

## Foreword

In the late 1980's Dr. Charles I. Brown suggested rather strongly that the Traditionally Black Colleges and Universities (TBCU) Special Interest Group of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) should formally develop plans to publish in its own journal the findings of institutional researchers from the TBCU institutions. This suggestion was not really new because Dr. Brown, or Charlie as we knew him, was constantly encouraging and prodding his fellow TBCUers to "publish, publish, publish." It was not unusual for Charlie Brown to identify yet another young protégé and challenge him or her to write a paper to be presented at their state institutional research (IR) meeting, then at the Southern Association for Institutional Research (SAIR) conference and ultimately at the AIR annual forum. Not only would he encourage you to "write up your work," but he would challenge you to have it ready for publication. Charlie recognized the frustration of not having one's work accepted for publication in the major journals, and he knew instinctively that a friendlier environment might spur on the scholarly productivity of his colleagues who may have become accustomed to "resting on their laurels."

Charlie's urging to produce a journal resulted in a challenge to secure funds from the Association for Institutional Research through a small grant to produce the *TBCU Research Journal*. The AIR Board of Directors welcomed the opportunity to encourage and support the professional contribution of TBCUers to the knowledge base of institutional research and planning. Their approval of our grant request was swift and unequivocal. Not only did the Board provide TBCU with the seed dollars to launch our research journal, but they provided us with a follow-up grant to insure the sustainability of our efforts. Thus was born the *TBCU Research Journal*, which made its debut at the Orlando Forum in 1997.

As we move into the second decade of the 21st century, it is evident that the groundwork laid by Dr. Brown, the Association for Institutional Research, and the TBCU members of the 1990s has established a second challenge to insure the ongoing contributions of TBCUers to the institutional research profession. In this current publication, *Cases on Institutional Research*, we see that the emerging issues facing higher education planners are being addressed, analyzed, and discussed from the unique perspective that constitute our Traditionally Black Colleges and Universities. Aside from the TBCU perspective specifically, we are reminded that the issues of enrollment management, retention, fiscal accountability, strategic planning and forecasting, *inter alia*, have become so universal that it will literally "take a village" to insure that all of higher education stands ready to successfully meet the next set of challenges to our profession. Through this publication and thanks to the pioneering efforts of icons of our profession like Dr. Charles I. Brown, we can assert with confidence that the base of knowledge of institutional research has been established and is being strengthened.

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