The following document presents a section of the review of the literature intended to be included in an upcoming dissertation study on the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) – Florida State University (FSU) College of Engineering partnership. The larger study aims to lend more voice to the administrators and alumni at FAMU to present a narrative of how the partnership works from the perspective of the HBCU, its leadership and its stakeholders. This particular document uses excerpts from the study’s literature review that highlights existing HBCU partnerships, and then continues by proposing the appropriate formation of additional relationships among HBCUs in an effort to foster a Harlem Renaissance-like era of growth and prosperity for the nation’s Black Colleges.

Keywords: College Partnerships; Inter-Institutional Cooperation; Mergers; Desegregation; Higher Education; Educational Policy; Renaissance; HBCU; Black Colleges; Harlem Renaissance
The Harlem Renaissance began in the United States of America during the Great Migration of African Americans to the North and Midwest, and ended with the coming of the Great Depression (Gates & McKay, 2004). The Renaissance was marked by the creativity and sophistication of African Americans eager to prove the worth of their work, express their frustration and disappointment with the post-Reconstruction South they were fleeing, and carve out their place in the history and high culture of Western Civilization. Headquartered in a flourishing Black neighborhood adjacent to a prestigious post-secondary institution and nestled in the center of the largest city in the country, the Renaissance gained as much from its centrality in Harlem. With Northern employers offering jobs vacated by White men fighting the First World War, Black mobility was a possibility in New York's Manhattan Island neighborhood of Harlem.

Harlem's concentration of employed and educated African Americans created a well-suited space for the acceptance and patronage of Black songs, poetry, literature, dance, and theater. Currently in America, unemployment in former industrial population centers, the absence of widespread lynching, and the presence of cities where Black is in the majority is slowing drawing African Americans back to the U.S. South (Rastogi, Johson, Heffel, & Drewery, 2011). In light of this situation, HBCUs are employing new initiatives to attract millennial students to their campuses. However, relative to the average predominantly White institution (PWI), most HBCUs' poorer financial situation, fewer academic offerings, and marred reputations have provided a hindrance to recruiting the highly talented transplants from Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago, and Ohio. To become a top choice for high achieving college prospects unfamiliar with Black colleges as an option for higher education, HBCUs have to make significant changes and then publicize their accomplishments.

Strategies vaguely present in the literature on HBCU reform, but largely avoided by Black college administrators, concern the approach of institutional progress through inter-institutional partnership (Darnell, 2011; Stassun, 2010, 2011). A significant component of the Harlem Renaissance was the presence of Black music, art, and literature being created and distributed from one neighborhood. Stassun (2010) argues that HBCUs partnering with nearby colleges that offer complimentary academic programs allows the growth of both institutions that are jointly able to offer training in various specialty areas. Similar to how the very existence of Harlem as a hub for African American culture drew talents such as Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, and Zora Neal Hurston to New York, if HBCUs in close proximity to one another combined resources and programs tailored for Black education, the location hypothetically could attract the most promising professors, researchers, and administrators. The following portion of this paper draws from the literature review for the larger study to investigate the hypothesis of Black college partnerships serving as a viable means to progress in which to foster a Renaissance among the nation's HBCUs.

To best understand how Black colleges may best work together in partnership with one another or with different types of institutions, it may prove beneficial to identify how college partnerships, in general, appear in educational research, the different types of college partnerships that exist, and provide examples of how some HBCU-PWI college partnerships function, both their benefits and detractors.

**Inter-institutional Partnerships**

College partnerships have been examined, defined, and redefined by multiple authors and organizations. For this study, a combination of the authors' definitions will be used and new definitions will be offered to fit this particular research topic. College partnerships will refer to all matter of higher education institutions working together, regardless of the capacity, level, or scope. In the study, college partnerships will serve as an umbrella term to refer to institutional cooperation, inter-institutional cooperation / partnerships / arrangements, intercollegiate cooperation, joint programs, mergers, acquisitions, consolidations, affiliations, and consortia. The following explanations and examples of college
Institutional Cooperation. Institutional cooperation, as referenced in Martha Ellison’s chapter on The Cooperative College Library Center (SREB, 1973), is a term that, similar to college partnerships, covers multiple terms. Though an older text, the Southern Regional Education Board’s (1973) survey of HBCU partnerships is one of the only works found to specifically highlight institutional cooperation among Black colleges. Institutional cooperation involves two or more post-secondary institutions operating a joint academic program, sharing grounds or physical plant facilities, dually appointing faculty, or participating in a host of any other forms of cooperation. An example of institutional cooperation presented in Ellison’s case study involves a consortium agreement designed and implemented in 1969 by 6 private, liberal arts HBCUs (Miles, Oakwood, Stillman, Talladega, Tougaloo, and Tuskegee) in two adjacent states, Alabama and Mississippi. Though not as small an area as Harlem, this geographical section of the Black Belt is the home to more than 20 HBCUs—nearly one-fifth of all Black colleges (White House, 2012). As the term cooperative suggests, institutional cooperation always appears in the literature as a consensual agreement among post-secondary institutions (Jackson, 2007; SREB, 1973).

Inter-institutional Cooperation. Inter-institutional cooperation appears in the literature as fully synonymous with institutional cooperation, yet not as widely referenced (SREB, 1973). Inter-institutional cooperation as a term benefits from the use of “inter” to more clearly denote that the cooperation is between two higher education institutions and not between one post-secondary institution and an agency or organization outside the realm of higher education. The term inter-institutional cooperation has appeared in the literature both with and without the hyphen and with cooperation exchanged with the words partnerships or arrangements; moreover, similarly to institutional cooperation, the term inter-institutional cooperation appears in reference to colleges opting to work together for a shared benefit. An example of this term may be found in older works on college partnerships such as the Southern Regional Education Board’s (1973) Expanding Opportunities: Case Studies of Interinstitutional Cooperation or Barton’s (2005) work on the governance of inter-institutional cooperation in American and Canadian higher education consortia.

Inter-collegiate Cooperation. Intercollegiate is a term most commonly used in reference to sports. An EBSCOhost search of this term will generate numerous articles and books mostly with the word sports, athletics, or the actual name of an athletic event immediately following intercollegiate. Though this term more explicitly identifies the cooperating entities as colleges and not simply an institution, which could refer to mental institutions, because of its wide use in the literature in relation to athletics, intercollegiate would not be the most appropriate term for the partnerships being investigated in this study.

Joint Program Partnerships. Joint programs between colleges are common in the literature. As it concerns joint programs, also referred to as cooperative programs, the literature alludes to two or more colleges sharing the resources, personnel, and/or students of a single academic unit, department, or program (Stassun, et al, 2010, 2011; Tatro, 2011). Joint programs between institutions often originate from academic need, financial efficiency, physical proximity, or to achieve enrollment diversity goals. An example, to be further detailed later, is a joint program in physics and astronomy designed by faculty at two separate universities, in which one program is in need of more lab space, equipment, and materials, while the other is in need of more students in to enter its graduate programs (Stassun, et al, 2011). The two colleges work together to provide the joint program that involves faculty, physical space, and classes that transfer fully at both the institutions (Tatro, 2011). Joint programs that require additional funding, articulation agreements and considerable time commitments of the faculty exist more frequently between private institutions due to their relatively higher level of flexibility—“flatter” administration, reduced bureaucracy and politicking.

College Mergers. College mergers, like business mergers, exist as the complete fusion of two or more institutions. Colleges have merged for multiple
reasons; many mergers involving HBCUs took place between 1955 and 1980, the passage of the Brown ruling and desegregation cases following the Adams case (Lovett, 2011; Morris, 1999; Bell, 1979). Other colleges have merged to relieve financial and administrative problems such as Case-Western Reserve University, Davenport University, and Virginia Union University (Brown, et al, 2001; Fisher, 1978). Lang (2002) offers a full taxonomy of college mergers, their various types, and the reasoning behind many mergers in North America; both Lang (2002) and Brown (2001) offer explanations for mergers and ample examples of existing mergers.

**Acquisitions.** Acquisitions consist of one college completely absorbing another college or school. Acquisitions have taken place in various forms including, universities that have bought other full universities such as Vanderbilt’s purchase of the Peabody School of Education (Conkin, 2002), and universities acquiring one school division from a university like Alabama’s Samford University’s acquisition of Tennessee’s Cumberland University’s School of Law, bringing the entire unit across state lines to be housed on the Birmingham, AL campus (Vause, 1996).

**Consolidations.** College consolidations occur in similarly to acquisitions and mergers. However, instead of originating from wealthy private colleges buying poorer ones like the Vanderbilt acquisition of Peabody Teachers College (Conkin, 2002), or college presidents deciding that two colleges together are better than one like the Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis merger (Gray, 2003), and consolidations normally result from public college systems combining failing programs between colleges in an effort to save money.

**Affiliations.** Affiliations and federations are alternatives to mergers that involve combining the operations, physical plant, or auxiliary functions of multiple post-secondary institutions without any of the existing parties losing name, identity, or autonomy (Davis, 1998; Roebuck & Murty, 1993). One of the most referenced college affiliations is the Atlanta University Center, an affiliation of Morehouse College, Spelman College, Clark-Atlanta University, Morris-Brown College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and the Interdenominational Theological Center, 6 HBCUs sharing one campus and a library while fully retaining their independence, identities, and institutional missions (Davis, 1998; Jackson, 2007).

**Consortia.** College consortia is one of the most prevalent types of college partnerships in US Higher Education, numerous articles and books on college partnerships reference consortia (Jackson, 2007; Lang, 2002; SREB, 1973). Consortia are the relatively loose cooperation agreements between multiple universities to share a common resource, to allow for seamless transfers of students, and/or to exchange people, property, material, equipment, or programs on a regular basis. Consortia usually span larger spans of area and space than other types of college partnerships. The Virginia Tidewater Consortium sharing one specialist professor among three public colleges along the eastern shore of Virginia and the Cooperate College Library Center consortia of HBCUs in “Deep South” states sharing one library processing center and exchanging library holdings are examples of consortia (SREB, 1973).

The literature referring to college partnerships are voluminous; however, the availability of refereed journal articles, books, and published papers highlighting HBCU partnerships with PWIs is limited. This study seeks to fill this gap by surveying the existing literature on HBCU-PWI partnerships and investigating the operations, productivity, and effects of unique type of college partnership in one particular setting. Though the primary focus of this study is college partnerships, HBCU-PWI partnerships, as a less researched subject area, will be highlighted and the partnership between the nation’s largest HBCU and one of the country’s largest PWIs will be examined to identify 1) what it takes to make HBCU-PWI partnerships work, 2) what has been improved as well as what has been hampered by the cooperation, and 3) what can be learned from this partnership to possibly apply to other HBCUs in similar situations to establish or enhance successful partnerships.
HBCU-PWI Partnerships

The following area of this paper will identify HBCU-PWI partnerships. Though not all HBCU-PWI partnerships were established to promote growth, examples can be drawn from the literature to develop a strategy for partnerships with PWIs that will lead to Renaissance of sorts for the partnering HBCU. The section of the paper below will provide rationalities for the formation of multiple HBCU-PWI partnerships and offer some insight into the operations of these lightly researched college partnerships. Beginning with the main reasons HBCUs partner with PWIs, the following area of the paper will lead into the main types of HBCU-PWI partnerships and give examples of each type. The third type of college partnership identified will lead into the third and final section of this chapter, offering the FAMU-FSU partnership as a model for fostering an HBCU Renaissance.

Relatively small HBCUs graduate more students in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics than most of the largest predominantly White institutions. Vanderbilt University physics professor Keivan Stassun (2010) provides the example that Xavier University of Louisiana graduated more African American physics baccalaureates in 2005 than all of the Big Ten schools combined (Stassun, Burger, Lange, 2010); therefore, the argument is made that institutional partnerships with HBCUs are effective solutions for broadening participation in the STEM fields (Stassun, 2003).

**HBCU-PWI Full institutional merger.** A common type of partnership in the 1960s and 1970s was the merger as a result of desegregation court case mandates and policies. Harris Teachers College, a White teachers college in St. Louis, merged with Stowe Teachers College, a Black teachers college also located in midtown St. Louis, in 1955 in response to the state of Missouri’s implementation of Brown-influenced desegregation plan (Morris, 1999). Another commonly referenced survivor of an HBCU merger is the Tennessee State University Merger with University of Tennessee – Nashville (Bell, 1979; Lovett, 2011).

**Multi-institutional affiliation.** The Atlanta University Center is made up of a voluntary partnership between six historically Black colleges and universities in which they share one contiguous campus (Lovett, 2011; Roebuck & Murty, 1993; SREB, 1973; Davis, 1998). The original impetus to create the AUC stemmed from efficiently directing funds for Black education in Atlanta, the affiliation drew Morehouse College, Spelman College, and Atlanta University (currently Clark-Atlanta University, a merger itself of Clark College and Atlanta University) on one campus to share a library and grounds while retaining autonomy and operating as separate institutions (Davis, 1998).

**HBCU affiliation partnership with PWI consortia.** The AUC has created a partnership in the form of a dual-degree agreement with engineering schools at four PWIs, the Georgia Institute of Technology, Boston University, Auburn University, and Rochester Institute of Technology (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). The AUC is not alone, multiple HBCUs have formed partnerships with PWIs to provide students with access to academic programs possessing more faculty and cutting edge facilities than are commonly found at HBCUs (SREB, 1973; Stassun, 2011; Roebuck & Murty, 1993). However, the AUC partnership is not given much attention in the literature on college partnerships, even though it is one of the only partnerships consisting of multiple levels and types of partnerships within its affiliation and consortia; the AUC is basically college partnerships epitomized, a gap in the literature that may be investigated in another study.

**Specific program partnerships.** What can be learned from Fisk-Vanderbilt Master’s to PhD Bridge Program to foster an HBCU Renaissance? The Fisk-Vanderbilt Master’s-to-PhD Bridge program is an academic partnership between two historically prestigious institutions (Fisk University is considered one of the “Black Ivy League” schools, and Vanderbilt is regarded by many as an elite university) less than a mile away from each other in Nashville, TN; the program appears in the literature as a model for cultivating potential in
Stassun (2010, 2011), a staunch advocate of HBCU-PWI partnerships, offers 6 keys that PWI academic programs may consider adopting in order to successfully cultivate potential in underrepresented college students (Stassun, et al., 2010). The following list may serve as a guide for HBCU administrators interested in enhancing their institution through college partnerships. First, Stassun (2010) argues the importance of developing strong relationships between faculty mentors and the students in the program. Key 2: Peer mentoring and support are presented as the second most significant component necessary for activating the potential in students that may not possess high standardized test scores yet show promise and ability through their grade point averages (Stassun, 2010). Key 3: Research and presentation opportunities must be highlighted and offered to the underrepresented students. Key 4: A PWI should focus on integrating intellectual, time management, logistical, emotional, and social skills. Key 5: Predominantly White Institutions intending to cultivate potential in underrepresented students must get develop tools to share tacit knowledge. Finally, Key 6: Special attention must be given to navigating critical junctures, the Fisk-Vanderbilt Bridge Program administrators take care to inform incoming classes of the stumbling blocks their predecessors faced in the program. For each cohort, the Fisk-Vanderbilt Bridge Program successfully tracks students and their progress through the program by looking at “inflection points” for students in the program.

Funding the partnership. The Fisk-Vanderbilt Bridge Program did not develop as a direct mandate from a desegregation case ruling. Thus without settlement money to supplement costs, the program is funded by both of private institutions themselves and supported as well any external grants such as those from the National Science Foundation and the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (Stassun, et al. 2011).

Gaining full support of the administration. The coordinators of the Fisk-Vanderbilt Bridge write that the program is successful because it uses a variety of mechanisms to cultivate a truly mutual institutional partnership between Vanderbilt and Fisk (Stassun, 2010). It is not that one college benefits from the partnership significantly more than the other, faculty in both physics departments take care to form research collaborations across campuses. Additionally, the faculty pushes for support of administrators of the program and their home institutions, while the administrators also support the faculty to continue facilitating all the activities that make the program a success—this is a situation Stassun (2010) refers to as bottom-up and top-down support.

Renaissance Potential in Proximity

Nashville, TN is home to 17 colleges and universities, four of 17 institutions are predominantly Black colleges with less than 6 miles separating the campuses. Moreover, the city’s three HBCUs are housed on the same street leading to downtown and the state’s capital. One college, Tennessee State University, is an athletic powerhouse with ranked degree programs in engineering, agriculture, music, and business. The neighboring campuses offer 1) the nation’s largest producer of Black medical doctors and dentists in Meharry Medical College, and 2) one of the nation’s largest producers of Black baccalaureates in the physical sciences and the most well-known name in the performance of Negro spirituals in Fisk University. Further north in Nashville, American Baptist College provides degrees in theology and pastoral studies for African American clergy.

The close proximity of the four Black colleges in Nashville and the fact that one out of every four Nashville citizens identifies as Black provides for a fertile setting to develop an HBCU Renaissance. Using either the Fisk-Vanderbilt model for joint programs, or the AUC model for campus affiliation, Nashville’s cluster of Black colleges provides a unique opportunity to develop inter-institutional partnerships. A partnership among those four institutions could combine each of
the college's specialty programs to offer an educational experience unmatched by any other college in the mid-South. Such a partnership could attract new, talented faculty with creative pedagogical practices and research agendas. Similar to the role new writers and integrated publishing "houses such as Knopf; Macmillan; Harcourt; Brace; Macaulay; and Harper played" in publicizing the work of the Harlem Renaissance (Gates & McKay, 2004, pp. 958-959), young researchers entering Nashville for the HBCU Renaissance partnership would have access to one another and the publishers willing to distribute their research papers, articles, and books.

More than Nashville, cities from Huntsville, AL to New Orleans, Louisiana house multiple HBCUs within small, concentrated vicinities. However, in order for colleges like Delaware State University, a college that serves as the only HBCU in the entire state, partnering with PWIs may provide the only means to instigating a Renaissance. To provide a model for HBCUs in close proximity to PWIs that wish to experience Renaissance through establishing a partnership, the next area of the paper will examine the cooperation between the nation's largest HBCU, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, and its neighboring institution, the PWI Florida State University.

The FAMU-FSU College of Engineering

Similar to the joint program that Fisk and Vanderbilt offer, FAMU and Florida State University operate a joint program. The FAMU-FSU partnership, however, is in a league of its own due to the complexity and level of its cooperation (FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, 2007); more than sharing one or two academic programs, Florida A&M University and its neighboring college Florida State University share an entire college. With little literature available concerning HBCU-PWI partnerships, there are virtually no published articles on FAMU-FSU joint college of engineering. This gap in the literature is where this research will concentrate its investigation. The following description of the partnership draws from the few articles that could be found that peripherally mention the FAMU-FSU partnership, and the two historical texts that were written and published at FAMU and the joint college. The College of Engineering history text is identifiably written from the PWI perspective, this gap of literature on HBCU partnerships written from the perspective of the HBCU is another goal of this study. An additional goal of this study is to fully and clearly connect HBCU-PWI partnerships to the desegregation litigation and legislation conversation.

The Florida A&M University/Florida State University College of Engineering. The Florida A&M University-Florida State University College of Engineering stands as the only HBCU-PWI joint college in the nation (Ohland, et al., 2002). The existence of the two public institutions in the same city of Tallahassee, Florida is a result of segregation as was the case for most HBCUs (Bell, 1979). The Florida desegregation plan accepted by the Office of Civil Rights set policies in place that would allow FAMU to get preferential consideration for new programs (FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, 2007; Neyland, 1987); accordingly, when FSU administration requested new engineering programs to be located in Tallahassee, FAMU was invited to the conversation.

Origin of the FAMU-FSU partnership. The Florida desegregation plan disallowed FSU from simply persuading the state government officials to authorize an engineering program to be located at the FSU campus; because FAMU had preferential consideration and an existing engineering program, FSU had to partner with FAMU to even secure an engineering program in the Tallahassee city limits (FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, 2007). Both FSU and FAMU had gained and lost various expensive programs, including engineering, due to the state of Florida’s financial difficulties. Consequently, FSU and FAMU, both anxious to expand current academic offerings and to host a comprehensive engineering school, put their contentious past behind them, wrote a collective report for the need of a college of engineering in west Florida, and presented a joint request for a college of engineering (FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, 2007). With the request submitted, the Florida Board of Regents had multiple factors to consider before making a decision. The literature
suggests the Florida BOR deliberated on the location, institutional history, and financial complexities associated with a college of engineering; after facilitating internal discussions and examining external consultation reports, the state of Florida approved the new engineering institute be established in Tallahassee and operated jointly by the two universities effective for 1982-1983 academic year (FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, 2007; Neyland, 1987).

The significance of location and proximity of FAMU to FSU is more extreme than that of most HBCUs in the same service area as PWIs (SREB, 1973). FAMU is located less than half of a mile south of the FSU campus. Though so close in proximity, each university, FAMU and FSU, operated separate engineering programs or departments at one point before the merger. Directly before the merger, however, FAMU had two engineering divisions, while FSU had none (FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, 2007). Legislation in Florida that disallowed the schools to have two separate programs, so once the desegregation plan was passed and FAMU had the existing engineering programs, FSU could not host an engineering program (Neyland, 1987).

Lack of FAMU-FSU partnership visibility in the literature. The literature reveals that though there has not been much written about either desegregation or college partnerships with Florida A&M University, the few articles that do exist pertain to FAMU’s consolidation of programs with the University of Florida (SREB, 1973), or offer an in-depth view of the history and current operations of the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering (FAMU College of Engineering, 2007; Ohland & Zhang, 2002). Though numerous articles have been published regarding African Americans in STEM fields, FAMU, which was once prominent in the literature for being a top producer Black physical science bachelor’s degrees, has not been mentioned recently in the discourse about training Black scientist and engineers.

Conclusion

Stassun (2010, 2011) and the Southern Regional Education Board (1973) have called for further studies to investigate whether institutional cooperation is an efficient method of broadening participation for underrepresented minorities. This paper argues that inter-institutional cooperation is a plausible solution for fostering significant progress at HBCUs. Momentum from the partnerships could commence a new era at HBCUs that would attract new faculty, a higher percentage of talented students, and accomplished administrators to the often ignored Black campuses. The culmination of additional academic programs, the productivity of young faculty and researchers, and concentration of opportunities for mobility and creativity in one location could welcome a second Golden era for African Americans. Different from the 1920s, the new millennium’s Black Renaissance would be located in the South and centered on the newly partnered Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

References


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