

Epilogue: The Future of African Americans in U.S. Higher Education

Robert Hall

The contents of this thematic journal have been reviewed by numerous individuals prior to its publication for both substance and accuracy. Many commented that once they started reading it, they could not put it down. Personally, I appreciate the historical perspective provided. It was an educational experience that, as an historian I can appreciate. However, I am, as I am sure others who read this anthology will be, saddened when thinking of the continued struggles that challenge Blacks in academe. Who would think that it continues, at least on some fronts, to be so unpleasant? One is left reaching the conclusion that it is tough being a Black professional anywhere.

While reading this special volume of the journal, a couple of other questions come to mind. One is the use of the terms Black and African American. Is there a difference? To me there is. In the journal, at some points, the term Black was used and at other times the term African American, when referring to the same group of people. In my opinion, the term Black should be used. My rationale is based on the fact that many Black people who live in the United States do not consider themselves African American. That is especially the case for Blacks who come from Latin America and the Caribbean. It is not as if they do not acknowledge their African roots and take pride in them, but they do not consider themselves African; they see themselves as Haitian, Jamaican, or other ethnicity from the Caribbean or Latin America. They recognize that Africans do not consider them as the “lost Africans.”

History has also proven that White Europeans were not the only participants in the Atlantic slave trade. Africans also had a role in the slave trade even though they had a different view of slavery. However, slavery in Africa was not the atrocious experience that it was in the United States. The bottom line remains though, that Africans, in some cases, did give away their own people with motivations of greed or survival. Further, since the beginning of the slave trade to the present, Africans have never really tried to identify with the people they gave away to the U.S. or the so called “lost Africans.” Additionally, once one completes his/her reading of this volume, one feels a sense of frustration. Hindrance after hindrance and crises after crises experienced by Blacks in higher education have been chronicled. However, the real question is, what will be done to remedy these concerns? Aside from these authors, are there other persons or organizations speaking out about these issues and attempting to remedy them? Each of the contributors certainly sees the *Metropolitan Universities* as having a special role. Are they being heard? Have there been improvements in terms of the “struggle” that these authors began writing about over three years ago, just after the beginning of the new millennium? Is there resolution or hope for the future? Or simply idealistic thinking?

Note: The author wishes to thank Ms. Frederique Frage, graduate assistant, for her assistance in the finalization of this epilogue.

Author Information

Robert Hall is an Associate Professor at Northeastern University in the Department of African-American Studies. He received his undergraduate degree from Harvard University and his doctorate in History from Florida State University.

Robert Hall
Associate Professor and Acting Chair
Department of African American Studies
Northeastern University
132 Nightingale Hall
Boston, MA 02115
E-mail: r.hall@neu.edu
Telephone: 617-373-3148
Fax: 617-373-2625