

IMPACT

Drawing National Attention: UNCF Research Confirms HBCUs are a Solid Investment, Fueling the American Middle Class



One of the major media stories of FY 2022 in Black higher education appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* following a report issued by UNCF's Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute (FDPRI) on the social mobility of Black students attending historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

The FDPRI report entitled, *HBCUs Transforming Generations: Social Mobility Outcomes for HBCU Alumni*, caught the attention of the *Wall Street Journal*. "Hard data about the value of a particular degree can be hard to come by. That's why a new study on historically Black colleges and universities is encouraging. The report was released by the United Negro College Fund's Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute," the *Journal* wrote.

“It finds that HBCUs are an under-appreciated vehicle for upward mobility for their overwhelmingly African American students. HBCUs developed in an era when discrimination, often government sanctioned, prevented many blacks from attending college. But the schools continue to prosper because they deliver a quality education that prepares students of any race to succeed in life. As a ticket to the middle class, they also help keep the American Dream alive,” the *Journal* wrote.

“This is the first time in my memory when a newly released UNCF research report received attention from the *Wall Street Journal*,” said UNCF President and CEO Dr. Michael L. Lomax.

“This report offers an equity-centered approach to understanding higher education outcomes for underserved students. The goal of a college degree is to fuel factual learning, maturity and growth and economic prosperity. Our research shows HBCUs contribute mightily to our well-being as a nation,” said FDPRI Director Dr. Nadrea Njoku.

“Investment in HBCUs builds institutions that are primary drivers of success for historically marginalized people. Contributing to the advancement of an HBCU directly influences the continued improvement of economic outcomes for Black Americans—and by extension, our society-at-large,” Njoku added.

According to the report, social mobility has emerged as a primary measure for understanding the return on investment for the families of college students as well as society more broadly. The report illustrated the effectiveness of HBCUs with educating African Americans and leading them to higher earnings after graduating from college.

HBCUs are a solid investment as the primary drivers for moving Black Americans from poverty to the middle class. And that investment helps ensure Better Futures[®] for us all.