

CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY • HOWARD UNIVERSITY • MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY • TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

The Faculty Fellowship Program provides HBCU faculty members the opportunity to contribute to the Center's mission of empowering entrepreneurship, specifically through research and scholarship. This fellowship supports faculty to conduct innovative and impactful research, produce peer-reviewed articles, books, monographs, e-books, digital materials, and other content that addresses critical challenges, explores new frontiers, and advances knowledge and scholarship related to improving outcomes for entrepreneurs.

Introducing the 2024-2025 Faculty Fellows



Name: Dr. Kellye Jones

College/University: Clark Atlanta University

Title: Associate Professor of Management

Project Title: “African American Female Technology Founder Funding: Insights From Traditional and Female Focused Venture Capitalists”

Abstract

Many early-stage technology firm founders seek venture capital support. Securing financing at the startup stage of operations is salient since it enables the firm to grow and become sustainable. With proper financial support, a good number of these firms mushroom into highly successful commercial enterprises.

The National Venture Capital Association reports that in 2023, investment decisions totaled approximately \$170 billion in US-based firms. Upon closer examination of these decisions, approximately \$2 billion was raised by African American founders which is 1.1% of US venture funding (Teare, 2023). The health care sector is popular among these entrepreneurs, and they raised about 1% of \$555 billion in this space (Crunchbase, 2022). In 2021, African American female founders raised \$494 million in venture capital support while other female founders raised about \$2.6 billion (Teare, 2023). The metrics indicate that female founders are less likely to secure venture capital. To address this imbalance, members of the investment community are beginning to invest with a gender focus. This entails taking gender into consideration upon assessing and investing in ventures.

This investigation explores the reported imbalance in African American female technology firm founders securing venture capital. The study examines the perceptions of traditional and female focused venture capitalists as they assess the characteristics of these founders and their firms. The impact of these perceptions on the decision to fund is also explored. Whether the traditional and female focused venture capitalists differ in their assessment and decision to fund is examined.



Name: Dr. Constant D. Beugre

College/University: Delaware State University

Title: Professor of Management

Project Title: “Building Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in HBCUs: An Institutional Entrepreneurship Analysis”

Abstract

The present research draws from institutional entrepreneurship theory to explore the internal dynamics of HBCUs as they attempt to transform themselves into entrepreneurship and innovation hubs. In so doing, the research uses a triangulation approach including three techniques, opportunistic ethnography, structured interviews, and archival data to gather data on the more than 100 HBCUs active in the United States. The research has implications for both theory and practice. From a theoretical standpoint, this research proposal could contribute to the literature on institutional entrepreneurship as a viable theory for studying and understanding institutions of higher education. By focusing on individual institutional entrepreneurs and their role in enacting change, this research proposal will apply institutional entrepreneurship to a level of analysis that has been neglected in research in institutional analysis. From a practice standpoint, HBCUs play an important role in American society. To the extent that entrepreneurship is a tool for economic growth and prosperity, developing entrepreneurial ecosystems in these institutions could increase the number of minority-owned ventures and thereby contribute to the reduction of economic and social inequalities. An understanding of the institutional dynamics could prove useful in identifying the challenges as well as developing strategies to overcome them and broaden HBCUs’ educational and economic mission. meticulously designed with competitive gamers in mind, delivers an astonishing speed up to 48 times faster than traditional button presses. In the realm of competitive gaming, where each nanosecond counts, our controller bridges the gap between traditional keyboard and mouse controls and console gaming, offering a crucial advantage for gamers seeking unparalleled speed and precision.



Name: Dr. Pam-Richardson Greenfield
College/University: Clark Atlanta University
Title: Assistant Professor
Project Title: “Franchising While Black”



Name: Dr. Natalie Bacum
College/University: Morehouse College
Title: Visiting Assistant Professor of Marketing
Project Title: “Franchising While Black”

Abstract

Historically, the franchise sector has been seen as a route to economic mobility and entrepreneurship. But even with its potential for success, Blacks have particular difficulties and obstacles that make it difficult for them to be successful in the franchising industry. Although Sereena Quick became the first Black woman to own Chick-fil-A franchises in three states, Herb Washington had to sell 13 of his 14 McDonald’s franchises back to corporate. This research seeks to understand how Black entrepreneurs navigate franchise ownership—from entrance into the industry to their (voluntary or involuntary) exit from the industry. An academic manuscript, researching Black franchise ownership, and an educational course will be created incorporating insights and learnings gathered from qualitative interviews of Black franchise owners.



Name: Dr. Angelita Howard

College/University: Meharry Medical College

Title: Founding Dean of Online Education and Expanded Programs

Project Title: “Increasing Blacks in Biotechnology Entrepreneurship”

Abstract

Biotechnology stands at the forefront of innovation, driving advancements that have the potential to revolutionize various industries. However, there exists a significant underrepresentation of individuals from Black communities in entrepreneurship within the biotechnology sector. This project proposal aims to address this disparity by investigating the factors contributing to the underrepresentation of Blacks in biotechnology entrepreneurship and proposing strategies to foster inclusivity and equal opportunities. Additionally, I will address the underrepresentation of Blacks in this field by identifying barriers and developing strategies to enhance opportunities for Black individuals who have graduated or are in a Masters in Biotechnology program. Diversity and inclusivity in entrepreneurship can stimulate economic growth, social equity, and creativity. As the founding director of the number 1 ranking Master of Science in Biotechnology, I have first hand witnessed the disparities where less than 10% of African Americans are in the field of biotech, and this number decreases in startups and entrepreneurial roles.



Name: Dr. Sharon Simmons

College/University: Jackson State University

Title: Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship

Project Title: “How an HBCU Entrepreneurship Lab Empowers Students and Transforms Communities”

Abstract

Jackson, Mississippi, a city resilient in spirit yet vulnerable to the whims of aging infrastructure and extreme weather, stands at a crossroads. But amidst these challenges, a beacon of hope emerges: an HBCU entrepreneurship lab where students, armed with action research and technology, become co-creators of solutions for a brighter future. This case study delves into the transformative power of this lab, exploring three crucial research questions that lie at the heart of

its mission. The first question is how does participation in the entrepreneurship lab affect HBCU students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy? The second question is how does participation in the entrepreneurship lab affect HBCU students' aspirations for high-growth ventures? The third question is what are student preferences for action research versus traditional classroom learning journeys? By comparing their perceptions of action research and traditional classroom learning, we gain valuable insights into what aspects of the lab resonate most strongly and where potential adjustments could be made to further enhance the learning journey. Ultimately, this case study explores the transformative power of an HBCU entrepreneurship lab that fosters self-efficacy, ignites high-growth aspirations, and empowers students to become not just entrepreneurs, but changemakers. By triangulating evidence from student interviews, lab documentation, stakeholder perspectives, and even publicly available data on Jackson's infrastructure and climate threats, we create a robust and multi-faceted picture of the lab's impact. This triangulation strengthens our claims and enriches our understanding of the complex interplay between individual growth, technological innovation, and community resilience. Ultimately, our mixed-methods approach aims to illuminate the full spectrum of the lab's impact. By combining quantitative rigor with qualitative depth and situating the lab within its broader context, we hope to paint a compelling portrait of its transformative power, one that resonates with students, faculty, community partners, and policymakers alike.



Name: Dr. Kimberly K. Powell

College/University: Southern University and A&M College

Title: Associate Professor of Marketing/Interim Department Chair for Management and Marketing

Project Title: “Optimizing the Retail Experience: A Qualitative Exploration of In-Store Shopping Preferences of Black Consumers at Black-Owned Businesses”

Abstract

This qualitative study aims to illuminate the in-store shopping preferences and behaviors of Black consumers when patronizing Black-owned businesses. Despite the growing body of research on consumer behavior and ethnic entrepreneurship, there is a notable gap in understanding the nuanced experiences of Black consumers at Black-owned retail spaces. Through a series of in-depth interviews and focus groups, this research seeks to capture the lived experiences of Black shoppers within these culturally resonant retail environments. Understanding the shopping preferences of Black consumers at these businesses can provide insights into how Black enterprises and Black entrepreneurs can thrive. The research is also expected to reveal key insights into the shopping preferences of Black consumers at Black-owned businesses. It will identify the elements of the in-store experience that are most valued by this demographic group, including aspects related to customer service, product assortment, cultural relevance, and store ambiance. Insights that could help Black entrepreneurs

and Black-owned businesses enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty when targeting the Black consumer market would also be captured in this study.



Name: Dr. Babu George

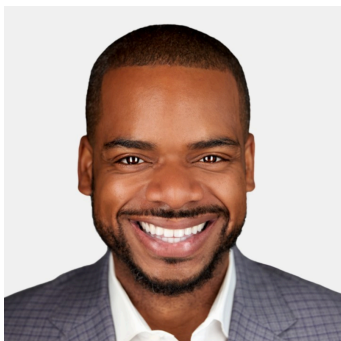
College/University: Alcorn State University

Title: Full Professor of Management

Project Title: “AI and the Black Entrepreneur: Case Studies in Technological Empowerment”

Abstract

This research proposal, titled "Pioneering Paths: Case Studies of AI Integration in Black Entrepreneurship," sets out to explore the multifaceted ways in which Black entrepreneurs are engaging with artificial intelligence (AI) within their businesses. Slated to begin on April 1, 2024, and culminate by March 31, 2025, this predominantly qualitative study seeks to uncover the unique experiences, challenges, and triumphs Black entrepreneurs face in the realm of AI. Through a series of in-depth interviews, detailed case studies, and analysis of secondary data sources, the research will explore how AI is being adopted and utilized, focusing on understanding the broader implications for innovation, business strategy, and community impact. The propositions guiding this research aim to illuminate the distinctive pathways Black entrepreneurs are navigating in the AI landscape, offering rich, narrative-driven insights. This exploratory approach is intended to provide a comprehensive view of the subject, contributing significantly to academic discourse and offering practical guidance for aspiring entrepreneurs, policymakers, and educators. The project’s findings are anticipated to be a valuable addition to the entrepreneurial and technological fields, enriching our understanding of diversity and innovation in the digital era. Targeted deliverables include at least one peer reviewed journal article, a conference presentation, and an eBook.



Name: Dr. Christopher Chauncey Watson

College/University: The Morgan State University

Title: Research Scientist/Visiting Professor

Project Title: “Exploration of the Systemic Forces Shaping Black LGBTQ+ Entrepreneurial Experiences in the United States”

Abstract

The entrenched historical oppression of Black individuals in America has perpetuated profound disparities across health, income, and education domains. Within this complex landscape, Black LGBTQ+ individuals experience compounded marginalization, exacerbating their socio-economic challenges. Despite societal aspirations to support Black-owned enterprises, only a marginal 3% of U.S. firms are Black-owned, with LGBTQ+ representation even scarcer according to the 2020 U.S. Census. This study endeavors to examine the systemic forces intricately shaping the experiences of Black LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs through a lens informed by interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

The research objectives are multifaceted: firstly, to delineate the nuanced characteristics of Black LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs often marginalized in business literature; and secondly, to identify the array of facilitators and barriers encountered within entrepreneurial ecosystems. By illuminating these critical facets, the study aims to contribute novel insights and strategies for future research and initiatives, thereby catalyzing growth and innovation within the broader economic landscape. This investigation addresses the evident gaps in literature surrounding Black LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs, rectifying their significant lack of visibility within academic and business spheres alike. By elucidating the intricate interplay of facilitators and barriers within entrepreneurial ecosystems, the research aims to lay the foundation for targeted interventions aimed at fostering inclusivity and empowerment. Insights garnered have the potential to inform policy initiatives, funding opportunities, and networking strategies, thereby fostering economic growth and diversity at both micro and macro levels.

Employing interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), the study seeks to delve deeply into the lived experiences of Black LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs, unraveling the contextual intricacies shaping their entrepreneurial trajectories. Thematic analysis techniques will be rigorously applied to ensure the robustness of findings, with semi-structured interviews and focus groups serving as primary data collection methods. Ethical considerations will be paramount throughout the research process, with findings anticipated to yield significant systemic implications for future interventions.