



TESTIMONY

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UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND
SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE ON
CYBERSECURITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

Hearing on Cyberworkforce: Growing and Developing the Cyber Pipeline May 21, 2019

Thank you to Chairman Richmond, ranking member Mr. Katko, and the distinguished members of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Protection. On behalf of the team at Grambling State University, the University of Louisiana System, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities across the United States, we sincerely appreciate this and the coming opportunities to collaborate on addressing one of America's most critical workforce development needs.

As president of Grambling State University, I am privileged to lead a campus community that includes more than 5,200 students, 550 faculty and staff, and countless North Louisiana constituents who have helped address the vital workforce needs in our state for 119 years. Founded in 1901, our University's well-known outside of the classroom for our historic and the most-winning football coach in history, Coach Eddie Robinson; our World-Famed and Super Bowl-performing Tiger marching band; and being, as our motto states, "the place where everybody is somebody."

However, it's our innovation inside of the classroom that is the true foundation for our legacy and what provides the unique opportunity to share with you.

Today, I am excited to provide background on why we were chosen as home to Louisiana's first bachelor's degree in cybersecurity and how HBCUs, like Grambling State, are well-



positioned to deliver the highest return on investment when developing talent in the fields of STEM, Cybersecurity, and related industries.

Since 1972, Grambling State has led Louisiana in producing African American Computer Science graduates. Our former students have gone on to lead information technology (IT) and threat prevention efforts for America's leading companies. From technology providers like CenturyLink and IBM to consumer and retail giants that include Sara Lee, General Electric, and General Motors, we have a long legacy of growing the senior-level talent that helps shape American technology.

Now, that might seem odd to hear of a small school located in rural North Louisiana, but our achievement isn't uncommon if you know the story of America's HBCUs. Today, we at Grambling State lead as Louisiana's number one producer of computer and information science graduates – in fact, we outpace all others in our state by at least 27 percent. Today, we are weeks from launching America's 13th Cybersecurity undergraduate program and the first in our state. Today, we are realizing growth that includes a five-year enrollment high, a 100 percent increase in our fiscal health score, and an economic impact of more than \$175 million.

In contrast, there is another impactful fact about today that exists for us and our sister HBCUs. At GSU, while we have a long legacy of partnering with America's technology giants to grow IT innovators, we also lead in facing the challenges of deferred maintenance, recruiting and retaining faculty, and competing for the federal, corporate, and partnership dollars that will help us realize our full vision for workforce development through academic attainment.

Although our nation's HBCUs make up just 3 percent of colleges and universities, we produce 27 percent of African-American graduates with bachelor's degrees in STEM fields. In addition, the National Science Foundation reports that 21 of the top 50 institutions for educating African-American graduates who go on to receive their doctorates in science and engineering, are HBCUs.

At Grambling State, we are proud to stand as a member of a lean, but mighty force of historically black schools who continue to prove that we are the best partners for addressing America's workforce challenges – most uniquely, those in the fields of cybersecurity and data-driven threat prevention.

As we look forward to a world that is poised to spend \$180 billion on cybersecurity in the year 2021, we don't see our challenges, we see an opportunity. With the right and robust support, we know that we are one of America's most critical answers for filling the 3-million-person job gap that exists globally in Cybersecurity today.

The investments, that partners like the Department of Homeland Security have the ability to make, will do more than just mitigate the nation's trillions of dollars in cyber-risk. These investments will also substantively change the trajectory of students, families, and the



communities who are served by HBCUs. Data from the Social Security Administration shows that your partnership with HBCUs will help raise the average salary of our graduates by more than 40 percent. In addition, studies from McKinsey and Company show us that these more-diverse workforces will help grow company earnings by 14 percent.

When it comes to investing in Cybersecurity programs and initiatives at HBCUs, there is only one way to lose – and that is through inaction. We are extremely encouraged by the steps the members of this committee and leaders throughout our nation are making to include historically black schools in the conversation about how we best protect our nation.

The positive vibrations of the work you do here on Capitol Hill will extend all the way to the classrooms and the lives of our students in North Louisiana. When partners like Governor John Bel Edwards and federal agencies get involved, we are empowered to create opportunities that change the lives of students like Jarrid Richards.

Jarrid is a senior in our computer science program who has ended up in my office with a need many times. He is a great example of how a holistic investment in minority students can help positively impact the trajectory of a person and a company.

During Jarrid's time at Grambling State, there were a few semesters where he encountered a gap, as many of our students do, between federal aid and his cost to attend. And, while Jarrid worked three jobs around campus, there were semesters when without scholarships and grants, he may not have been able to continue his education. When Jarrid was in need of career development, our partnership with CLECO, a local energy provider, was able to provide him his first hands-on experience with network security and preventing cyber threats.

Those investments and the mentorship of his professor Dr. Reddy positioned Jarrid to finish this school year with multiple internships offers and at least two full-time job opportunities that will be waiting when he graduates this fall.

And, while Jarrid's perseverance and grit may stand out among our students, his needs do not. He is much like many students at minority-serving institutions – who just need an opportunity and investment to become the game-changing answers to the needs of American companies and communities today.

It's my extreme honor to lead a University who produces thousands of Jarrids and other innovators who history shows are changing the way our world works. It is my hope that we, Grambling State and other HBCUs, will be offered the opportunity to partner in continuing to secure America's future and producing the workforce talent that will help our nation remain a leader in innovation.

Thank you.