

Historically Black Colleges and Universities :

And a Spotlight on Mary McLeod Bethune, 1875-1955

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are colleges or universities that were established before 1964 with the intention of serving the African American community. There are more than 100 historically black colleges in the United States, located almost exclusively in the southern and eastern states.

Southern University is the largest HBCU and one of the most prestigious universities. Located in Louisiana, Southern University has campuses in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Shreveport, the Southern University Law Center and the Southern University Agricultural and Extension Center. Southern University has become the only HBCU system in the United States with an enrollment of over 15,000 students. The System encompasses five institutions offering two-year, four-year, graduate, professional, and doctoral degrees.

Cheyney University in Cheney, Pennsylvania has been known for graduating prominent alumni through its education and journalism departments. Cheyney, founded in 1837, is the oldest HBCU, established for the purpose of educating youth of African descent.



Hampton University, Hampton, VA

Hampton University was founded in 1868 and is located in Hampton, Virginia. With an endowment of more than \$185.8 million, Hampton is one of the wealthiest HBCUs. The school confers approximately 848 undergraduate degrees yearly and consistently ranks in the top 10 in graduating African Americans with degrees in biology, business administration, communications, English, journalism, pharmacy, nursing and psychology.

Howard University, located in Washington, D.C., is one of the most prominent historically Black higher education institutions in the United States. Howard University is a comprehensive, research-oriented, private university providing an educational experience of exceptional quality to students of high academic potential. Particular emphasis is placed upon providing educational opportunities to promising Black students. Howard has produced more African American doctorate degree holders than any other institution in the world. Howard is the only HBCU to make the U.S. News and World Report's top 100 colleges and universities.

Florida A & M University was announced as the best school for African Americans in 2006 by the Black Enterprise magazine.

Founded in 1887 as the State Normal College for Colored Students, the venerable HBCU offers 62 bachelors degrees in 103 majors/tracks and 36 master's degrees in 56 majors/tracks.



Howard University, Washington, DC

Xavier University of New Orleans, Louisiana is the top school in the nation in the placement of Black students into medical schools and has the largest number of Black undergraduates receiving degrees in biology or life sciences. Xavier also has the distinction of being the only historically Black and Catholic university in the Western Hemisphere.

North Carolina Central University (NCCU) is a rapidly growing institution. It is the first liberal arts college for African Americans in the country. Its School of Law is ranked as one of America's top law schools in the nation by the Princeton Review. With a student population of 9,000, NCCU is the ninth largest HBCU. NCCU also has the highest HBCU graduation rate in North Carolina. In 2005, NCCU ranked third in North Carolina in admitting the most National Merit Scholars.



Mary McLeod Bethune

Mary McLeod Bethune was born in 1875 to former slaves in Mayesville, South Carolina. She devoted her life to ensuring the right to education and freedom from discrimination for African Americans. She believed that through education, Blacks could begin to earn a living in a country that opposed racial equality. In 1904, Bethune opened the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute for Negro Girls. Bethune never refused to educate a child whose family could not afford tuition. There was objection during Bethune's time to the education of Black children, but her zeal and dedication won over skeptics of both races. Bethune also opened a high school and a hospital for Blacks. In 1923, Bethune oversaw the high school's merger with the Cookman Institute, thereby forming the HBCU Bethune-Cookman College. She helped integrate the Red Cross and became president of the National Association of Colored Women, formed the National Council of Negro Women, and in 1940, Bethune served as VP of the NAACP.