

National Council on Black American Affairs An Historical Overview

*When you are right, you cannot be too radical.
When you are wrong, you cannot be too conservative.*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The National Council on Black American Affairs (NCBAA) is an affiliate council of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). The Council serves as a collaborative voice promoting the academic and professional success of African American staff and students within the community college system nationally.

The history of the organization is best appreciated in the context of its development, beginning with the evolution of its parent organization, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), initially known as the American Association of Junior Colleges (AAJC).

Organized in 1920, with a full-time director since 1941, the AAJC became the primary advocacy voice for the junior college sector of higher education. It was originally established as an association for private two-year junior colleges and was primarily a presidents' organization. Because there were very few community colleges at that time, and it was just the beginning of the community college movement, most of those that existed were junior colleges.

Through the years, the pace of establishment of new junior colleges was far beyond predicted estimates. During the decade of the sixties, more than 500 community colleges were established across the nation. Public community college membership was exceeding that of private colleges, and persons who were not presidents began attending Association meetings.

As the Association geared programs to provide assistance to the rapidly increasing number of community colleges with regard to leadership personnel, facilities, and programs, change was taking place in the nation's cities that would have a profound effect both on many of the colleges as well as the national association. It was during this period that the central cities of urban America were exploding in rebellion. The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King in 1968 accelerated African Americans' demands for equal opportunity and access. African Americans were organizing to seek greater participation and representation within the major institutions of the American society. Historically, opportunities within the major institutions were relatively closed to African Americans and other disenfranchised minorities. Many of the students who were making up the new community college student population were veterans, reflecting as in society the larger disproportionate number of minorities who served in the army. As veterans were coming back into the institutions that were expanding, there was no one representing that population.

At the 1969 meeting of the Association in Atlanta, Georgia, Mayor Stokes of Cleveland and Ralph Nader addressed the convention, raising awareness about many issues in higher education, including the general unrest that had begun to pervade many college campuses. Dr. Novell Smith, President of Merritt Community College in Oakland, California, addressed the convention and asked whether the community college would change to meet changes in society. Concerns about the apparent neglect, insensitivity, or lack of concern for Blacks primarily and other minorities coincidentally by the AAJC generated the beginning and evolution of a Black caucus, led by Dr. Charles Hurst, President Malcolm X Community College in Chicago. The Black caucus of the AAJC challenged the organization to be more responsive to needs of Blacks and more representative of Blacks in its staffing.

By 1970, there was much anticipation of the fiftieth anniversary meeting of AAJC, which was held in Hawaii. The convention provided an up-beat review of the remarkable development of junior and community colleges throughout the decade. The Association's Board, at that time presidents, all white, all male, entertained much discussion with regard to the conducting of business and procedures in election of officers. A few African American community college presidents, trustees, and faculty, primarily from newly established urban community college campuses, attended. They quickly observed the lack of representation of African-Americans on the policy-making board of the Association. The Black Caucus prepared a slate of African-American presidents for nomination for the National Board.

At the annual business meeting during the convention, the chair recognized Dr. Charles Hurst, who read a prepared statement addressing the need for AAJC to become more relevant and responsive to needs of all members of their constituency. During the announcement of slated nominees for various offices, minority nominations came forward from the floor. After several unsuccessful bids, Dr. Abel Sykes, on behalf of the minority caucus, nominated Dr. Charles Hurst for the position of representative-at-large. Dr. Hurst, referred to as *perhaps the most radical of the nominees put forth*, became the first person elected to the Board from the floor as well as the first Black Board member, followed by Dr. Novell Smith, Dr. Thomas Lowell, Dr. Harvey Banks, Dr. Sanford D. Bishop, and Dr. Abel Sykes, who was also the first Black to serve as chairman of the AACJC Board of Directors.

The election created some concerns, primarily by some Junior College delegates from the south. Some members of this group threatened to pull out of the Association to form their own group. The following year, Dr. Edmund Gleazer, Executive Director of the AAJC, took a year's leave to seek input from the larger membership regarding the manner in which the National organization could be more relevant to its membership. Dr. Gleazer authored "Project Focus," a report recommending the following items for reorganization:

- organization name change from the American Association of Junior Colleges to the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC);
- leadership designation change from Executive Director to President;
- criteria development by which organizations could become councils;
- Board expansion from 15 to 30 members with some elected at large;
- Board election process change;
- Creation of community representation, especially from business and industry.

At the 1972 AAJC convention in Dallas, Texas, the name of the organization was changed officially to the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC), to accommodate independent and church-related junior colleges. A changed management structure included the designation of President for the Association's CEO, a Board of Directors who would elect their chairman, and election by means of mail ballot. The AACJC Board of Directors approved criteria for the recognition of councils. Each council would be required to develop a national constitution and by-laws, demonstrate self-sufficiency with a legitimate membership of 200 persons, and operate as a national body.

In March of 1972, the first constitution for the Council on Black American Affairs, a three page document, was written by Dr. Rosetta Wheadon and Dr. Donald Godbold and was approved by the Black Caucus at the AACJC Convention. At the time, the AACJC was very prescriptive, so the NCBAAs offices were based in their offices.

By July 1972, Dr. Margo Smith (AACJC Board), Dr. Wheadon, and Dr. Godbold revised the constitution to meet AACJC requirements. On November 30, 1972, the revised constitution was approved by the AACJC Board of

Directors, and the Council on Black American Affairs became the first Council approved by the AACJC Board. Dr. Godbold was elected as the first National Chairman of the NCBAA. By virtue of this position, Dr. Godbold was provided a seat on the AACJC Board of Directors, representing the Council on Black American Affairs. In 1974, Dr. Sykes was elected to the AACJC Board. At the AACJC, the Office of Minority Affairs was established, led by Dr. Andrew Goodrich. Additionally, during developing years, there was Caucus-appointed support and initial representation at AACJC: Jean Thurston, William Lawson, Betty Coleman, and Dr. Howard Simmons, AACJC Project Director. Dr. Connie Odom was hired as the first African American Vice President at the AACJC.

The NCBAA celebrates the following **Organizing Pioneers***:

- Dr. Don Godbold, Community College of Denver, Aurora campus;
- Dr. Abel Sykes , Compton Community College, Compton, California;
- Dr. Novell Smith, Merritt College, Peralta Community College District, Oakland, California;
- Dr. Charles Hurst, Malcolm X Community College, Chicago, Illinois;
- Dr. Sanford Bishop, Sanford Bishop Junior College, Mobile, Alabama;
- Dr. Thomas Lowell , Penn Valley Community College, Kansas City, Missouri;
- Dr. Claude Ware, East Los Angeles Community College, Los Angeles, California;
- Dr. Rosetta Wheadon, State Community College, East St. Louis, Illinois;
- Jessie Gist, Combrook Community College, Patterson, New Jersey;
- Melvin Newton, Merritt College, Peralta Community College District, Oakland, California
- Dr. Horace Traylor, Miami Dade Community College (First Treasurer)
- Dr. Arthur Banks, Greater Hartford Connecticut Community College
- Dr. Lonnie Martin, College of North Carolina
- Dr. Ray Proctor, Essex County Community College, New Jersey
- Dr. Gus Pritchard, Community College District, California
- Dr. Ralph Lee, Forest Park Community College,
- Dr. Joseph Gore, Mary Holmes Community College, Westport, Mississippi
- Dr. Nathaniel Willis, Kennedy-King Community College, Chicago, Illinois
- Dr. Edgar Draper, Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY, New York
- Dr. Lawrence Johnson, Roxbury Community College, Roxbury, Massachusetts
- Dr. J. Harry South, Essex County Community College, New Jersey
- Dr. William "Bell" Moore
- Dr. Thomas Lloyd, Highland Park Community College, Highland Park, Michigan
- Dr. Zelema Harris, Penn Valley Community College, Kansas City, Missouri
- Dr. Carolyn Williams, Highland Park Community College, Highland Park, Michigan
- Dr. Gwendolyn Sanders, Delaware Tech Community College, Wilmington, Delaware

*affiliations at this point in the history

NCBAA Region Development

Regionalization of the Council did not occur until the seventies. Although the Council had a national focus, membership of the organization began to grow in impressive numbers. One way to accommodate membership was to develop a Regional structure to provide more direct interaction, support, and network service to area members while continuing to maintain a connection to the national organization. In 1974, the Council of Black Affairs approved the Regional concept and determined a Regional structure. Dr. Godbold, Dr. Sykes, and Dr. Ware met with key individuals across the country to develop plans for organizing and implementing a four-Region structure. The Southern Region was the first to be organized, followed by the Western, North Central, and Northeast Regions.

The NCBAA celebrates **Organizing Trailblazers** for each Region:

Southern Region Trailblazers

Dr. Mildred Bell at El Centro Community College District served as first Southern Region Chair
Dr. Edwin Thompson
Dr. Joan Wilson
Dr. Horace Traylor (National Board Treasurer)
Dr. Connie Sutton
Dr. Sanford D. Bishop
Dr. Johnnie Ruth Clark
Dr. J. Don Boning
Dr. Charles Sueing (National Board Secretary)
Dr. Willie Clemons
Dr. Lionel Silvers

Western Region Trailblazers

Dr. George Herring, Dean at Merritt College, Oakland, California, served as first Western Region Chair.
Dr. Donald Godbold
Dr. Abel Sykes
Dr. Claude Ware
Dr. John Greene
Dr. Roy Phillips
Dr. Doris Ward (college trustee)
Constance Rice
Odell Johnson

North Central Trailblazers

Dr. Ralph Lee, President of Forest Park Community College, St. Louis, Missouri, served as first North Central Region Chair.

Hattie Jackson
Dr. Carolyn Williams
Dr. Rosetta Wheadon
Dorothy Anderson (college trustee)
Herman Stevenson
Dr. Shirley Carlson
Dr. Nathaniel Willis

Dr. Robert Leans
Dr. Thomas Laws
Dr. Charles Kennedy
Dr. Edna Wilson
Dr. Nolan Ellison

Northeast Region Trailblazers

Dr. Richard Turner, President at South Central Community College, New Haven, Connecticut, served as the first Northeast Region Chair.

Dr. Lawrence Johnson
Dr. Gwendolyn Sanders
Jessie Gist
Dr. Connie McQueen
Dr. Joshua Smith
Dr. Howard White (State Superintendent of Schools)
Dr. Raphael Cortada
Dr. Howard Simmons, AACJC
Jeanne Thurston, AACJC
William Lawson, AACJC

Presidents' Round Table (PRT)

At the April 1983 NCBAA Board of Directors meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, Dr. Charles Green expressed a need for peer level correspondence and an opportunity for Presidents and Chief Executive Officers to share concerns and information. The proposed organization would provide a base of support for NCBAA, the parent organization. Dr. Rosetta Wheadon confirmed that the new organization would be accommodated by the NCBAA constitution. It was agreed that the new organization would have no conflicts with the parent organization. It would share common goals and hold membership in the parent group.

Mission Statement

The Presidents' Round Table is an affiliate of the National Council on Black American Affairs. The Round Table is designed to provide African-American Community College Presidents an operational network to help ensure their success with the following: 1) identifying and responding to issues affecting African-Americans in community colleges 2) providing mentoring opportunities for African-Americans 3) sharing professional resources 4) providing other national and international professional opportunities for African-American CEO's and 5) supporting the goals and objectives of the National Council on Black American Affairs.

The first elected officers* of the Presidents' Round Table were the following:

Convener: Dr. Charles A. Green, President, Maricopa Technical Community College, Phoenix, Arizona

Secretary: Dr. Freddie Nicholas, President, John Tyler Community College, Chester, Virginia

Treasurer: Dr. Vernon Crawley, President, Forest Park Community College, St. Louis, Missouri

*positions at time of appointment

One of the most significant achievements of the PRT was the successful launching of The Thomas Lakin Institute for Mentored Leadership, a mentoring program for African American Community College administrators aspiring to become community college presidents. The program was formally presented in the fall of 1994 at Oakland, California. Twenty-one mentees from twenty-one community college districts from

around the nation constituted the first class. In the fall of 2010, the Presidents' Round Table launched an additional Institute for new African American CEO's to support them in the early years of their presidencies.

The Dr. Carolyn Grubbs Williams Leadership Development Institute For Mid Level African American Administrators

In keeping with its mission to provide professional development, support, and networking opportunities for all African American constituencies in community colleges, the National Council on Black American Affairs established a Leadership Development Institute for Midlevel Administrators (LDI). The Institute would activate a qualified pool of individuals for administrative positions in community colleges. The targeted audiences for the Institute would include community college professionals: deans, faculty, program managers, coordinators, and others in midlevel positions or those making transitions into leadership positions in community colleges. The inaugural Institute was launched in October 2002 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, with the focus on preparing 20 African Americans for leadership positions in community colleges. An overwhelming response to the invitation allowed 42 scholars to participate.

On the occasion of its 10th Anniversary, the Institute was named for Dr. Carolyn Grubbs Williams, creator of the Institute concept and mentor extraordinaire to hundreds of community college professionals.

In October 2011, Advanced LDI was launched. It is an intensive, two-day institute designed for LDI alumni. Participants build upon skills gained in the LDI through focused discussions on leadership and networking with experienced community college professionals and their colleagues.

Since its inception, Dr. Marian Shivers, Professor Emeritus at Yuba Community College in Maryville, California, has served as Dean of the Institute and Advanced LDI. She continues to provide guidance and professional advice to Institute alumni.

Morgan State University Partnership

In March 2004, a collaborative partnership was established between NCBAA and the Community College Leadership Doctoral Program (CCLDP) at Morgan State University. This partnership united two historically black entities, with complementary missions, in the professional development of African Americans in community colleges.

Succeeding NCBAA National Board Presidents

Dr. Don Godbold
Dr. Ralph Lee
Dr. Carl Crawford
Dr. Carolyn Grubbs Williams
Dr. Richard Turner
Dr. Freddie Sandipher
Dr. Brenda Simmons
Dr. Calvin E. Woodland
Dr. James Bennett
Dr. Carolyn Hull Anderson
Dr. William H. Crawford, III