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Editorial Introduction – Volume II

Across Borders and Boundaries: Afro-Diasporic Pathways, Global Black Education, and Collective Futures

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Volume II broadens the proceedings' scope by tracing Black educational struggle, leadership, and knowledge production across borders—geographic, institutional, and epistemic. While Volume I emphasizes institutional transformation through leadership praxis, Volume II foregrounds the transnational and historical dimensions of boundary-breaking work. Together, the chapters reveal how access, belonging, and power operate not only within individual campuses but across national policy regimes, diasporic movements, cultural narratives, and global knowledge economies. In a moment marked by renewed contestation over racial justice, migration, and the legitimacy of equity initiatives, these contributions insist that Black education cannot be understood, or advanced, without an Afro-diasporic analytic lens.

Diaspora theory provides critical grounding for this orientation. Hall (1990) reminds us that cultural identity within the African diaspora is not an essence but a positioning, formed through rupture, displacement, and ongoing becoming. Similarly, Gilroy (1993) conceptualizes the Black Atlantic as a space of transnational circulation in which intellectual, cultural, and political formations exceed the boundaries of the nation-

state. Taken together, these frameworks invite us to see Black higher education not as a bounded institutional project, but as part of a dynamic diasporic formation shaped by movement, memory, resistance, and exchange.

The volume is organized around four interlocking themes: institutional identity and belonging; policy and structural intervention; diasporic coalition and solidarity; and knowledge production as a site of struggle and possibility. Together, these themes situate Black education within a transnational analytic frame that understands institutions not as isolated entities, but as nodes within a broader Afro-diasporic formation shaped by history, migration, racialization, and resistance.

First, the volume interrogates institutional identity and belonging as dynamic, contested processes. Across HBCUs, predominantly White institutions, professional pipelines, and international universities, contributors examine how Black identity is negotiated within organizational contexts structured by colonial legacies and contemporary racial hierarchies. Belonging emerges not as a passive condition but as an achievement—cultivated through leadership praxis, relational networks, and institutional counter-narratives that resist erasure.

Second, the volume foregrounds policy and structural intervention as arenas where power is codified and contested. From affirmative action debates and Minority-Serving Institution designation to curricular design and developmental infrastructures, these chapters reveal how governance regimes shape access, resource distribution, and institutional legitimacy. Policy is treated not as neutral administration, but as a racialized architecture that can either reproduce inequity or enable transformative possibility.

Third, diasporic coalition and solidarity operate as both analytic lens and political praxis. Drawing from Black feminist and liberationist traditions, contributors illuminate how cross-racial and transnational alliances are forged within conditions of scarcity, anti-Blackness, and competitive funding logics. Coalition is framed not as identity collapse, but as relational accountability across difference—a strategic alignment that honors Afro-diasporic multiplicity while confronting structural fragmentation.

Fourth, the volume positions knowledge production itself as a site of struggle and generative power. It asks whose epistemologies circulate, whose narratives are sanctioned, and how Black intellectual labor travels across borders. In this framing, scholarship becomes diasporic work—an act of translation, memory, and future-making that disrupts colonial hierarchies of knowledge and asserts Black intellectual sovereignty.

Collectively, these interwoven themes align with traditions of social justice scholarship that understand professional formation and institutional leadership as forged through defining moments of equity engagement (Marbley et al., 2015). More importantly, they insist that Black education must be theorized not solely within national frameworks, but within the ongoing, unfinished project of diaspora itself.

Importantly, this work is also literacy work. Robinson (2012) conceptualizes literacy engagement not merely as skill acquisition but as a developmental process through which individuals cultivate agency, negotiate institutional structures, and participate more fully in civic and educational life. Within Afro-diasporic contexts, institutional participation requires this expanded literacy, an interpretive capacity to decode policy regimes, navigate racialized expectations, and assert epistemic presence. In

this sense, literacy becomes a diasporic practice: a means of translating across contexts, sustaining cultural memory, and contesting erasure.

Chapter pathways throughout the volume illustrate these theoretical commitments across leadership, policy, and diasporic coalition. Leadership is framed not simply as administrative stewardship but as narrative intervention within contested institutional spaces. Veteran transitions curricula are positioned as developmental infrastructures that affirm lived experience while scaffolding institutional fluency. Speller's examination of HBCU-HSI dual designation interrogates the racialized architecture of Minority-Serving Institution policy, revealing how federal funding frameworks reproduce scarcity politics while simultaneously seeding possibilities for Black–Brown coalition. By centering institutional leaders' sensemaking within anti-colonial and coalitional frameworks, the chapter positions HBCU-HSIs not as anomalies, but as emergent sites of diasporic solidarity and policy resistance.

In contemporary contexts, these networks extend into digital ecosystems. Robinson and Robinson (2021) argue that social media and digital platforms can cultivate critical literacy, amplify marginalized voices, and contest dominant knowledge hierarchies. Such tools expand Afro-diasporic knowledge production beyond traditional institutional gatekeeping, echoing Gilroy's (1993) insight that Black expressive cultures have long operated through transnational circuits that disrupt singular narratives of authority.

Volume II advances three implications for AABHE's scholarly and practitioner community. First, boundary-breaking requires policy literacy across contexts; as Speller's analysis of HBCU-HSI designation demonstrates, comparative and coalition-oriented

approaches to MSI policy expand the repertoire of strategies available to Black education advocates. Second, solidarity operates as educational infrastructure; collective advancement is built through relational ecosystems that mentor, sponsor, protect, and strategically align across racialized institutional boundaries. Third, knowledge justice demands expanded literacies. Empowerment emerges when individuals and communities gain the interpretive and communicative power necessary to reshape institutional norms (Robinson, 2012; Robinson & Robinson, 2021).

As you engage this volume, we invite reflection: What does it mean to treat Black education as a global and diasporic project rather than a nation-bound concern? How might institutions cultivate environments that not only admit Black learners and scholars but sustain their intellectual authority across borders? What infrastructures—policy, funding, mentoring, mobility, and community partnership—are necessary to sustain Black intellectual leadership across the lifespan?

Volume II offers pathways rather than prescriptions. It reminds us that boundary-breaking is collective, historically situated, and intellectually rigorous. Whether within HBCUs, Brazilian universities, veteran transitions programs, diasporic mentorship networks, or the medical education pipeline, Black intellectual persistence emerges through infrastructures of cultural wealth, solidarity, and strategic intervention. It is sustained by community, sharpened by critical analysis, and propelled by the insistence that Black knowledge and Black futures belong, everywhere.

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