



# DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY

---

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

*College of Business*

April 26, 2019

Congress of the United States  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Small Business  
2361 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6315

Dear Small Business Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight, and Regulations:

Please accept my written testimony below in response to the Committee on Small Business Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight, and Regulations invitation to the hearing titled, "Lost Opportunities? SBA's Engagement with Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

## **Experience**

My tenure at Delaware State University (DSU) has included faculty and administrative roles in the division of both academic and student affairs. I have served in the role of an Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and as a Dean of both the Graduate School and currently the College of Business. Additionally, I serve as the founding Director and Principal Investigator (PI) of the Delaware State University Center for Economic Development and International Trade (UCEDIT), a U.S. Economic Development Administration University Center charged with leveraging University resources for economic development initiatives throughout the State of Delaware and the founding Director of the Economic Development and Leadership Institute at Delaware State University, which provides underrepresented students with theoretical, practical and experiential learning in the field of economic development while introducing and cultivating the tenants of effective leadership in developing economies both domestically and abroad.

It is through these experiences that I have had the opportunity to engage the Small Business Administration (SBA) on small business development initiatives as well as recognize several opportunities for the SBA to deepen its relationship with DSU.

1200 N. DUPONT HIGHWAY • DOVER, DELAWARE 19901-2277 • (302) 857-6900 • FAX (302) 857-6908

Delaware State University is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate because of race, creed, national or ethnic origin, sex or disability.





# DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY

## OFFICE OF THE DEAN

### *College of Business*

#### **Delaware State University's Current and Past Partnership with the Small Business Administration**

- DSU served as a lead SBDC until 2004.
- The University's Delaware Center for Enterprise Development (DCED) received four SBDC sub-awards from the University of Delaware between 2014 and 2017 totaling approximately \$100k to provide technical assistance to clients in Kent County.
- DCED received an SBA PRIME grant from 2009-2011. The funds from the SBA PRIME grant were used to establish a Mobile Entrepreneurial Training initiative for small business owners and emerging entrepreneurs.
- In 2019, the DCED signed a service agreement with the University of Delaware's SBDC to provide services to Kent County residents.

#### **Potential Areas of Development**

The SBA support referenced above has provided specific clients with invaluable insight and resources for furthering their own enterprises. However, the impact of the SBA's funding and services could be exponentially more significant if the University and the SBA strategically worked together to develop targeted programming that effectively integrates the talent and resources of both entities.

To this end, there are three areas of focus that the SBA can engage the University that would further both of their mission; (1) infrastructure, (2) alumni/community partnerships and, (3) student engagement.

1. **University Capacity Building:** Not unlike many universities across the country, Research, Teaching, and Service represent the three pillars in higher education. However, there is one distinct difference when comparing Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) to Predominantly White Institutions (PWI), their ability to effectively monetize their research and service. HBCUs have traditionally, and currently focused their revenue generation efforts on the enterprise of Teaching; pressing their respective Admission Offices to increase enrollment to support growing financial gaps with little attention being given to Research and Service. Contrarily, Universities such as John's Hopkins and the University of Washington garner up to \$2 billion in federal funding alone for their research and service activities. These institutions have effectively leveraged the full capacity of their brain trust by deploying the expertise of their faculty, staff, and students to solve many of the world's most challenging problems. The ability of these universities to effectively and efficiently deploy their resources for the public good is not by chance but rather by design. And it is this design that our University and many other HBCUs could utilize the expertise within the SBA to

1200 N. DUPONT HIGHWAY • DOVER, DELAWARE 19901-2277 • (302) 857-6900 • FAX (302) 857-6908





## DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY

### OFFICE OF THE DEAN

### *College of Business*

develop further. SBA opportunities such as SBIR and STTR, in addition to the billions of product and service needs of the federal government and private sector, requires a university's infrastructure that is designed to leverage its assets both immediately and efficiently. For example, the SBA can play a critical knowledge role in HBCUs' pursuit of the creation of Centers of Excellence designed to respond to global product and service needs through innovation.

- 2. Alumni/Community:** The fastest growing population of entrepreneurs are African Americans, specifically African American women. However, even though this high propensity to become their own boss, African Americans' road to business stability and expansion is paved with limited access to capital, professional networks and technical "know how." However, a viable partnership between HBCUs and the SBA, uniquely weaving and tailoring their various assets, could provide the necessary platform to engage the African American small business community as well as plug the resource gaps. For example, HBCUs are uniquely linked to African American community organizations such as fraternities and sororities, ministerial alliances, Urban Leagues and agricultural associations (for the land grant institutions), all of whom have economic development as part of their mission. Moreover, DSU, like many other HBCUs, has a large first generation population representing many of the metropolitan areas of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Thus, the SBA, in partnership with HBCUs, can create a network of services that extends into the communities that they represent.
- 3. University Student Engagement:** Per a recent Young Entrepreneur Foundation survey, 90% of teachers and guidance counselors say their students are interested in becoming entrepreneurs; however, 75% of them say their students have no idea where to go for guidance. Unfortunately, the cultivation of this phenomenon amongst incoming freshmen and upperclassmen is often absent in our HBCUs due to lack of resources and/or capacity. However, a strategic partnership with the SBA could be vital in our efforts to design and provide this knowledge and skill base via curricula and co-curricular activities. For example, the establishment of multidisciplinary innovation labs shared entrepreneurial ideation, and development spaces and skills training are areas where the SBA's resources and expertise could play a vital role in the development of our students' business acumen.



## DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY

---

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

*College of Business*

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael H. Casson Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Michael H. Casson Jr., Ph.D.**

Dean, College of Business

Director, University Center for Economic Development and International Trade (UCEDIT)

Director, Economic Development and Leadership Institute (EDLI)

Associate Professor of Economics

Delaware State University