



**HBCUs NEED YOUR HELP
BY JULIANNE MALVEAUX**

President Barack Obama says he wants more United States citizens to have access to the college experience. He says he wants to ensure that our nation, once again, leads the world in the number of folks who have had the opportunity to experience college. Our president has been right on point in issuing edicts and offering rhetoric. And we all applaud his focus on taking our nation forward.

Thus the HBCU community has been disturbed, chagrined, upset, and bereft by the fact that the 2010 budget does not reflect any priority energy for HBCUs. In other words, even –president George Herbert Walker Bush was willing to offer HBCUs 85 million in additional spending. This \$85 million was not included in the budget of the Obama administration.

From where I sit this means that Bennett college for women will lose half a million dollars. From where I sit, I see sister and brother presidents trying to bridge the gap. From where I sit, there is a sense of outrage that the Obama administration does not quite get the HBCU energy. Why is it that a recalcitrant Bush would do more for HBCUs than an ostensibly sympathetic Obama would?

Here is the bottom line – House Education leader George Miller (D_Ca) has asked that HBCUs get the \$85 million that has been taken from our energy for the next 10 years. Miller would supplement title 3 funds as part of a Student Aid and Direct Lending Bill – HR 3221 – and offer \$85 million a year for 10 years. On the other hand, the President and the Senate are offering a mere \$12 million more than the 2009 base, which makes us worse off than we have been. Why should HBCUs go backwards, not forwards, in their work to educate and celebrate African American students?

The budget is now being marked up and all of us have work to do. Here is the work – we live and lift and ask members of the United States senate to embrace the HBCU mission and move the agenda ahead. What are we all prepared to do to counter the loss of \$85 million?

This is a time for people to raise voices and to make a difference this is a time for African American people to boldly reach out and lift up a notion of the energy that is highest and best. We cannot smile our way through the energy that comes from having an African American president of the united states. Part of our work, also, is to push our way through our energy and enlightenment.

I spent several days last week at Tuskegee University, and I was delighted to be in the crucible that Booker T. Washington built. My colleague, Dr. Benjamin Payton, is

retiring after 28 years; I was blessed with rich collegiality among peer UNCF presidents. The spirit of connection was real and also strong.

At the same time, there was a frustration. What must we do to restore dollars to the HBCU Title III budget? One of the things that we must do is to be tangled in a web of mutual energy and support.

If you are reading this, then please ask your senator to do her/his best to support HBCUs in 2010. More than anything else, we need advocacy for HBCUs. We need to insist that we go forward, not backward, and that those who understand our value push and promote it. How is it that President Barack Obama would do less for the HBCU community than his predecessor has? What can we do to ensure that the federal government provides the needed support to historically black colleges and universities?