

## Obama names leadership for HBCU Initiative

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Dr. Gregory Cooper and Dr. Ivory Toldson will head up the president's efforts to sustain and support historically Black Colleges and Universities

Today, the Obama Administration announced a new leadership team for the [White House Initiative for Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#) (HBCUs). Former South Carolina State University president Dr. George E. Cooper has come on board as the Executive Director of the Initiative and Howard University's Dr. Ivory Toldson will join him as Deputy Director.

Cooper and Toldson will work with the HBCU Board of Advisors—appointed by President Obama—serving as a bridge between the federal government and historically Black institutions of higher learning. They will also aid Secretary Arne Duncan by serving as an organ for HBCUs within the Department of Education, helping to develop policies and provide assistance schools, students and other key stakeholders.

President Obama has stated that by 2020, he wants America to again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. The HBCU initiative is intended to help increase both the number of Black graduates and help sustain the livelihood of these institutions.

Dr. Cooper is a Senior Fellow with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and is responsible for reviewing key federal legislation regarding HBCUs. As the 10th President of South Carolina State University (SCSU) he was also the chairperson of the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities, Council of 1890 Universities (2010-2012). Cooper has also served as faculty at Alabama A&M University and Tuskegee University. He is a graduate of Florida A&M University and Tuskegee University, and holds a Ph.D. in Animal Nutrition from the University of Illinois – Urbana.

An associate professor at Howard University, Dr. Toldson also serves as senior research analyst for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, and editor-in-chief of "The Journal of Negro Education." He formerly served at Southern University and A&M College and is responsible for the Breaking Barriers series for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF), which analyzes success indicators for Black male schoolchildren Toldson was also the lead author of *The Quest for Excellence: Supporting the Academic Success of Minority Males in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Disciplines*.

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