



HBCUs: Getting Them and Keeping Them

By Santianna Stewart

In the year 2011, it still amazes me that the acronym “HBCU” is not a widely familiar term. It is also puzzling that the meaning behind it is just as unfamiliar. So what does the acronym H.B.C.U. mean exactly?

Historically Black Colleges and Universities are institutions of higher education in the United States that were established before 1964 with the intention of serving the black community.

With a rich and incredible history dating back to the post-Civil War era, HBCUs have grown to about 105 institutional campuses across the country in a span of 150 years. However, with all of its past trials and tribulations and the constant struggle of equality and dignity, HBCUs now face a new selection of challenges.

One of those challenges is funding and development. Most of these learning institutions rely strongly on student tuition, government programs, and foundation contributions to sustain operation. These revenue sources can prove to be unreliable, thus leaving HBCUs financially exhausted. Various campus projects – including management of the facilities – are often put on the back burner for more urgent and pressing issues such as accreditation and student enrollment.

APPA OFFERINGS

APPA offers a wide selection of resources that would prove beneficial to the facilities officers employed at HBCUs. Whether it's the Supervisors Toolkit, the Institute for Facilities Management, or the Leadership Academy, the facilities professional can gain the knowledge to handle nearly every facilities need.

- The **Supervisors Toolkit** training is designed to meet the needs of the

facilities management professional and specializes in supervisory-level leadership development. Any strong profession cannot grow and develop without strong and knowledgeable leadership in place on the front lines. Also, most Toolkit training is offered at the regional level, which can prove to be geographically and financially friendly for those institutions with limited means to travel.

- The **Institute for Facilities Management** provides a superior education to mid-level facilities managers in their related fields of work. Leadership training is instrumental at all levels of the facilities management profession to ensure best practices are being implemented in the maintenance and upkeep of the campus facilities.
- The **Leadership Academy** enhances and furthers development of leadership throughout the educational industry.

The **Facilities Performance Indicators report (FPI)** and **Facilities Management Evaluation Program (FMEP)** both empower and equip institutions with vital data as well as operations and performance measurement tools to successfully continue to align with the institutions' overall mission and vision.

For more information on these valuable APPA programs and services, please visit our website at www.appa.org.

ESTABLISHING CONTACTS

Not only does APPA offer professional development courses and benchmarking tools, it also serves as a “hub” for peer institution networking and an opportunity for making professional contacts. Building personal and professional relationships within a respective industry welcomes the exchange of ideas and solutions to com-

mon problems. This is where the APPA e-mail discussion lists can be extremely helpful. They facilitate a networking link for educational facilities professionals to pose questions to their peers on common facilities problems and issues.

INVOLVEMENT

A possible strategy could be to have existing APPA HBCU members reach out and help spread the word on the benefits of APPA membership, and how the association has made an impact within their own institution. Engaging peers at this level could prove to be an effective means of getting these schools on board to become involved with APPA.

However, HBCUs continue to make up a very small percentage of the APPA institutional membership. Why is this? Could financial strain be to blame? Subpar outreach attempts? Or could it possibly be these schools simply do not see themselves reflected or represented in the membership? Whatever the case, the message needs to be conveyed that an association such as APPA exists and is sensitive to the needs and hardships that all institutions face, be it financial or not. APPA is an all-inclusive institutional facilities management organization that strives for excellence not only as an association, but most importantly to support our members.

For a list of non-member HBCU institutions or for more information on how you can become involved with future recruitment initiatives, please send an e-mail to santianna@appa.org. ☎

Santianna Stewart is APPA's membership and outreach manager; she can be reached at santianna@appa.org. This is her first article for *Facilities Manager*.