

# EDUCATION

## Are black colleges only halfway houses?

By James E. Alsbrook, Ph.D.

Special to the NNPA from the Chicago Defender

Wrangling between Black trustees of predominantly Black, state-funded Central State University and Ohio Gov. William Voinovich has drawn national attention again to one big question: How long should state-funded "separate but equal" education be probed at Black-administered colleges when larger, better equipped, fully accredited and integrated colleges are nearby and available to all races?

The same and similar questions have arisen in southern states. But this case is unusual. Central State is millions of dollars in debt, some dormitories are condemned as uninhabitable and its prior administration stands accused of foolishly spending millions of dollars on sports programs.

Black people of Ohio are split on the problem. Some of the trustees have rejected Gov. Voinovich's demand that they resign. They say they will remain until Voinovich promises to rehabilitate and not close Central

State. But other Black leaders say the trustees should resign to make way for a fresh appraisal and new beginning. Some lawyers challenge the governor's claim that he can fire trustees before their terms expire.

Both sides of the question are defended strongly in Ohio. Those who think all predominately Black state-supported colleges should remain open are arguing that:

1. Primary and secondary education of young inner-city Blacks is generally inferior and racially segregated, so the predominately Black state-supported college is needed as a bridge to provide catch-up knowledge, sympathetic help, correctional and social support for the impoverished and disadvantaged Black youngster who has talent clouded by knowledge deficits, cultural quirks and mildly unconventional behavior.

2. Opportunities for extracurricular development and

self-realization for Black students in Black colleges are greater because race problems are minimized. Also, competition for leadership in scholarship, campus politics and other honors is more, even without extraneous influences in which inherited advantages (such as family wealth, better "connections," etc.) are held by some white students.

3. Black role models are more numerous at predominately Black colleges. Often, the Black college teacher has emerged from a disadvantageous home life and can identify with the problem of honest, hard-working Black students who also were disadvantaged, but struggle valiantly for upward mobility.

Those believing that Central State and other colleges like it should be closed are arguing that:

1. The nation is becoming more highly integrated, so Black students should attend the best available colleges, compete with whites on an equal basis and learn how the real world works in free and open competition.

2. Predominately Black schools suffer by design of the (See Halfway houses, Page 9)



## The four basic functions of a college faculty

Ever wonder what college professors are supposed to do? Ever wonder if they have the same duties at a research university such as Howard (DC); a comprehensive university such as Radford University (VA); a liberal arts college such as Bennett College (NC) or a community college such as San Bernardino Valley College (CA)?

Each year we highlight the four basic functions of the faculty. Some terms are more technical than others, but each reader will be provided with additional knowledge that can be applied to their roles as parents, leaders, students and/or friends of those needing information.

The book, "American Professors: A National Resource Imperiled" by Howard Bowen and Jack Schuster, was the primary source of research for this column.

**Research:** Faculties contribute to the quality and productivity of society, not only through their influence on student scholars, but also directly through "research."

The term "research" is used as shorthand for all the activities of faculties that advance knowledge and the arts. Activities such as religious inquiry, social criticism, humanistic scholarship, etc., may be classified as "research" if they involve the discovery of productive knowledge or the creation of original art.

The work of humanistic scholarship, for example, includes the discovery of past human experience, the preservation of texts and artifacts, and transmission of this knowledge from generation to generation. Faculty members, on the whole, have been free to choose their research programs in terms of scientific and social interest.

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