

The Unique Contributions of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUS) in Occupational Therapy Education

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For over 100 years, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have been the primary vessel for educating African Americans. The lack of access to educational opportunities in higher education has been one of the greatest barriers facing blacks in the United States. HBCUs existed as early as 1837 with the mission to educate black Americans (US Dept. of Education, 1991). Today, students have greater access to education at a wide range of colleges and universities, with countless opportunities to pursue a degree in higher education. Yet, with less than 6 percent Blacks/African Americans in the profession of OT, there is still a need for universities and colleges to embrace the mission of HBCUS. The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the history and unique contributions of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in occupational therapy. The study was also intended to examine the success of these programs and their impact on diversity in the OT profession. This research uses a mixed methods approach consisting of survey research and in-depth interviews. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS Version 22.0, and recorded interviews were transcribed using a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) for textual analysis.