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Review of the Book Black Graduate Education at Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Trends, Experiences and Outcomes, by R. T. Palmer, A. A. Hilton, and T. P. Fountaine (Eds.)

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**Review: Black Graduate Education at Historically Black Colleges and Universities:
Trends, Experiences and Outcomes**

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Palmer, R. T., Hilton, A. A., & Fountaine, T. P. (2012). *Black Graduate Education at Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Trends, Experiences and Outcomes*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. pp. 275.
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The relevance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) is a contested argument in both popular and academic press. However, these arguments are primarily limited to the continued existence of HBCUs institutions post *Brown v. Board of Education*, undergraduate student experiences, and institutional dynamics (e.g., finances, governance and administration). A topic that has received limited, if any, attention concerns graduate education at HBCUs, and the experiences of Black students pursuing graduate degrees at historically Black institutions. *Black Graduate Education at Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Trends, Experiences and Outcomes* edited by Robert Palmer, Adriel Hilton, and Tiffany Fountaine fills that void. In Chapter 1, the editors provide a thoughtful and detailed outline of the book. In the subsequent chapters authors—using a variety of quantitative, qualitative, historical, and theoretical approaches—explored graduate students' experiences at HBCUs (Chapters 4-11); retold the histories of graduate education at HBCUs (Chapter 2); examined the impact HBCUs have on producing graduate degree earners from Black and other underrepresented communities (Chapters 3); discussed post-graduate outcomes of students with degrees from HBCUs (Chapters 12 & 13); and the future of graduate education at HBCUs (Chapter 14).

I find the text to be both timely and necessary for three reasons. First, as I stated before, graduate education at HBCUs and Black students pursuing graduate education at HBCUs has received little-to-no attention in the literature. Second, as John Silvanus Wilson, Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, has recently suggested, HBCUs must market themselves aggressively and find their niches in the 21st century. Finally, as racial demographics in the United States continue to shift, I posit HBCUs will play an important role in educating the growing number of minority students that will be pursuing graduate degrees. The chapters together provide insight to why HBCUs are relevant

beyond undergraduate studies, what niches HBCUs with graduate programs are fulfilling both institutionally and collectively (e.g., public HBCUs), and how HBCUs with graduate programs can and will contribute to educating the United States citizenry as demographics shift.

I was enthralled while reading the text, which led me to consider additional scholarly questions concerning graduate students and graduate education at HBCUs. In Chapter 4, Palmer (2012) qualitatively explored why Black students decided to attend an HBCU for graduate school. He found the participants chose HBCUs because of the supportive and welcoming climate at those institutions. While his sample included students who studied at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) as undergraduates, I questioned, "How are their experiences different from students who attended HBCUs as undergraduates?" In Chapter 6, McGaskey (2012) suggested HBCUs offer students social and cultural capital. I thought, "How does this 'capital' change based on discipline?" Perhaps, one of the most compelling chapters was Chapter 14. In this chapter, Taylor (2012) highlighted several reasons why graduate—or more specifically doctoral—education at HBCUs is in jeopardy or "on a wing and a prayer." These factors included, but were not limited to gaps in federal and state funding, loss of opportunity funds, and discrimination.

If I have any criticisms about the volume, they are the overlapping nature of background data and literature presented in the chapters, and there is no thematic approach in how the chapters were presented. Additionally, since all three editors received their doctoral degrees from Morgan State University, I would have enjoyed reading about their personal experiences and the intersections of their experiences in Chapter 1 or in an additional chapter. Fountaine does share her experience briefly in Chapter 9. But these concerns are minor—it is an overdue and well-written manuscript.

Overall, the volume highlights many important topics associated with graduate education at HBCUs, and provides a solid and dependable baseline for future research concerning graduate education at HBCUs. It is a valuable read for lawmakers, administrators, faculty, staff, students, graduate admissions and advancement professionals at HBCUs, and scholars alike. The book is also beneficial for master's and doctoral programs that examine issues associated with urban education, academic programs that explore the intersections of sociology and education, and Black/African American studies programs. If you have an interest in HBCUs, *Black Graduate Education at Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Trends, Experiences and Outcomes* should definitely be on your bookshelf; I am glad it is on mine.