Still We Rise?: African American Higher Education Patterns and Trends, 1971-2004

Walter R. Allen, Uma M. Jayakumar, Kimberly A. Griffin, William Korn and Sylvia Hurtado
UCLA

University of North Carolina
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The American Dream lies at the very heart of the American cultural ethos. At the center of the American Dream is the emphatic conviction that, in this society, education opens the door to success. Education has long been seen as an essential foundation of democracy. The extent to which citizens are given or denied equal educational opportunity speaks volumes about openness and power relations within our society. For African Americans, the centuries-old struggle for education has been emblematic of a larger fight for personhood and equality in America. In this struggle, progress has come in fits and starts, interspersed with rollbacks and lost ground. 

(Allen & Jewell, 1995)
“You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, ‘You are free to compete with all the others,’ and still justly believe that you have been completely fair.” (1965)
Elements Influencing Campus Climate Diversity

**GOVERNMENT/POLICY**

**Historical Legacy of Inclusion/Exclusion**
- Resistance to desegregation
- Mission
- Policies

**Psychological Climate**
- Perceptions of racial/ethnic tension
- Perceptions of discrimination
- Attitudes and reduction of prejudice

**Structural Diversity**
- Diverse student enrollments
- Diverse faculty and staff

**Behavioral Climate**
- Social interaction across race/ethnicity
- Campus involvement and diversity
- Classroom diversity

**SOCIOHISTORICAL CONTEXT**

**INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT**
Data and Methods of Study

- UCLA CIRP and HERI annual survey
- Reaches 400,000 freshmen annually
- In 2004, 440 of 720 participating institutions sent data (75% freshmen response rate)
- This report based on responses of 541,824 African American/Black first, full-time freshmen attending 1,112 institutions from 1971-2004
Figure 1. Gender Differences in Four-Year College and University Attendance
Figure 2. Percentage of Black Freshmen at Various Income Levels by Institutional Type (1971)
Figure 3. Percentage of Black Freshmen at Various Income Levels By Institutional Type (2004)
Figure 4. Percentage of Students With Parents Who Completed At Least A College Degree
Figure 5. Parents' Occupations

- Blue-Collar Work (Father)
- Businessman (Father)
- Homemaker (Mother)
- Business Woman (Mother)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>1971</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue-Collar Work (Father)</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businessman (Father)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemaker (Mother)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Woman (Mother)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6. Expectations to Work to Help Finance College

[Graph showing trends over time]
Figure 7. Sources of Financial Support (% over $1500)

- Parents
- Work Study
- Loans
- Pell Grants
- State Scholarships

Percent
Figure 8. Gender Differences in Academic Achievement and Self-Confidence in 2004
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1971</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration (general)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Biology (general)</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical, Dental, Veterinary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Medical, Dental, Veterinary</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Business Administration (general)</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Education or Recreation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>History</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Accounting</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 9. Change in Career Aspirations

- K-12 Teacher
- Physician
- Attorney
- Business
- Engineer
- Social Worker
- Nurse

Percent

1971
2004
Figure 10. Top Five Reasons for Choosing A Particular College in 2004 (% Stating a Major Reason)

- Academic reputation of college
- Job opportunities for typical graduates
- Graduate school prospects
- Offered financial assistance
- Social activities

Comparison between Men and Women.
Figure 11. Information Sources in Choice of College in 2004

- Friends
- Relatives
- College Ranking Magazines
- College Recruiters
- Teachers
- High School Counselors

[Bar chart showing information sources and their relative importance for women and men.]
Figure 12. Students' Political Views - 1971

- Liberal or Far Left: 38%
- Middle of the Road: 12%
- Conservative or Far Right: 50%
Figure 13: Students' Political Views - 2004

- 47% Liberal or Far Left
- 36% Conservative or Far Right
- 16% Middle of the Road

- Significant and dramatic changes
- “Good News - Bad News Era”
- In 2004, 1.8 million Blacks in college
- Changing educational access and equity - affirmative action, admissions procedures, financial aid, political climate, racial climate
- 2006 UCLA, 150 Blacks of 4,400 admits
Universities are on the front lines in a battle for the soul of the nation and the security of the world. Colleges and universities should vision and model society’s highest ideals. We must win the struggle for equity, excellence and diversity – the larger struggle for human dignity. Otherwise we fail our most sacred trust.
You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

from AND STILL I RISE by Maya Angelou,
Further Contact Information and Details:

www.choices.gseis.ucla.edu