

**I'm a Higher Educationist, I'm proud, and I'll say it loud:
Embodying and embracing the future of higher education as a field of study
*Sydney Freeman, Jr.***

Acknowledgements

Good morning, I would first like to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for it is in him that I move and breath and have my being. I now would like to acknowledge the lands in which we are now inhabiting.

We gather together to engage in knowledge sharing, discourse, and disruption with the land currently known as Puerto Rico. The set of islands was called Boriken, meaning “land of the great lords,” by its original caretakers, the Taíno people. Shortly after the arrival of the Spanish the population of Taínos dramatically decreased through disease and the violence of enslavement, although there are accounts that many fled to the mountainous interior of the island. In order to advance their colonial project, the Spanish brought the first enslaved African people to work the mines and later sugar cane fields. In addition to Europeans, the influence of both the Taíno and West African cultures can be seen in the food, language, and music in present-day Puerto Rico.

As scholars of higher education, we commit to interrogating the history of this place. This requires us to reflect on the tenuous and contested relationship with the United States, rooted in colonialism and empire, and its role in higher education. Likewise, we recognize that as visitors we must always be mindful of our relationships, connection, and responsibility to place. This requires us to engage with its history, honor its people, and to be in right relation with land, water, and all creation. We embrace the opportunity and responsibilities of learning with and being in community with the people and land of Puerto Rico.

I would now like to acknowledge and thank, Robin for such a wonderful and humbling introduction. I would also like to thank DL Stewart and the ASHE Board of Directors, the Barbara Townsend Award and Lecture Selection Committee, colleagues, and friends.

I recognize the weight of being the first Black person to give this distinguished lecture. As Terrence Blanchard, recently said as he made history as the Metropolitan Opera's first Black composer. Quote “I'm the first but not the first qualified. I don't want to be a token but a turnkey for other Black people coming behind me.” End quote.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge two Black women who have played an indelible role in my development as a scholar and have supported me over the last 13 years during my affiliation with CAHEP, Drs. Dianne A. Wright and Crystal Chambers. I stand on your shoulders. For those of you who may not know this, Dr. Wright is the only Black woman and person of color to serve as chair of CAHEP. And Crystal Chambers has been a friend, writing partner, and co-creator as we have worked together to build a journal and other initiatives to advance higher education as a field of study. I also want to thank several individuals who I will call my peer-reviewers, Drs. Felecia Commodore, Russell Thacker, and Kaleb Briscoe for their help in the development of this lecture.

I also would like to thank, my wife of 12 years, Dr. Lynda Freeman for all her support throughout my career. I wouldn't be standing here if it were not for your love, support, and partnership.

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I would like to dedicate this lecture to my parents, Sydney Freeman, Sr. & Cassandra Freeman. Particularly, my dad who passed away two months ago. He was the first person to invest and encourage my intellectual pursuits. This is one of my favorite pictures of us as I gave them honorary doctorates 10-years ago on the day of my graduation.

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Introduction

I'm a Higher Educationist, I'm proud, and I'll say it loud. For some of us this phraseology may seem familiar. It plays off of "The Godfather of Soul" and funk music icon, James Brown's 1968 unofficial anthem of the Black Power movement, "Say It Loud – I'm Black and I'm Proud". It was recorded the same year as the death of Dr. Martin Luther King. A moment and time where the Black community was at a critical juncture. I'm sure many asked, "What would the Black community be in the future without civil rights leaders such as Dr. King and Malcom X?" While I don't seek to make these male figures into messianic figures.

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As there were many Black women such as Maude Ballou, Pauli Murray, Diane Nash, and Kathleen Cleaver, who made tremendous contributions to the movement. In 1968, there was a feeling of uncertainty after Dr. King died regarding how the Black community would move forward.

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Similarly, the field of higher education is at a pivotal inflection point. Not from the standpoint of a leader's assassination. Although, we have had several pillars of our field be laid to rest in the last few years such as the great higher education historian, Dr. Les Goodchild and Dr. Kelly Ward, one of our field's leading scholars on the study of women's issues in higher education.

But our field finds itself grappling with rapid change exacerbated by the pandemic. Much of it leading to what some have called the Great Resignation, due to many faculty and staff alike feeling and being undervalued, underpaid, and overworked. We are seeing more issues related to mental health impact our students, faculty, and staff. Institutional and structural racism is becoming more pronounced even after the protests of 2020 in response to the murders of George Floyd and Breanna Taylor. Political ideology has grown like a cancer at some institutions. Exacerbated because of the most diabolic national and local elections, and misinformation campaigns, which has allowed anti-intellectualism to grow. We can't even agree that the events of January 6th were treasonable offences. Fights over mask mandates, Covid-testing, and whether Critical Race Theory should be taught is all fair game.

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While such arguments are raging across higher education. On our local campuses many faculty, those of us who are formally trained in the field of higher education, who I call higher educationists, our voices and expertise are often minimized on our own campus. The term higher educationist was first coined by [William Cowley in his article titled, “Dawn of the Higher Educationists”](#) in June of 1969. Ironically, 11 months after “Say it Loud-I’m Black and I’m Proud” was released.

But I can’t tell you the countless times I have shared my expertise on issues like pedagogy, faculty affairs, and diversity, justice, and equity on campus and that knowledge be seen as unwelcome and often threatening. I know I am not the only one who has experienced that as I have heard those sentiments in interviews of 49 higher education studies faculty and program chairs. Often our colleagues in other disciplines and fields don’t even know we exist.

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As Allison M. Vaillancourt, former higher education administrator wrote in a 2013 article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, [“This is not what I expected”](#) when I learned about and started my graduate studies in higher education and student affairs at Auburn University in 2007. It was my thought that it would be awesome to get formally trained in a field that taught me how to support and advocate for the betterment of college students.

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Early in the morning on Thursday, November 8, 2007, I drove my 1st car which was an old beat-up green Jeep Cherokee to Louisville, Kentucky to attend this conference that I heard about called ASHE. The jeep was so old, and I was so broke, I used a key chain clamp like the one on the screen as my seat belt buckle. But I was so excited to go to my 1st ASHE conference, even though it took 7 hours by car. I was the only Auburn University student there and I was not funded to attend, but I wanted to learn more about the field. Once I got there, I remember going up to the registration desk and asking how much it cost. I don’t remember how much it cost but I couldn’t afford it. Not for a one-day pass or for the entire conference. But I stuck around and even snuck into several presentation sessions including one that included Drs. Chris Golde and Carol Colbeck’s discussion on advancing doctoral education. But while wandering in the hall without a nametag or conference program book. Another Black graduate student saw me looking around and asked me what session I was looking for. And I told him I didn’t know. He then asked me what topics I was interested in. I told him I was interested in the ways that higher education and student affairs programs prepared their students for leadership. And it was then that I learned about CAHEP and its role in improving the quality of the teaching and learning in higher education graduate programs.

At that time, I didn't know the rich history of higher education as a field of study and didn't even know that I wanted to be a faculty member. I just thought that it was amazing that there was a field of study that was dedicated to researching and addressing problems in higher education. And provided a curriculum that prepared individuals for service and leadership in one of the most important sectors in our society, postsecondary education.

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So, as I thought about what I would talk about today, I knew I wanted to build upon the masterful speech given by Dr. Kristin Renn in her 2017 ASHE presidential address regarding the future of the field. But to do that, there are three questions that I will seek to answer during the rest of the balance of my time during this lecture.

- What is Higher Education as a field of study?
- What is the status of the field?
- What is the future of the field?

What is Higher Education as a field of Study?

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So, what is higher education as a field of study? It has been close to 130-years since the birth of higher education as a field of study. During the last 50 years, many scholars have added to the literature regarding these programs. Les Goodchild defined higher education as "sophisticated knowledge about and research on colleges, universities, and related postsecondary institutions, as well as the professional skills used by those persons who work in them". Goodchild also said, the field's purpose is to "educate and train professionals for administrative, faculty, student life, and policy analyst positions in the country's approximately 4,000 postsecondary institutions".

G. Stanley Clark is generally considered the father of higher education studies. In the 1890's Hall served as the president of Clark University. Between 1893 and 1895 he developed three courses in higher education studies titled, Present Status and Problems of Higher Education in This Country, Outline of Systemic Pedagogy, and Organization and Curricula of School and College. Later, he established a 16-course specialization that became a part of the Ph.D. program in education at Clark University.

The first doctoral and masters' degrees in higher education were conferred in 1900 and 1906 at Clark University respectively. His enthusiasm for this emerging field did not go unnoticed. This initiation of higher education graduate preparation programs as a means of preparing college and university leaders led other larger institutions such as Ohio State University, Columbia University's Teachers College, the University of Chicago, the University of Pittsburg, the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Michigan to establish graduate programs in this field during the 1920s.

I have learned most higher education and student affairs students don't know much about the origin of our field of study. We teach them about the history of higher education in the United States. But very few students know the true history of higher education.

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As Dr. Crystal Chambers wrote in her groundbreaking 2017 article, *Discovering Nalanda and other institutions of Higher education before Salerno*.

Quote “Most history of higher education coursework in the global west begins with institutions of higher learning in western Europe – Salerno, Bologna, and Paris. However, this tradition discounts the histories of higher education particularly of institutions in the global east, which predate European models.” End Quote

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Similarly, faculty members and students alike know little about the history of the field. Here, Dr. Chambers work is instructive and leads to a point that I would like to highlight. Which is, we must ensure that as we continue to examine the history of the field, and we must critically interrogate what histories or herstories we are leaving out. And fight for inclusion for all voices.

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I remember a heated argument I had with the late Les Goodchild in 2014 while refining the edited book, *Advancing higher education as a field of study: In quest of doctoral degree guidelines-Commemorating 120 Years of excellence*. I was lead editor on that project but was coediting with him, Diane Wright and Linda Serra Hagedorn. It was between 9 or 10 p.m. CST and we all were up, going line by line editing each book chapter. However, when reviewing his chapter that provided a near comprehensive, history of higher education as a field of study, degree programs, associations, and national guidelines, he had left out any mention of the unique contribution of such programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

We went back and forth for a while as he was unaware of and unsure of the contributions of such programs to the field. But in the end, I wrote up a section that was ultimately added to his chapter that included the history of Minority Serving Institutions in the advancement of our field. Little known programs such as Adam State University’s masters program in higher education administration and leadership--founded by close friend but we are not related, Dr. Melissa Freeman, who established the only program of its kind to focus specifically on training students for leadership at Hispanic Serving Institutions--were included in an official history of our field.

I share this story with the hope to inspire those of you that research in our field it is important to use your voice and to ensure that when telling the story of any issue in our field that historically marginalized voices should be moved to the center. And burden should not rest solely on the shoulders of underrepresented scholars.

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As Dr. Caroline Turner wrote in her brilliant 2017 essay, "[Remaining at the margin and in the center](#),"

Quote "Given the important contributions of those entering higher education from the margins [such as underrepresented students and faculty] it is my hope that you would not come away...thinking that the burden of the work should totally be shouldered by those at the margins. In fact, it is essential that those occupying the center(s) [White people and those with other privileged identities] challenge higher education leaders and policy makers to hasten a shift in the field by embracing voices at the margin." End Quote

Not only do we need to be inclusive of marginalized voices and tell the whole story, but we must also acknowledge that it has grown. For instance, on my wall I have a prominent portrait of an old White guy. Without fail almost anyone who is in my office for more than three minutes asks me about it. You may wonder who is in that portrait. It is G. Stanley Hall. What is so interesting about Hall is that in addition to being known as the father of higher education as a field of study he is also frequently regarded as the founder of modern child psychology and educational psychology.

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But he was a prominent proponent of racial eugenics and was described by [Gill Schofer as a male chauvinist educator](#). I often use the portrait as a teaching tool to show how a person who was deeply flawed could establish a field that counts many of its greatest thinkers and scholars as women and people of color. This historical truth does not erase a discussion of the negative past but celebrates that it has grown in spite of it.

So, the first question was What is Higher Education as a field of study and its history? What we learned was one, we can learn a lot from our fields past. Two, we can adapt and evolve. And three, we must tell the whole truth.

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What is the Status of Higher Education as a field of study?

Now the second question that we have is, what is the current status of our field? One of the greatest developments of our field over the last 60+ years has been the expansion of higher education graduate programs, research centers, journals, and publications. [Philip Altbach in his 2014 study titled, "Knowledge for the contemporary university: higher education as a field of study and training"](#), highlights the expansion of higher education as a formalized field of study in countries such as China. This is because China has heavily invested in various forms of studying and training higher educationists. They include more than 30 higher education degree programs and research centers. And according to the last global survey of higher education as a field of study conducted by the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College, there are 29 countries across the globe that offer 277 academic programs that have a concentration or emphasis in the study of higher education.

I would assert that any initiatives that considers the refinement of guidelines for the academic study of higher education needs to consider the inclusion of these global programs. Although we are doing a better job of researching and addressing problems that impact colleges and universities beyond North America and Europe. Much more needs to be done regarding establishing and supporting higher education academic programs in non-Western countries.

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Might I boldly suggest that CAHEP and CIHE partner together and lead such an initiative. I believe the greatest innovations in the advancement of higher education as a field of study in this decade will not come from the United States. If anything, we are seeing that smaller American higher education graduate programs are being closed down or being folded in with other sub-fields such as adult education.

So, we have much to be proud of regarding our field's growth internationally. Academic degrees in the field of higher education studies are becoming a vital credential for aspirant leaders globally. We need to find ways to support that while also shoring up our programs in the North America.

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[Kristen Renn in her pivotal 2019 ASHE presidential address](#) talked about the two types of higher education scholars. Which I place in two camps. The first group being higher education studies scholars. Those scholars, practitioners, and policy professionals who have earned higher education graduate degrees with concentrations and specializations in student affairs and higher education. And another group who Renn described as disciplined-based scholars that have earned their degrees in established disciplines such as political science, history, sociology, and economics who apply their knowledge to higher education issues.

Rather than focus on the divisions of these two groups of higher educationists. I think we should celebrate the work of both disciplined-based scholars and those trained in higher education as a field of study. Both types of scholars have provided invaluable scholarship to our field. The rigorous methodological, theoretical, and empirical traditions of disciplinary scholars broadly speaking have helped the field advance in various ways. Particularly, by utilizing established and recognized approaches to scholarship, our field has become respected beyond what some could consider a small field. However, there is much work to do.

I also think it is important to recognize the work of higher education studies scholars. Who Renn acknowledges as having been integral in adopting and adapting various forms of Critical Theory to solve various problems facing higher education. These same scholars have been important contributors to experimenting beyond the use of more established disciplinary-based methodological, theoretical, and empirical approaches to address a variety of higher education research challenges.

Higher education studies scholars like DL Stewart, this year's ASHE president has lifted his voice to change the lexicon of the field. For instance, in their 2017 article, [*Language of Appeasement*](#), they challenged the higher education sector to move beyond just using words such as, diversity and inclusion that often leave the structures of higher education unchanged. But helped our sector begin to utilize nomenclature such as equity and justice. Language that my institution now includes in its initiatives to support underserved populations on campus. This is an example of the influence and impact our public scholarship can have.

And then I would like to celebrate the transformation of diversity and inclusivity in our field over the last 40+ years. I don't know if in 1974, when the seminal text written by Paul Dressel and Lewis Mayhew titled, [*Higher Education as a field of study, The emergence of a profession*](#) they would have imagined the inclusion of the diversity of backgrounds of higher educationist. Although we still have room to improve, we as a community of scholars have found ways to be intentional in including more people of color, various sexual orientations, genders, and ability, etc.

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We have come a long way from 1993 when Dr. Michael T. Nettles became the first Black person and I believe person of color to serve as the president of our esteemed association. As three of the last five presidents have been Black scholars and two of the last five identify as a queer or gender non-conforming. My presence giving this talk along with the last two faculty that have earned this recognition have been women from underrepresented backgrounds. I must say here that I hope that in the future that CAHEP works to diversify who serves in such roles as chair. In CAHEP's 25-year history, 10 scholars have served in the role of chair. In that time only one chair has been a person of color and that was Diane Wright who served as chair during 2005 to 2007. That means that it has been almost 15 years since we had a person of color in such a leadership role even though such positions call for two-year terms. We must be intentional not only placing people of color in supporting chair positions. But support faculty of color to assume top leadership within our own council.

So, the first question was What is Higher Education as a field of study and its history? The second question was, what is the current status of our field? Where we acknowledged that we are now recognized as international field of study. That we have strong disciplined-based and higher education studies scholars who we call higher educationist that continue to advance and strengthen the field. And we celebrate and recognize that we have become more inclusive as a field and as association. And CAHEP still has work to do as it relates to the top posts of the counsel.

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What is the Future of Higher Education as a Field of Study?

The third and last question is, what is the future of our field?

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The first recommendation is that we, “Decenter the Elites”. What I am suggesting here is that we no longer solely consider or give the largest influence to the elite programs, journals, and the fields other important entities. We are a growing field internationally. But many of our smaller programs, often with one or two faculty have unique programmatic needs. Similar to how a lot of the research in higher education centers the issues faced by Research 1 institutions. The same can often be said about higher education programs. Given this challenge, I believe it is time that we prioritize needs and smaller academic programs that are under resourced and under supported.

Recommendation #1: Decenter the Elites

I can't tell you the countless conversations I have had over the last decade with program coordinators and faculty associated with CAHEP regarding the ways that the field could better support smaller programs that are often not considered elite. By that I mean programs with three full-time faculty or less dedicated to teaching in their college or university's concentration in higher education or student affairs graduate curriculum. Elites are not only those who teach or are enrolled in these programs. It extends to their graduates who often serve at non-elite programs given the limited number of faculty opportunities at such other elite programs. I know what I'm talking about having studied faculty job selection particularly at US higher education studies programs. The program status of a person's academic training or where they serve as faculty often determines the opportunities such as being afforded to serve on voted positions such as the ASHE board. Academic lineage matters.

Too often, like in the case of developing and advancing doctoral guidelines for the field of higher education, the desires, and comforts of those from the [top 21 higher education graduate programs in U.S. News and World report](#) take precedence over smaller less resourced programs.

Arguments for having such doctoral guidelines have often been rebuffed from elite programs. They often say such guidelines would be constraining. Not allowing them the freedom to make decisions related to their own curriculums. However, not considering that we have over 190 higher education programs in the United States, many that offer the doctorate in higher education. It is my contention that although we all would wish to avoid additional external program review processes, some smaller programs will continue to shrink, merge, or die if there are not best practices and suggested guidelines in place to provide recommendations regarding what a basic quality program could and should look like. And because we are a low consensus field, we have examples of elite often larger programs that have little to no higher education core courses. They are higher education doctorates in name, but their curriculum in content are non-distinctive education courses that are matched with courses from the disciplines.

This also applies to the weight and value we give to scholarly journals. [Shaun Harper in his 2017 ASHE presidential address encouraged us to challenge the White power and White supremacy that permeates the very architecture, composition, curriculum, and editorial decisions governing of the academy and research.](#)

As a tenured full professor, I have led and been a member on tenure and promotion committees and served as a outside reviewer. I have witnessed reviews where the assumption that someone's scholarship is sub-par because it wasn't published in a "top-tier publication". However, after reading the review you can see that the person had not even read the article. I have found some of the most cutting-edge and potentially field-shaping scholarship in publications that would not be considered in the top five journals in our field as identified by [Nathaniel Bray and Claire Major, in their 2011 article, *Status of journals in the field of higher education.*](#)

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Recommendation #2: Transition from being a Field to a Discipline

The second recommendation is to push for our field of study to become its own standalone discipline. Scholars such as Dressel and Mayhew in the 1970's and later [John Brubacher in his 1982 book titled, *On the Philosophy of Higher Education*](#), acknowledged that higher education was indeed a field of study but determined that it lacked what most disciplines possessed: (a) a general body of knowledge, (b) theoretical frames, (c) specialized vocabulary, and (d) common methodologies and techniques. And Jonathan Fife and Les Goodchild in the 1991 Winter Issue of the New Directions in Higher Education monograph project which they titled, *Administration as a profession*, said that at that time scholars had "struggled to create a definable body of knowledge".

While I appreciate their perspectives, I think the study of higher education has come of age. While we have and will continue to borrow from other disciplines and fields. After almost 130 years as a field of study, I believe that are field has begun to grow up and the next generation of scholars should build upon the work of our predecessors but aim to become our own standalone discipline. We should begin to work towards being identified as a discipline because we are beginning to meet the criteria for such a distinction. It further allows us to distinguish ourselves from other closely associated, but distinctive fields of study such as adult education.

Although we currently function as a multidisciplinary and low consensus field, I believe that we are beginning to meet Brubacher's criteria for a discipline. In the last nearly 130-years we have established generalized knowledge in the areas such as student development, race and underrepresented populations, international studies in higher education, and higher education policy studies. In more recent years, scholars such as Dr. Russ Thacker and myself have sought to establish theoretical frameworks and a philosophy that specifically applies to the field of higher education.

One of the best examples of building on existing disciplinary frameworks to create a theoretical framework that specifically applies to higher education is Dr. Lori Patton-Davis' masterful construction of a [Critical Race Theory of Higher Education](#). She ably built off of the theoretical law analysis of Professor Derrick Bell and educational adaptation of that work by Drs. Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate to craft a set of three brilliant propositions that uniquely addresses Critical Race Theories application to the field of higher education studies.

We as higher educationists have a distinct vocabulary and knowledge of postsecondary education that comes out of shared experiences of studying and working in the academy. If you don't believe me, think about the recent articles, such as Drs. Martha McCaughey, a professor of sociology and Scott Welsh, an associate professor in communications' article titled, [The Shadow Curriculum of Student Affairs](#), that was published in the Fall 2021 magazine for the American Association of University Professors.

In the publication the authors argue that the field of student affairs is encroaching on areas of faculty responsibility. Not understanding that like the discussion I had earlier this week with a group of leaders that serve at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, "Most faculty know their disciplines very well but have no perspective on the co-curricular side of the house and the theories that underline effective practices of student development and administrative practices". I am excited about the new work of higher educationists such as [Fred Bonner II, Rosa Banda, Stella Smith and aretha marbley, and others](#) who are developing alternative student development frameworks and models that are both theoretically sound, yet accessible and user friendly for scholars and practitioners alike.

While at every ASHE, ACPA, and NASPA conferences we talk about the need to make our work more accessible and meaningful to influence policy and practice within the field. We must value and encourage more public scholarship. I think we should assert our scholarly expertise on platforms of influence beyond academic journals. While I appreciate reading the perspectives of scholars of various disciplines and fields in the Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Education, Diverse Issues in Higher Education, and Academe Magazine. As we move into the next decade, we should redouble our efforts to ensure our scholarship is published in such periodicals. Our work should also be published in non-academic outlets such as the USA Today, the New York Times, and the Washington Post and such contributions should be given increased weight in the tenure and promotion process.

Moving from a field to an emerging discipline will help us to further assert our expertise among our colleagues in other disciplines.

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Recommendation #3: Celebrate and Embrace Being a Higher Educationist

And lastly, we need to celebrate and embrace our identities as an emerging discipline and as higher educationists. I remember having conversations with the late Kelly Ward about the lack of respect that many institutions had for the field of higher education. Particularly, those leaders who were trained in the traditional STEM disciplines. As I leave you, I would contend that we must make our value known on our campuses. We should be outspoken leaders on issues such as shared governance on our campuses. We should also make ourselves visible and accessible to decision-makers at our institutions who need our expertise in the ever-increasing number of contentious issues and challenges that appear on our campuses. Our campuses marketing and communication teams should know the names of our faculty and their expertise not only to share our latest publications internally but externally.

I will leave you with this personal experience. Over the last two years I have written 13 national circulated op-eds on higher education issues. Four of the articles have led to changes in policies and practices such as changes in names of departments, establishing cultural center, and research lab on my campus. It has also allowed me to gain influence in discussions related to policy changes on subjects like faculty evaluations.

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Because I am a Higher Educationist and I'm proud and I'll say it loud, my contributions to such topics nationally have brought me influence locally. And that is what I want for all of us. To think our conceptual and theoretical understandings and have it applied in real world context.

ASHE and in particular, CAHEP is the environment that honed and shaped me into the scholar that I am today, and I am forever grateful for it. You helped to push, refine, and validate my scholarship and ideas. I am glad that you continue to do that for the next generation of higher educationist. We should be proud of the progress that the field has made for close to 130 years. But we have much more to do. As we think of the past ASHE Executive Director, co-founder of CAHEP with Les Goodchild and Bob Hendrickson, the first chair of our council, and the person to which this lecture and award is named after Barbara Townsend. We must continue to embrace the important mission of our work to advance higher education as an emerging discipline and its academic programs.

Yes, as higher educationists we are at a major crossroad similar to Black folk in 1968. We are unsure what is next because we have many challenges ahead of us. A lot of us are unsure if we want to join the those in other sectors, who have chosen the route of the Great Resignation. But because we know our proud history, have a clear understanding of where we currently stand as a field of study, and know the opportunities ahead such as being a part of the generation that transforms us from a field to a strong and emerging discipline. We can be like James Brown and don't wallow in despair. We can just remind ourselves that we know who we are. We're higher educationist and we're proud and we'll say it loud.

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