



## **Assessment, Accountability, and Student Learning Outcomes at Historically Black Colleges and Universities**

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## Abstract

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The inaugural convening of the Historically Black College and University (HBCU) Collaboration for Excellence in Educational Quality Assurance (CEEQA) took place June 21-22, 2018, on the historic Morehouse School of Medicine campus in Atlanta, GA. Candid conversations around student learning outcomes assessment happening on HBCU campuses framed the conference agenda. These discussions centered on solutions to common assessment challenges and the need for an official HBCU collaborative of practicing and retired assessment professionals. This collaborative, the first of its kind, seeks to help address accountability measures while being true to HBCU missions and culturally relevant assessment approaches. Hence, as both internal and external accountability mandates increase, so too has the need for a strong HBCU alliance.

The group met over the course of two-days and immersed themselves in professional development sessions and group work. From the Transparency Framework to the Role of Culture and Cultural Competence to Quality Assurance, the culmination of the event produced a newly formed collaborative including an organizational structure and future convenings. We found that CEEQA can offer significant resources and specific expertise to the HBCU community and higher education community writ large. This report presents the background and subsequent founding of the Collaboration for Excellence in Educational Quality Assurance.





aspects of accountability and transparency and unpacks the present assumptions about HBCU assessment practices and student learning outcomes.

There is very little knowledge about assessment, accountability, and student learning outcomes at HBCUs. Conversely, there is a significant problem in the current literature on assessment and student learning at HBCUs in that it has been studied primarily from a western European ideology (Arroyo & Gasman, 2014; Ewell, 2002; Hood & Hopson, 2017; Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017). This is

while others have worked together as campus level administrators, and others met while serving as assessment coaches. These comrades who share 25+ years of experience at HBCUs teamed up to conceptualize and seek guidance on a formal convening of HBCU assessment professionals. It is noteworthy to share that all but one of the original group member's institutions are a part of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SASCOC).

### 2017 Assessment Institute

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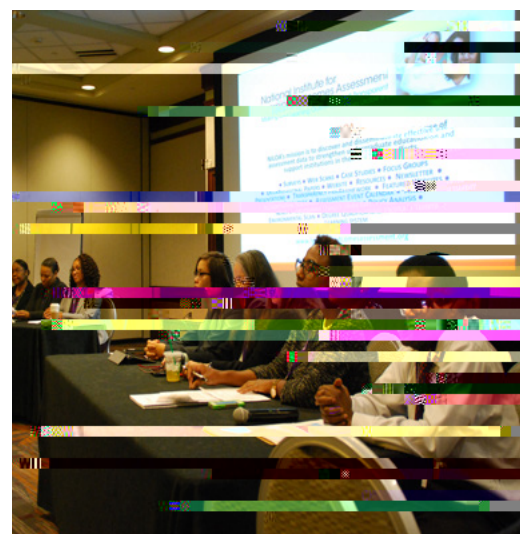
To stay informed on the latest research on assessment, some soon to be CEEQA founding members attended the 2017 Assessment Institute in Indianapolis, IN. During this conference they gathered and attended various plenary sessions together. This particular conference presented an opportunity for organizers to glean ideas and discuss the impending convening. Every chance they got to gather as a group during this two-day conference – between sessions, lunch, and dinner – HBCU colleagues strategized and sought out advice from seasoned assessment experts. Before the 2017 Assessment Institute's closing activities, the group gathered one last time to support colleague's featured on the NILOA Track panel, "Assessment at Historically Black Colleges and Universities" where nine different HBCUs were highlighted. As one member stated, this panel was the perfect climax to end a collegial experience and "finally not feel alone" at the Institute or my home institution.

Participants returned to their campuses reenergized and ready, and agreed to move forward with scheduling their first official meeting for the following summer. The first order of business included identifying local colleagues who could assist with administrative support and soliciting sponsorship from an established organization that focuses on assessment and student learning outcomes. They also agreed that the first meeting would be held in Atlanta, starting as a small work group headed up by members of the Atlanta University Center Consortium - Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Spelman College - that will eventually evolve into a national convening for HBCUs.

This invitation only event targeted HBCU assessment directors, institutional effectiveness professionals, and vice/assistant presidents for research, etc. (see Appendix A). Colleagues from the Atlanta University Center Consortium undertook the task of getting the word out and raising interest, while Florida A&M's Office of University Assessment was instrumental in surveying potential participants regarding their specific needs and interests. The HBCU Collaborative Interest Survey (see Appendix B) was launched on April 19, 2018.

As researchers and practitioners, CEEQA founding members are aware that little attention has been paid to the specifics of how HBCUs provide a variety of options for gathering, documenting, using, and sharing meaningful actionable evidence of

*These comrades who share 25+ years of experience at HBCUs teamed up to conceptualize and seek guidance on a formal convening of HBCU assessment professionals.*



student learning on their campuses. In that spirit, it is important to note (1) the



## Work Group Outcomes and Takeaways

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1. HBCU assessment professionals work centers on culture, competence, care, and compliance.

*Perhaps some of the ways we assess are not viewed in the typical vein of PWIs. We are constantly doing qualitative assessment because we have to pay attention to our surroundings (as a part of our survival as a people). We understand our students, particularly first-generation students, who perhaps don't need as much academic support as navigating college culture and language. We teach out of love, we mobilize resources, a lot of what we are doing is in service to our students. The literature does not validate what we are doing all the time - but we are doing it.*

-CEEQA Founding Member, 2018

2. Institutional leadership is vital in supporting assessment activities.

*I think it's not so much that we don't know what we need to do in order to help students be successful but is more so that we have not had the constant leadership and the courage to do what we need to do in order to help our students be successful. Only truly viable institutions are those that are servant led where they put the interest of others before their own.*

-CEEQA Founding Member, 2018

3. Intentional, intrusive, and appreciative advising is the heartbeat of their work.

*Constant contact with students goes hand-in-hand with mentoring, peer mentoring, etc. It is essential for students to understand their transition to the university and how important it is to be a part of this particular community... and the great responsibility they have as members of this community.*

-CEEQA Founding Member, 2018

4. It is important, indeed vital for HBCUs to be at the forefront of their student learning outcomes success stories.

*We have skirted around trying to explain our relevance or to prove why we are relevant... we are relevant because we do this for our community. There are two choices 1. Tell our own story, or 2. Our story being told for us... but the story will be told.*

-CEEQA Founding Member, 2018

5. HBCUs must remain student focused and address myriad possibilities and challenges their diverse student populations possess.

*We need to understand where our students are excelling and falling short. We should celebrate successes and seek to understand shortfalls from an empirical standpoint versus an anecdotal standpoint and then develop and fund proven evidence-based programs and strategies that are going to fill those gaps. In some*

***the vision of CEEQA is to leverage the collective expertise of assessment professionals to promote the use of best-practices in assessment and evaluation and to demonstrate the effectiveness of HBCUs in the achievement of common educational aims.***



*instances we can identify and know where the gaps are but we don't find the strategies that we need to plug those gaps and oftentimes try to put on superficial*





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## Appendix B

### HBCU Collaborative Interest Survey & Results

#### Survey:

1. Name
2. Title
3. Institution
4. Years of service in position
5. Rank the following in terms of importance:
  - a. Quality Assurance in Assessment Processes
  - b. Professional Development Plan for Assessment
  - c. Curriculum and Assessment Alignment Maps
  - d. Program Assessment Rubrics
  - e. Elements of Academic Program Review
  - f. Data Visualization Tools
  - g. Assessment and Accreditation
6. What best practice or strength can you share with others as part of this collaborative?
7. What issue or topic of discussion would be most beneficial to you in the work of this collaborative?
8. What suggestions or thoughts can you offer to strengthen the value and success of the collaborative?

#### HBCU Collaborative Interest Survey Results

Table 1. CEEQA Members' Position Title at the Time of Convening

Position Title	%	Count
Director of Assessment	7.14%	1
Assistant Vice President with responsibility for Institutional Effectiveness	14.29%	2
Director of Institutional Effectiveness	14.29%	2
Other	64.29%	9
Total	100%	14

Table 2. Detailed Position Title of CEEQA Members Who Answered “Other”

<b>Position Title b – Other (Please specify your position title)</b>
Vice President of OIPRE (IE Responsibility)
Executive Director of Institutional Research and Analysis
Chairperson - College of Education
Associate Dean, Curriculum Evaluation & Effectiveness
Associate Dean, Curriculum Evaluation & Effectiveness
Director of Institutional Research & Assessment
Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Initiatives
Director, Institutional Research

Table 3. Time (in years) CEEQA Members Have Held their Current Position

<b>Time in Current Position</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Count</b>
Less than one year	15.38%	2
1-2 years	23.08%	3
2-4 years	15.38%	2
4-6 years	7.69%	1
6-8 years	15.38%	2
8-10 years	7.69%	1
More than 10 years	15.38%	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13</b>



### **What best-practice and or strength can you share with others as a part of this collaborative?**

- *I can share our experiences transitioning from a paper-based process to documenting assessment activities to an institution-wide cloud-based platform designed to help manage the process in addition to a ording programs and units the ability to align outcomes to accreditation standards and strategic priorities at the institutional level.*
- *I have written books, books chapters, and articles and have made multiple presentations nationally and internationally on Evaluation (i.e., products, programs, processes, personnel).*
- *Culturally Responsive Evaluation.*
- *As a IR person, I can share the databases we had at my institution which support assessment for best practice.*
- *Leading program area faculty through curricular/assessment/accreditation reviews Introducing faculty to VALUE rubrics (nationally recognized) assessments for improved outcomes and narratives of their degree programs.*
- *Determining metrics for program evaluation and evaluating programs.*
- *Professional development for shifting and creating assessment cultures for higher education.*
- *Institutionalize Assessment so that the units do not lose momentum in completing on-going assessment work as turnover occurs in the organization.*
- *Models for IE, Framework for assessing quality, strategic planning models.*

### **What issue or topic of discussion would be most beneficial to you in the work of this collaborative?**

- *Building and sustaining an institutional culture for meaningful assessment that serves to move the institution forward.*
- *How we can identify promising practices (a.k.a. best practices) and support each other to improve our own practices.*
- *Constructing Learning Benchmarks responsive to liberative epistemologies.*
- *How to build campus climate of using IR data for assessment purpose.*
- *e utilization of data analytics.*
- *How to be creative with your University's resources and support for assessment.*
- *Best practices for collection of evidence and artifacts and integrating those in the assessment cycle for analysis and decision-making.*
- *Assessing Student Learning.*

### **What suggestions or thoughts can you offer to strengthen the value and success of the collaborative?**

- *Plan in advance, identify key roles and responsibilities, and most importantly expected outcomes.*
- *Hopefully we will include sense making sessions that consider the intersectionality of justice issues and traditional discipline outcomes which often times frames the context of content in the HBCU setting.*
- *oughts on establishing responsive/collaborative/systemic practices and protocol (campus culture) that live (or outlive) beyond individuals and turnover in Institutional Effectiveness units at HBCU.*
- *At the onset, I would like the collaborative to establish outcome measures and set timelines for publishing and presenting at national conferences.*
- *Provide as many easy to follow, practical steps as possible to guide work when the participants return to their institutions. Maybe a practitioner's guide or checklist?*
- *Be willing to share with transparency.*





## About NILOA

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- The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) was established in December 2008.
- NILOA is co-located at the University of Illinois and Indiana University.
- The NILOA website contains free assessment resources and can be found at <http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org>.
- The NILOA research team has scanned institutional websites, surveyed chief academic officers, and commissioned a series of occasional papers.
- NILOA's Founding Director, George Kuh, founded the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE).
- The other co-principal investigator for NILOA, Stanley Ikenberry, was president of the University of Illinois from 1979 to 1995 and of the American Council of Education from 1996 to 2001.

## NILOA Staff

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## NILOA Senior Scholars

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