

We must all be guided by the admonition regarding potential talent and fortitude to develop it: "not every flower blossoms on the first day of spring, some need more rain, more sunshine, and more loving care." The young people who now populate our justice system and legislative halls; who are in operating rooms; who are in military leadership roles; and who are working in social services areas; who teach and research, all serve the quality of life in America. There are many more who are hoping to do the same.

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CAROLYNN REID-WALLACE

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Dr. Carolynn Reid-Wallace has had a long and storied career in higher education as a teacher, scholar, academic administrator, and policy maker. From 1991 to 1993 Reid-Wallace served as the Assistant Secretary for Post-Secondary Education at the United States Department of Education. In that position, she was the nation's chief officer for higher education, post-secondary policy, and student aid. She served as the thirteenth president of her alma mater, Fisk University, in Nashville, Tennessee, from 2001 to 2003 and was the first female president in Fisk's more than 137-year history. Prior to her tenure at Fisk she provided leadership to a number of institutions including serving as senior vice president for education and programming at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, vice chancellor for academic affairs of the City University of New York, director of Pre-collegiate Education and assistant director of the Division of Education Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities, and dean of the college and vice president for academic affairs and acting chief executive officer at Bowie State University. As committed to teaching as she is to administration, Reid-Wallace has taught and mentored students at Bowie State University, Talladega College, Grinnell College, Howard University,

being a school that has a very clear understanding of its origins, why it was established in the very beginning, and having an understanding of its contributions and its measurable outcomes as a result of the need to have those institutions. That is the historical part of it. But in the twenty-first century, these schools cannot, nor should they, be what they were in the beginning: a haven for blacks who had absolutely no entrée into the larger society. Because the universe has changed black people now have an opportunity to matriculate at a variety of institutions across the country and even if they do not get in, legally, constitutionally it is not supposed to be because of color. Wherein the beginning, no matter how bright we were we simply could not defy the laws of the state and the laws of the nation, which basically said "separate but equal," which we all knew not to be true. Separate but equal meant you go to your black school and you leave our white school to us. That has changed and as a consequence, what it means to be a historically black institution in the twenty-first century is not unlike what it means to be a majority white institution in the twenty-first century.

It means that you have to have a competitive curriculum. It means that you have to have a very strong faculty. It means that you have to look for a rich diversity of students. Those students should come from many different parts of the world; and so you are looking for international students from Europe. You are looking for them from Africa, from the Caribbean, from Asia, and from South America. You are looking for white students, which was not a part of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the twenty-first century, for historically black institutions such as Fisk, Howard, Hampton, Spelman, or any school to survive, they must diversify. They have got to emphasize quality, and they must provide programs of study of the highest quality, which prepare students for intellectual and social leadership in a highly technological society, a highly pluralistic society and a multicultural world. You also have to be prepared to maintain a strong record of excellence in teaching to be, in my judgment, a twenty-first century historically black institution.

You have to encourage the creation of new knowledge through research and scholarly activities of faculty and your advanced students. One has to offer a well-planned program in the liberal arts tradition, which develops among its students a broad understanding of the basic principles and values of the arts and humanities and the natural sciences and social sciences. In short, being a historically black institution in the twenty-first century, in the United States of America, means that you

1. The Private Historically Black Colleges

and the University of New York. She received her master's degree in dramatic literature from Adelphi University and a doctoral degree in English and American literature from George Washington University.

Fisk University is a tradition-rich institution. It was founded in 1866, and in 1930 became the first black higher education institution to gain full accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. In 1952 it became the first historically black college to obtain a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. Some of Fisk's notable graduates include W.E.B. Du Bois, Aaron Douglas, James Weldon Johnson, John Hope Franklin, and Nikki Giovanni. During her leadership of Fisk University Reid-Wallace declared as her central mission the goal of positioning the institution within the emerging global context for higher education. She revitalized Fisk's liberal arts curriculum, reinvigorated critical curricular complements such as the college's Race Relation's Institute, hired significant numbers of new faculties, attracted new donors, and engineered innovative partnerships with Vanderbilt and other major research universities. Additionally, she worked to diversify Fisk at all levels, with particular emphasis on building a more "internationalist" student body. She frequently spoke of recruiting Hispanic students, students from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and white American students. Fisk University, she often stated, must become "a laboratory of democracy."

The question that this study proposes is a question that has occupied an extraordinary degree of our time at Fisk during my administration, which has been the last 12 months. I have insisted that we grapple with the question, "What does it mean to be a historically black institution in the new millennium?" And from my judgment it does not mean what it meant in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Being a historically black institution in the twenty-first century, I believe means



Carolynn Reid-Wallace (courtesy Carol-

have an intellectually rigorous curricula and a powerfully strong faculty. It means that you are as conversant with the broadest range of academic courses as any other school, and that you have those courses on your books and you have the facilities to support them. It means that you have technology. It basically means that you as a black institution have the right institutional values, the right mission statement, and the right goals.

And I happen to think that Fisk's mission statement is one of the best I have seen. I will quote it: "It is the mission of Fisk University to provide a liberal arts education of the highest quality. The ultimate goal is to prepare students to be skilled, resourceful, and imaginative leaders who will address effectively the challenges of life in a technological society, a pluralistic nation, and a multicultural world." And Fisk has, in the last 12 months reconfirmed its institutional values; and those values are quality, compassion, innovation, diversity, community outreach and service.

Diversity, as normally accepted, recognizes that you have a wide range of types and kinds within a setting. The long-term goal of focusing on diversity is to offer an extraordinarily wide range of people who are different in many ways but similar in many other ways, an opportunity to experience a first-rate education. And one hopes that the accomplishment of that objective will allow this community of people to go out into the world and be better citizens; more thoughtful, more reflective, more competent in both their disciplines and in the civic responsibilities and duties that they assume.

We have several strategies for achieving diversity at Fisk. One of them is to develop a really powerful distance learning technology system that will allow the institution to offer credit, non-credit, and degree programs across the country as well as the world. We have put a great deal of money into staffing up, so that we have some of the countries' best theoreticians and technologists to begin to help faculty members make the transfer from the traditional classroom lecture materials to putting that material in an online format. We have just begun the process, but it is very clearly, as our strategic plan indicates, designed to allow us to stretch our arms into South Africa, to stretch our arms into Europe, and into Africa, the Caribbean, Asia and other parts of the world, and also to diversify through this technology in the United States and indeed our own state.

Another strategy that we have used to achieve greater diversity is in our recruitment efforts. We have made a very conscious decision that we have to find a way to bring to Fisk a larger number of Hispanic students.

It happens that in this city alone, that particular community of people has grown exponentially in the last five years. And large numbers of Hispanic students, if they finish high school, end up working at Kroger as baggers or working at McDonalds. We are working with the Hispanic community. One of the strategies is to engage the community. To the Hispanic community we say: Fisk University is not as large as Vanderbilt University, nor do we want to be. We are a small, first-rate liberal arts institution, and we have many things in common with your community. We have a good number of Hispanic professors on our staff; we have a good number of Hispanic artifacts in our library and in our galleries. We would welcome having your students, the best of your students, to come to our school to get a first-rate education. And to show you the good will that is behind that intent, I have said to the Hispanic community that I will accept, for this semester, as many students who are interested in taking computer technology courses. I will accept them into a specially designed program. We will teach in Spanish and in English, and we will offer the course for free, by way of showing the good will of this institution. And my phone is ringing off the hook with inquiries.

During the last semester, we went across this country speaking about Fisk to Hispanic communities of students, and to educators who are Hispanic. And I am very happy to report that we have in our dormitories now a few Hispanic students who, based on our recruitment efforts, have come to Fisk. And I run into the kids on campus and they seem perfectly happy. Well obviously in time, we expect the numbers to increase.

But it is not simply a matter of ethnicity or race, or geography, when I think of diversity. I think of diversity in the context of age. I know that there are a great many black women who dropped out of school after their sophomore year in college. They got married, they had children, and they raised their children. The kids are now off in college or are married, and they are wondering, what do I do with my life? And we are saying, we are looking for older, mature students who can come here and study for a degree. And we are going after that cohort as well. These are just a few examples of the kinds of strategies that we are using in an effort to accomplish the goal that we have established.

My experience as the president of a post-secondary institution has reinforced my deep-seated conviction that one effects change, that one can impact the larger community in a democratic society through education. I have always believed that education has the power to free the mind; education enables us to move past the theory and the conjecture into a practical and real-life field of experience. And I think education,

the institution itself, is one of the most civil, and one of the most extraordinarily enriching opportunities afforded a human being to come to grips with life in terms of its differences, its challenges, and its complexities. You can do it in education. To give you one example: You can read an anthropological text and understand something about people who live in a society that is different from your own. And in the higher education community, or for that matter the post-secondary community, if you are really lucky, if you are in a diverse community, if you are in a cosmopolitan community, or even a provincial community that has diversity as a part of its overall mission, you can go from the anthropological text to having a roommate who is from that place. And that breaks down some of those stereotypes. Some people think that those who have a religion that is different from theirs, or who come from a certain part of the world, or for that matter, country, who are from a certain economic class, might be different. Well, in the educational arena, what you come to understand, through both theory and practice, is the power of information to transform your thinking. If your thinking has been transformed, then hopefully your practices and your attitudes will be enriched, enlightened, and enlarged.

Expanding Fundraising Capacity, Strengthening Academic Standards, and Improving Management of Financial and Human Resources Are Critical

It is clear to me that historically black institutions, like small struggling white institutions, have to find a way to get on a sound financial basis. I mean we have got to figure out a way to raise more money. Because if you do not have the money, all of the rhetoric in the world will not get you where you need to be. So one of the major priorities is to strengthen the institution's fundraising capabilities, and that has to be done in ways that are yet imagined. In fact, we are working on a couple of things. This priority is so great, and so it will require people to break down paradigms and to reconceptualize fundraising. To develop a more effective fundraising strategy is one of the largest, most pressing, most important priorities, I believe, facing historically black institutions.

Another priority that is important is to strengthen the university's academic standards, including its library resources. Black colleges have really suffered the brain drain with integration. Large numbers of people who would have come to work at historically black colleges do not

consider these institutions. They are wooed away before they finish their PhDs. And they are working for more money, under better conditions in some cases, not always in others, at majority institutions. But we have got to find a way to strengthen our academic standards, and that includes finding the best and brightest faculty. But it also means doing things like turning our libraries into electronic libraries because this is a new age. And, while the book, from my own personal opinion, is still an extraordinarily important and I would say comforting resource to have at one's disposal, the truth of the matter is many students do not come to libraries because they are working through distance learning and they need to have access technologically. So we need to strengthen the university's academic standards, including its faculty and its library holdings.

Then, I would say that there is something that is almost too obvious to mention. But I think it is important. We must find a way to improve our management of financial and human resources. You know when these accrediting associations and these federal auditors come in and look at your books, you can lose your accreditation if your fiscal management is not sound. You can be put on sanction if your human resources records are not as they should be. Now the part that sounds too obvious is this: It looks as if we are not efficient fiscal managers. The truth of the matter is we are in so many cases very efficient. The problem is we just do not have enough hands to do all of the things that are required.

Priorities in the abstract mean nothing. What we have got to reckon with and understand clearly is that priorities only mean something if historically black colleges and universities are able to have the resources to do the things that are necessary. And that is why I led off with developing a more effective fundraising strategy. If you do not have the money, you cannot run a good financial human resources service. If you do not have the money you cannot strengthen the university's academic standards. That is the catch 22. And this is why, I think, black colleges will have to pool their resources and come together. For instance, and I am just hypothesizing now, let us say that I lived in a town where there were at least three historically black colleges that were private institutions in at least a 15-mile radius. I do not say they would have to merge, but I think it would be counter-productive for me to run courses when the other school might have those courses and faculty. I could send my students there on a shuttle bus to take those courses and then I could take students from their institution to study in areas where they do not have the faculty. So, in short, I am saying that one of the great challenges that I think we are going to have to come to grips with is finding a way to

collaborate and to partner with sister institutions so that we can achieve cost savings, and instructional efficiencies that otherwise would not be available to us.

Institutional Goals: Recruit and Retain High Quality Faculty, Strengthen Communication System and Increase Student Enrollment

At Fisk we understand first and foremost that we are a national liberal arts institution; we are not a research institution. That basically means that our emphases are placed across the disciplines. I mean we really do look at the humanities, and we look very, very carefully at the natural sciences, and the social sciences. We think that well-educated people really do have to have a broad understanding of the basic principles and values in those disciplines. And I happen to believe in the interdisciplinary approach. I do not think that well-educated people are really well-educated people if they do not know the connection between the natural sciences and the humanities, and technology. Or if they do not understand that a great artist such as Picasso, or for that matter Romare Bearden, understood mathematics and anatomy. So being able to create curricula that engage students in the overarching connection of intellectual knowledge is something that I am passionate about, and it is where I put my emphases. And it is where I have, as an academic president, urged my faculty to focus their attention.

One of the big issues facing most small institutions, including historically black colleges and universities, is this whole business of money. How do you get the resources to retain and/or attract high-quality faculty? What do you do when you can barely meet payroll every month? When you are out there trying to increase your fundraising, and you get money but it is restricted money that allows you to use it for one thing but not another. What I have tried to do over the last year, and I have been here exactly 13 months now, is to find that way as we have gone about the business of recruiting new faculty. I am looking for what I call the young and the hungry. These are the young people who are fresh out of their graduate programs with PhDs but with very little teaching experience. But they have a strong commitment to historically black schools. They simply must, in order to come here. They must have really good academic training; they must have that PhD. They must have an understanding of the interdisciplinary knowledge that is out there.

I try to woo them. I have been saying, "Look, I know you are not going to stay with me forever, but if I can get you to come here for three years, and if I can give you a free townhouse that is safe and clean and fairly new, if I can pay you a small amount of money (when I say small, I am talking 40 to 45 thousand dollars), if I can give you an opportunity to go to at least two national conferences in your discipline, if I can assure you that the class size will not exceed 16 students, and seminars will be smaller could I attract you, could I interest you in coming?" I have done that to attract faculty and administrators. I have also looked for high-earning people who are making \$140,000. And I have said, "Look, commit yourself to me and this institution for a relatively short period of time, three to five years, and have an opportunity to help transform a truly great university of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries into a remarkably powerful and great university of the twenty-first century." Some of these people have "bought in" because they liked the vision, and because they had enough money coming in to work for 60 or 65 thousand and still feel as if they were making a contribution. This is not an issue facing Carolyn Reid-Wallace exclusively. It is facing presidents of small schools and historically black institutions generally. It is a "small school challenge" to develop strategies that will bring to the campus first-rate scholars. By way of summarizing, I look for the very young, uninitiated, inexperienced, but brilliant scholars. And I look for the really brilliant older scholars in their 50s and early 60s, and maybe early 70s who have retired from really wonderful schools, and who are looking for another challenge. That is one of the things that I think has worked well for us, and is clearly one of the issues facing historically black college presidents: finding a way to get the faculty in place.

I emphasize to the faculty that this is a shared governance arrangement. You have to have shared governance. That is a basic principle of the academy. In the very beginning there were reasons why presidents had to be in the image of the president that Ralph Ellison describes in *Invisible Man*: dictatorial and authoritarian. There may have been some exigencies that made that necessary. But the truth of the matter is this is the twenty-first century, and the president has to do what a president is hired to do and faculty have the chief responsibility for deciding the curricula, for determining who teaches in those programs. And I basically tell my faculty: "I am not going to do your job because I have too much to do myself." This university has an extraordinary faculty. I have had such a good collegial relationship with them because we have our shoulders to the wheel and we are all working together, not separately. And I also believe

that they believe it when I say this is a shared governance arrangement. We can be no stronger than our individual and collective inputs.

The other priority is finding a way to tell the story about what we are doing. Communications is a very big problem at our schools. We are doing some remarkable things but nobody knows about them. And because of that, I have decided that one of our priorities is to improve the university's communications system. The September 2002 issue of *Ebony* features a long pictorial essay about Fisk. We have been trying to strengthen the communication system. It is a challenge facing, not just my school, but also many other schools like Fisk.

The other priority is to increase student enrollment. We have got to increase the enrollment, and we have got to diversify the enrollment. You have to look for older students to put in the mix with the typical 17-year-old high school graduate. We have made a commitment that will be fulfilled. We are not there yet, but our commitment is, and I have said it to the faculty, I have said it to the students, I have said it to the board of trustees, and I will say it to the world—we must reach the disenfranchised. I am tired of young black men going on crack and going into prison. We, at Fisk, have made a commitment to go out into this community and we are going to addict them. We are going to sell them drugs, but the drugs will be called humanities and sciences; the drugs will be called arts and social sciences and natural sciences. We are going to sell them the “drug of education.” And we are going to reach them before the guys on the streets reach them. And we are going to work with them at our expense. This is our investment in the city and in this country and in the people who look just like you and me, but who need somebody to reach out and touch them. When I became president of this school, I noticed the fences that separated Fisk from the community. I made them pull every single fence down. I said this is an open university. We are no different from the people out there but for the grace of God. Our job is to permeate those neighborhoods, to bring those kids onto this campus, whether they are seven or eight years old, and to nurture them and work with them until they become 16, and then we are going to have scholarships to bring them here as opposed to paying our taxes to send them to prison. Guess what? We have some of those little tikes now who come over and they knock on my door on Saturday saying, “I want to get in the computer room, you said we could go!” In turn, I say, “Wait a minute, I will take you over.” We set up some things in order to begin to make this our way of reaching out and lifting up, and by so doing, strength-

The Challenge of Fundraising

With regard to alumni support, Fisk is above the average nationally. Statistics related to inadequate alumni support do not apply to this university. In 12 months, and we are still counting, but in 12 months we raised \$18.4 million. \$18.4 million from: alumni, from government contracts, and grants. An anonymous donor gave us \$4 million that brought in \$4 million in matching money from the United States government. Then a man whom we just recruited to our board of trustees promised to give us \$2.5 million, and he is not an alumnus of Fisk. According to all of the statistics that I have looked at inadequate alumni support is a problem for a great many institutions. But in my own case, that is not our problem. What I will say is that alumni giving nationally is not as strong as it ought to be. Wherein at my university it is just extraordinary, and it has always been one of Fisk's great selling points. Why? If you talk to any people from Fisk's yesteryear they will tell you that this place was not just a university. I mean we married men from Fisk or from across the street at Meharry. We made best friends and were the godmothers of our roommate's children. This place was like a little world and so when people open their check books and they write checks to Fisk, they are not just writing a check to a university, they are writing a check to a place that was as much a part of their stability as let us say, your home was to your upbringing, or your local church was to your success. And that is, in my own judgment, the reason why we do not fall into that “below average” support cohort that you read about in some of the studies.

One thing I certainly say to presidents struggling with below average alumni support is to communicate regularly with your alumni. Let them know what is going on at the school. You can do it via the web; you can do it by just doing a front and back page one-pager that you send out. I have myself, just done something that was really very reinvigorating. I got on the road, and I went to at least 20 states where we have alumni associations, and I met with these people and I told them first-hand what was happening and allowed them to ask questions of me. Because it was so costly to do it when I did that, I also used that occasion to recruit. After I met with the alumni, they would have a luncheon or a dinner and maybe the next day bring a hundred students and their parents, for me to meet. So we did the communicating with alumni, but we used the alumni to help us reach out into their communities to bring prospective students to the occasion

My biggest challenge is raising unrestricted money. We raised \$18.4 million, but most of that money has been earmarked. It is restricted. It is saved for student scholarships or it is for construction. I need unrestricted money, as do most historically black college presidents; most presidents anywhere, need unrestricted money. And that money could be used to give raises to outstanding faculty; it could be used to send some of our brilliant professors in French literature off to Paris for the summer. We did it on a small scale. We identified seven meritorious professors and we gave them cash awards and public recognition. Now I am sure there were more than seven, but those selected were the cream of the crop. I am the kind of president who would like, in addition to giving that little bit of money, which was only \$2,000 per person, to have that professor and his family go off to Martha's Vineyard for one week at our expense with a box of books with the goal of relaxing on the beach and reading and thinking. When you come back you are intellectually reinvigorated. If you had that unrestricted money, you could do those extra things to give people a sense of community and appreciation.

As far as federal support for higher education is concerned, I know exactly what college presidents can do to increase their access to federal funds. I was an Assistant Secretary for Post-Secondary Education in the United States Department of Education. The first thing presidents have to do is to get out from behind their desks and come to Washington, and they have to meet with high-ranking people as well as middle-management people in government. Presidents have got to send letters to their congressmen and their senators. We hired a lobbyist in Washington, DC, because you have to have a physical presence in Washington, somebody advocating on your behalf every day. We have to do the same thing that the president of Harvard or the president of Yale or Dartmouth, or any other institution does. You have to be there. You have to be present; you have to write things and send them to these offices. Let them know what your new curricula plans are, let them know what is happening in your art gallery. And you have to do it every week. As I have said to my staff, doing it once a semester will not suffice. Every week your responsibility is to produce a well-written document. It does not have to be long, but something that you feed to Washington, DC, because that is how you stay on the radar screen. And at a certain point, you get their support. That is how it works. I had a multibillion dollar budget when I was an assistant secretary. And you know who got a lot of that money? The people, including some historically black college presidents, who were always in my office, sending me material, because

from time to time things come up and you remember, "Oh, Fisk is the institution that has this fabulous art gallery, with all of that rich art," let's send them half a million dollars. Remember, government people are trying to close their books at the end of the year, and they give support to the people they know will handle it responsibly.

Fisk University: A Tradition of Training Leaders

The contributions of historically black colleges are too many to enumerate. But one certainly is the fact that through the establishment of these institutions, so many of us had an opportunity to become educated. Without these institutions, up until the early seventies, large numbers of the educated population that we now know would not exist, because we would not have been allowed to go to other schools. I can use myself as a perfect example. I was born two blocks away from the second oldest college in the United States of America, a college that has graduated at least four, maybe five, United States Presidents. But because of segregation — and incidentally, when I graduated from high school I was the recipient of a Rockefeller scholarship, I had high board scores, and I had won almost every state contest given academically — I was not allowed to go to that institution. Fisk University, which is my alma mater, accepted me. This is a perfect example of the contributions of these schools. They have given to large numbers of people opportunities to study and to come to discover who they are. I had no idea, no clue that I could one day become the president of a university, that I could one day make my mark on society. I, like some people, had the good fortune to be brought up in a family where people said to me, "You matter. Your humanity matters, and it is not your failing that other people do not understand it. Your challenge is to help them understand it." So I had that understanding. As a result of a school like Fisk, I came to understand the power of the mind.

Fisk gave me a rigorous intellectual grounding. It forced me to read and think deeply about everything from Socrates and Plato to Matthew Arnold to Ralph Ellison to Richard Wright. It gave me this extraordinarily eclectic, rich, intellectually cohesive grounding. That is one excellent example of the strength and contribution of these schools. Another one is that these institutions for many, many years were places of employment; in fact they still are, for a significant number of people of color. Without them, some of us could not have made our livelihoods because once we had finished undergraduate and graduate school we

returned to these institutions to work and to do our research, and to teach another generation of students to believe in themselves and to go forward. Just as important is the fact that these institutions, the historically black institutions, enabled you to understand your worth, your power, your potential, and your strength. They ennobled individuals to go forth and to be full citizens. That is in itself an extraordinary benefit that comes when schools are created as a result of a genuine response to a societal need.

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MICHAEL L. LOMAX

President and CEO of the United Negro College Fund

Former President, Dillard University

Dr. Michael L. Lomax is the president and chief executive officer of the United Negro College Fund, the country's oldest historically black higher education consortium. Prior to his leadership of the Fund, Lomax served as president of Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana, from July 1, 1997 to July 1, 2004. During his leadership of Dillard, Lomax executed an ambitious strategic plan to reposition Dillard as one of the premiere liberal arts colleges in the South. The primary objective of his administration, he states, was to "reinvent" Dillard for the twenty-first century by merging the vast opportunities of the present with Dillard's tradition of excellence. Among his many achievements toward the accomplishment of this goal were the revitalization of the University's advancement program, a complete overhaul of the curriculum to bring it to a competitive liberal arts standard emphasizing globalization and internationalization, the expansion of the enrollment by over 40 percent with students representing every region of the United States, the Caribbean and Africa, and the recruitment of well-qualified faculty members and administrators to enhance an already strong teaching and administrative cohort. Additionally, Lomax forged partnerships with several major research universities and multinational corporations. In 2002, the U.S. News and World Report ranked Dillard University among the top