

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND
UNIVERSITIES INITIATIVE LEADERSHIP**

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

4:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m

Thank you President Trump and Secretary DeVos,

I appreciate the trust you have placed in me to Chair the President's Board of Advisors on HBCUs. It has been my life's work to unleash talent—in all its forms, from wherever it originates.

As CEO of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), I work with employers across the country. No matter their industry, size or longevity, today's organizations all share the same challenge—closing the skills gap while building diverse, inclusive, engaged workforces.

For each of them, the “War for Talent” will never end and, thanks to this incredibly strong economy we're experiencing, it is now a way of life. And today, people are an organizations' only competitive edge.

Employers depend on our country's educational institutions as a reliable source of the multi-faceted talent they need. HBCUs are a critical conduit for this talent. Every year, over 300,000 students turn to these institutions for their education and to prepare them for their careers.

This President's Advisory Board can be the nexus between Higher Education institutions and employers. As a CEO (in both non-profit and for-profit businesses), a former Fortune 500 Chief HR executive, and someone with over 7½ years of experience in the HBCU space, I am up for this very challenge.

At SHRM, we are the experts on people and work and on building powerfully diverse organizational cultures that drive success. SHRM's 300,000 members impact the lives of over 100 million people in the American workforce. SHRM is also an experienced academic partner, currently providing human resources curricula through 465 programs on 354 college campuses.

By working together, across all sectors, the HR profession, HBCUs and this Advisory Board can strengthen the relationship between education and employers. This Advisory Board can facilitate this critical relationship and support innovations in work-based learning opportunities for HBCU students. And as the world's largest human resources association, SHRM can work with CEOs to connect industry to the diverse talent at these institutions.

This Board has an incredible opportunity to highlight HBCUs as wellsprings of the diverse talent American employers want and need today. HR and Education, along with the support of this Administration, must move together, forward.

I look forward to working with Secretary DeVos, Johnathan Holifield and the White House HBCU Initiative Team.