Members Hearing on Fiscal Year 2016 Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Wednesday, April 15, 2015

Joint Testimony of the Honorable Hank Johnson (D-4th GA) and Marc Veasey (D-33rd TX)
FY 2016 Request: $40 Million for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions Program

Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Visclosky and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony today. As members of the House Armed Services Committee, we have been intimately involved in overseeing the Department of Defense's mission, programs and activities. Thus, we feel especially well qualified to provide this statement in support of the Department of Defense (DOD) Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority Institutions (HBCU/MI) Program and the need to increase DOD research capabilities at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Funding for the HBCU/MI Program is a national security issue. Our nation and DOD, in particular, are in need of talent to fill jobs across the national security workforce. The opportunities and experiences that minority students gain from exposure to DOD research labs are critical. This program provides important science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) research opportunities not just for HBCUs but for all Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), including Hispanic Serving Institutions and others.

HBCUs, in particular, provide enormous value for students, the nation, and the STEM workforce related to DOD priorities. HBCUs represent only 3 percent of all two- and four-year colleges and universities. However, HBCUs enroll 10 percent of all African American college students; confer 18 percent of bachelor's degrees awarded to African Americans; and generate 25 percent of the STEM bachelor's degrees awarded to African Americans. Moreover, HBCUs accomplish this while serving students with greater financial need; 71 percent of students who attend HBCUs today are low-income students who depend on federal Pell Grants for their education, a substantially greater share than the 40 percent of students at other nonprofit colleges and universities. Yet HBCUs educate students more cost effectively than their counterparts. In fact, the total cost of attendance at HBCUs is 30 percent lower, on average, than other nonprofit institutions.

Despite this demonstrated track record of success, the federal government has decreased STEM and research and infrastructure investments in HBCUs. The National Science Foundation reports that HBCUs received 10 percent *less* in federal science and engineering funding in FY 2012 compared to FY 2011. This is the second consecutive annual decrease in science and engineering obligations to HBCUs. Additionally, the HBCU/MI Program, funded under the Defense-wide Research, Development, Test and Evaluation account, has been cut dramatically from $67 million in FY 2010 to $34 million in FY 2015.

We thank the Subcommittee for rejecting the deep, 33 percent cut included in the Defense Department's FY 2015 budget request, and restoring most of the funding with a final FY 2015 appropriation of $34 million for this activity. We also greatly appreciate the Subcommittee's action to reject the Defense Department's FY 2014 reprogramming request to divert $5 million from the HBCU/MI appropriation to other activities within DOD.

FY 2016 Appropriations

Looking forward to FY 2016, we are again greatly disappointed that the Department of Defense continues to overlook this valuable program. The DOD FY 2016 budget request proposes once again to slash the HBCU/MI Program by 25 percent, from $34 million to only $26 million. The proposed disinvestment counters the DOD's goal to expand partnerships with HBCUs and develop new Centers of Excellence focused on DOD priorities. We ask this Subcommittee to not only reject this ill-advised budget cut, but also to increase the HBCU/MI Program appropriation to $40 million to grow important research and partnership opportunities between the DOD and HBCUs.

Funding History of the HBCU/MI Program

HBCU/MI Funding History	
FY 2010	$67 million
FY 2011	$23 million
FY 2012	$18 million
FY 2013	$36 million
FY 2014	$36 million
FY 2015	$34 million
Administration FY 2016 Request	$26 million
HBCU Coalition FY 2016 Request[1]	**$40 million**

The DOD HBCU/MI Program plays a critical role in assisting HBCUs and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) with cultivating and strengthening their scientific and technical infrastructure, capabilities and curriculum that are important to national defense. For example, the HBCU/MI Program provides support for research and collaboration with DOD facilities and personnel, research grants for further knowledge in the basic physical scientific and engineering disciplines through theoretical and empirical activities, and collaborative research that allows HBCU faculty and students to work directly with military laboratories in technical areas of interest to DOD, such as cyber security. Program funds also are used to support STEM education by funding scholarships, the STEM Prep Project with HBCUs (a program that provides academic training to young students for degrees in STEM fields), cooperative work/study opportunities, and other innovative academic programs that increase the number of students of color completing undergraduate and graduate STEM degrees.

The HBCU/MI Program has a strong research and educational collaboration with the Naval Air Warfare Center in support of the Avionic Enabling Technology Development for Manned and Unmanned Airborne Systems. The HBCU/MI Program also focuses on addressing the Army's research needs through new

[1] The HBCU Coalition consists of the United Negro College Fund, Thurgood Marshall College Fund, and the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education.

Centers of Excellence for Battlefield Capability Enhancements. These centers work with Army, industrial, and other academic partners to accelerate Army-relevant research to technology demonstration. In addition, these Centers of Excellence recruit, educate, and train outstanding students and post-doctoral researchers ready to enter fields in science and technology like cyber security, data-to-decisions and autonomy to solve 21st century defense challenges.

In FY 2011, four Centers of Excellence were established at the following institutions: Hampton University (Lower Atmospheric Research Using Lidar Remote Sensing); North Carolina A&T University (Nano to Continuum Multi-Scale Modeling Techniques and Analysis for Cementitious Materials Under Dynamic Loading); Delaware State University (Center for Advanced Algorithms); and Howard University (two centers one for Bayesian Imaging and Advanced Signal Processing and IED Detection Using GPR and another for Extracting Social Meaning From Linguistic Structures in African Languages).

The DOD HBCU/MI Program is a critical asset to cultivating STEM talent to meet our growing national technological and economic needs. HBCUs have already compiled an impeccable record of producing graduates majoring in STEM disciplines. By supporting research, research training, mentoring and other activities that help students enter the workforce in STEM, the DOD HBCU/MI Program is helping America meet the global challenges that face us.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to express our strong support for the DOD HBCU/MI Program.