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Title: Envisioning reciprocal and sustainable HBCU-LIS pipeline partnerships: What HBCU librarians have to say

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Abstract:

Purpose—After the closing of four of the five HBCU-based LIS programs (leaving only that of North Carolina Central University), there is a need to revitalize HBCU-LIS pathways to increase racial diversity in LIS education.

Methodology—This mixed methods study entails survey and interview research with HBCU librarians. The researchers explored participants' professional experiences and perspectives on creating HBCU-LIS pipeline partnerships.

Findings—Participants demonstrated substantial experience, expressed high levels of job satisfaction, viewed pipeline programs favorably, and believed that LIS can be strengthened through the inclusion of HBCU educational practices and students.

Practical implications—This study provides recommendations and a model for forging culturally competent and reciprocal HBCU-LIS partnerships.

Social implications—Community-led knowledge of HBCUs can disrupt rescue and deficiency narratives of these institutions. Such prejudices are detrimental to HBCU-LIS partnerships.

Originality/value— Past HBCU-LIS pipeline partnerships did not culminate in research or published best practices. This article presents literature-derived and community-sourced guidelines along with a model for future initiatives.

Keywords:

Pedagogy, Library and information science, Historically Black colleges and universities, Diversity, Inclusion, Pipeline programs

Paper type:

Research

Introduction

Educational pipelines, which have become popular in the post-affirmative action higher education landscape, are designed to steer underrepresented students into undergraduate and graduate programs (Gasman & Nguyen, 2014). The pipeline model is often touted as a possible remedy to the lack of racial diversity in LIS. Interest in these types of collaborations continues to grow among LIS stakeholders, with some stating that the absence of students of color is due to a pipeline problem (Bourg, 2014). Indeed, there have been a number of collaborations between historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs)¹ and LIS programs. As it stands, however, there are no published guidelines on HBCU-LIS partnerships. We address this knowledge gap in this research study.

The HBCU-LIS link is hardly novel. For nearly 100 years, HBCUs have been instrumental in educating Black librarians. The Black librarian community, though only 8.1% of the library profession, would be substantially smaller were it not for the contributions of five HBCU library schools at Hampton University (1925-1954), Alabama A&M University (1969-1982), the University of the District of Columbia (1969-1979)², Clark Atlanta University (1939-2005) and North Carolina Central University, or NCCU (est. 1941). These programs provided pathways to librarianship long before the American Library Association and mainstream LIS programs included people of color. Only one HBCU-based LIS program at NCCU remains—the significance of which should not be overlooked. NCCU’s School of Library and Information Science continues to “promote access to information for all of humanity” and recruit “underrepresented populations and non-traditional students” (NCCU SLIS, 2019). This is not to suggest that this program must bear the responsibility of meeting the needs of LIS students of color; rather, this incredible opportunity should be shared. Data collected by the Association for LIS Education (ALISE) substantiates that, some 75 years after the founding of North Carolina Central University’s library school, there remain 16 programs in North America that lack students of color.³ Stated differently, in an era of online LIS education, one-third of LIS schools lack racial diversity.

The LIS workforce could be vibrant and racially diverse if all LIS programs were energized in creating mechanisms for not only recruitment but inclusion. Pipeline programs are but one method of increasing diversity. So long as care is taken to create reciprocal and responsive partnerships, these endeavors can be effective. Exploration and dialogue are vital first steps in nurturing long-term HBCU-LIS partnerships. This is especially the case as it relates to meeting the needs of those matriculating from HBCU campuses where community and cultural identity are emphasized (Gasman & Arroyo, 2014; Douglas, 2012; citation omitted, 2019). In light of the largely online, solitary nature of current LIS education, these and other nuances are important considerations when exploring HBCU-LIS partnerships.

We aim to model the practice of exploration and dialogue by gleaning from those on the frontline of HBCUs and LIS: HBCU librarians. Who better than HBCU librarians to provide insight on the way forward? Our purpose is to assemble community-sourced recommendations

¹ The HBCU designation recognizes accredited colleges and universities that exclusive educated Blacks prior to the 1965 U.S. Higher Education Act. HBCUs originated in the 19th century in response to the need for advanced education for African Americans. All but three HBCU institutions were founded after the emancipation of slavery in 1865[#]. Currently, there are 103 HBCU institutions, most of which are located in the U.S. south (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). HBCU institutions educate a third of Black college students while comprising less than 2% of the nation’s colleges and universities (Gasman & Commodore, 2014; Kena et. al, 2017).

² The library school at the University of the District of Columbia did not earn ALA Accreditation.

³ Some respondents declined to answer or noted their race as “unknown.”

for HBCU-LIS pipeline partnerships. We are interested in mechanisms for forging inter-institutional conversations that could lead to the inclusion and empowerment of HBCU students in all aspects of the library and information science field, beginning with graduate programs.

Review of relevant literature

The pipeline metaphor was coined by Astin and Astin (1982) who described the U.S. higher educational landscape as “a leaking pipeline which loses disproportionately large numbers of African American students” (Astin & Astin, 1982 as cited in Mazon & Ross, 1990, pg. 159). Astin argued that a faulty pipeline represents when and where marginalized students enter and leave the sciences in particular, with factors such as role models, achievement levels, self-concept, classroom experiences, and peer groups affecting the “flow.” The term “pipeline” has since taken a broad definition and is synonymous with methods for channeling students of color in specific directions—for example, the school-to-prison pipeline (Christle et. al, 2005; Dancy, 2014) or the high-school-to-medical-school pipeline (Fincher, Brown & Noble, 2002). Thus, although the term “pipeline” commonly holds a positive connotation, there can exist deleterious pipelines. For instance, among the especially productive theoretical approaches are those envisioning pipelines as systems of dependence. In his work on Black male school-to-prison pipelines, Dancy (2014a) theorizes this phenomenon as an extension of Foucault’s Panoptic form of social control. Similarly, in *Theorizing Black manhood: Black male construction in the educational pipeline*, Dancy (2014b) parallels pipelines with the concept of perpetual Black boyhood or the infantilized Black male identity. Maladaptive educational settings funnel students into lifestyles geared toward perpetual surveillance and policing. Scholarship such as that of Dancy improves our understanding of the critical lack of Black males in librarianship; LIS researchers such as Kaetrena Kendrick Davis (2009) have done important work in this area.

We turned to higher education literature, especially the works of Marybeth Gasman, to understand the conditions for viable, transformative HBCU pipelines. First, HBCUs must be seen as not as inferior establishments, but as anti-hegemonic spaces or sites of resistance (Douglas, 2012) that function as social equalizers (Brown & Davis, 2001). Secondly, receiving institutions should minimize educational context switching by providing continuity. To facilitate a seamless transition from HBCUs to PWIs, programs must recast traditional paradigms, specifically “survival of the fittest” or meritocratic approaches that devalue cooperative learning and “weed out the weak” at either the application or matriculation stages (Gasman & Nguyen, 2014; Fryer & Greenstone, 2010). These hyper-individualistic practices are at odds with community-based pedagogy. Interactive classroom environments (Brown & Davis, 2001; Gasman & Arroyo, 2014) are also important for fostering successful transitions for HBCU students who enter predominantly white graduate programs and subsequent fields. In addition, pipeline students are edified through diverse curricula that celebrates industry pioneers from underrepresented backgrounds and incorporates culturally-relevant content (Perna et. al, 2010). Research also demonstrates that students in pipeline programs are affirmed through robust support systems such as various models of mentorship (Charleston et. al, 2014; Hobson et. al, 2012) as well as mechanisms to address academic struggles early on (Gasman & Nguyen, 2014). Other support structures include small, intimate classes, and cohorts (Douglas, 2012; Fryer, 2010).

Well-intending pipelines can go array. Lachney and Nieuwma (2015) write of “bait and switch,” where K-12 diversity recruitment strategies misalign with university curricula and culture. Wolff (2011) similarly discusses how pipelines turn into “pipe dreams” as it relates to

failed attempts at including faculty of color in higher education ranks. Though these examples differ from the present study's context, the lessons of creating authentic relationships are important. Otherwise, educators' risk perfunctory or "artificial, transitional interventions" that, similar to affirmative action efforts, are numbers-centered but ignore the long-term task of promoting upward mobility (Thomas, 1990, para. 8).

It is for this reason that we use the term "pipeline partnerships," as these initiatives can only be established through trust and mutual cooperation. Educating students of color is not enough; underrepresented students should be empowered throughout the entire educational process. Egalitarian environments (that is, faculty-student rapport, curricula, student services, alumni relations) are necessary for students of color to thrive.

Cooke's (2019) adoption of "radical pedagogies in LIS education" represents this revolutionary type of inclusion. Borrowing from a range of models—namely, culturally responsive and sustaining (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; 1995b); feminist (Accardi 2013), engaged (hooks, 2014), and sentipensante pedagogies (Rendon, 2012)—Cooke makes the case for a humanizing educational framework intended to "acknowledges and challenge power dynamics and inherently oppressive content and practices" and "center students and their experiences in the learning process" (p. 119). The hospitable (Rupprecht & Rupprecht, 1983; Stratman, 2013; Tsolidis, 2001), loving (Cheng, 2011; Keating, 2007; hooks, 2003), honest (Williams, 2016; Vich and Kim, 2016; Scott, 2017) nature of this radical praxis values deep and active listening, authenticity, along with relationship building. Radical pedagogy extends beyond courtesy, merely the grantor's choice, and is predicated on belonging, or the receiver's right. We argue that, to be transformative, HBCU-LIS partnerships must incorporate radical pedagogical frameworks, as presented by Cooke (2019). We will investigate whether there is congruence between HBCU librarians recommendations and the radical techniques invoked by Cooke's radically humanizing LIS pedagogy. The purpose of this study is to distill recommendations for forging welcoming, impactful, sustained, and mutually beneficial HBCU-LIS partnerships.

Research Question and Methods

Baring the aforementioned opportunities, challenges, and philosophies in mind, we sought to answer the question: *What are HBCU librarians' perspectives toward partnerships between HBCU and LIS programs?* An LIS program is operationalized as an ALA-accredited graduate program, whether a Library and Information Science Program or School of Information (iSchool), that leads to the MLIS or equivalent. To address this inquiry, we designed a mixed methods explanatory study comprised of survey research followed by semi-structured interviews.

Also known as multitrait -multimethod matrix or multiple operationalism (Campbell & Fiske, 1959), triangulation (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz & Sechrest, 1966), and critical multiplism (Cook, 1985), the mixed methods strategy relies on more than one type of research technique—whether a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, more than one quantitative method, or more than one qualitative methods—to examine a phenomenon. Mixed methods can also entail handling various types of data (Brewer & Hunter, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2007; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; 2007). Recognized as a postmodern research tradition, the mixed methods design is influenced by constructivist-interpretive, critical (Marxist, emancipatory), and feminist theoretical frameworks. It is argued that the mixed methods approach is rooted in the philosophy that reality is socially-constructed and multiple (Creswell, 2007; Denzin and Lincoln, 2007; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2006). That is, "reality is never absolute; rather, it is 'representational'" (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 455).

The mixed model of inquiry uses varied research to uncover tacit knowledge involving cultural pluralism, which is our aim. When done correctly, mixed methods research can afford both reflective and confirmatory insight. Drawing on a range of methods helps to more accurately represent the participants' perspectives. Idiosyncratic and statistical evidence together can paint a holistic picture of constructs. There is growing use of multimethod techniques in LIS, particularly in light of calls for methodological diversity in LIS (Halpern et. al, 2015) and evidenced-based librarianship (Connor, 2006; Booth, 2000; Eldredge, 1997; 2000a; 2000b). Fidel's (2008) content analysis of 465 articles published in four major LIS research journals revealed that, at the time, 22 articles, or 5% percent, used the explicit term "mixed method design." Yet, Chu's (2015) review of methods used in the top four LIS journals, which indicated that the application of multiple methods in LIS grew exponentially.

Bearing this in mind, the present study entails an explanatory sequential method comprised of survey collection followed by interviews. Collective, quantitative patterns together with individual, qualitative insight can begin to explain HBCU librarians' perceptions of and recommendations for LIS pathways. The survey instrument was designed according to a literature-derived taxonomy of constructs (Table 1). Based on Cooke's invocation of radically humanizing pedagogies, a number of constructs necessitate further exploration. (e.g., participants' experiences, potential recruitment techniques, viability, and qualities of successful HBCU-LIS partnerships) was helpful in formulating variables. These constructs were subsequently used to design a questionnaire consisting of three sections and 23 items.

Table 1. *Cooke's invocation of radically humanizing pedagogies*

Culturally response & sustaining pedagogies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relevant & responsive to social and cultural realities • effectively meets the academic & social needs of diverse students • collective & individual empowerment • develop critical consciousness to challenge status quo 	Gay, 2010 Howard, 200; 2003 Shade et. al, 1997 Ladson-Billings, 1995a; 1995b Paris, 2012 Paris & Aim, 2014 Rychly & Graves, 2012
Radical hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasis on guests (students) versus host (instructor) • sense of belonging • listening & reciprocity • overcome fear of difference 	Rupprecht & Rupprecht, 1983 Stratman, 2013 Tsolidis, 2001
Radical love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissolves boundaries • Transformative learning • Affirm emotion well-being • Environment of openness 	Cheng, 2011 Keating, 2007 hooks, 2003
Radical honesty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing whole self into the classroom • Truth telling • Valuing narrative and personal experience • Acting (real teaching & authenticity) 	Williams, 2016 Vich and Kim, 2016 Scott, 2017

Five pre-testers who met the inclusion criteria of librarians currently employed at HBCUs provided feedback. Pre-tester evaluations helped strengthen the survey's function, syntax, and fidelity. The survey was distributed via library association listservs and social media on October 28, 2018. It was redistributed directly to HBCU librarians via email on January 28, 2019. Six follow-up interviews took place between February 4 -13, 2019. The survey data was quantified while the interviews were transcribed and coded. An a priori coding scheme was developed, and the researchers achieved a Kappa coefficient of .73 after coding the first interview. The remaining interviews were then coded and analyzed using the constant comparative technique (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Since sampling entailed purposive and snowball methods, it is not possible to generalize findings to the entire HBCU librarian population.

Results

Seventy-eight HBCU librarians across 48 HBCU institutions participated in the survey, equating to a 47 percent institutional response rate. Participants possessed a cumulative 1,422 years of experience, with a range of 1-50 years in librarianship and an average of 8 years in their current positions (Table 2). A list of participating institutions and corresponding libraries is found in the appendix.

Table 2. Participant backgrounds ($n=78$)

	#(%)
Years in librarianship	
>1-5	17(22%)
6-10	12(15%)
11-15	13(17%)
16-20	6(8%)
21+	30(38%)
Years in current position	
>1-5	45(57%)
6-10	9(12%)
11-15	9(12%)
16-20	12(15%)
21+	3(4%)
Current position, by area	
Public services	37(47%)
Technical services	20(26%)
Administration	14(18%)
Special Collections/Archives	7(8%)

When asked about the benefits of working in the library professions, participants overwhelmingly agreed that the field affords personal lifelong learning (98%; $n=76$); work/life balance (92%; $n=72$), along with opportunities to assist people (100 %; $n=78$) and provide information (100%; $n=78$). Other benefits include:

- Combining teaching with research
- The ability to be creative, meet new people, and to be compensated for many tasks that one would do without being paid for
- Staying current with technology and being exposed to new ideas
- Flexible schedule and room for growth through professional development such as conferences

- It is a creative and nurturing field
- Public trust
- Encouraging student success, graduation, and retention
- Working with future leaders
- Providing great customer service

Table 3. Benefits of working in the library field ($n=78$)

	Personal lifelong learning #(%)	Work/life balance #(%)	Assisting people #(%)	Providing information services #(%)
Strongly agree	76(98%)	40(51%)	73(94%)	72(93%)
Somewhat agree	0	32(41%)	5(6%)	6(7%)
Neither agree nor disagree	1(1%)	2(3%)	0	0
Somewhat disagree	1(1%)	4(5%)	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0

Interviewees were asked how much they enjoyed working as librarians based on a scale of one (low) to ten (high). Measures ranged from 8.5 to 10, with 9 being the average.

We also probed how participants felt about being academic librarians specifically at HBCU institutions. Interviewees were asked to provide three words to describe their experiences as HBCU librarians. The word cloud below (Figure 1) represents descriptors, with those in small font mentioned once, medium font mentioned twice, and larger font mentioned three times.



Figure 1. Interview participants' descriptors of job experience

Other perspectives on the experience of being a librarian on an HBCU campus include:

- “As opposed to my previous position at a PWI, greater emphasis is placed soliciting ideas from the students”
- “Greater opportunities for leadership and management roles”
- “Contributing to and influencing the academic conversation among HBCU scholars”
- “Meeting a variety of people and networking with the HBCU Library Alliance and other librarians of diverse descent”

- “One may not have to code-switch as much working at an HBCU. One might have a greater sense of pride in working for an HBCU. Also, it gives students a chance to see people who look like them in academia”
- “Not being the ONLY person of color in the institution, department or leadership; working with others who look like you”; “Affording students the chance to engage with librarians who look like them”
- “Special collections of Black history”
- “It provides African American librarians with tangible and intangible means to ‘give back’ and ‘pay forward,’ especially in cases where African American librarians are themselves products of HBCUs”
- “You have the opportunity to enrich and share the pride, closeness, and solidarity an HBCU can give that is not available at a PWI”

Our primary goal was to determine HBCU librarians’ perspectives on recruitment. Eighty-eight percent ($n=69$) of participants were in favor of pipeline partnerships and answered “definitely” yes when asked if there should be stronger partnerships between HBCUs and LIS programs. Regarding methods of recruiting HBCU students to the library field, the majority of participants recommended one-on-one conversations ($n=73$; 94%) followed by graduate school fairs ($n=60$; 77%), as shown in Table 4. When asked about challenges to attracting HBCU students to the LIS professions, 49 (63%) of participants selected low librarian salaries; 50 (64%) selected by image of librarians, followed by cost ($n=49$; 63%), lack of diversity in LIS ($n=43$; 55%), and lack of recruitment material ($n=36$; 46%).

Table 4. Recruitment activity recommendations

One-on-One Conversations #(%)	Face-to-face and Online Information Sessions #(%)	Social Media #(%)	Graduate School Recruitment Fairs #(%)
73(94%)	49(63%)	31(40%)	60(77%)

Many participants had recruited others to the LIS professions by sharing personal testimonials ($n=75$; 96%) and/or providing American Library Association (ALA) resources ($n=53$; 41%); information on LIS programs ($n=15$; 19%), or other material about the library profession ($n=10$; 13%). Other types of student engagement and recruitment included:

- “Providing examples of successful librarians making a difference”
- “Offering recommendations for application to library program”; “shared information about a distance education program in LIS”
- “Sharing information from the Occupational Outlook Handbook along with links/information regarding library professional associations, available scholarships and internships, and different types of library/archive careers”
- “Introducing individuals to colleagues or potential mentors”

Some participants felt that there were other opportunities for HBCU librarians to recruit on their campuses, such as

- “Teaching public history, library science, and museum courses”
- “Contacting and meeting with library & information science programs or student organizations”; “Creating better library marketing campaigns”
- “Encouraging student assistants to consider LIS and partnering with professors on service-learning opportunities for students”

As shown in Table 5, responses were moderate in terms of recommendations for recruitment material, with online (n=45; 58%) and audiovisual methods (n=27; 35%) ranking highest.

Table 5. Recruitment material recommendations

Online (i.e., social media, stand-alone website) #(%)	Traditional (i.e., print brochures, pamphlets) #(%)	Audiovisual (i.e., videos, radio; advertisements, documentary) #(%)
45(58%)	27(35%)	21(27%)

Other general recruitment recommendations include:

- Focusing on work-study students (e.g., “allowing students to experience library work through work-study”; “I think greater attention could be paid to student workers who are in the library doing the work. We can do a better job of making the profession look attractive to them, give them a great impression of the work”; “employ students to work part time in libraries”; “hiring undergrads in the library helps them to learn about the profession”)
- Securing external funding (e.g., “grant money to teach students about library profession”; “offering opportunities for summer fellowships to students through library grants”)
- And a number of participants again emphasized individual engagement (e.g., “personal interactions,” “personal contact,” “personal conversations,” and “personal experience-telling a story sparks interest”)
- Strategic partnerships (e.g., Collaborate with “campus departments that are most likely to have majors that attracts majors that align with the library profession, i.e., English, History, Computer Science/IT”; “Career services should spotlight Library workers”)
- Focusing on high school students (“Hold local, regional or national workshop for high school counselors to promote librarianship”; “Overcome popular perceptions of librarians by encouraging relationships with librarians at the elementary through high school level and by influencing popular culture depictions of librarians”)

We were also interested in exploring variables that distinguish HBCU education, as posited in well-known literature (Gasman & Arroyo, 2015). We asked participants whether LIS programs should borrow specific characteristics of the HBCU educational experience. The majority agreed that LIS education can be strengthened through community-orientation (n=71; 91%); leadership development (n=72; 92%); cultural immersion (n=67; 86%); emphasis on both self-determination and resistance (n=69; 88%); and accessibility (n=70; 90%).

Table 5. Areas to glean from HBCUs (*n*=78)

		Sense of community (i.e., village-type setting, smaller class sizes, campus pride) #(%)	Leadership development (i.e., expectation of civic contribution and social justice) #(%)	Cultural immersion (i.e., celebration of Pan-African diaspora & African American heritage) #(%)	Resilience (i.e., emphasis on both self-determination & resistance) #(%)	Accessibility (i.e., acceptance into programs, affordability) #(%)
Strongly agree		53(68%)	51(65%)	44(56%)	47(60%)	51(65%)
Somewhat agree		18(23%)	21(27%)	23(29%)	22(28%)	19(24%)
Neither agree nor disagree		3(4%)	5(6%)	9(12%)	5(6%)	5(6%)
Somewhat disagree		3(4%)	0	1(1%)	3(4%)	1(1%)
Strong disagree		1(1%)	1(1%)	1(1%)	1(1%)	2(3%)

On the topic of other aspects of HBCUs that might inform LIS education, participants shared:

- “HBCU institutions are so diverse in race and ethnicity that they are fertile grounds for diversity and recruitment in LIS programs; the modern HBCU is not monolithic.”
- “LIS programs must understand that HBCUs have very capable students; students from these schools are qualified and care about academic rigor; HBCUs have brilliant young minds that can add much-needed value to the LIS field; our students represent the same academic disciplines as other institutions from which graduate LIS programs generally approach/recruit.”
- “Both LIS programs and HBCUs need to be proactive instead of reactive to shifting educational environment. Also, LIS must stop pretending to be more rigorous than they are and stop holding potential students to unrealistic standards.”
- “HBCUs have their own cultures just as PWIs; students are used to closer relationships with and understanding of faculty and fellow students; the history as to why these institutions were founded and why students choose to attend still today—understanding the students that they seek to recruit.”
- “LIS programs should know that HBCU students are more likely to be in tune with social justice ideals and should emphasize that area of library work.”
- “There could be challenges with online programs vs. library school programs and recruiting students for the right program because all don't have experience of just taking online courses.”
- “HBCU students have many choices for graduate schools and aren't looking to enter institutions which indicate - either explicitly or implicitly - that they are unwanted or will become simply a number. For example, if your institution has had incidents of racial intolerance or hate, your program will be less attractive to HBCU students. You'd have to plan to counter negative impressions based on the treatment of students of color at your school.”
- “LIS programs need to realize their curriculum doesn't even match or address the real cultural challenges in libraries...poverty, racism, unemployment, entrepreneurship, etc.”

- “The major consideration, in my opinion, is finances for some students; cost and affordability of library school.”

There were several self-critical reflections:

- “There is a lack of mentorship between HBCU librarianship and HBCU students.”
- “Training and testing of librarians must be far more stringent - people do not aspire to mediocrity. People should think ‘expert, professional, intelligent’ when they think of librarians. The field has a well-deserved image crisis.”

And, in a similar light, an interviewee recalled:

“When I shared that I transitioned from being an English professor to an academic librarian, a lot of people thought it was a demotion. But when I shared my move with a friend who manages a literary festival, she understood and said, ‘Oh, that’s a comeuppance.’ She understood the worth of librarians. We have to do a better job of relaying that message.”

Finally, we were curious about possible skews in attitudes based on experiences and employment. We investigated whether there were significant differences in perspectives toward pipeline partnerships as it relates to length of time in librarianship, length of time working in an HBCU library, and current position (administration, public service, technical service, and archives/special collections). Findings from Chi-square analyses indicate that there were no significant differences in terms of HBCU librarians’ attitudes toward pipeline partnerships based on length of time in librarianship [$\chi^2=(1, n=78)=3.27, p=.51$]; current position [$\chi^2=(1, n=78)=.644, p=.89$]; nor length of time at an HBCU library [$\chi^2=(1, n=78)=1.52, p=.82$]. Stated differently, librarians of varying positions, job tenure, and professional experience generally agreed on the value of HBCU-LIS pipeline partnerships or pathways.

Implications

The HBCU librarians who took part in this study possess substantial library experience, as indicated by the lengths of time in librarianship ($\Sigma=1,422$ years) as well as in their respective positions ($M=8.06$ years). Participants looked upon their careers favorably, with a subsample of interviewees expressing high job satisfaction ($M=9$). Interviewees also shared positive descriptors of their careers (e.g., rewarding, engaging, challenging). Open-ended responses pinpoint that survey participants deem flexibility as a key benefit to the profession. Growth, creativity, public service, lifelong learning, and work/life balance, lifelong learning, and emerging technologies were also noted as strong points. This sense of elasticity was reified by interviewees, one of whom praised the interdisciplinary nature of his line of work and stated that he is able to combine his interests in technology and digital humanities with librarianship. Another interviewee similarly shared how she blended her various interests by developing a program to teach librarians basic sign language. The multifaceted nature of librarianship was a recurrent theme.

According to survey findings, HBCU librarians’ sense of purpose and overall job satisfaction are conducive to the representation, mentorship, and dialogue are that essential for successful pipeline partnerships. Perhaps most importantly, the majority participants agreed ($n=67$; 88%) that there should be HBCU-LIS partnerships. The remaining participants ($n=11$;

12%) answered “maybe.” Suggested methods for recruiting HBCU students reflected the high value placed on belonging and engagement. One-on-one conversations ($n=73$; 94%), face-to-face and online information sessions ($n=49$; 63%) were the preferred means of building relationships with HBCU students. Open-ended responses suggest that interactive methods can help mitigate challenges to recruitment, such as the cost of graduate LIS education, the traditional view or image or librarianship, and low librarian salaries.

Moreover, survey and interview data coincided with the contracts of radically humanizing pedagogies, as expressed by Cooke (2019):

Culturally relevant & sustaining pedagogies

Based on responses, not only do librarians feel that HBCUs promote cultural pride, but they believe themselves to be beneficiaries of this feature. Some expressed that they were uplifted by the ability to be authentic at work and serve as library, campus, and community leaders. They also confirmed some of the literature-derived (Abelman & Dalessandro, 2009; Brown & Davis, 2001; Gasman & Arroyo, 2015) characteristics of HBCUs, expressly a sense of community, leadership development, cultural immersion, emphasis on self-determination and resistance to hegemony and accessibility. Participants conveyed that LIS programs could benefit from these attributes of HBCU campus life. In addition to gleaning from HBCU-based educational practices, respondents also recommended that LIS educators take part in cultural or institutional orientation prior to engaging in HBCU-LIS pathways or partnerships. “LIS educators should learn more about Black history and also HBCU history,” said an interviewee. Participants described HBCU students as being shaped by campus climate and, according to an interviewee, “students get exposure to a wider range of history and understanding of society. They think about how information is tied to liberation and how it can be weaponized.” Conversely, when asked what the LIS field can gain from these students, some believed that HBCU students can bring a sense of social responsibility to the LIS professions. As one interviewee put it, “HBCUs have a higher standard when it comes to education beyond just academics.” A survey participant stated, “HBCU students are taught to question the status quo.”

Radical love and hospitality

Based on the data, radical love and radical hospitality manifested as inviting students into the library professions and fully presenting possibilities. Responses suggest intimate interactions among HBCU librarians and students, with one interviewee stating that HBCU librarians must “go the above and beyond to compensate, usually with a personal touch” given the reality of limited resources at some institutions. Another shared, “I think that’s the best thing I can do is just make them realize that they can interact with me outside of this session, and they can just knock on my door.”

Interviewees shared that recruitment must entail exposing students to as many facets and settings of librarianship as possible to “dispel the idea that this is a boring career.” Interviewees were also asked to assess the viability of specific recruitment techniques such as free one-day conference registration for HBCU students, opportunities to shadow library professions, and participating in live LIS courses, with the former two being looked upon favorably. Reactions to the idea of sitting on live courses were not favorable. As it pertained to modernizing the image of the librarian, an interviewee shared, “We have to show the breadth of work you can do in libraries—the creative, analytical, scientific. For example, being a top-level administrator in a

library is very similar to a business or bank executive. Librarianship can be a STEM field, too. And there is room for growth.”

Some interviewees expressed that they already actively recruit. One explained: “I had a program with a librarianship panel to try and encourage students to consider librarianship as a path. We try to reflect the different ways you can go and the different kind of roles through individual conversation and actual library programming.” Another shared that she encourages work study students who express interest in librarianship to rotate throughout library departments and reflect on new knowledge. The below tweet (image 1) and flyers (image 2 and 3) demonstrate recruitment efforts at the Atlanta University Center’s Robert Woodruff Library and Prairie View University’s Coleman Library, respectively. Similarly, Hampton University’s Harvey Library recently hosted a Forum on Minority Recruitment and Retention in LIS (image 2).

Image 1. AUC Woodruff Library information session - recruitment flyer

COME ON IN Y'ALL: THE ARCHIVES PROFESSION & YOU

Learn firsthand about the profession from your very own AUC Archivists. We will also discuss similar information professions including museum/curation, library science and conservation.

WHEN
October 30, 2018
11am - 12:30pm

WHERE
AUC Woodruff Library
Room 208
115 James P. Brawley Dr, SW Atlanta, GA 30314

ALL MAJORS ENCOURAGED

Join us for an informational session about the archives profession and related careers.

I FOUND IT IN THE ARCHIVES

If interested please RSVP by emailing archives@aucrct.edu

OCTOBER IS ARCHIVES MONTH
Learn more by visiting <https://www.ahdsrct.org/ahdsrct/ahdsrctmonth>

AUC Woodruff Library @AUCWoodruffLib · 23 Oct 2018
Are you wondering how to leverage your major into a career that will allow you to tell the story of a community, preserve a piece of history and improve access to information through technology? Join #AUCWoodruffLibrary archivists and librarians for this informational session!

Image 2. Prairie View A&M University recruitment event flyer

Have you considered
LIBRARIANSHIP
as a career choice

Join us:

Monday, April 10th, 2017, 2-3p.m.
Room 108 of the John B. Coleman Library
during National Library Week

to hear from a panel of
library professionals on
their unique experiences
within the field.

Light refreshments will be served.

PV A&M PRAIRIE VIEW
A&M UNIVERSITY Persons requiring special assistance,
please contact: 936-261-3585

Image 2. Hampton University Forum - banner

The William R. and Norma B. Harvey Library
PRESENTS
THE HAMPTON UNIVERSITY FORUM
ON MINORITY RECRUITMENT & RETENTION
IN THE LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE FIELD

Radical honesty

Truth telling and authenticity are important for preparing future librarians. There were areas of job dissatisfaction. A prevalent theme was the need to be transparent about both the strengths and limitations of the library professions. Low librarian salaries and the high cost of graduate education were recognized deterrents to attracting HBCU students to the LIS professions. The outmoded image of librarians was similarly noted as an inhibitor to recruitment.

In this vein of transparency, the researchers felt it important to disclose any skews in perception based on types of librarians or length of time in librarianship. For example, the fact that participants demonstrated considerable library experience, and most worked in public services ($n=37$; 47%) might suggest that higher-ranked or public-facing library professionals are more inclined to shape HBCU-LIS partnerships. However, statistical analyses indicate that participants generally favored HBCU-LIS partnerships regardless of length of time in librarianship, current position, or length of time in current position. Interviewees further represented this heterogeneity; their experiences in libraries ranged from less than one year to 18

years. Librarianship was a first career for some interviewees and a career transition for others. They held positions as digital, reference/instruction, and acquisitions librarians. In terms of ethnic and racial identity, participants volunteered that they are of Hispanic, mixed Asian and White, White, African, and African-American descent. Though our survey did not elicit participants' racial or ethnic backgrounds, we were fortunate that interviewees were comfortable divulging this information.⁴ That said, not only was there tremendous diversity, but there was also considerable positive sentiment toward librarianship which is all conducive for building genuine and racially realistic HBCU-LIS partnerships.

Application

The diagram below (figure 2) displays a suggested journey toward strengthening HBCU-LIS pipeline partnerships. The recommendations are based on a triangulation of feedback HBCU librarians' feedback, Cooke's concept of radical humanizing pedagogy and well-known research on HBCU education (Gasman & Arroyo, 2015; Gasman & Nguyen, 2014; Perna et. al, 2010).

Figure 2. Conceptualization of HBCU-LIS pipeline partnerships

⁴ Racial diversity on HBCU campuses should not be underestimated. For this reason, in our interviews we provided a definitional operation of HBCU students that acknowledged those who are non-Black or foreign-born/international students. To be sure, HBCU-LIS pipeline partnerships can benefit all types of students.

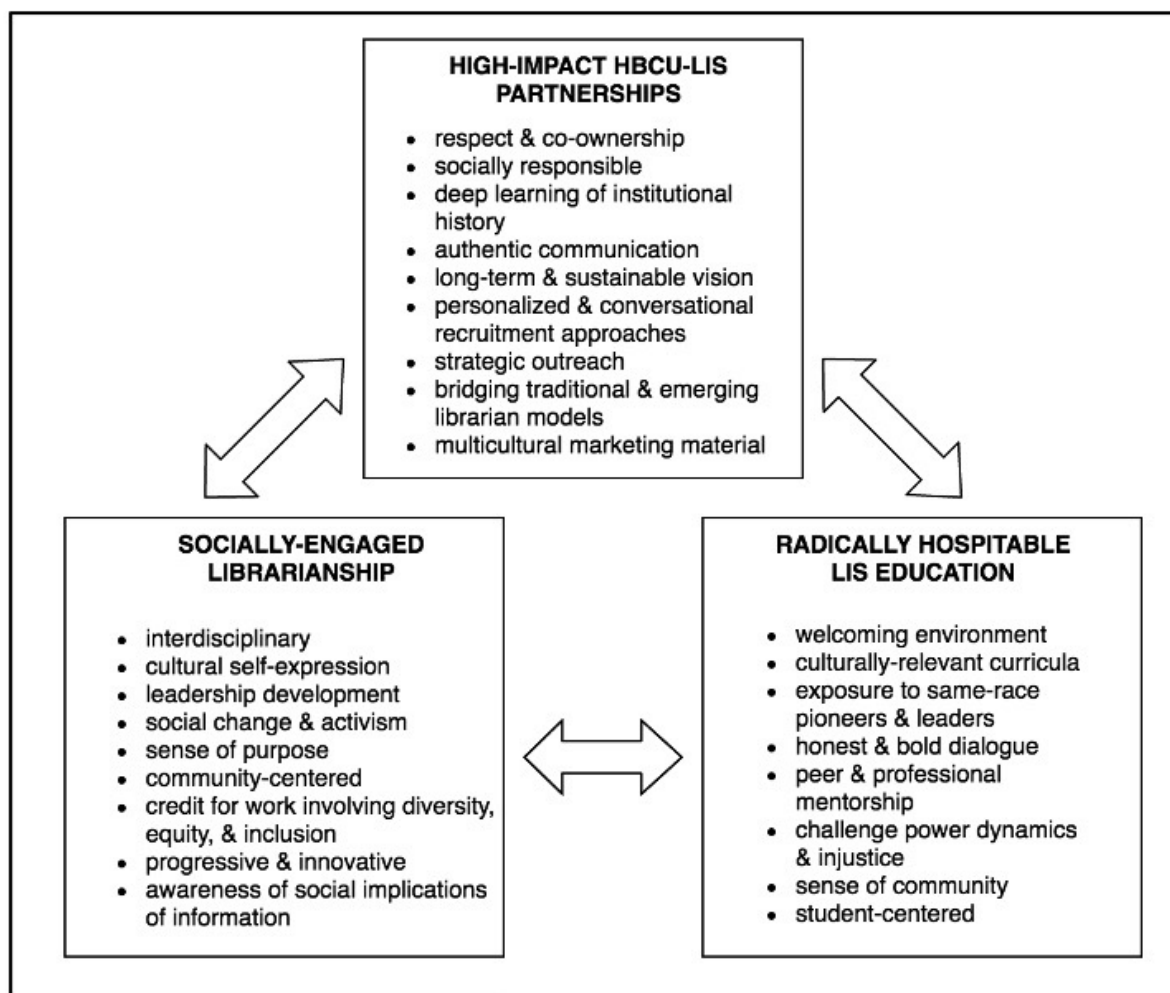


Figure 2. Conceptualization of HBCU-LIS pipeline partnerships

High impact HBCU-LIS pipeline partnerships must begin with authentic, open discussions between LIS educators and HBCU librarians representing a range of backgrounds and experiences. Reciprocity is key to avoiding fleeting initiatives and, conversely, fostering long-term and sustainable programs. HBCU librarians should fulfill active, decision-making roles throughout the process, and should help streamline recruitment efforts (i.e., focusing on library student assistants, liaising between LIS programs and academic departments, presenting dynamic and modern image of librarians). Individualized, rich interaction are important for recruitment efforts. Given the emphasis on meaningful engagement, regional or localized HBCU-LIS pipeline partnerships may be optimal. For instance, LIS programs can partner with HBCUs in the same cities, states, or regions. Graduate school fairs, virtual and face-to-face information sessions, and library programming are possible starting points. Marketing should be strategic, multimodal, and multicultural so that prospective students can identify with librarianship and are exposed to an array of career possibilities. Remedial or rescue narratives can be suppressed through cultural humility—in other words, LIS educators should learn HBCU cultural and institutional histories. They must remain aware of and combat power differentials. Outcomes should be rooted in a posture of social change.

For pipeline students to thrive in LIS programs, there should be attention to creating welcoming or radically hospitable (Cooke, 2019) environments. This can be accomplished through student-centered and culturally-relevant curricula, honest and bold classroom dialogue, and a sense of community. Rather than viewing critical discourse as infractions, LIS educators should make room for viewpoints that challenge inequitable power dynamics as well as injustice. Pipeline students should be empowered through peer and professional mentorship and presented with examples of same-race pioneers and leaders. HBCU librarians must continue to play active roles beyond recruitment by mentoring and advocating for pipeline students.

Upon graduation, these emerging leaders will be well-suited to become activist LIS professionals. They will likely channel cultural self-expression into their careers. Their innovation and leadership will advance the field—so long as professional and workplace settings value work involving equity, diversity, and inclusion. Similar to their experience in LIS education, pipeline program alumni will be motivated to keep community outreach and purpose in mind. When faced with injustice, they will have the tools and support to resist. Again, HBCU librarians will serve as career mentors and advocates. As a result of their overall empowering experience, pipeline program alumni will be energized to recruit other HBCU students into LIS programs. A cycle is, therefore, established.

Concluding Thoughts

This research study is intended to provide practical insight on creating HBCU-LIS pipeline partnerships. Though hopeful, we acknowledge various complexities. There is no guarantee that LIS programs will consider the findings from this study nor the entire research project, or that HBCU programs will be open to partnerships. The reality is that some LIS programs are earnestly committed to diversity and inclusion, while others are reticent. HBCUs themselves vary greatly in terms of sizes, strengths, and capacities. Our purpose was neither to idolize HBCUs nor to pressure LIS programs to adopt a fad. We simply argue that there is phenomenal but unrealized potential to revitalize HBCU-LIS pathways. Authentic relationship embodies the spirit of this research study and, in fact, our recommendations for HBCU-partnerships.

We must also reiterate that some HBCU libraries already recruit students to LIS professions, as demonstrated by several examples. Also, as stated earlier, there have been a few HBCU-LIS pipeline programs, some through the HBCU Library Alliance. Our goal is not to omit these prior efforts, but to broaden the conversation to include all kinds of HBCU librarians from across the nation and to suggest a comprehensive framework. Further still, we are not ignoring the centrality of North Carolina Central University's LIS program. We instead submit that now that there is only one HBCU-based LIS program at NCCU, the feeder pattern of HBCU students warrants increased, fervent attention. Indeed, the ideal is for there to be *more* HBCU-based LIS programs; establishing or resurrecting LIS programs at HBCUs is mightily necessary. To accomplish this, we would first do well to interrogate how Black librarianship has changed and why former HBCU-based LIS programs closed (the basis of two adjacent studies). Secondly, doing so does not erase the need to change mainstream LIS education so that HBCU students are welcomed into these spaces. This research study is based on HBCU librarians' viewpoints on recruiting HBCU students to the LIS field. Future studies should gauge HBCU students' perspectives on the LIS professions.

We entered this study fully aware that there are some who find the idea of HBCU-derived suggestions for LIS education to be provocative. Views toward HBCUs are rooted in historic

racial and respectability politics. Not everyone will agree with the approach of injecting decolonized much less Afrocentric pedagogy into mainstream LIS education. To this end, one participant recommended an inverse audit: “This is backwards. We need to ask what HBCUs can learn from LIS programs.” Another respondent questioned, “1. How would this [HBCU-LIS pipeline partnerships] differ from other LIS programs? 2. Why is a different LIS approach needed?” The recommendations herein will be effective to the extent that they are accepted, processed, and applied. We hope that there will be ongoing discussion and evidence-based action.

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APPENDIX
Participating HBCU Libraries and Institutions

Institution	Library
Alabama State University	Levi Watkins Learning Center
Albany State University	Pendergrast and Wetherbee Libraries
Alcorn State University	J. D. Boyd Library
Allen University	Flipper Library
Atlanta University Center*	Robert W. Woodruff Library
Bethune Cookman University	Carl S. Swisher
Bluefield State College	Hardway Library
Bowie State University	Thurgood Marshall Library
Clinton College	Clinton College Library
Coppin State University	Parlett L. Moore Library
Delaware State University	William C. Jason Library
Elizabeth City State University	G.R. Little Library

Fayetteville State University	Charles W. Chesnutt Library
Fisk University	John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library
Florida A & M University	Coleman Memorial Library
Florida Memorial University	Nathan W. Collier Library
Hampton University	William R. and Norma B. Harvey Library
Howard University	Founders Library
Johnson C. Smith University	James B Duke Memorial Library
Keene High School	Drew Library
Lawson State Community College	Lawson State LRC
Lincoln University of Missouri	Inman E. Page Library
Lincoln University of Pennsylvania	Langston Hughes Memorial Library
Miles College	C. A. Kirkendoll Learning Resources Center
Mississippi Valley State University	James Herbert White Library
Morgan State University	Earl S. Richardson Library
Morris College	Richardson-Johnson Learning Resources Center
North Carolina Central University	James E. Shepard Memorial Library
Oakwood University	Eva B Dykes Library
Paine College	Collins-Callaway Library/LRC

Prairie View A&M University	John B. Coleman Library
Savannah State University Library	Asa Gordon Library & Tiger's Lair Satellite Library
Shaw University	James E Cheek Learning Resources Center
Southern University at Shreveport, LA	University Library
St. Philip's College	St. Philip's College Center for Learning Resources
Tennessee State University	Brown-Daniel Library
Texas Southern University	Robert J. Terry Library
Trenholm State Community College	Trenholm State Community College Library
Tuskegee University	Ford Motor Company Library/Learning Resource Center
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	John Brown Watson Memorial Library
University of Memphis	Ned R. McWherter Library
University of the District of Columbia	Learning Resources Division
Virginia Union University	L.Douglas Wilder Library