

## Chapter 4

# Dynamic Leadership: Moving HBCUs Toward New Ontologies of Organizational Development

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter focuses on the need for new ontologies and methodologies as it relates to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and their competitiveness on a global educational landscape, particularly as they try to maintain high standards of excellence in student enrollment and involvement, research and educational opportunities, and most importantly, in funding. HBCUs, despite their rich history and legacy, have come under some harsh criticism in the past, but more recently, the issues have related to fiscal mismanagement and to organizational structure problems. This chapter explores the constructs of alignment of strategy, understanding of organizational culture, promotion of empowerment, and development of organizational trust as they relate to the HBCU environment and how these factors can relate to increased positive visibility and funding opportunities for these institutions. Leadership in these environments has to be both transformational and authentic, focusing on new ways to bring partnerships, innovation, and collaborative leadership to the institution.*

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## **BACKGROUND**

Many scholars have discussed the changing dynamics as it relates to HBCUs and their continued commitment to academic and strategic excellence in continued difficult economic times. Some may argue that HBCUs have little relevance in today's society, however, most of the statistics refute such logic. By better understanding the issues related to strategy, culture, empowerment, and organizational trust, many can better appreciate and relate to the changing cultural dynamics and philosophies that undergird HBCUs today and into the future and will cement their legacies for many years to come.

*Strategy:* Development of strategy is a systematic process through which an organization agrees on—and builds commitment among key stakeholders to—priorities that are essential to its mission and are responsive to the environment. Strategic planning guides the allocation of resources to achieve these priorities. The process is strategic because it involves choosing how best to respond to the circumstances of a dynamic and sometimes hostile environment (Allison & Kaye, 2005, p. 1).

*Organizational Culture:* Organizational culture is a powerful force which can promote ethical activities and impact upon the behavior of leaders and followers. Culture contributes to the success or failure of those responsible for the institutions' morals and values, which are promoted throughout the organization as translated into policies and practices (Deal, 1987).

*Empowerment:* Employees' willingness to "think outside of the box" and be creative. Enabling group members through enhancement of their personal 'self-efficacy' beliefs and intrinsic task motivation (Conger & Kanungo, 1987). As defined by Hickman (p. 513), empowerment entails two components: 1) delegating or redistributing leadership, authority, responsibility, and "decision-making" power, formerly vested in senior executives to individuals and teams throughout the organization – to what extent is senior management willing to share the power? and 2) equipping organization members with the resources, knowledge, and skills necessary to make good decisions – important in most organizations through training mechanisms and programs.

Organizational Trust – Expectations or belief that

*one can rely on another person's actions and words and/or that that person has good intentions toward oneself. That is, people make emotional investments in trust relationships, express genuine care and concern for the welfare of partners, believe*

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