will fulfill their missions and serve the public good by creating an educated citizenry, contributing to the creation of knowledge, and preserving cultural heritage. [Trustees] serve as the bridge between higher education and society. (p.90)

Chait et al. (1993) in *The Effective Board of Trustees* assert that "there are specific characteristics and behaviors that distinguish strong boards from weak boards and identified

competencies requisite for boards. (p. 3)." The authors identified the following six competencies:

Table 1. Six Competency Dimensions Needed for Effective College/University Boards

Dimension	Requirement
Contextual	The board understands and considers the culture and norms of the organization it governs.
Educational	The board takes the necessary steps to ensure that trustees are well informed about the institution, the profession, and the board's roles, responsibilities, and performance.
Interpersonal	The board nurtures the development of trustees as a group, attends to the board's collective welfare, and fosters a sense of cohesiveness.
Analytical	The board recognizes complexities and subtleties in the issues it faces and draws upon multiple perspectives to dissect complex problems and to synthesize appropriate responses.
Political	The board accepts as one of its priorities the need to develop and maintain healthy relationships with key constituencies.
Strategic	The board helps envision and shape the institutional direction and helps ensure a strategic approach to the organization's future.

In addition to Chait et al.'s (1993) characteristics, commonly referenced sources for the role of the trustee are the American Association of University Professors' (2006) Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities, the Carnegie Foundation's perspective on the roles and responsibilities of trustees (1973), and the Association of Governing Boards' (AGB) (2010) (2010) Statement on Board Responsibility for Institutional Governance. Summations of the perspectives on trusteeship from these documents can be found in Appendix A. That summation illustrates a consensus among the three in relation to trustee responsibilities.

First, the board is the ultimate authority at the institution, responsible for its governance and for serving as the final intermediary for disputes among students, faculty, and staff. It is

tasked with identifying what trustees responsibilities are across the community at large and for the campuses they serve that relate the institution to the larger community. Lastly, the board is responsible for the financial welfare of the institution, providing direction and policy on fiscal matters, including the budget and endowment, among other responsibilities (Chait et al., 1993).

There are other responsibilities that two of the three organizations assign to trustees. The Carnegie Commission and the AGB, for instance, align on their view that trustees are tasked with appointing, assessing, and removing, the president, if necessary. The AGB and the AAUP affirm the board's responsibility to leave the administration and faculty the responsibility for day-to-day management of the college and the conduct of teaching and research. It is of special note that both history and mission are infused with the board's responsibilities. The AAUP points to trustees' "special obligation" to engage the use of the institution's history in its decision-making processes, while the Carnegie Commission explicitly describes the board as "a guardian of the mission." Legon (2014) highlights the fact that boards are made up of

> …successful leaders, mostly from outside the academy, who need to respect the culture of the institution they serve. At the same time, they must also recognize the pace of change requires a new level of fiduciary engagement. In an environment of constant challenges, boards must move to "strategic governance," which means primarily forming a far more robust partnership with institutional leaders. (p. 17)

In acquiescence to this assertion, the additional layer of culture matters specifically when this premise is applied to HBCUs. For governance systems to operate effectively, there has to be a core level understanding of not only the mission of the institution but also its history and evolution.

Trustee Responsibilities

Trustee rights and responsibilities are delineated in the charter, but it does not explain how a good fiduciary will leverage matters for the good of the institution (Elliott & Chambers, 1934). Among the rights granted to private college trustee boards, most noteworthy are self-perpetuation, lay membership, and ultimate authority. Self-perpetuating board vacancies are staffed through an appointment or election (Hall, 1997). Trustee seats are viewed as equivalent to an office. Individuals occupy and vacate positions, but the seats remain with the institution. Some scholars assert that an exclusive right to decide who joins the board helps to explain an institutions' adaptability over time:

> Governing boards, with some exception, have made an extraordinary adjustment to changes occurring around them. Their corporate structure, both in the public and the private domains, has allowed the selection of new board members who have brought boards' responsiveness to the changing values and needs of the nation. Under the control of corporate, higher education as a system of colleges and universities has assimilated an assimilated an expanded view of the instruction and learning, of the extension of knowledge, and of public service. (Duryea & Williams, 2000, p. 222)

In addition to contextual knowledge, board members should understand the extent of their authority and the source of that authority as an essential element of the governance structure at institutions of higher education. Much of the literature centers on the faculty role in governance while boards are scarcely represented. The absence of discussion of boards is peculiar in that there is a heightened role of authority bestowed upon this entity in that they have the vested power to hire and fire the president. At private institutions, the board of trustees set

the salary and other compensation and tenure for presidents (Ehrenberg, Cheslock, & Espifantseva, 2010).

Blanchard (1967) argued that boards are seldom tapped for their opinions outside of financial matters. In contrast, Griffiths (1979) proposed that the final authority for the college--its mission, programs, and actions--is to be in the hands of the trustees. There is nothing new in this description of board responsibilities, but the change in the colleges and their environments gives further emphasis to this fundamental tenet of boardsmanship. Gleazer (1985) broadly examined the relationship between boards and chief executive officers with a specific emphasis on the pressures that affect the behaviors between the two. He further noted that informed national observers report that trustees are becoming more involved than they were formerly (Gleazer, 1985).

Reasons for this include arduous budgeting reviews necessitated by financial cutback and the fact of more frequent litigation to remedy alleged wrongs by the colleges. Collective bargaining often has a similar effect. As the agenda of boards become heavier, trustees often perceive the role of the college president in a different light and more board decisions require more time and sharper attention. In the earlier days of the community colleges, board members commonly knew little about the nature of community colleges, their distinctiveness, philosophy, and mission, and so they sought presidents who had that expertise and relied heavily upon them for guidance (Gleazer, 1985).

Laws specifically about open meetings, as discussed by Schwartz and Bakerman (2012), make it easier to study how boards of public institutions transact trusteeship and engage with matters of mission and identity. However, to turn the spotlight onto the views and decisions of private college trustees is considerably more difficult. At private colleges, evidence of trustees'

priorities is often only revealed in the form of decisions such as the appointment of a president or announcement of a capital campaign. Regarding authority, public trustee boards sit atop the institutions' organizational structure. However, unlike their private college peers, public college trustees often work in the shadow of the state. That is, the governor is responsible for appointing trustees among 77% of public colleges and universities (Schwartz & Bakerman, 2012).

Public higher education governance often also includes other layers such as state system boards that may reduce the authority of institutional boards of trustees. By contrast, private colleges appoint members through an internal process. Relative to public boards, private college trustees are commonly regarded as insulated from political influence, operating as the final authority within the institution (Hall, 1997).

An opinion piece in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* by Eldridge McMillan (1987), an Association of Governing Boards Distinguished Award winner for Trusteeship and former Chair, Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, asked the following question, "What makes a board of trustees successful?" The answer, according to McMillan, was summarized in one activity: fundraising. "Trustees have always been critical players in any college's fundraising effort," McMillan (1987) wrote, "but with the increasing sophistication of fundraising in higher education, many boards are confused about their responsibilities" (p. A19).

The article presents yet another perspective on trusteeship across Predominately White Institutions (PWIs), as well as HBCUs. "Even though the ability to give should be a prime consideration for trustees, colleges should not rush to fill boards with people whose main attribute is the size of their wallets," writes McMillan (1987, p. A19). McMillan's view is that middle-income alumni who are loyal to the institution would better serve the institution.

As more scrutiny lands on HBCU boards, member selection processes have received increased attention. Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., President of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, (2012) wrote that with the issues and threats HBCUs face, recruiting dynamic, multi-skilled, multi-talented board members is imperative. "Nearly every major study of non-profit boards over the past two decades identified board recruitment as one of the most significant challenges (p.1)." Taylor (2012) provided an analysis of the challenges of HBCU boards and gave recommendations as to board expectations. HBCU board members have many things with which they should be concerned. There are three areas of grave importance: the office of the president, organizational performance, fiduciary duties, and fundraising (Taylor, 2012). These areas needed to be evaluated through trustee self-assessment. However, that is not without challenges.

> Self-assessments of performance are rarely accurate because the environment provides few unambiguous clues about what successful performance is, opinions vary so much about what constitute valid indicators of success, and to maintain a positive self-image, most people tend to reject or reinterpret negative information about performance. (Taylor, p. 348).

Taylor demonstrated little confidence that the self-assessments provide an accurate depiction of actual board performance. However, he did note that board assessments are an imperative because of the potential for growth and understanding of its roles and responsibilities, as well as the opportunity to reflect on ways to improve their performance as trustees (Taylor, 1993).

Practices in Board of Trustee Operations

Common among the themes recommended for board operations are acting within the institutions' mission, tradition, and history. Also included are making decisions that reflect and reinforce institutional values, emphasizing trustee growth and development, setting goals and

grooming board leadership, encouraging debate, respecting the governing process, and paying attention to strategies with an eye on the future. Specific characteristics and behaviors differentiate strong and weak board (Chait et al., 1993).

Most agree that effective boards need to know the roles and goals of the board, plan for the long-term success of the colleges' welfare, understand and oversee the colleges' finances, regularly assess the board itself, and maintain a connection with trustee associations. Trustees themselves report that boards should continue their educational development, work to have effective communication, and work to achieve the goals or ends of the institution (Vaughan & Weisman, 1997b).

Others suggested that effective boards shape the future of the college via powerful engagement, and make policy decisions (Myran & Zeiss, 2003). The president and the board must understand their respective roles; that is, the leadership of the institution by the president and governance and policy-setting by the board. Both the president and the board must commit to working collaboratively on behalf of the institution. The Association of Governing Boards in its seminal 2006 report, *The Leadership Imperative*, stated that integral leadership links the president, the faculty, and the board together in a well-functioning partnership purposefully devoted to a well-defined, broadly affirmed institutional vision (Baliles, 2006).

Trustee Training--What We Know

Governing boards are invested with the ultimate authority to make policy and key decisions for America's colleges and universities (Birbaum, 1988). Boards of trustees will face a number of challenges, including reductions in funding, increased regulations, and access, as well as a number of other items, all of which perpetuate the need for proper training and preparation of trustees governing the landscape of higher education (Kezar, 2006). Board member orientation and training programs are essential to the success of trustees.

The Association of Governing Boards (AGB) surveyed their members and found 65% of colleges spend half a day or less to orient and introduce trustees to their new roles (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2009). The AGB also reported new trustee orientation sessions typically include information on "trustee responsibilities, college mission and history, strategic priorities and challenges, a review of budget and financial matters, and academic programs and quality" (2009, p. 2). The association made similar statements in its 1980 report, in which it stated new trustees need a systematic and thorough orientation. Pusser, Slaughter, and Thomas (2006) noted that some research on trustees asserts that they are not decision-makers but rather tend to defer to the presidents and chancellors. This further supports the requirement for training and development of trustees in higher education overall and in particular for those in HBCUs.

A 2005 report from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* indicated 40% of college trustees stated they were "slightly" or "not at all" prepared for their role as a trustee (Selingo, 2007). Further, Selingo (2007) reported that among trustees who felt unprepared, only 56% reported an excellent relationship with the college president. Vaughan and Weisman (1997) reported that 93% of trustees stated they received most of their information from the college president or his staff. Burns (1966) wrote that board members are not going to perform optimally if they are not adequately and appropropriately oriented to the responsibilities intrinsic to their duties as board members.

Boggs and Smith (1997) reported that college presidents felt orientation of new board members was valuable, and that numerous presidents surveyed stated they felt it was important for the president to participate in the orientation of new board members. One president in their survey stated it could take up to two years before a board member truly felt informed and

comfortable in the new role (Boggs & Smith, 1997). Anne Neal, co-founder and president of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, used the Vaughan and Weisman survey results to support her call for meaningful changes in the manner in which universities are governed (Marklein, 2007). The Association of Governing Boards provided support for increasing the role and scope of trustee orientation. AGB surveyed board professional staff members, and nearly 62% of them indicated training on trustee orientation would assist them in their jobs of supporting the board (Schwartz, 2010).

Ongoing training and professional development of trustees are infrequent and are not commonly found as a variable in fostering board effectiveness. The dearth of ongoing trustee training could be problematic as half of the knowledge a person acquires in this capacity will be obsolete within a decade (Knowles, 1984). Potter and Phelan (2008) suggested that providing a good orientation or training program is important to prevent problems among and within the board. Boggs and Smith (1997) discovered that some boards are proactive and minimally provide some form of an abbreviated orientation to board candidates even before they are seated. In this regard, the practice of providing orientation, though it may be abbreviated, has provided good results in that candidates can make a more informed decision about serving on the board. Asera (2009) suggested that student learning outcomes would be positively impacted if organizations valued and planned for professional development as an integral part of everyone's responsibilities, including the board of trustees.

Trustees across all types of colleges indicated three areas of importance: knowledge of the higher education institution, knowledge of politics within the institution, and knowledge of the uniqueness of higher education institutions as compared to other sectors (Michael, Schwartz,

& Cravcenco, 2000). Based on their participation in trustee training programs, Anderson and LaVista (1994) shaped their trustee training format to highlight survival skills for trustees. These skills were intended to help clarify the roles of trustees and included an overview of the context of the colleges, resources, and finances. Trustees themselves indicated a need for some orientation and training. However, they disagreed on the types of activities that should be provided (Frederick, 1973).

Support for trustee orientation and continued training is strong. Davis (1997) highlighted the importance of providing both a solid content that takes into account the attributes of the trustees, as well as an effective delivery method that is respectful of their busy schedules. He suggested an effective education program would contain elements to learn the culture of the board and the context of the college. The program would be driven by the board itself to assist new trustees with effective group processes, to bolster analytical decision making, to gain better insight into key college stakeholders, and to focus on strategic thinking for the future (Davis, 1997). However, gaps in understanding actual practices in the selection and training of trustees exist (Dika & Janosik, 2003).

The Evolving Roles of Trustees

In 1962, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching summarized the responsibilities of college and university boards of trustees. These responsibilities included serving the public interest to the extent to which it can be served by their particular institution, maintaining a broad vision for the institution--as opposed to focusing narrowly on the goals of one department or unit, representing the college or university to the world, providing a bridge between the institution and the community, protecting the institution from improper pressures or attacks, and, the most important task, selecting a president (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1962).

Once a president is selected, the Carnegie Foundation stated it was important to establish the working relationship with the president. They further recommended that college boards focus on broader policy issues, while presidents focus on operations. Other additional tasks were recommended, including overseeing the physical, fiscal, and budgetary workings of the institution. The Carnegie Foundation stated a more challenging role of trustees was to work with faculty members to have a foundation in the curriculum so that the board could make wise decisions on that affected the college (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1962). These responsibilities provided the framework for a broader view of the power of boards of trustees, indicating that their function had a profound influence on the universities they served (Burns, 1966.)

Kerr (1963) created a list of tasks critical to college trustees (Zwingle, 1975). His list included eight items with themes surrounding creation of an independent board, protection of the independence of the institution, review of the purpose of the institution, assurance of the forward motion of the institution, management of resources, anticipation of enrollments and making appropriate adjustments in advance, communication with stakeholders, and maintainance of a voice at state and federal levels (Zwingle, 1975). Although Kerr's (1963) recommendations for boards did involve managing resources and providing for top-level leadership, his remarks also included elements of autonomy and of advocacy. A 1973 Carnegie Commission report stated, "It is more important for the board to provide for effective governance than, as it once did, for it to govern" (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973, p. 36). During the same era in the 1970s, researchers identified other roles and concerns of trustees. Doser (1976) highlighted the importance of political advocacy, which in part was due to decreased state funding allocation, and to increased trends of state and national regulations, policies, and curriculum influence.

These trends are remarkably similar to themes of today. Dziuba and Meardy (1976) prefaced a compilation of journal articles by listing challenges, including financial constraints, legal questions, energy usage, teacher outspokenness, collective bargaining, affirmative action, and political advocacy in Washington, DC.

Coleman (1981) asked trustees and presidents to rate their perceived effectiveness in performing their duties. Trustees ranked themselves most effective in reviewing budget proposals, establishing institutional policies, ensuring compliance with state and federal laws, and evaluating the performance of the president. Boards and presidents have separate roles in successful governance and building that base of knowledge is important for both groups. Professional associations have helped define the role of college trustees (Longin, 2002). It is suggested that two important roles of trustees include maintaining a financially viable institution, given budget cuts, and working with local businesses and industry to provide relevant job-related education and training (Basham, 2008; Mangan, 2010). Board members were further accountable for making sure their colleges serve the needs of their communities, and for "adopting, following, and enforcing standards of conduct that respect the public trust" (Shults, 2001, p. 8).

Two other consistent beliefs were that boards of trustees are responsible for nurturing and selecting leaders for their institutions, and boards bear the responsibility of strategic planning and setting the direction of colleges (Lovett, 2010; Boggs, 2011). To complement the importance of the board-CEO relationship, Boggs (2011) stated college CEOs regularly report that maintaining a positive relationship is one of the most important aspects of the job. Elements of effective relationships, according to the literature, also include a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, and practices, as well as the existence of a positive functional and personal

relationship among the CEO and trustees (Perkins, 2012).

Trustees themselves have provided feedback to help determine what they feel to be important and to help determine how effective they are in addressing those issues. Michael and Schwartz (1999) surveyed university and college trustees and found that trustees ranked highest the concern for long-range planning, making institutional policy, attention to budget, and support for the president. Conversely, college trustees ranked lowest the role of providing direct institutional management (Schwartz, 1999).

The researchers found more similarities in responses among the institutional types than statistically significant differences. As a practical matter, the authors suggested each higher education institution type should plan trustee orientation and training programs to best address the perceived roles of their group (Michael & Schwartz, 1999). Shields (2007) stated board development is important in strengthening governance. Researchers and associations have recognized contemporary considerations and challenges to the roles of trustees. Broad (2011) wrote that both increased business and industry competition, while increased knowledge and learning competition from China and India have placed additional pressure on our colleges and universities. She suggested colleges and universities must work together and with partners to increase high school graduation and college preparedness. They need to help more people, especially underrepresented populations, attend college and create new pathways for learning. In recent years, college boards have had to navigate more conflict, compete for fewer resources, and make more difficult decisions (Boggs & Smith, 1997). Nevertheless, effective boards must work together toward a common goal to move the institution forward (Doyle, 2009).

Theories

The Oxford American Dictionary (Ehrlich & Flexner, 1980) defines a group as "a number of persons or things gathered, placed or classed together or working together for same purpose" (p. 287). As with other boards, a HBCU board of trustees can be classified as a group with the ultimate purpose and responsibility of governance for its institution. Trustees are placed together to govern their respective institutions. The literature is scarce at best in providing information around group dynamics within boards of trustees in higher education even though being able to form a collaborative working relationship is critical, particularly as the board acts as a group.

Understanding how groups evolve and make decisions has the potential of enhancing the board of trustees' ability to actualize positive impact on the institutions they serve. Professional development activities designed around the theories of socialization could inevitably positively increase their abilities in the service of providing policy direction and governance to their institutions.

Houle (1989) asserted, "The deepest basis for learning of each trustee rests on his capacity to draw lessons from the continuing stimuli of board experiences, but he should also be ready to respond to formal education activities of sorts" (p. 51). That capacity is inclusive of how groups operate, which likely correlate to how well they will work together to achieve policy decisions. Consistency and contextual professional development activities that include elements of group socialization and group development can provide long-term gain. The contention is that "[o]rganizations and associations, like human beings, exist in a volatile world and cannot thrive unless some of their board members are constantly engaged in the processes of enlarging their understanding and perfecting their skills" (Houle, 1989, p. 51).

Likert (1967) contended that, "Group members need skill in leadership and in membership interactions processes in order to build and maintain a group efficient both in

solving problems and coping with conflict and differences" (p. 162). While trustees may have been or are engaged in leadership roles outside of higher education, they must function within the group with their fellow board members. The inability of trustees to operate as a group may be related to a lack of understanding of the culture of the governance structure of higher education institutions. Chait et al. (1993) notes that previous treatment of governing boards "have oddly overlooked group dynamics and group process" (p. 4).

Likert (1961) provided characteristics required by groups: a) trust and confidence in each member, b) being together long enough to establish a comfortable working environment, and c) being motivated to achieve its objectives. Johnson and Roberts (2010) reported that trust is another critical element and is essentially a result of understanding the values of each member, learning from each other, holding one member accountable for decisions, and completing meaningful work as a group. In concurrence, Johnson and Roberts (2010) noted that the combination of relationships, accountability to results, and relevant work are all factors that influence trust and fostering better governance.

In his seminal research, Tuckman (1965), a professor of psychology, discussed how groups develop and described this development over a four-stage process, which was later adapted to include a fifth stage (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Recognizing that groups change over time, the five stages of group development are relevant to the exploration of the understanding of how the boards of trustees form effective work relations. An illustration of the five stages of group dynamics is presented in Figure 2. Emphasis is given to the forming of and continuation of group dynamics. Tuckman and Jensen's (1977) five stages of group development are relevant to the growth process of boards of trustees. This model is continuous and evolves as individuals become part of the group.

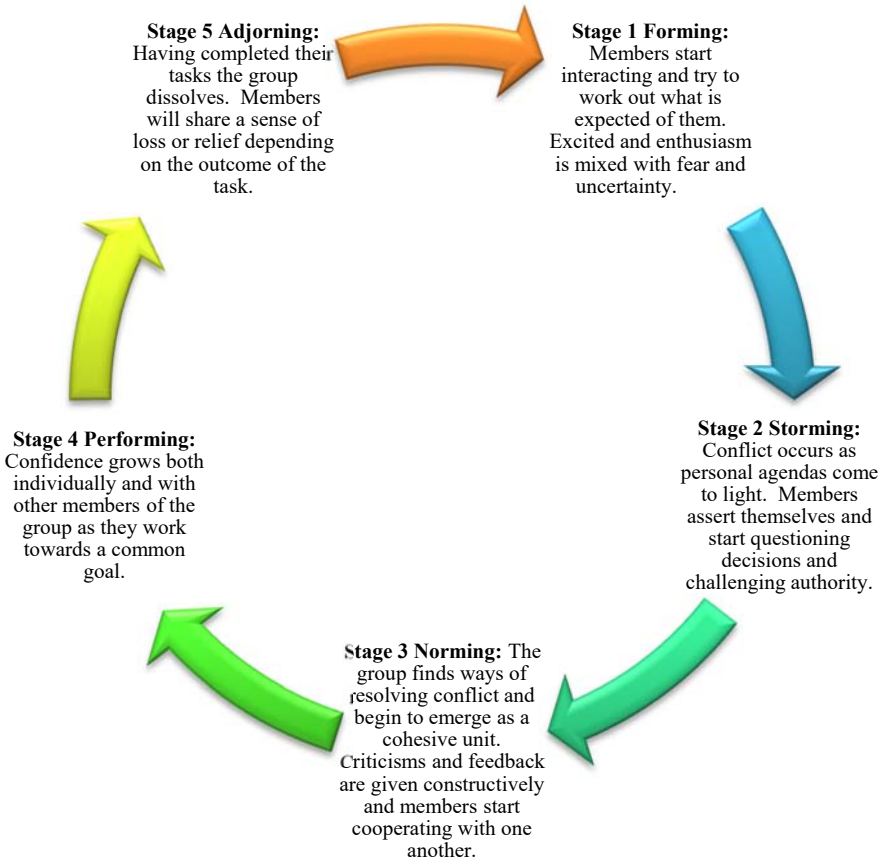

Figure 2 Tuckman and Jensen's Group Development Model. Adapted from "Stages of Small Group Development," *(Tuckman & Jensen, 1977)*

The stages are defined as follows:

Stage 1: The forming stage is categorized by the group members being fairly comfortable with each other, as they have not yet begun the decision-making process. In this early stage, the group members are positive and polite, while some members are anxious partly because they have not fully understood what work the team will do. In some cases, group members are simply excited about the task ahead (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977).

Stage 2: The storming stage is where group members begin to test the established boundaries created during the forming stage, which can also characterize this stage as a critical stage in that this could be the making or breaking of the group. As the members of the group experience variability in the leadership and or work styles, conflict may arise at this stage and

may frustrate members of the group. This stage can find some individuals suppressing their viewpoints and energy toward satisfying the goals of the group dynamics (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977).

Stage 3: The norming stage is categorized as the point at which the group starts to resolve their differences and begin to value and respect each other's strengths. This period is where they most often are characterized demonstrating a stronger commitment to the goals and objectives of the group. This stage can be viewed as the turning point at which the members demonstrate more of a sense of being receptive to the constructive feedback members of the group. The group can regress into the behaviors of the storming stage as additional goals or objectives are added (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977).

Stage 4: The performing stage happens as goals and objectives become the central focus of the group and are reached without friction. Typically, trust is established at this time among group members, and loyalty to the group is now evident as they begin to address issues.

Stage 5. The adjourning stage is the point at which the completion of the task occurs, and members are proud of their accomplishments. The achievement of goals permeates the group; however, some apprehension may result among some members as they realize the work of the group has been terminated and a loss of camaraderie may pervade (1977).

When trustees engage in their governing duties and responsibilities as a functioning board, Tuckman's model comes into play in understanding collaborative working arrangements within the group. Collaboration is necessary for groups to work together; however, before a collaborative understanding of the issue is reached or debated, the governance structure must be appreciated and understood. Smith (2000) stated, "Maintaining the strength of the team requires ongoing attention to group dynamics" (p. 186). Development activities encompassing an

appreciation of these group stages and assistance with the active process of moving through each stage supports the goal of an efficient and productive board (Smith, 2000)

Group Socialization

The development of a group, or group socialization, is an exploration of the changes individuals experience as they become members of a group (Levine & Moreland, 1994). Levine and Moreland (1994), both professors of psychology, have made significant contributions to the literature on group socialization, and their findings are vital to this research in understanding how group dynamics relate to decision-making by members of boards of trustees at HBCUs. In the case of HBCUs and understanding the perceived turmoil on boards of trustees at these institutions, it is critical that boards of trustees include group socialization as part of their required professional development activities (Levine & Moreland, 1994).

Moreland and Levine's (1982) model of socialization explains how cognition and behavior change the group and the individuals over time. "The model assumes that the relation between the group and its members systematically changes over time where each views the other as potential influence agents" (Kruglanski & Higgins, 2003). Moreland and Levine's (1982) model is differentiated from Tuckman's (1965) model in that Tuckman examined the group as a whole over time in the exploration of group development whereas Moreland and Levine (1982) focused on assessment of the relationship of the individual members and how the relationships changed over time.

In this model Moreland and Levine (1982) offered three distinct elements: evaluation, commitment, and role transition.

Evaluation involves the individual and group assessment of the overall reward of contributions of each individual. It also considers the contributions of the collective group.

Commitment is directly related to the outcome of the evaluative process and is based on the relationships of the individuals. When individuals feel a sense of connectivity or commitment toward the group, there is an increased likelihood of an acceptance of the group's goals, values and sense of desire toward satisfying the overall expectations of the group.

Role Transition occurs as a sort of rite of passage into the next realm. Here, the individual's status within the group has evolved (Moreland & Levine, 1982).

As new trustees become affiliated with a board, they seek to actualize personal needs such as being a part of the group, while the group seeks the inclusion of that individual's contribution toward the achievement of the goals and objectives of the group. It is when the individual and group's desires meet that a transition occurs. Moreland and Levine (1982) refer to this acceptance into the group as assimilation. Once role transition occurs, an individual will have matriculated through the five phases of group socialization.

Summary

The literature on governance, specifically on trustee boards helps us understand board origins and legal rights, historical and popular conceptions of trustee responsibilities, trustee and board characteristics, and how trustees view their roles through the means of training preparedness to make informed decisions. Professional development is multidimensional. Therefore, a spectrum of activities and experiences should be employed to elevate someone to a higher level of performance or into a new role. After an exhaustive review, the literature lacks development activities for all trustees and the associated concepts involving teams or groups (i.e., the board of trustees). The key aspects of group dynamics, training, and development are not commonly found in the literature on boards of trustees for HBCUs.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

There is a scarcity of information about the functioning of boards of trustees at HBCUs, and consequentially even less is known about how HBCU trustees are trained and oriented for board service. This study was designed to investigate and explore the extent to which training and development programs were utilized by HBCU trustees in order to better understand the challenges and opportunities of board service for this unique sector.

The training and professional development of new trustees at Historically Black Colleges and Universities was explored with a perception that their board service is wrought with complexities. Trustees must not only be familiar with the multitude of issues facing institutions of higher education, they must also understand the challenges confronting their particular institution in the context of the unique mission upon which their institution was founded, along with the attendant historical and cultural challenges that constrain leadership efforts at HBCUs. A common criticism about much of the research on HBCUs is that it is usually done out of context or uses inappropriate concepts (Freeman, 1998).

Researchers of ethnic populations in school settings should use culturally sensitive approaches to recognize and, when possible, account for cultural differences that exist among groups (Tillman, 2002). In an educational context, and in others more generally, African American culture has typically been described as differing significantly from European American culture. These differences include but are not limited to value orientations based on historical experiences, the use of languages, and even epistemological foundations (King, 1995). These differences are believed to establish cultural distinctiveness that should be taken into

account when researching an ethnic population. Therefore, the most appropriate research method for this study to explore the training and development of trustees at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) was by using qualitative research methods that would consider the personal phenomenon such as this cultural perspective. This chapter presents the research design for the study, the data sources, data collection methods, analysis, study limitations, and researcher bias.

Research Design

Qualitative research affords the opportunity to uncover a detailed story more fully and focuses on understanding the phenomenon being explored at a greater depth (Creswell, 2007). Consequently, this methodology facilitated a better understanding of the underlying group dynamics that foster decision-making by boards of trustees for HBCUs.

Employing a qualitative research design for this study allowed for the exploration of "…little-understood phenomenon and the forces causing the phenomenon in question…" (Marshall & Rossman, 2014, p. 41). The qualitative research method afforded the advantage of using multiple sources of data, including interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual information (Creswell, 2014). Further, this qualitative research method involved a search for meaning and understanding through the data and relied upon the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. It permitted the researcher to delve more deeply into the participant experience and research questions guiding this study.

This study explored the practice of providing training to trustees of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The goal was to identify those aspects of trustee orientation and training, if any, that enabled board members to carry out their responsibilities with greater efficacy. This study sought to discover what influences the type of training and professional

development provided to board members for HBCUs, so that these individuals might better fulfill their roles, given that they are charged with shaping the institution with the policy decisions they make.

The utilization of a culturally sensitive approach enabled a more appropriate lens through which to interpret differences as conventional approaches may have yielded an interpretation of circumstances and behaviors at HBCUs as inherently flawed without the consideration of cultural differences (Gasman & Turner, 2008). Minor (2004) provided a practical interpretation, noting that despite the differences in decision-making context at HBCUs, there are challenges associated with governance and even evidence of poor practice exhibited at some institutions.

Tillman's (2002) Culturally Sensitive Research Approach (CSRA) was not intended to support the articulation of hypotheses that can be tested, but provided a lens for researchers to design and conduct research about individuals and social, economic, and educational conditions in a variety of settings and to document the existence of similar circumstances for African Americans in multiple contexts. This approach afforded the opportunity to pose questions that are important to the leadership and participation of African Americans in education and U.S. society.

Tillman (2002) described the importance of qualitative methods in culturally sensitive research:

> As for example, researchers using culturally sensitive research methods (e.g., interviews and observations) can pose questions that not only are racially and culturally significant but also allow participants to consider the cultural significance of the questions, given their particular circumstances. The culturally specific knowledge of participants can generate new understandings, contribute to

> what we already know, and address theoretical gaps concerning the lived experiences of participants. Although the National Research Council (NRC) principles emphasize the use of quantitative methods as the standard for empirically based knowledge, culturally sensitive qualitative methods can be used to uncover the continuum of self-defined racial and cultural beliefs, attitudes, and theories articulated by participants—knowledge that may be difficult to obtain through randomized treatments or other similar methods (p. 460).

The elements of the Culturally Sensitive Research Approach include culturally congruent research methods, culturally specific knowledge, cultural resistance to theoretical dominance, culturally sensitive data interpretations, and culturally informed theory and practice. The approach represents both epistemological and methodological possibilities for more culturally informed research, theory, and practice (Tillman, 2009).

Minor (2008a) offers that before conclusions can be drawn about the effectiveness of decision-making practices in HBCUs, there is a need to research the context in which governance activity takes place. HBCUs are classified as a distinctly different institutional sector, which prompted the inclusion in this research the identification of contextual factors at play as campus leaders made decisions at HBCUs. Chief among these contextual factors are the racialized climate that exists on campuses of HBCUs, the history from which HBCUs originated, and the perceptions formed by others about HBCUs. Chapter Four will highlight a few of these factors.

With a full understanding that quantitative methodology could also serve in fulfilling this research effort, this study used qualitative inquiry to formulate a more nuanced perspective. This research sought to provide an enhanced understanding as to how HBCUs prepare and develop

board members for their critically important roles in the governance of higher education institutions and used these research questions to guide the inquiry:

1. How do trustees at Historically Black Colleges and Universities view their specific roles and responsibilities?
2. What training is provided to prepare trustees for their fiduciary and other responsibilities?
3. What are the contextual factors at HBCUs that materially impact the ability of the board to serve as effective participants in the governance process?
4. What is the commitment of board members to their continued development as trustees, in terms of their allocation of time and resources to the institutions they serve?

Site and Sample Selection

This section details how participants were recruited and how information was collected and analyzed. The sampling technique used for this study was purposeful sampling, which offered the opportunity to discover, understand, and gain insight from participants who were knowledgeable about the topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Purposeful sampling was utilized to identify institutions and potential trustee participants who were knowledgeable about the role of trustees and who could provide information about the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2007). While the U.S. Department of Education (2016) reported that there are over 100 Historically Black Colleges and Universities, this study did not examine trustee training and development/orientation for the entire population, rather the focus was to target six institutions across the southeast., HBCUs located in the states in that region provided the best geographical access for the interviews to be done in person. The chief element for institutional selection was that the institution be recognized as an HBCU by The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). No other criteria were applied.

The participants for this study included 13 current or past members of boards of trustees, including two past presidents of the selected six Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The interviews with two past HBCU presidents expanded data collection, which was necessary to supplement the concentration of interview participants from just two institutions. To ensure representation of both male and female participants, as well as racial diversity, non-white and white participants were asked to participate. Additionally, those participating in the study represented a mixture of institution types, including both public and private HBCUs in various sectors. The interview participants were recruited from a subset of trustees from these institutions.

There has been no scarcity of news stories about the challenges facing HBCUs. A number of these news stories have involved actions or inactions of HBCU boards of trustees. Among these challenges are stories of financial instability and accreditation challenges. These two challenges are often linked one to the other and seem to be on autoplay at a number of HBCUs. Feldman (2014), Fischer (2014) and Kolowich (2014) confirm that trustee boards from these institutions would want to express their views on their institutions as it relates to the students and institutions they serEve, and yet the literature is very thin showing how trustees are trained and developed for their roles in support of the institutions of higher education they serve.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities across sectors--private, public, single-sex, faith-based, or liberal arts--are faced with burgeoning leadership and fiduciary challenges. The researcher's professional affiliation with a few HBCUs facilitated the ability to leverage professional relationships to gain access to enough trustees to explore the research questions. Unfortunately, reservation and resistance were encountered from some trustees regarding participation, while others who did participate were hesitant to be recorded. As a result of the

reservations, this research was based on a sample of convenience by exploring the research questions with those trustees who were willing to participate and did indeed participate (Creswell, 2005).

This study sought the support and endorsement of the president and board chair of each institution that was invited to participate as a means of legitimizing the desired access to trustees and encouraging their participation. Among the 13 participants were current and former trustees in various roles including board chairs, appointed and elected trustees, presidents, faculty, students, and alumni. Overall, the board chair is considered the most critical position on the board of trustees. The board chair is the interface between the board and the president and has routine engagement with the president on institutional matters outside of scheduled board meetings. Arguably, the chair is the most active member of the board. The board chair typically possesses a more comprehensive understanding of the institution, including the challenges and opportunities facing their respective institutions.

In consultation with the doctoral advisor and committee of this research study, two of whom have contributed to the literature on governance and one who has conducted research on boards of trustees of elite institutions, it was determined that there would be less resistance from institutional leaders and trustees to participate in this research. In designing the research, a leading researcher on HBCUs was consulted, who also agreed that many of the trustees across the identified HBCUs in the region would "flat-out" decline to participate. Finally, a leader of a national organization that focuses on board development provided advice and insight on the difficult task of gaining access at some HBCUs. Regretfully, all of these experts were correct in their assessments. Many of the leaders of these institutions ignored repeated requests, scheduled and canceled phone calls. With full recognition of the challenge of securing institutional and

trustee participation, the dissertation advisory committee of this research study was informed of the difficulty of creating a cross-sectional survey tool utilizing an interview protocol. After considering the strong probability of a low response rate, it was decided to focus on the inclusion of relevant documents, regarding boards of trustees' controversies at some HBCUs in order to gather the depth of insight that was needed.

Obtaining Access and Recruiting Participants

Participants were recruited as an outcome of initiating contact with the respective president of each institution. The rationale for this approach was to use the influence of the president to encourage trustees to participate. Operating with the assumption that the president would serve as the connecting factor to the trustees and their participation, the recruitment process was initiated by preparing a list nine of institutions that met the site conditions as described. A generic copy of the letter sent to each of the nine college presidents appears in Appendix B. Within a week to ten days, a few favorable responses were received and the response rate going forward remained low. The participation and input of two past presidents, who by virtue of their prior roles were trustees at two of the six HBCUs included in the study, completed the research sample.

Data Collection

The University of Georgia's Institutional Research Review Board provided notification of approval (Appendix C) to proceed with research protocol to ensure the protection of participants throughout the conduct of this study. This initiated the study activity. Data collection began in July 2017 and all interviews were completed by October 2017; however, archival documents and other media were analyzed through February 2018. Multiple data

sources were considered to provide a full understanding of the phenomena; however, the two key data sources used were interviews and document review and analysis.

Interviews

The 13 interviews included formal interviews with members of the boards of trustees, as well as informal discussions with former presidents and former trustees, accounting their experiences related to their training and professional development for board service. Open-ended interview questions were developed and used throughout the study. The interview protocol used is located in Appendix D. The interview questions explore training received by board members for their service as a trustee. The questions also explored information centered on the continuous availability of training, understanding if the professional development and training were formalized, and seeking information on recommendations for training to better prepare future trustees. Interview times ranged from approximately 45 to 60 minutes and were scheduled based on the availability of the participants. Five interviews were in person and the remainder were conducted over the telephone. Field notes were captured during the interviews, as well as at the conclusion of the interview to ensure key information was captured. These field notes were recorded in a notebook and included reminders and items of interest mentioned during the interview.

The interview questions were segmented into four primary categories: personal narrative, board service, board orientation, and board effectiveness. The personal narrative highlighted professional experience, special skills or access, higher education experience, and affiliation or connection to the HBCU. The second category, board service, gathered information regarding the current role of the trustee on the board, the amount of time contributed to board activity, and the types of decisions made by the trustees. The third category of questions sought information

related to the type of board orientation, formal versus informal, as well as the topics that were covered during the orientation and training, if applicable. This category of questions also sought information about the conduct of board assessments, as well as trustee recommendation for additional training. The final category of questions centered on board effectiveness with questions related to social/organizational dynamics of the board members. The interviews were semi-structured, and probing and follow-up questions were used as necessary to gain a better understanding of the information or to obtain additional information. Seidman (2006) offers that the interview method provides participants the opportunity to direct the conversation toward areas of importance for which the participant can fully provide their story. By allowing some flexibility to the structure of the interviews allowed the interviewer to fully engage on matters of importance introduced by the participants once they felt at ease.

Documents

Another form of assessing data used in this study was that of document analysis. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet transmitted) material (Bowen, 2009). Documents that may be used for systematic evaluation as part of a study may include advertisements, agendas, meeting minutes, manuals, background papers, books and brochures, letters and memoranda, maps and charts, newspapers (clippings/articles), press releases, radio and television program scrips, organizational or institutional reports, survey data, and various public records. Documents are defined in this study as any written materials that provided additional information about the subject of the study (Esterberg, 2002).

Documents provided a unique insight into the context and culture of the institutions and supplemented the information gained through interviews. As a matter of usefulness of both interviews and documents, Merriam (1998) stated the following:

> The data in documents can be used in the same manner as data from interviews or observations. The data can furnish descriptive information, verify emerging hypotheses, advances new categories and hypotheses, offer historical understanding, track change and development, and so on (p. 128).

Documents available for analysis were rich with information related to this study that supplemented the semi-structured interviews. The document analysis consisted of 27 board meeting minutes from calendar year 2014 through 2016, 23 news articles both in print and video, 18 letters and memorandums, presidential employment contracts, contract amendments and agreements, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) reports, policy manuals, by-laws, and AGB Consulting assessments. While this information was publicly available on the Internet, to maintain the anonymity of the institution and participants, only excerpts that highlight the training and development imperative were included in this study.

While documents were gathered for each institution, a high concentration of documents were collected for those with the lowest participation rate. Documents were selected based largely on how well they informed the research as to the posture of the boards included in the study. The documents used supplement the information for those institutions for which there was only one or no participant in the interview process. In the findings, these boards were represented by with the use of pseudonyms: Board C, Board D, Board E and Board F. The institutions associated with Boards E and F are both public 4-year and post graduate degree

granting institutions and will be highlighted in Chapter Five. These institutions were selected based on the highly publicized discord of the board with the presidents of these institutions. These were two public institutions that were selected for inclusion in the interview process, but as to the untimely dismissal of both presidents, it was impossible to gain entry for interviews. Based on the voluminous documents that were generated with news outlets and other media, a number of board members, constituents, and past presidents were interviewed, and this information was used in the compilation of documents for these institutions.

Expert Discussions

This study was fortunate to have a number of these discussions facilitated by leadership at the institution where the researcher worked, as well as professional relationships with HBCU presidents, a prior board chair, and former trustees. Additionally, this study benefited from an interview with a noted researcher on HBCUs, who had insight into the culture of HBCUs that was helpful from a perspective not considered. The expert explicitly revealed that most individuals would not speak to a researcher about this topic but suggested that through professional relationships, there was the possibility to schedule a brief discussion with some trustees at selected institutions. Regrettably, none of the three individuals who were suggested agreed to be interviewed. The expert was helpful, however, with understanding the context and the role of trustees in these institutions. It was suggested that poor board relationships existed in three instances.

Another expert, a leader of a national organization that conducts board training and assessments, agreed to be interviewed to discuss trustee development at HBCUs. This discussion was not only captivating but also useful from the vantage point of reaffirming that the

subject matter of this study was indeed worthwhile, as well as providing additional information relative to the contextual factors of some HBCUs and connections to their identity.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this project was guided by the notion that data collection and fundamental analysis were somewhat simultaneous processes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The analysis of data was carried out as data were being collected. While listening intently to the participants' responses to interview questions or as they provided general commentary, the interviewer formulated systematic ways to analyze and translate the information that was shared. Much of the interview data was captured electronically and supplemented by handwritten notes. More broadly, data analysis in qualitative research involves moving deeper into understanding and representing the data and also interpreting the broader meaning of the data (Creswell, 2014).

In an effort to strengthen the research design, it was essential to employ a data analysis procedure that complemented the methodology of the study. Narrative analysis is a process by which events are selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience (Riessman, 2008). There are four approaches to narrative analysis: thematic, structural, interactional, and performative. Research may use any approach or a combination of approaches for analysis. This study utilized the thematic approach to focus on the content of the narrative allowing full opportunity to assess the content and context of the information during the analysis.

The thematic analysis approach was deemed the most appropriate for this specific study, given its emphasis upon the exploration of training and development of trustees of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Thematic analysis is concerned with "what" is said, rather than "how" it is said (Riessman, 2008). The thematic analysis approach is useful for "finding common thematic elements across research participants and the experiences they report" (p. 54).

Thematic analysis served this study well because it enabled the researcher to garner broad themes from the data provided through interviews, discussions, and document analysis. Furthermore, thematic analysis was a good fit because it revealed specific information (i.e., professional attributes, activities, board experience, knowledge of higher education, etc.) that can be useful to HBCUs in their training and development of future trustees for their institutions.

In this study, the transcripts were reduced to a range of themes, some of which, while insightful, were not used in addressing the research questions for this study. Using the literature about the process of coding, and open coding in particular, exact words or phrases from the participants were used as codes in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This study was aware that universal acceptance of findings in a qualitative research study is rare (Polkinghorne, 1995), however, in an effort to produce a valid study that contains trustworthiness criteria, it was essential to use strategies like triangulation, member checks, and audit trails. A variety of sources including interviews, institutional documents, and field notes were all used to triangulate the data. Additionally, member checks with select study participants were also conducted. Finally, an audit trail was established through the maintenance and preservation of all transcripts, notes, and digital recordings.

Study Assumptions

The study assumed that trustees who participated answered questions candidly and to the best of their knowledge and ability. This study further assumed that HBCU trustees were the best individuals to ask when seeking information about trustees' participation in orientation and training, about the types of activities involved in their training programs, and about the practice of their boards. Lastly, the study assumed that trustees were genuinely interested in learning

about and improving upon orientation and training programs, inclusive of board use of best practices.

Study Limitations

This research focused on a small group of members of boards of trustees at select Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and it is therefore beyond the scope of the study to generalize these results to all HBCUs. The impact of culture, race, gender, and environment was taken into consideration because these are all elements of importance in the assessment of any aspect of HBCUs as noted throughout the literature.

Every study has limitations, and this study was in no way different in that aspect. Time was a limitation in the exploration of this study as more time and potentially the permission to observe the trustees in session would have further enriched the study. Only one instance of this was afforded and was used in the study to gather more information and insights. The primary limitation in this research was that of obtaining a substantive sample size. A number of board members were reluctant to participate due to the sensitive nature of the information related to their boards and or the institution, so they did not participate. Others did not return calls for interviews. Another limitation of this study was the use of a sample of convenience, rather than obtaining and assessing data from the board of trustees for every HBCU.

In addition, some level of personal fear of reprisal in the pursuit of this study was evident and therefore another limitation. As a professional within higher education, and most specifically as a professional at an HBCU, the researcher faced the possibility of resentment for presenting less than favorable information about HBCUs. Despite those pressures, this study will serve the HBCU community in a way that edifies its approach toward the professional development of trustees to best serve HBCUs.

In conclusion, this study investigated the composition, training, and perceived functioning at six HBCUs as experienced by the study participants. While the study could not secure participation by a large number of HBCU boards and trustees, the participant interviews combined with extensive document reviews provided insight into the make-up of boards, their training, and experience. These data are reported in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study conducted during the summer and fall of 2017 in the southeastern portion of the United States at six Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), four private and two public. Of the six institutions, interviews were given by participants from the four private institutions who served as trustees of the boards for the institutions they served. The names of the institutions have been labeled with the specific intent of protecting the anonymity of the participants and the institutions of affiliation. The firsthand experiential information provided by the participants was invaluable in that the details offer insight into the imperative of group development and training of trustees at HBCUs. Institutions selected for this study included a number for which turmoil existed within the boards of trustees and may suggest a need for group development and training. This study also includes data drawn from sources other than personal interviews. Two of the boards studied were public HBCUs, and while no interviews with those board members were obtained, publicly available documents were analyzed that give evidence of similar issues at private HBCUs. These findings are inclusive of one additional private HBCU for a total of five private institutions. No interviews were captured for this fifth institution but documents were available which added to the body of knowledge explored. My review of these documents form part of the analysis that follows.

This study explored the training and development of members of boards of trustees of HBCUs to enhance their effectiveness and high functioning in their roles as trustees. Through the following questions, this study sought to understand how the relationship between trustee preparation and group development relates to the effective functioning of governance of HBCUs.

The data gathered was written in narrative form and was collected to address:

1. How do trustees at HBCUs view their specific roles and responsibilities?
2. What training is provided to prepare trustees for their fiduciary and other responsibilities?
3. What are the contextual factors at HBCUs that materially impact the ability of the board to serve as effective participants in the governance process?
4. What is the commitment of board members to their continued development as members, in terms of their allocation of time and resources to the institutions they serve?

These questions were developed to understand how HBCU trustees are trained and developed. Through semi-structured interviews with trustees, and the review of publicly available documents, the above stated research questions were explored, and this chapter presents the study findings in four topical sections, each corresponding with the four research questions: (1) Trustee Roles and Responsibilities; (2) Trustee Training Provided; (3) Contextual Factors; and (4) Commitment of Board Members. These findings are shared from the separate perspectives of trustees and based on publicly available documents.

The literature suggests that when training and development activities are incorporated with a concerted focus on the institution for which the member will serve, as well as the role and functions served by the board, the continuous learning should amplify the level of preparedness of trustee service. Chait et al. (1993) in *The Effective Board of* Trustees assert that "there are specific characteristics and behaviors that distinguish strong boards from weak boards as the competencies requisite for effective boards were identified." The authors identified the following six dimensions: (a) contextual, (b) educational, (c) interpersonal, (d) analytical, (e) political, and (f) strategic. The two most relevant aspects for this research study were the

educational and interpersonal dimensions. The educational dimension focuses on the training and professional development of the members of the board of trustees. The interpersonal dimension centers on the development of the board of trustees to work collaboratively as a group. Table 2 presents key aspects of Chait et al.'s (1993) educational and interpersonal competency/dimensions. These dimensions were assessed while group socialization and group development theories were used to further analyze the trustees in this study. The findings presented here link to much of what Chait et al. presents in Table 2.

Table 2. Competency Dimensions Relevant to This Study

Dimension/Competency	**Associated Activities Required**
Educational Dimension	Trustees are well informed about the institution, the profession, and the board's roles, responsibilities, and performance. Provision of on-going training and development activities. Self-assessment to facilitate accountability in identifying how well the board itself is performing.
Interpersonal Dimension	The board nurtures the development of trustees as a group, attends to the board's collective welfare, and fosters a sense of cohesiveness.

Adapted from The Effective Board of Trustees (Chait, Holland, & Taylor, The effective board of trustees, 1993, pp. 2-3).

Framework for Data Analysis

The perspective of the research participants along with the information from the documents reviewed were analyzed against two of Chait et al.'s (1993) competency dimensions. In addition, Levine and Moreland's (1994) group socialization theory was used to consider how groups function, and, in this instance, the groups were boards of trustees at HBCUs. Professional development and training was also assessed to gauge the types of learning opportunities provided to the trustees to increase their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. This research also explored what individual members understood their roles and responsibilities to be as trustees as a result of training and development. It was critical to determine if any degree of training impacted their role in decision-making processes among the trustees because these are

essential in the design and implementation of strategy for institutions and that makes the need for trustees to function as a viable and effective group even more acute. The socialization and development of trustees along the continuum of group development was also investigated because this requires the members of the group to work together effectively.

Group development theory (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) focuses on how members of a team work. The development of a team is enhanced by a team's commitment to reflection and on-going evaluation. This is of particular importance as it relates to the development of trustees as they assume their individual roles but execute their responsibilities as an effective team. The roles and responsibilities are to establish the mission and vision of the school, strategic development, constituent accountability, and adherence with regulatory and accrediting agencies. Trustees have an enormous responsibility in that they ultimately nurture and nourish the interests and affairs of the institution and this would be in keeping with the focus of group development theory toward the furtherance of trustees of HBCUs.

Findings

This study attempted to discover how well these boards developed to achieve optimal effectiveness in the execution of their roles and responsibilities. The data presented by the participants as well as the information extrapolated from institutional documents were examined to establish the existence of aspects of the development of effective trustees. The following sections provide an insight into the length of service of the trustees, information related to other board service, and information related to their role and responsibilities, as well as information regarding any training and development they received. The findings provide an understanding of how the participants developed individually in their understanding of the responsibilities of trusteeship and their development as a group in service to the institutions they served.

Findings Related to Trustees' Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities

How do trustees at HBCUs view their specific roles and responsibilities? (Research Question #1)

In order to provide context for their understanding of their roles, some time was spent reviewing the profiles of the trustees interviewed which aided in establishing context around the types of individuals selected for these opportunities at HBCUs. The findings here will provide insight into the 13 participants with some context around national averages concerning trustees.

Trustee characteristics. The 13 trustees from the four institutions that participated in interviews for this study were approached or otherwise recommended for service. Boards at private institutions are often self-perpetuating and manage the process in this manner. Of the 13 participants, eight of them noted an existing relationship with the institution. Table 3 provides a description of the 13 study participants compared to the Association of Governing Board's 2010 national average by trustee type. The third column of the table reflects the percentage of study participants by individual characteristics; for example, gender and alumni status. Notable among the information is the depiction of where the sample aligns, as well as is not aligned, with the trustee profile nationally as compiled by the Association of Governing Boards (Schwartz & Bakerman, 2012). The two categories in this study that closely aligned with the AGB's national average of trustees was constituency: 62% of the individuals in this research reported being alumni of the institutions they served, as compared to the national average of 60%, and the percentage of women trustees in this sample was 23%, which was slightly less than the national average of 29%. In this study, trustees working in the business sector were proportionately higher than other occupationl sectors, but are less than the national average. The occupation with the fewest trustees represented was education. Professional service is defined as those

fields such as accounting, law, dentistry, medicine, or mental health. The category labeled as Other includes professions such as artist, clergy, government, or nonprofit employee.

Table 3 Participant Sample of HBCU trustees compared to (2010) AGB National Average

	Number in Study	Study Percentage	National Average
Constituency			
Alumni	8	62%	60%
Gender			
Men	10	77%	70.6%
Women	3	23%	29.3%
Race			
White	3	23%	-
Non-White	10	77%	-
Occupation			
Business	5	38%	51.8%
Education	2	15%	13%
Professional Services	3	23%	23.1%
Other	3	23%	11.2%
Tenure – Board (Years)			
<5 years	3	23%	-
5 to 10 years	9	69%	-
>10 years	1	8%	
Tenure – Board Chair (Years)			
<4 years	2	100%	-
4 to 6 years			-
>6 years			

Source: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (2010). Policies and practices, and composition of governing boards of independent colleges and universities, 2010. Executive summary

Table 4 provides a breakdown of the study participants by institutional type and industry. Each of the 13 participants was assigned a pseudonym to ensure anonymity. Two of the participants are prior presidents who de facto are former trustees of HBCUs.

Table 4. Interview Participant Information (n=13)

Participant Identifier	Institution Identifier	Institution Type	Sector	Industry
Payton Jackson	Board B	Professional; Postgraduate	Private	Business
Harper Douglas	Board A	2-Year; 4-Year	Private	Business
Justice Harris	Board A	2-Year; 4-Year	Private	Education
Robin Parks	Board B	Professional; Postgraduate	Private	Education
Ellis DuBois*	Board D	4-Year	Private	Professional Services
McKinsey Evers	Board B	Professional; Postgraduate	Private	Other
Carson King	Board B	Professional; Postgraduate	Private	Business
Kerry Allen	Board A	2-Year; 4-Year	Private	Other
Avery Powell*	Board C	4-Year; Professional	Private	Education
Denver Little	Board B	Professional; Postgraduate	Private	Other
Cameron Marshall	Board A	2-Year; 4-Year	Private	Business
Parker Bridges	Board A	2-Year; 4-Year	Private	Professional Services
Aspen Bates	Board A	2-Year; 4-Year	Private	Other

Note: *Denotes trustee as a past member – past president.

It should be noted that Institution (board) A had the largest number of interview participants at six. This was a private, not-for-profit institution. Institution (board) B was represented by 5 interviews, and it also was a private, not-for-profit institution. Institutions (boards) C and D had one participant each, both past presidents of the respective institutions. Importantly, it should also be noted that all of the interviews were with trustees of private, not-for-profit higher education institutions.

Information regarding the professional career fields of the interview participants was obtained using the Internet to search for their professional biographic information, as well as information provided by the trustees themselves. The number of years of service completed as a trustee ranged from less than one year to over 10 years at an HBCU. In the case of those serving 10 years, this is reflective of one trustee who served as a president of an HBCU. The average length of service reported was five years, which was consistent with what was identified via publicly available institutional data. The professions of the trustees were varied and ranged from education to business to medicine to religion, as well as one participant, who was actually a student. Confirmation of this information was verified through interviews with the participants.

The text that follows provides direct input from trustees as they shared details related to participation on boards. Where applicable, external board experience is analyzed from the perspective that it may enhance the operational capacity of the participants thereby increasing the level of overall effectiveness.

Parker Bridges, who has served on the board at Institution A for 10 years and has international experience as a trustee, notes frustration with being "forced" into board service. In the exchange of information about his experience, this trustee shared insight into the selection process for Institution A. This trustee recounted a strong reservation about the commitment of

service but has at this juncture served on the board for Institution A for approximately seven years.

> Well, my board experience in the United States has just been Institution A. I got on it because four times I have been elected president of the faculty senate. Now, when I started out doing this in 2008, there was a separate person elected to represent the faculty on the board of trustees. I was suddenly ordered to do it myself and I refused. I said no I'm not elected to do this, let somebody else. So, I won my points and then somebody else did it until the 2015 academic year when the issue was forced by our former president. He kept saying that every other board uses the president of the faculty senate for this purpose not somebody separate. I proposed a compromise whereby I would do it and I was going to leave office in 2016. I expected this man to be elected president of the faculty senate and would then take on his other responsibility. Then he suddenly resigned and went to a different school…. I began doing it. (Parker Bridges, personal communication, August 8, 2017).

While Aspen Bates expressed reservation and a lack of interest in trusteeship, as the one student member, he presented a naïve and yet hopeful outlook as it related to the enormity of service on the board.

Aspen Bates is a traditional student at Institution A without professional career service at this juncture. The student member is a mass communications major and serves in the role of president of the student body at Institution A. While this trustee has a limited frame of reference, with less than a year of board service, this trustee recognized the importance of the role. In accordance with the governing documents for the Board of Trustees at Institution A, the

president of the student body is stipulated as a member of the board of trustees. The student trustee noted: “This is the first time I have ever served on a board, but I am looking forward to the experience” (Aspen Bates, personal communication, August 8, 2017).

Conversely, Ellis DuBois, serving at a private 4-year degree granting institution, had a career in higher education that spanned over 30 years of service, including duty as president of two HBCUs; one in the northeastern region and one in the southeastern region of the United States. Ellis DuBois recently served as president of an HBCU in the southeast for 4.5 years before resigning.

To understand the relationship between the trustee and the board appointment, interview participants were also asked to clarify their affiliation or connection, if any, to the institution for which they serve. Eight of the study participants are alumni, and none of them noted a specific skill or resource that rendered them as targeted candidates to serve as trustees.

Kerry Allen responded:

> So actually, I have a family connection to the institution. My uncle was a Dean there back in the 80s. So yes, that's my primary connection to it. Then my cousin joined the board for a number of reasons. One absolutely is because of who he is and that he is highly qualified, but also because of his connection to the institution in that he did most of his growing up around Institution A. He asked me to come on with a group of folks familiar with the college, because they were looking for a younger stable of folks to come on and join the board. So, my connections [are] to home and my family relationship. But then also I served in DC for 12 years on Capitol Hill and the executive branch. They also wanted someone with that type

of experience to be part of the board as well (Kerry Allen, personal communication, September 6, 2017).

Much like Kerry Allen, Robin Parks notes an affiliation with the institution and that affiliation was the prime rationale for selection as a trustee.

> As an alum of the school, I bring a true connectedness with the institution to the table. I bring a commitment to see the success of the school in meeting its mission. My ties with the alumni association, as well as with constituents is part of why I was selected as a trustee, as well as my service on a corporate board (Robin Parks, personal communication, September 8, 2017).

Parker Bridges also provided information regarding board experience as a result of participation as a trustee on a board outside of the United States. In follow up to the inquiry, once it was identified that the trustee had international trustee experience, I found that the international experience did not directly inform the participation of this trustee on Board A. Based on Parker's comments, a discernable and notable difference in board experiences was that the international trusteeship fostered more connectedness and value of the participant's voice in board matters, whereas that was not the case as a faculty board participant in the United States on Board A.

> I had been serving for eight years as secretary of the board of trustees of a school in Bucharest, Romania because I worked for UNESCO for 21 years in Romania. My daughter went to school there and I got involved on the board there. These are the two board experiences for me (Parker Bridges personal communication, August 8, 2017).

In the same way, the role Ellis DuBois had in service on the board of directors for the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) would seemingly have made a positive impact on the performance of service to the institution, particularly as the stated mission of the UNCF includes:

> … Positioning member institutions (HBCUs) as a viable college option for students and investing in institutional capacity to improve student outcomes; creating transformational support programs to ensure students are enrolling and persisting through college completion; building awareness of educational attainment and cultivating college-going behaviors within the African American community ("Our Mission UNCF," n.d.,)

The trustee with service on the board of the UNCF, whose mission excerpt is stated above, would seemingly have benefitted from the experience in a manner that would translate into positive impact for the trustee's institution. Optimally, this experience would have had a mutual benefit which would have afforded a broader perspective in board effectiveness and relations, since the UNCF Board of Directors is composed of individuals from a wide array of sectors, including corporate organizations, and presidents of HBCUs, where one would presumably have cultivated a comprehensive perspective on matters facing the board.

Much like Ellis DuBois of Institution D, Avery Powell of Institution C is a former HBCU president and has served on a number of boards. Avery Powell served for five and a half years as the president of an HBCU and has served on other HBCU boards as a trustee, as well as boards of a number of national organizations. Ellis DuBois and Avery Powell offered that based on their positions as president, their commitment to board service was essentially a requirement of their roles, so they did not see this expectation outside of a key "job" responsibility. Essentially, serving as the president of the institutions, each was a key stakeholder as they

reported to the board that laid out their performance expectations as part of their roles as president. Therefore, decisions made while serving on the board of trustees directly impacted their roles as president and became a job requirement. Avery Powell reflects on this:

> We met three times per year as prescribed [in the] bylaws. The primary goal of the board was setting the mission and vision of the Institution along with the strategy for reaching the goal. As president I was keenly aware of the board and its position for assessing my performance (Avery Powell, personal communication, September 23, 2017).

In summary, trustee characteristics were reflective of a variety of backgrounds and levels of experience. While the trustees themselves did not all note the rationale for their selection for trusteeship, 8 of them were in fact alumni of the respective organizations for which they serve as trustees. Based on information from the participants, the diversification of experience that each participant brought to the board was of value in the provision of indirect assistance and internal development among the trustees in pursuit of the successful conduct of their duties and responsibilities.

Board member responsibilities. Before asking trustees to respond about their responsibilities, it was necessary to better understand what trustees do. The governing documents (the bylaws for each institution) were examined to assess the standard operational function of the board as well as any other guidance rendered for the direct governance of the institution.

The review of the bylaws for Institution A showed a clear delineation of the roles and expectations of the trustees. The bylaws described the elected and appointed offices of the board and outlined the performance expectations of its members, including a requirement for an annual

self-evaluation. Institution A's bylaws specified seven roles, while the governing document for Institution B was detailed and included information relative to the conduct of training. These tasks were relegated to the governance and nomination committee who met annually and provided guidance as follows:

> The Committee shall draft and/or review Bylaw amendments requested by the Board of Trustees and shall periodically review, at least once every two years, the need for Bylaw amendments for the Corporation and its corporate affiliates. The Committee shall evaluate regularly the Board's structure and composition in order to make recommendations regarding the optimum terms of service of Board members and officers and to nurture the collegiality and vitality of the Board (Bylaws for board of Institution A, 13).

In the case of Institution B, the bylaws for this institution specifically include language related to training and development of trustees for readiness for board service.

> The Committee shall cause appropriate information and training to be given to newly elected members of the Board in order to adequately prepare them for effective service as members of the Board. In the selection of candidates for membership on the Board, as well as in the orientation of new members of the Board, the Committee shall be governed by any guidelines furnished to it for this purpose by the Board (Bylaws for board of Institution B, p14).

The bylaws for both Institution A and B highlight the board's roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations, and also stipulate necessary training. Equally important, the boards conduct self-assessments, as well as work to nurture the development of the trustees as a group. The bylaws indicate a call for active internal assessment, which if carried out appropriately,

incorporates a need for the board to periodically recalibrate its efforts. Together, these activities are directly in line with Chait et al.'s (1993) prescriptive of the two competencies noted in Table 3: Competency Dimensions Related to This Study, which features the educational dimension and interpersonal dimensions.

Fiscal stewardship. The interviews demonstrated that the prevailing responsibility trustees noted was fiscal stewardship. This was apparent throughout for Institution A and Institution B. Ensuring fidelity to the fiscal responsibilities of their institutions was paramount to their baseline obligation as a trustee and was part of the criteria used by the accrediting body in its assessment of institutions.

McKinsey Evers provided the following perspective on fiscal stewardship responsibilities:

> Honestly, I must say that a key responsibility of trustees is to ensure that the institution has adequate financial resources to advance its capacities. All ideas regardless of how good they are won't mean much without resources for implementation (McKinsey Evers, personal communication, September 12, 2017).

Harper Douglas stated:

> My first role is in service to the school, to serve as an advocate for this institution. As a trustee I also have a fiduciary responsibility and must always be ready to participate in decision-making opportunities to support the institution (Harper Douglas, personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Reflecting a keen sense of responsibility to the taxpayer as well as the student, fiscal stewardship was a recurring point of discussion among the respondents.

Payton Jackson made this statement:

> An obvious obligation to the school is partly as a fiduciary and therefore financially you want to be certain that the institution is doing what it needs to do to remain functional in support of its mission and educational goals. (Payton Jackson, personal communication, September 8, 2017).

Parker Bridges put it in simple terms: "What comes to mind is the budget, obviously it is critical to what we control and what we focus on" (Parker Bridges, personal communication, August 8, 2017).

Role as liasion. Justice Harris and Kerry Allen discussed their roles and responsibilities from a liaision prospective. They viewed what they do as service to the community at-large. Justice Harris stated that role this way:

> I see the role of a trustee as one committed to establishing and supporting the mission of the school. We are charged with setting the tone for the institution to ensure its ability to achieve the established strategic objectives (Justice Harris, personal communication August 10, 2017).

Kerry Allen offered that the state of the institution's future is the chief responsibility of the board.

> … the board is the sole entity concerned with the continuity of the school for years to come, far into the future. We are on a different time schedule than the president. Our vision exceeds the time bounds of the term of the president (Kerry Allen, personal communication, September 6, 2017).

Policymaking. Cameron Marshall's perspective centered on the policy setting provisions of trusteeship with the assertion that, "As trustees we are charged to set policy, hire the

president, evaluate the president and oversee other areas of fiscal responsibilities" (Cameron Marshall, personal communication, August 10, 2017).

Separation of roles of board and president of the institution. Avery Powell pointed out the importance of separating the role of the board apart from what is expected of the president and stated:

> Board members must recall that it is our role to provide direction from a policy standpoint, and to provide assistance in setting priorities, but not managing the institution or its programs. As a trustee you have to stay in your lane (Avery Powell, personal communication, September 19, 2017).

Other responsibilities. Aspen Bates noted an understanding of representing the interests of students whose goals are rooted in obtaining a high-quality education.

Carson King offered that "…trustees have a responsibility to provide their expertise on the matters for which the institution is dealing with. Trustees have a responsibility to provide financial support to the institution – time, talent and treasure" (Carson King, personal communication, September 21, 2017).

Denver Little offered an encapsulating response, noting, "To provide the best possible education is our mission. As a trustee, our only concerns are setting polity, hiring a president, evaluating that president, and overseeing our fiscal responsibilities" (Denver Little, personal communication, September 8, 2017).

Understanding how trustees view their working relations and assessing their views on what practices could be exercised to achieve greater levels of effectiveness were important items in this study. The participants of Boards A and B provided information, which demonstrated that

the boards functioned fairly well. They offered information relative to interpersonal relations that supported the favorable operation of each board respectively.

A review of the governing documents for Institution A and Institution B highlighted the board's roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations, and stipulate training. Equally important, the boards conduct self-assessments as well as work to nurture the development of the trustees as a group. These elements are directly in line with Chait et al.'s (1993) prescriptive for an effective board of trustees. Boards A and B worked moderately well.

Kerry Allen remarked on board effectiveness:

> Trustees offered input as to board effectiveness. The meetings are always very orderly and structured and with agenda and ample opportunity for us to contribute and to talk about what we think should be the direction of the institution, considering that there's somewhat of a split amongst the members. I mean board members tend to be either folk who are alumni or just very closely associated with the institution for years and years and years. We have a couple people that are more associated with the Episcopal Church so that's what they bring. When you have a new group of folks who may or may not be that closely associated, they're bringing a different experience and a different idea. I honestly thought that there would be more conflict, particularly between some of the new group and in the group of alumni [but there] was not (Kerry Allen, personal communication, September 6, 2017).

Justice Harris provided input suggesting a well-functioning board. Justice Harris did temper the comments with the transparent sharing of some challenges among trustees.

> I think we've actually functioned quite well. There are times where a little tension may arise, but I think we have done quite well considering the differences there. Certainly, I would understand it when the alumni, who have been active with the institution for 25 years, give some of the newer board members a little bit of a side eye, who aren't really that familiar with the institution….I think a little tension may be there, but it rarely comes to the surface. I think maybe the fact that it is [makes it] easier to work through the problems that we are dealing with. There's a reason for that….I think we all recognize that there's no time, considering the situation the institution is in now (Justice Harris, personal communication, August 10, 2017).
>
> An additional perspective offered echoes this sentiment, as Harper Douglas stated: One thing about _____, whatever problems we may have had between board and administration nothing has gotten to the media. I have been around for a long time, and I read in the local paper horrific stories about HBCUs here in the state where there have been lots of problems. We don't have any of that (Harper Douglas, personal communication, August 11, 2017).

While Harper Douglas hinted of the conflict in other HBCUs, one of the institutions referenced was a church affiliated, private HBCU and the other a public HBCU that includes aspects of state government with the board of trustees. The state institution referenced experienced a number of challenges with respect to funding. Those funding challenges placed the institution in jeopardy of losing its accreditation. The interplay of politics is not to be underestimated as a large component of turmoil on the campuses of state HBCUs.

The role of the student trustee was one with limited input, but nonetheless as the president of the student body that respondent was appointed by the bylaws as a trustee. Though

this trustee held a position as an officer of the student body, based on information shared by this trustee, the respondent seemingly understood the role of the student trustee of the institution.

This study included the examination of two public HBCUs, Alabama State University (ASU) and Florida Agriculture & Mechanical University (FAMU) for which I was not able to conduct interviews, however I was able to access data came from publicly available sources. The information was rich with information on a number of fronts. The available documents depicted challenges with the boards of each of these institutions as it relates to development and training, particularly as it relates to roles and responsibilities as well as to Chait et al.'s (1993) interpersonal competency.

From a comparative standpoint, the boards of Alabama State University and Florida A&M University, unlike the private HBCUs included in this study, do not have self-perpetuating boards. Each state delineates the composition of the board, as well as the authority and operations. Ironically, the greatest level of turmoil appeared to exist within the public-sector institutions. Excerpts reviewed might have been beneficial to the function of each board.

The public documents showed a high level of public discord between the board and the immediate past president of Alabama State University, a public 4-year degree granting institution. In the case of this institution, the board had a number of challenges. Chief among those challenges was the questioning of their 2013 selection for president. In an archival document, dated April 29, 2014, from the vice chair of the board of trustees to the president, the Vice Chair delineates a few points of his understanding of the role of trustees at his institution:

> The board has to approve actions taken by you as president that fall into the board's purview. Therefore, it is imperative that we develop a working relationship. You responded that you could hire and fire whom you desired without the board's

> approval. Also, you stated it would be an interference with the day-to-day operations of the university if we (the board) did not accept what you did, and it would be a violation of SACS. I informed you that pursuant to our governing statues and bylaws, the president makes recommendations to the board, and the board can accept or reject them. You responded that I was incorrect and that you heard it loud and clear from two presidents and the president of SACS that you have the sole authority to run the university without board approval (Wiggins, 2014).

The above statement from the Vice Chair of Alabama State University's board is one which appears to project a sense of positioning, such that the president of the institution recognizes the authority of the trustees. The correspondence (letter) from which this quote is excerpted was preceded by a letter of similar content from the chair of the board, dated April 28, 2014, echoing the legal rights of the board as provided by laws of the state.

> It is important that we share with you some specific issues that are of concern to the board. First, we must deal with the organization of the University. I am not certain of the source of your information that changing the organizational structure of the University does not require board approval, but I assure you that this [is] not the case. The board of trustees has the authority to approve the organization of the University and has done so as the organization has changed in the past. In addition, it is your duty to recommend all personnel action to the board, including request for hiring and separations. By statutory authority, it is the role of the board to approve those recommendations. Please be reminded, your presidency is in its infancy, and it is the duty and responsibility of the board to assure that your transition is successful. To achieve that goal, we must establish a new path forward;

therefore, within the next 30-45 days, we will review the goals and objectives of your presidency and discuss your evaluation instrument (Dean, 2014).

Of additional interest in the case of the board at Alabama State University, public records reveal that the trustees determined that the president failed at establishing a rapport with the board. So much so, that this president was placed on notice within the first four months of her presidency, based on what appears to be an overreaching board as it relates to the day-to-day operations of the institution. The letters from both the chair and vice chair of the board provide clear reminders that the president is accountable to the board. While the letters highlight a direct relationship to Chait et al.'s (1993) interpersonal competency, these letters also highlight elements of the political dimension as they reveal the linkage to how a board accepts the need to develop and maintain healthy relationships with key constituencies as one of its priorities.

Florida A&M University revealed a similar experience. Documents including trustee bylaws, presidential contracts, board evaluations of the president, board minutes, news articles and news clips, and correspondence related to Florida A&M University, a public 4-year, professional degree granting instituion, were examined. In direct association with research question 1, a key responsibilitiy as it relates to the function of the board, the evaluation instrument used to assess their president was also reviewed. Upon my review of the documents, I found an apparent lapse in the establishment of key performance indicators addressing the board's training to assess the president. This is directly linked to research question 2 which examines the training provided to trustees.

The board of trustees approved an annual evaluation for 2014-2015 of President Mangum at Florida A&M University, who has been on the job for little more than a year. The board concluded that the president, who was a former executive leader responsible for planning and

budget at a prominent PWI in the northeast, had not met expectations in four of 10 categories. Two trustees contended she had not met expectations in any of them.

Among other things, trustees complained in recent months about the president's hiring decisions and a lack of communication with them. The public complaints led to a backlash when five lawmakers, who are alumni of the institution, called for an inquiry into whether trustees were overstepping their authority (Etters, 2015). This dynamic is political in nature and appears to be exacerbated by public interest which can stimulate a response from the board. The political alumni noted above presented an inquiry to which the board chair responded with an acknowledgement of a need for self-evaluation as noted below in his response to the alumni constituents:

> I've been getting calls every Friday, and she's been keeping me abreast of various issues. We've spent a tremendous amount of time over the last several meetings on the presidential evaluation. We've spent time giving statements on internal relationships. But I think that we as a board also have some work to do in clarifying what we represent as a board and how we expect to get to that result.

The board chairman agreed, saying he was committed to "moving in that direction." "I believe there has been some progression, and I look forward to working with the president in a positive way as we move the university forward'" (Menzel, 2015).

Recognizing that the assessement of the president is typically a key responsibility of the board of trustees and when there is tension between the board, specifically the board chair and the president, the findings suggest that the erosion of the interpersonal relationship typically devolves itself in a counter productive manner with a strong potential of infiltrating the entire board. In review of archival documents, this appears to also be the case with a sector of alumni

of Florida A&M University, who were part of the state legislature, who viewed the public discord between the chairman of the board, as well as the other trustees, with the president as bullying. The following is an excerpt from a June 2015 letter, drafted on official letterhead from the state senate to the chair and members of the state board of governors. This group of legislators who are also alumni of the given institution asserted their concerns about the understanding of the board of trustees as to their role and responsibilities which ultimately links back to an assessment of the confidence in readiness of the board to function in an optimal manner:

> As we're sure you are aware, the obligations of any university's trustees are fairly straightforward, and are limited to policy. They ought not and do not include involvement in the day-to-day operations of the institutions; that job is left to the president they selected. Evidently, the board chair has enlisted a number of his fellow board members to join him as they attempt to directly interject themselves into such operations, and demand that the president subverts her own authority by yielding to theirs. Moreover, their challenge of her leadership came just as the budget negotiations were underway during this special legislative session, leading more than a few of us to question whether their timing was deliberate (Joyner, 2015).

The documents reviewed for Alabama State University revealed an enumerated list of items of concern as provided in official communication from the accrediting entity SACSCOC to the president of the institution. Chief among the items of concern is information related to the function of the board, as well as the conduct of members of the board as noted below:

> The following action regarding your institution was taken by the Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges during its meeting held on June 19, 2014:
>
> The SACSCOC Board of Trustees reviewed the institutional response to unsolicited information alleging non-compliance with the following sections of the Principles of Accreditation: Principle 1.1 (Integrity), Core Requirement 2.2 (Governing board), Comprehensive Standard 3.2.3 (Board conflict of interest), Comprehensive Standard 3.10.3 (Control of finances), and Comprehensive Standard 3.10.4 (Control of sponsored research/external Funds). The Commission placed the institution on Warning for six months for failure to comply with Core Requirement 2.2 (Governing board), Comprehensive Standard 3.2.3 (Board conflict of interest), Comprehensive Standard 3.10.1 (Financial stability), Comprehensive Standard 3.10.3 (Control of finances), Comprehensive Standard 3.10.4 (Control of sponsored research/external funds), and Federal Requirement 4.7 (Title IV program responsibilities) of the Principles of Accreditation. The Commission authorized a special committee to visit the institution (SACSOC, 2014).

Key among the items noted by the accrediting body are matters related to integrity and matters related to financial stability. The SACSOC report for Alabama State University notes huge missteps from a fiduciary perspective of the board. These gaps in responsibility could yield grave consequences for Alabama State University, which renders the notion of group and professional development of the board a matter of necessity. It is evident that inadequate development of the proper execution of the duties and responsibilities of trustees fosters deficiencies as noted by SACSOC.

Few HBCUs face the threat of loss of accreditation, financial stability, board conflict/relationships and funding. However, even those few who are endangered by actions of their boards of trustees suggest a need for preparedness to mitigate these incidents. Nevertheless, what was found at Alabama State University was a pervasive lapse in understanding what is required to translate these challenges into achievements that increase the value proposition of the institution.

In summary, perspective is informed by the experience individual trustees have had on the boards of the institutions for which they have served. The trustees tend to place emphasis on areas of personal involvement as most meaningful and yet no element of representation on the board or other member of the board was discounted for his or her participation. The findings suggest the value of the members of the board as a whole rather than of its individual members. The trustees primarily saw their roles as fiscal agents or stewards, policy makers, and liaisons. Additionally, there was a recognition of the clear delineation of the responsibilities of the trustees versus those of the president. As the researcher, it is clear that in general the trustees understand their charge.

Findings Related to Training Provided

What training is provided to prepare trustees for their fiduciary and other responsibilities? (Research Question #2)

Having established the composition of the study participants as well as their expected and perceived roles and responsibilities, the focus now turns to their responses with regard to the amount and type of training they received in support of their board service. Training resources are available through organizations such as the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) offers training as well as SACSOC. The AGB believes that a critical first step in the transformation of

HBCUs is to strengthen governance and in support of this notion developed the Initiative for Strengthening HBCU Governance and Leadership is a multi-year program that to addresses existing challenges within HBCUs while position themselves strategically, now and into the future . This Initiative for Strengthening HBCU Governance and Leadership (AGB, 2014).has four goals:

1. To strengthen HBCUs by enhancing governance practices, capacity and structures;
2. To advance effective working relationships between HBCU presidents and boards;
3. To develop the capacity of presidents' cabinets to support the work of boards more effectively; and
4. To help facilitate engagement among HBCU leaders on governance and other issues.

Board orientation/training. Participants indicated they received some form of an orientation or training at their respective institutions. None of the participants provided information of a thorough or otherwise detailed or formal orientation program with continuous engagement, but rather a series of discussions with institutional constituents (institutional leaders and other selected staff). Understanding what the appropriate amount of training is, what is the most important content to be trained, and the most effective method for the delivery of the training are all important considerations. The participants in this study spoke to a variety of activities. Following are the entries capturing comments from trustees on this matter. Denver Little admitted:

> My initial training was very limited. I was able to participate in a few meetings with administration prior to the board meeting and then meetings at the conclusion of the board meeting. While not formal in terms of structure, I spent a good deal

> of time understanding the budget process as well as having the opportunity to have a one-on-one meeting with the president (Denver Little, personal communication, September 8, 2017).

Carson King echoed the lack of formal training:

> There was not a formalized training, but a briefing of information regarding the budget and past audits. We received an overview of the financial health and the academic status of the school including enrollment data and academic performance (Carson King, personal communication, September 21, 2017).

Cameron Marshall offered more experience:

> I have served on a non-profit board before, so I already had an understanding, but we did not have training for service as a trustee for _____. As an alum of the college, I was very familiar with the institution. The board chair provided information to bring me current on issues as well as introducing me to key individuals (Cameron Marshall, personal communication, August 10, 2017).

Parker Bridges added:

> I did not have the opportunity to meet many of the members of the board until our first meeting. There was a read-ahead packet sent to me prior to the meeting, which gave me a general understanding of expectations, but I had plenty of questions. I was able to learn from the informal discussions with other trustees who shared information regarding their experience on the board (Parker Bridges, personal communication, August 8, 2017).

Payton Jackson had a different experience: "Information sessions were provided by key individuals and by folks across the campus. I spent dedicated time getting an overview of the

strategic direction of the institution and received an open invitation to participate in meetings" (Payton Jackson, personal communication, September 8, 2017).

McKinsey Evers sidestepped the question to express disdain with the failure of trustees to execute their duties and responsibilities. This trustee noted frustration with those who failed to uphold their responsibility to the institutions they serve. While he did not answer the question as it relates to what training and development was provided pertinent to the fiduciary responsibilities of trustees, he offered the following:

> I do not ascribe to micromanagement; the leaders of the institution are required to demonstrate accountability. I make myself available at all times to the administration. I want to do all that I can to avoid what happened to _____College (McKinsey Evers, personal communication, September 12, 2017).

Governing documents for Florida A&M that were reviewed included the bylaws, which provided a clear delineation of responsibilities of the trustees as well as the president of the institution. The documents provided scant reference to board development and training; however, the board operating document for Florida A&M's reference to training is that it is the responsibility of the governance committee and should be initiated when appropriate.

While McKinsey Evers's comment, in response to available training and development, focus on frustration, it speaks to what may indicate a need for additional training on the full scope of fiduciary responsibilities in that this response con be construed to imply the presence of board overreach or a lack of accountability.

Findings Related to Contextual Factors

What are the contextual factors at HBCUs that materially impact the ability of the board to serve as effective participants in the governance process? (Research Question #3)

Numerous contextual factors contribute to the manner in which HBCUs operate. Chief among these factors are historical and political factors that shape the culture and influence of HBCUs as it relates to the function of their boards. It would be expected that these factors would emerge throughout the conversations with the trustees, however I found very little discussion from the participants on this matter.

The influence of HBCUs. Although trustees perceived their roles and responsibilities in a number of ways that aligned with responsibilities noted in the literature, what was most interesting was the fact that HBCUs were scarcely noted in other studies. The scarcity of literature on trustees of HBCUs stimulated the interest of this study because the acknowledgement of the racial identity of the institutions could prove to be a potential matter of importance in how they may or should view their roles. Avery Powell spoke to this phenomenon:

> As a trustee and an alum of this great institution, I give reverence to the giants on whose shoulders I stand. It is a privilege to serve in recognition of those who have come before me. The board has an obligation to ensure that the accreditation standards are upheld, and that is one of the key responsibilities as a trustee. Trustees own an important role in shaping public perceptions of the institution, so we have to offer the public our interpretation of who we are as an institution, particularly at a time when people are looking for opportunities to not only reduce the public dollar but also cut private philanthropy. Trustees must be aggressive in making the public case for our value—the public case for HBCUs as national assets (Avery Powell, personal communication, September 19, 2017).

Traditions and culture of HBCUs. When study participants were probed regarding matters related to traditions and the culture of HBCUs, the discussion turned to the matter of heightened interest in participants expressing a desire to aide in the demonstration of continued relevance of HBCUs. Focusing the inquiry on issues many HBCUs experience, the study participants conveyed an understanding of some contextual factors, and in some instances offered input as to working through some of these factors. Cameron Marshall stated:

> As a trustee you have to understand the institution the challenges and pressures that are faced. You have got to know the environment in which an HBCU operates. It is a highly political environment, so we have to know who is for and who is not for us (Cameron Marshall, personal communication, August 10, 2017).

Avery Powell responded:

> HBCUs play a key role in education in America, and yet so often we struggle with declining enrollments that shake the core of our existence. This is in part as a result of how we are viewed as a 'lesser than' option to predominately White institutions. We have to continually prove our value (Avery Powell, personal communication, September 19, 2017).

Robin Parks offered this insight:

> HBCUs are plagued by misconceptions of quality. The intellectual ability of the students attending HBCUs have often been perceived as less intelligent, and that HBCUs are the only institutions that would accept them. This is simply not the case, and we must alter this perception. So while I would say this is a challenge, the uphill climb is not impossible, it is one we must make (Robin Parks, personal communication, September 8, 2017).

Parker Bridges added:

> We must hire the right president to lead this HBCU. Identifying an innovative and effective leader that can balance the mission while achieving a strategic advantage is key. We have to stretch the comfort zone and be open to identifying the right choice for this institution (Parker Bridges, personal communication, August 8, 2017).

Group Socialization

In no encounter with the participants did anyone discuss the interpersonal dynamics and/or professional development that would bolster the inner workings of the group in its formation as a board. The dynamics of the board were loosely discussed, but several instances were reviewed in the documents analyzed for the study. Many of the dynamics discussed were negative and were often a component of discord at HBCUs assessed. In no instance did any of the participants make mention of professional development activities as a group, and this is reflective of a deficit in ensuring that trustees are prepared for what they are obliged to do in their roles. Although trustees noted the collegial nature of members of their boards or the existence of favorable interpersonal dynamics, there was not a sense of the trustees fostering "we" as an ideal to be achieved in interpersonal dynamics. There was a distinct absence of discussion around how the trustees collaborated in an effort to edify teamwork among members of the board such that they would be more effective at engaging at a level to advance the interests of the institution.

A common thread relating to the challenges of HBCU boards are matters that relate to the threat of a loss of accreditation, financial stability, board conflict/relationships, and funding. Seemingly, then, trustees have to have their fingers on the pulse of the factors impacting their

institutions. Nevertheless, there is seemingly still a lapse in understanding of what is required to translate these challenges into achievements that increase the value proposition of these institutions. These items all relate to the importance of the development and execution of formalized training and professional development of trustees, such that they are able to understand what is required of them in their roles as trustees.

Findings Related to Commitment

What is the commitment of board members to their continued development as members, in terms of their commitment of time and resources to the institutions they serve?

(Research Question #4)

Commitment can be measured in many ways and in the case of the study participants, there were instances of how what they offer by way of their board service illustrates their commitment to the institutions for which they serve. What was found is that this is closely aligned with a responsibility inherent in trusteeship and that was fundraising/giving, particularly as there were trustees who saw their individual contribution of time and skill as their gift. For example, Harper Douglas provided a thoughtful acknowledgment of the importance of giving but with an alternative viewpoint:

> I think everybody's willing to support it. So I'll tell you I have interesting view, but I tend to think that and not only with Board A but with a lot of nonprofit boards. When you serve on a non-profit board or Board of the Higher Education of course, you should expect to give, that's just part of it. I mean it's no surprise to anybody. However, though I tend to think, and I'm not just talking about Institution A, but generally I tend to think that there's often an overemphasis on giving. I think that a lot of entities lose

out on opportunities because of their over emphasis on the giving aspect…..In other words, I think that a board is better utilized in terms of bringing their talent to the table, to ensure that even more funding than their $500,000 check comes in because at the end of the day what is given by the board is not going to feed the institution. But if we are challenged more to put our heads together to go for really big moonshot fundraising initiatives, if that's more of a focus, then that can activate the institution. I'm talking about my general experience. I think there's an overemphasis on that I think to the point where often I've been in situations where you have folks who serve on the board and they give because maybe you just want them to do so. They basically do nothing else and they're certainly on the boards and they give their $500,000 checks they don't do anything else just so that they can say that they put that board service on their resume. I think it's often those who do that are valued more than some folks who may not be able to give but are at every board meeting and coming up with ideas. But I've seen people get pressured because they can't write a check to do this or that. You don't really know what their financial situation is. To serve as a trustee at an HBCU, you must be willing and able to devote your attention to the University first and foremost. You have to bring your 'A' game and expertise to the table, every time. The philanthropic objectives of the university must be part of every HBCU trustees giving plan. But you have folks who don't show up, who can write a big check and there's no pressure….As institutional challenges arise, the individual talent of a trustee

> or trustees are typically leveraged seeking to capitalize on the expertise of the trustee (Harper Douglas, personal communication, August 11, 2017).

Payton Jackson offers a less jaded view:

> There is not one trustee that I know, who does not understand that *time, talent, and treasure* are important elements of our institution; however, this is not unique in that every board that I am familiar with of any college, not just HBCUs, embrace this notion. We have a responsibility to share our expertise and experience in support of the college's initiatives and this includes financial support as well (Payton Jackson, personal communication, September 8, 2017).

Fundraising. On the topic of fundraising, there was an acknowledgement of the call of trustees to give. There were no specified amounts for individual gifts from trustees outlined in the bylaws. However, for the private institutions, trustees indicated the expectation is that financial gifts are to be made by each trustee in support of their institution. McKinsey Evers offered the following:

> There is a requirement that each trustee is also a donor. Each trustee commits to philanthropy, which often means that I have to write a check. Entering into the role as a trustee, I understood that this was part of what was expected of me in support of the college (McKinsey Evers, personal communication, September 12, 2017).

Hours necessary to carry out responsibilities. Participants in this study were asked to comment on the amount of time they personally contributed to their respective boards and how they did so. The responses varied in that some of the respondents simply referenced the time specified for board meetings or other special meetings that were held while others noted other

activities around the committee activities. One student trustee, whose exposure to and experience with boards, was limited to service as a trustee for Institution A and thus spent limited time working on the boards.

Payton Jackson is a member of the finance committee for Institution B and offered the following:

> As a member of the finance committee, we have a charge that includes the review of the school's budgets, financial performance, and contracts. We put in hours reviewing financials and will have call meetings to discuss and render approval of the budget, so we are not restricted to the scheduled meetings (Payton Jackson, personal communication, September 8, 2017).

Similarly, Denver Little, also of Institution B, shared a response in that the activities of the board extend outside of the quarterly meeting schedule. This trustee, however, was able to provide an additional level of insight into the perceived rationale for the additional time because growing the student body was an important board goal, which requires a number of additional resources. chiefly financial resources, human capital, and investments in infrastructure. Denver Little justified the extension of time as an institutional imperative:

> The school has a lofty mission and is working to increase the student body. Don't get me wrong; we welcome the opportunity. The president is aggressively working for the school, and that ignites our efforts. This school serves a critical need, and it is up to all of us to ensure its success (Denver Little, personal communication, September 8, 2017).

Interpersonal Dimension/Competency

This dimension recognizes that boards of trustees must be a cohesive group to be effective. Chait et al. (1993) highlight the need for groups to be collaborative in order to foster the ability of a board to be well functioning. Trusteeship is anchored in the ability of the board to demonstrate trust in the board and its members. An interpersonal dynamic must be developed such that, at the end of debates and differences of opinions, the board remains unified and communicates decisions with one voice. Based on the findings of this research, interpersonal dynamics between trustees can appear collegial on the surface and yet the relations at times seem to center on a dismissive posture when questions arise to look more closely at the interpersonal dynamics of a board. The information from the boards of Florida A&M University and Alabama State University serves as key examples of when this dynamic is flawed. Overall, the interpersonal dynamics seemed conducive to professional engagement in the interest of their respective institutions. Nevertheless, much of the tension that was found centered on the interpersonal dynamics between the board, or the board chair, and the president. Based on what is found in the literature, when the president and the board chair's dynamics were not conducive to the success of the institution, this shortcoming presented an impact on the institution that has included, in some cases, the departure of both the board chair and the president of the institution.

To further underline the seriousness of a board's interpersonal dynamics, Morehouse College, a flagship HBCU was examined as a matter of an HBCU that has experienced a very public demonstration of the corrosion of interpersonal competency. Morehouse College was not included as part of the study sample noted as Institutions A-D but it is included as an example what transpired publicly at Morehouse College was serious and revealed the depth of the breakdown of interpersonal dynamics. In a publicly available internal communication pulled

from the Internet (Eigel, 2015), a Morehouse College trustee wrote a memo to his fellow trustees that enumerated concerns that linked not only a need for understanding their roles and responsibilities as trustees but also the need for understanding the group/social dynamics of the board of trustees. What was revealed in this memo illustrates the care and concern of this trustee for the insitution writ large. What this trustee calls his fellow trustees to do is to look at itself and not sigularly at the president of the institution.

Why I am Writing the Whole Board?

1. My love for Morehouse College as a national treasure and my belief that she must play her unique and important role in equipping new generations of leaders compels me to share what I believe is a privileged perspective gained over the twenty months I worked with the college.

2. I believe that the Board of Trustees itself is the only entity that can take responsibility and ownership of its own contribution to misalignment between the administration and the Board. Certainly, the President plays an important role in this equation, but he cannot single-handedly do what is required to create functional alignment. He can, and should, address his contribution to the misalignment, but he can only attempt to influence a body that he does not hold accountable, rather is held accountable by. Even the accrediting entities can only demand change, but not lead it. It is incumbent upon each individual Trustee, as part of the whole, to decide on and then lead the change necessary for Morehouse College to reach her full potential.

3. In any functional and effective relationship, the identification and ownership of change that leads to growth and effectiveness must mutually and reciprocally

> start with self– and not others. While there are many who understand the importance of such self-examination, I have observed either an unwillingness or inability of a key subset of trustees to look within themselves in order to understand and take ownership of the part they play in the dysfunctional aspects of the relationship with the President. Instead, they have focused exclusively on the President's contribution to the dysfunction. It is based in my assessment that there is no co-ownership of responsibility by some key Board leadership that I appeal to the entire Board to hold itself accountable to the process of self-evaluation and commitment to growth that can only be realized from within (Eigel, 2015).

This trustee's asseessment of the dynamics of the board is written with what seemingly is a call for accountability. In the second point made, this trustee places the responsibility squarely on the board for ensuring the success of the institution. This trustee goes further in the third point to speak to the need for the internal assessment of the board itself to evaluate any deficiencies that encorage negative board relations with the president. These points are salient and align with elements of effective governance.

In the case of Morehouse College, a private 4-year degree granting institution, an Association of Governing Boards (AGB) Consulting report, dated May 14, 2014 and available on the Internet (Legon & Schexnider, 2014), examined the status of the board of trustees in this matter. That report saw a need for professional development and training of trustees about their roles and responsibilities. The AGB's report notes:

> Since our original work with Morehouse College, it has become increasingly clear that fundamental governance weaknesses need immediate attention. The

> structure and effectiveness of board governance and a board's relationship with its institution's chief executive leave little room for error. That relationship must function based on a high degree of trust and a mutual understanding of priorities. In addition, boards must recognize the balance between their fiduciary authority and their support for strong and effective administrative and academic leadership (Legon & Schexnider, 2014).

In furtherance of a push toward highlighting a need for Morehouse College's board to engage in enhanced development and increased efforts of interpersonal social development, the report continues as follows:

> ….in view of the current operating environment of institutions of higher education, mission clarity and ensuring the value proposition of our institutions mandate a refresh of board and institution governance; the old ways of meeting governance responsibilities will not work and may actually exacerbate already challenging times.
>
> Boards must be careful not to mistake their own individual interests and priorities with their fiduciary responsibilities of putting the needs of the institution first. Resisting bold governance change at Morehouse College can be construed as an abrogation of fiduciary responsibilities ((Legon & Schexnider, 2014).

The essence of the report was to project a need for deeper introspection of the board and its understanding of its function such that the board would aim to reach a higher level of performance. The AGB's consulting firm recommended a number of changes to the bylaws of the board, in order to be consistent with best practice. Morehouse College has in fact redrafted its bylaws as recommended in the report dated, May 17, 2017. The inclusion of the

recommendations of the consulting group in the redraft of the bylaws reflect a sense of understanding what it will take for the board to become high performing and a fervent desire to do so.

Among the items in the redraft of the bylaws, the following section (Section 7.10 – Governance Committee) is significant:

> The Committee shall establish and maintain standards of Board conduct, develop and facilitate Board member recruitment, establish procedures and be responsible for overseeing qualifications and assessment of the Board members and the Board itself, Board orientation and matters relating to board governance (Morehouse College, 2017).

This finding is indicative of a decision that the board as an entity should be required to look inward and assess the effectiveness of itself in matters related to the sustainability of Morehouse College.

Summary

Overall, the study participants provided information reflective of an understanding of their roles and responsibilities as trustees. Although there is no standardization of how to achieve optimization of boards at HBCUs, it is, however, evident that the trustee participants appear to default to the knowledge they bring with them from other areas to serve on these boards, as well as bylaws and other guiding documents. Based on the participant input and documents reviewed, Boards A and B reflect a status of moderate to good functionality. With just the input of two prior presidents for the Boards labelled as C and D, this study could not extract an assessment of the level of effectiveness of the boards for the associated institutions based on their input. Neither of the participants noted the engagement of organizations such as

the AGB or SACSCOC as a resource for training and development. Each of the institutions for which the participants are associated are members of the SACSCOC and were afforded resources offered by or through SACSCOC. The resources are aids that alone would not fully develop the individual trustee, but would have offered guidance as to proper execution of fiduciary responsibilities; as well as the principles of accreditation.

The information presented related to the two public HBCUs incorporated the political aspects and interpersonal dynamics of boards. The two institutions discussed both experienced discord and faced mandates, which in the case of Alabama State University, could have been of immediate determent with the threat of losing its accreditation. Equally alarming is the level of dysfunction of the board at an HBCU flagship institution, Morehouse College. It is clear that the guidance these boards received related to the conduct of their operations requiring action and/or attention, from the accrediting body or from the consulting firm they utilized, was heeded. Improvement was attained in their standing as they garnered compliance. In a few cases, the actions resulted in the early departure of a president and the unceremonious dismissal of the board chair. When taken in respect to Chait et al.'s (1993) dimensions of interpersonal dynamics and effectiveness, this seems appropriate.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study utilized a qualitative research approach to explore how members of boards of trustees of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are trained and professionally developed for their roles and responsibilities as trustees. This final chapter discusses the results of the study, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

This qualitative study explored the professional development and training activities provided to members of boards of trustees for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Four research questions guided the study, and as the findings section of this project demonstrates, the responses to these research questions contribute to the understanding of the professional development and training of trustees of HBCUs.

The study involved 13 participants in the examination of primarily six HBCUs located in the southeastern United States. One additional institution was added as it was rich with examples of cited throughout the literature related to the relevancy of critical competency dimensions, most specifically the interpersonal dimension. Members of boards of trustees in higher education represent all walks of life. Most of them are not academicians nor have prior experiences with governance at institutions of higher education. The dearth of trustees with higher education governance experience, training, and professional development has critical implications on the decision-making processes of institutions and, in this case, on HBCUs. Certainly trustees are committed to the interests of the HBCUs they serve, thus it is imperative for each of them to have a formalized training and professional development program for serving as trustees to

include enhancing their understanding and knowledge of institutions of higher education and the unique issues and challenges of HBCUs.

This study revealed some insight as to how to accomplish the task for the benefit of all. The final chapter includes the following: a) an overview of the study as described in Chapters 1 through 4 to establish context for the findings of this study, b) a summary of the findings with implications for HBCUs organized by the research questions, and c) recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study, as stated in Chapter 1, was to explore the essential preparation and development for members of boards of trustees of private and public HBCUs. This training and support specifically would facilitate their ability to enhance or become more effective and more highly functioning in their decision-making role as trustees of HBCUs. The study also explores the relationship of this training to the effective functioning of governance of HBCUs.

Chapter 2 provided a comprehensive review of the literature and conceptual framework for this study, as well as the analytical structure for the analysis of the data. The literature review also offered an overview of the historical and contemporary context of HBCUs in order to gain a deeper understanding of the distinctiveness of these institutions within higher education. Additionally, presented in the literature review was an examination of the evolution of the role of the college president over the course of this country's higher education history. The history of HBCUs was presented along with an extensive discussion on governance. The literature revealed expectations of characteristics and qualifications such as those that interlock with corporate boards (Pusser et al., 2006) and how these principles must be incorporated for effective trustee training and development. This chapter highlighted literature related to the required

competencies of trustees which includes a summary of Chait et al.'s (1993) Competencies/Dimensions for trustees to provide context to the use of each of the six competencies for becoming more effective or higher performing in their roles as trustees of HBCUs. Boards of trustees are only able to render effective decisions if they function as a group, and as such, theories that centered on group socialization were examined. Professional development and training of trustees requires consideration of content presented but also how the training is prepared and conducted. This was also explored in an effort to assesses the impact of development and training on board effectiveness.

In the absence of more appropriate theoretical frameworks to conduct the analysis in this study, Levine and Moreland's (1994) group socialization theory and Tuckman and Jensen's (1977) group development theory were used to explore the gap in the literature that exists surrounding the function of trustees as a group and the professional development activities they receive to learn their roles and responsibilities for governing the institutions they serve. Having observed only one board, I was not afforded an opportunity to make first hand observations of the five stages of group development as the board was already formed. Similarly, I was not able to observe what is noted by Tuckman and Jensen (1977) as *storming*, which is characterized by the interpersonal challenges that arise from conflicting personal agendas relative to institutional priorities, or *norming*, which is characterized as the process of evolving and refining agreed upon roles of the trustees as they learn to work within the context of their own unique group dynamic. I was however, able to observe a board in the *performing* stage of group development which is characterized as constructively self-aware individual and collective contribution in pursuit of institutional goals. Nothing in the literature was identified relative to formalized professional development delivery methods for trustees of HBCUs, particularly during periods of turmoil.

Findings in this research study address a few of the gaps in the literature. In addition, the use of a culturally sensitive approach, as highlighted by Kershaw (1990) and Tillman (2002), aided in understanding the culture of HBCUs and the nature of decision making at these insitutions.

Chapter 3 presented the methodological design employed by this qualitative study, situated in an interpretive paradigm. Thirteen trustees participated, and a myriad of documents were examined to complete this study. The interview responses and documents were reviewed and analyzed. This design supported an in-depth exploration of the experiences of the trustees who provided insightful responses when answering the research questions. While the study initially sought to include six HBCUs, participants from only four agreed to be interviewed. Two of these insitutions had only one participant, which rendered their input to only general information used in support of the information collected for Institutions A and B.

Chapter 4 presented the findings based on information from the 13 participants and publicly available documents. Anonymity for each participant as well as the confidentiality of their responses was provided by the use of pseudonyms. While there no interviews for two of the institutions, the study examined documents for two public HBCUs: Florida A&M University and Alabama State University, as well as an examination of documents for Morehouse College and each of these documents informed the research questions. Collectively, the findings were aligned with two of the competency dimensions for boards (interpersonal and educational dimensions) as delineated by Chait et al.'s (1993).

The trustees' responses from Boards A and B emphasized the fiduciary responsibilities as prescribed throughout the literature as well as within the text of the governing documents for their respective boards. While there were similarities, there were a few unique skills that each trustee explained that contributed to his or her role as a trustee. The skills that the trustees

brought to the board and their professional and organizational experience appeared, in some cases, to translate into a seamless integration into their role as trustees within organizations of higher education, in this case HBCUs. It should be noted with some deference, that the assumption of trusteeship within higher education is a bit more complex and warrants the development of competencies that are aligned in the context of the development of effective boards with education and training that takes into consideration the challenges colleges and universities must resolve. It is critical that trustees understand the accreditation process and appreciate the imperative of accreditation in support of continued operations. Taking full advantage of the training and offerings of entities such SACSCOC and the AGB would be beneficial and further gird boards of HBCUs in ensuring the survivability of these institutions.

While Boards A and B were moderate to well-functioning boards, the findings are indicative of a learning gap that must be closed to better aid trustees in understanding what is expected of them at HBCUs, particularly around the attainment of being highly functioning boards. This training should facilitate the development of the trustees along Chait et al.'s Competency Dimensions. This became apparent as the participants offered that they were not always clear on the expectations of them in their role as trustee nor their full responsibility in support of the institutions they served.

The trustees provided general responses related to their fiduciary responsibilities as they provided input related to research question one. As the discussion turned to the matter of specific training related to the fiduciary responsibilities, participants were hard-pressed to provide information on deliberate training, related to increasing or enhancing their understanding of their fiduciary responsibilities. Collectively, the participants communicated responsibilities, but there was an absence of clarity in the articulation of the inherent fiduciary responsibilities.

This supports Minor (2004) who alludes to policymakers and practitioners who, without an understanding of the racialized climates of HBCUs, are susceptible to making unqualified comparisons between HBCUs and predominately White institutions. Nonetheless, one item of importance was a discussion that centered on institutional rebranding. Few participants took the position to reimage or rebrand how their respective HBCU is represented.

The findings included evidence of a need for attention to the financial health of these institutions. A number of the documents reviewed revealed a gap in the oversight of regulatory components monitored by the accrediting authorities, as well as matters otherwise relegated to appropriate use of funds. While this is not a matter that is an HBCU issue alone, it is one that has been part of some scenarios included in the termination or early transition of HBCU presidents.

Below is a brief summary of each of the research questions and the findings.

Research Question 1

How do trustees at Historically Black Colleges and Universities view their specific roles and responsibilities?

Findings. A wide array of responses from participants regarding their view of their roles and responsibilities as HBCU trustees reflect a number of similarities. While each participant expressed a number of skills and abilities, there were a few unique skills that each individual was able to contribute to their role as a trustee. Despite the skills that each individual brought to the board, their professional and/or organizational experience did not necessarily translate into a seamless integration in their roles as trustees within organizations of higher education, in this case HBCUs. It should be noted that there is an assumption that trusteeship within higher education must endure complexities of secondary and periperial stakeholder interests that can

wield significant impact on the institution that other boards of trustees do not encounter. This added dynamic of complexity warrants the development of competencies that are aligned in the context of the development of effective boards with education and training that takes into consideration the challenges colleges and universities must effectively resolve. The findings are indicative of an understanding of the participants' roles and responsibilities. However, more training and development around the integrative aspects of board-specific responsibilities should be nurtured, along with outlining the expectations of the trustee. This became apparent as the participants admitted that they were not always clear on what was expected of them in their role as trustees nor did they possess a full understanding of their responsibilities in support of the institutions they served.

Research Question 2

What training is provided to prepare trustees for their fiduciary and other responsibilities?

Findings. Many of the trustees provided general responses related to their fiduciary responsibilities as they provided input related to research question one. As the discussion turned to the matter of specific training related to their fiduciary responsibilities, participants were hard-pressed to provide information on deliberate training targeted at increasing or enhancing their understanding of their fiduciary responsibilities. More detail was elicited through the question: "How did you come to learn about your fiduciary responsibilities?" Collectively, the participants communicated responsibilities, but there was an absence of clarity in the articulation of inherent fiduciary responsibilities and how they learned what their responsibilities were.

Research Question 3

What are the contextual factors at HBCUs that materially impact the ability of the board to serve as effective participants in the governance process?

Findings. Some of the participants spoke to the perception of Historically Black Colleges and Universities being viewed as "less than" when compared to Predominately White Institutions (PWIs). What was prevalent about the discussions that included that view was a sense that a few participants took that viewpoint to reimage or rebrand how their respective HBCU was represented. For example, in discussion with a leader of one of the organizations which provided board training and development activities, it was sobering to hear that the students that attended the institution for which he serves as a trustee could easily attend an elite institution, except for a commitment to the values and traditions of their families who wanted them to choose this HBCU. What this trustee noted was that there is a clear commitment of each trustee to the core identity of HBCUs, which is they are first, and foremost liberal arts colleges and that identity is how the institution is promoted. None of the other participants alluded to the dismissal of the core identity of race, but rather they embraced the Black identity.

The dynamic of historical cultural constraints and the pervasive criticism imposed through contemporary scrutiny combined to manifest a predisposition for dismissal of HBCUs as inadequate, given that their collective value proposition in the public psyche deteriorates with each successive institutional failure. This institutional sector challenge cries out for solutions.

There is a need for solutions designed to ensure that the sector benefits from collective learnings on leading indicators of successful outcomes, as well as detrimental outcomes. Board trustees may be best situated to collectively exploit this opportunity and begin gaining traction on overcoming these contextual challenges.

Across the HBCUs in this study, there was a unique culture which is often coupled with a racialized climate that invokes the imperative for training and development that would aide trustees to navigate the culture of HBCUs in a manner which positively impacts service to their

respective institutions. The literature substantiates that there are certain contextual factors at HBCUs that engender the focus of institutional leaders and warrant specific training as to how to govern in spite of the challenges related to the historical residue of racial discourse in America. This dynamic of Black culture, anchored in part on the remnants of Jim Crow laws and other negative aspects of segregation in America, has created a stain upon many institutions within the community at large. The compass that will guide the navigation of HBCUs out of the suppression of structural racism within higher education must be recalibrated if HBCUs are to reach a level of continued relevance and sustainability

The findings of this research question included evidence of a need for attention to the financial health of these institutions. A number of the documents reviewed revealed a gap in the oversight of regulatory components monitored by the accrediting authorities, as well as matters otherwise relegated to appropriate use of funds. While this is not a matter that is an HBCU issue alone, it is one that has been part of some scenarios included in the termination or early transition of HBCU presidents.

Research Question 4

What is the commitment of board members to their continued development as members, in terms of their commitment of time and resources to the institutions they serve?

Findings. The trustees universally expressed their commitment and understanding of time as a resource dedicated in support of fulfilling their roles as trustees and responsibility to their institutions. All of the trustees acknowledged their financial commitment to their institutions. While a few expressed dissatisfaction with this element, they were on board with the expression of commitment by means of financial contributions. The trustees in their responses acknowledged that they use their individual talents or access to talent or resources as

leverage. What was absent however was a discussion of a commitment of continuous internal development of the board through activities centered on becoming or maintaining status of a highly performing board.

There is no evidence of a curriculum for the trustees inclusive of theories of group socialization/development. The selected theories, while helpful, were not necessarily best for this study. A more directed study along the lines of critical race theory may have better aided in understanding the group dynamics of trustees in the execution of their roles related to the governance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Baldridge (1971) asserts that a fundamental premise is that policy making in a complex organization such as a university, in this case an HBCU, is often a political process not merely a bureaucratic one. The existence of prescriptive models for training and development, created largely on best practices for majority institutions, sounds the alarm for a need for the development of training that is anchored with the HBCU as the central benefactor.

The board represents a number of constituents and based on the examination of participant input as well as documents reviewed, the interpersonal relations among the trustees in a number of cases is lacking. With the many competing priorities of these constituents, the dynamics of the trustees appear to be more fragile than nimble. This may reflect Baldridge's (1971) study on the "human side" of governance in *Power and Conflict* (1971), which suggested that policy, values and conflict emerge from people not structures. This, too warrants greater attention in the development of trustees of HBCUs.

Implications for Historically Black Colleges and Universities

This study presents many opportunities for consideration particularly as it relates to development and training of trustees which should include a plan for training as to the unique elements of culture and racialized climates existent across HBCUs. While HBCUs are not all the same from one campus to the other, there are certain contextual factors that were described in this study in relation to their respective institutions, such that training would be warranted. The dynamic of Black culture, anchored in part on the remnants of Jim Crow laws and other negative aspects of segregation in America, has created a stain upon many institutions within the community at large. The compass that will guide the navigation of HBCUs out of the suppression of structural racism within higher education must be recalibrated if HBCUs are to reach a level of continued relevance and sustainability.

Boards of trustees for colleges and universities are entrusted with broad authority as policymakers. To effectively make key decisions that will successfully guide and direct the course of HBCUs, it is imperative that knowledge and training for trustees to do so be implemented. To be able to accomplish this measure, trustees of HBCUs must understand the importance of developing as a group that can work together to be a well-performing board. Continuous professional development and training activities to educate and reinforce learning relating to the operations of HBCUs, as well as the development of a clear understanding of the expectations, roles, and responsibilities as a board member are imperative. The training and preparation of trustees should incorporate the development of programs that directly translate to achieving the goals and objectives tied to the institutional mission, internal assessments, the selection and assessment of the president, challenges that are facing the institution, the institution's strategic plan, and meeting the fiduciary responsibilities of the institution.

HBCUs are as relevant today as they were upon their origination. While individuals of color have many options as it relates to higher education, HBCUs exist to serve the continued purpose for which they were created. Those entrusted with the responsibilities to govern these institutions toward the achievement of maximum yield as it relates to the mission of these institutions must understand the importance of their statutory obligations and commitment as fiduciaries of these intuitions. Training and development as related to matters of regulatory elements must be institutionalized, such that inculcating the attributes of preemptive preparation and decision-making as routine will better position HBCUs in the maintenance of standards for accreditation, but also it will become a matter of prudent operations.

The boards of trustees for Historically Black Colleges and Universities matter, as they hold the trust that ensures the continued status of these institutions. As individuals become trustees at HBCUs, they must be selected with a clear commitment to govern in a manner that serves the interest and mission of the institution for which they serve. The failure to provide professional training and development to these individuals would be detrimental to the institutions they serve. Failure to understand the cultural nuances of and norms unique to each HBCU renders a disadvantage to the institution. Trustees must be educated on the challenges facing these institutions and trained as to how to leverage their time, talent, and, where applicable, their treasury or appropriate access to the treasury to aid in the advancement of the mission of these institutions. Tuckman and Jensen's (1977) group development theory, along with Levine and Moreland's (1994) group socialization theory promote the importance of working well as a group, and the stimulation for professional development is integral to achieving this effort. Chait et al.'s (2014) dimensions/competencies requisite for an effective

board is paramount to the success of boards, and competencies from this model are highly appropriate in assessing the value of trustee orientation and development.

As board members are educated on the challenges facing their respective institutions, they should also be educated as to the landscape of challenges across all HBCUs, other minority-serving institutions (MSIs), as well as PWIs. This education would allow them to gauge what practices could be incorporated into strategy development and corresponding tactics to overcome the challenges facing HBCUs presently, as well as potential threats to these institutions in the future. If there is not a concerted effort by HBCUs to incorporate group socialization and development training into their trustee orientation activities, these institutions will be ill equipped for the challenges of the future. A contributing factor to the success of a team or group is its ability to work well together in the pursuit of achieving a goal. There is no greater goal of achievement for an HBCU than to successfully meet the aims of the institution's strategic mission. Tuckman and Jensen's (1977) five stages of group development and Moreland and Levine's (1982) group socialization theory support this assertion. These two theories are the foundation for the overall cohesion of the boards of trustees of HBCUs in a consolidated manner, supportive of achieving and maximizing the institution's goals and objectives. Chait et al.'s (2014) Competency Dimensions further girds the elements of trustees working as a cohesive unit in support of the institutions they serve with a unified voice and effort as a highly effective board.

Recommendations for Future Research

Boards of trustees will continue to play a crucial role in the survival of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and the skills these trustees bring to the boards of these institutions will become more pivotal to effective governance of HBCUs. Upon the selection of trustees for

placement on HBCU boards, they must understand their roles and responsibilities, as well as the contextual factors that exist at HBCUs to ensure their preparedness for governing through the challenges they may encounter. This is essential, particularly as these trustees must put forth a concerted effort toward understanding the institution's financial resources, regulatory requirements, and academic quality, which all require the board to work as a group to meet the mission of the institution. As noted in Chapter 2, Minor (2004) states that those without an understanding of the context of a racialized climate and the paradox of their mission will tend to make unqualified comparisons between HBCUs and PWIs which typically renders HBCUs deficient. It is important that his assertion is embraced. While no two HBCUs may be the same, there are inextricable differences between HBCUs and PWIs that may inappropriately cast a negative disposition upon the HBCUs. With that, any research conducted on HBCUs must incorporate race as a contextual factor.

Without respect for prior board experience, the success of board members for HBCUs is centered on the provision that professional development and training activities are formalized and continuous. Research that identifies orientation-worthy activities that could provide insight regarding methods and strategies that would accelerate the professional development of board members is needed. Additionally, research investigating the best way to infuse adult learning principles into the activities would enhance their effectiveness.

More research is needed that identifies the basic elements of what professional development and training is required, specifically related to the culture of HBCUs and its direct impact on the effective decision-making of boards. The identification or development of a theory that supports the analysis of trustee development is tantamount to the success of better positioning boards of HBCUs for development and training which may better support their

functioning as well as effectiveness. With specificity around HBCUs the elements of training and best practices found throughout the literature are primarily associated with PWIs, thereby rendering an additional area of deficiency in the availability of training specific to the cultural nuances of HBCUs. Identifying a pipeline of individuals who are readied for board membership at HBCUs, who are foundationally sound as to the expectations of trustees serving these institutions, would be beneficial to all parties. Research that examines the dynamics of groups and the underlying sociocultural aspects of the relationship of groups is warranted.

An additional area for which research would prove beneficial is that of the development of those identified for board chair. The relationship between board members is important. However, the relationship of the board chair and the president is equally, if not more, important. Many of the noted disruptions regarding boards of trustees at Historically Black Colleges and Universities during the period covered by this study have been because of the relationship between the board chair and the president. To mitigate, if not eliminate, non- or low-performing boards at HBCUs, research should be conducted with these specific institutions in mind. Information about these broad themes can serve to benefit those who seek to positively affect the decision-making process of trustees for Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the future. Similarly an opportunity to enhance the success of board relations would be gained with the training of presidents of HBCUs.

Lastly, another area for future research consideration related to the training and development for boards of trustees at HBCUs is the discussion of the gender of the president and of the board chair in relation to the effectiveness of board relations and effectiveness. This study noted the departure of four HBCU presidents at the close of the calendar year of 2016, all of whom were women and each board chair was male. Research in this area would incorporate

another layer of consideration as leadership at the two levels of governance are often researched but without the dynamics of race and gender.

Conclusion

Trustees of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, not unlike other colleges and universities, will continue to face a wide array of complex challenges in the future. These challenges will require institutions to not only capitalize on selecting individuals who will best serve their needs, but also to provide these individuals with the level of preparedness for executing their duties and responsibilities upon being seated as trustees.

Essentially, part of the pre-boarding of trustees should include professional development and training. This preparation should continue throughout the tenure of the trustee to ensure long-term benefits. It is imperative that when professional development and training are regularly conducted, group socialization and development activities must be included to ensure the success of the board to work together in the interest of the institutions they serve because group dynamics matter. Professional development should involve the concepts of group socialization to navigate the five stages of group development successfully. Quarterly activities that reinforce the understanding of matters of significance at their respective institutions would also increase the yield on the interpersonal dimension, promoting the effectiveness of boards.

Finally, it is essential that as Minor (2004) offers, using race conscious theory conjointly with traditional higher education paradigms might be a useful approach to conduct research on HBCUs. Incorporating relevant and meaningful learning activities maximizes the immediate usefulness of the information to the trustee. This allows the trustees and the board in full to advance from the receipt of data to a position of utilizing the information in application and problem resolution as they work to counter the challenges of their institutions.

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APPENDIX A: Roles and Responsibilities of College and University Trustees as provided by the American Association of University Professors (1966), The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1973), and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (2010).

AAUP	Carnegie Commission	AGB
The governing board of an institution of higher education in the United States operates, with few exceptions, as the final institutional authority.	It is the final arbiter of internal disputes involving the administration, the faculty, and students – the court of last resort for most disagreements	The ultimate responsibility for governance of the institution rests in its governing board.
The board helps relate the institution to its chief community.	It acts as a "buffer" between society and the campus.	The board should play an important role in relating their institutions to the communities they serve.
The board plays a central role in relating the likely needs of the future to predictable resources.	It has the basic responsibility for the financial welfare of the campus.	The board should approve a budget and establish guidelines for resource allocation using a process that reflects strategic priorities.
The governing board has a special obligation to ensure that the history of the college or university shall serve as a prelude and inspiration to the future.	It defines the purposes to be followed and standards to be met; it is the guardian of the mission of the campus	
	It appoints and removes the president and other chief officers, and arranges for the administrative structure	Governing boards have the ultimate responsibility to appoint and assess the performance of the president.
The governing board entrusts the conduct of administration to the administrative officers and the conduct of teaching and research to the faculty.		The board should establish effective ways to govern while respecting the culture of decision making in the academy.
	It is an "agent of change," deciding what changes should be permitted and what changes should be encouraged and when.	
		Boards should ensure open communication with campus constituencies.
The board ensures the publication of codified statements that define the overall policies and procedures of the institution under its jurisdiction		The governing board should manifest a commitment to accountability and transparency and should exemplify the behavior it expects of other participants in the governance process.

APPENDIX B: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY

Institute of Higher Education

May 27, 2017

<insert date>
<insert name>
<insert title>
<insert address>

Dear <insert name>:

I am a doctoral student working under the direction of Dr. Libby V. Morris, Zell B. Miller Distinguished Professor of Higher Education and Director, Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia, with a research interest in governance, specifically boards of trustees at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). I am writing to request your participation in a research study dealing with the selection, training and development of individuals selected to serve on Boards of Trustees at HBCUs.

Your participation will involve a 60-minute face-to-face interview with me, and you can choose the interview location. The purpose of this study is to explore the requisite preparation and support for members of the board of trustees of HBCUs that would support their ability to enhance or become more effective and more highly functioning in their role as trustees. There is a limited body of research on HBCU senior leadership, and most specifically on the board of trustees. This research will add to our knowledge of trustee preparation, trustee training, and its relationship to the effective functioning of governance of HBCUs.

As **Title**, I believe you can provide valuable insights for my analysis. I am most interested in capturing your perspective on the selection and development of those serving in the role as trustees and the critical imperative of ensuring their preparedness as they play a key role in the survival and viability of one of the nation's most sacred trusts, HBCUs. If you are willing to participate and your schedule permits, I would like to interview you during the month of June or July 2017.

With your permission, I will record the conversation to help remember what was said and may site your name and/or specific statements in publications or presentations. The audio files will be destroyed once the study is complete. While conducting the study, I and possibly a professional transcriptionist will be the only person with access to the audio files and transcripts. All information will be stored in a locked file or password protected computer in my office.

Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty. If you are an employee, your decision to participate in the research will not affect your employment or employment evaluations. If you are a student, your decision to participate or not will have no bearing on your grades or class standing. If you decide to withdraw from the study, the information that can be identified as yours will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless you make a written request to remove, return, or destroy the information. No foreseeable risks or discomforts are expected. There may also be no potential benefits for you personally from this study. However, the potential benefits may include a better understanding of what is required to ensure proper selection and preparation of members of Boards of Trustees at Historically Black Colleges and Universities in an effort of ensuring their survivability.

Should you have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact me by email at cam34586@uga.edu or by phone at 678.283.6119. Additional questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.

Thank you for your consideration to participate in this research study. I would be most grateful if you would be willing to make the time to participate, as I know your perspective will add value to the study. I will contact you soon to schedule a time for us to talk if you are willing and available. I will also be able to offer further explanations if you have any questions about the study. Again, thank you for your consideration. Please keep this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

Constance A. Mack-Andrews

APPENDIX C: APPROVAL OF PROTOCOL

Office of the Vice President for Research
Institutional Review Board

July 6, 2017

Dear Libby Morris:

On 7/6/2017, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Review Category:	Exempt 2
Title of Study:	Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Boards of Trustees Matter
Investigator:	Libby Morris
Student Co-Investigator:	Constance Mack-Andrews
IRB ID:	STUDY00004946
Funding:	None
Documents Reviewed:	Consent Document and Interview Guide

The IRB approved the protocol from 7/6/2017 to 7/5/2022.
In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

Brooke M. Harwell
University of Georgia
Human Subjects Office, IRB Analyst II

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Personal Narrative

1. Tell me about your professional career, including where you have worked and the type of work you have done.

2. How long have you been serving as a trustee on the board at [name of institution]?

3. Trustees are often selected for a specific skill set and/or connection to a college or university.
    a. Prior to serving as a trustee, what kind of connection did you have to [name of institution]?
    b. What role did your past experience and skills (knowledge of higher education, marketing/branding, financial affairs, information technology, etc.) play in being invited to serve on the board?
    c. Are there established criteria for the selection of board members?

4. Sometimes, trustees serve on multiple boards,
    a. Do you serve on any other boards? If so, in what capacity and how long have you participated?
    (e.g., College/University Boards? Foundation Boards? Corporate Board}

    b. If yes, how has service on other boards influenced how you engage with this board?

Board Service

1. What is your current role on the board?
    a. what is expected in this position?
    b. how much time do you personally contribute each month to the board? In what ways?

2. While all boards may have their own cultures and characteristics,
    a. what are the primary responsibilities of board members at [name of institution]?
    b. how often does the board meet?
    c. How does the board typically make decisions?

3. Have you ever participated in a presidential search process? If so, could you describe that experience?

4. How active is the board in development? Do you have a role in fund-raising?

5. How extensively do you think that your skills have been tapped by the board in its major functions?

Board Training

a. When you joined the board what type of orientation, if any, was offered?

b. As part of your role on the board of this institution, please tell me about current training.
    a. Is training ongoing? If so, could you please describe the topics and activities? (e.g., retreats, in-service, speakers, etc.)
    b. [if yes] How successful do you feel the training has been?

c. Does the board at this institution conduct board assessments?
    a. If so, what is the frequency and what do you expect to learn?
    b. How is the assessment data used?

d. What elements or components of training would you recommend being included in future training activities and why?

Board Effectiveness

1. How would you characterize the relationship of board members and their effectiveness in working together? What makes it successful? What makes it challenging?

2. What advice would you give to the board to make it function even more effectively?

3. What practices would you recommend to improve the effectiveness of the board to serve the institution?

4. Finally, how could your experience and commitment be best leveraged to advance this institution?

Wrap-up

1. In conclusion, when you describe your institution's culture, values, and traditions, what do you say?

2. Finally, what steps could the board and president take to improve functioning and to enhance the institution overall?
   Feel free to call me if you begin to think or anything you want to add or clarify.

NOTE: All follow-up interviews will follow this method of questioning. Probing questions will be used throughout the interview(s) to gain a more comprehensive description of participants' experiences.
