

# Environmental Health & Safety at HBCUs



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**ABSTRACT: Of the 107 Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs), few have a strong staff presence in the environmental health & safety (EHS) field. Many do not have EHS departments, rolling those responsibilities into public safety or security functions. This presentation will explore the reasons for the dearth of minorities in EHS and suggest how this can change.**



**What are HBCUs? HBCU is a special designation for private and public institutions of higher education founded before 1964 with the mission of educating black Americans. Most HBCUs are located in former slaveholding states, and most were formed before 1900 – many during the Reconstruction period. In 1890, federal funding was provided for black land-grant colleges.**

**HBCUs are now inclusive and have some diversity of students, staff and faculty.**



# 29 of 107 HBCUs have internet-identifiable EH&S personnel

**About half of those identified some EH&S duties handled by Public Safety, Fire Safety or Security offices. Most have just one person identified with EH&S responsibilities.**



# Certified Chemical Hygiene Officers at HBCUs

**One.**

Certified CHOs at other colleges/universities

**250+**



# Are HBCUs teaching courses amenable to EH&S careers?



Sure. At least 30 offer environmental science majors. Over 60 offer chemistry majors. At least 2 offer Industrial Health & Safety majors (S.Carolina State & Univ. of Arkansas – Pine Bluff)

# What initiatives are in place to increase diversity in EH&S?



**The Undergraduate Research Education Program (Undergirding Potential Program: UP Program) in Environmental Health Sciences (a NIEHS initiative) is a collaboration among the University of Michigan (Michigan), Hampton-University (Hampton), and Fisk University (Fisk) with the goal of increasing diversity in the EHS research workforce and accelerating improvements in environmental quality and public health.**

# What other initiatives are in place to increase diversity in EH&S?



**Lincoln University (Oxford, PA) has a MOU with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that continues “to enhance the education and training of students so that we are prepared to meet the environmental challenges of the future, while helping to ensure that careers in science are open to every American regardless of race or ethnicity.”**



# What other initiatives are in place to increase diversity in EH&S?



**Huston-Tillotson University (Austin, TX) has focused its new environmental studies program on environmental justice, a recognition that environmental benefits and burdens are not equitably distributed.**

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# What needs to be done to increase minority representation within the EH&S industry? (a few ideas)

- Better STEM programs at the high school level in rural black and inner-city schools.
- Recruitment of minorities to entry-level EHS positions in industry & academia.
- Offer more environmental health & safety-related majors at HBCUs.
- Mentors. STEM mentors for new college students.
- Expand industry/government/academia partnerships.



**Thank you for attending tonight!**

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