

6TH ANNUAL

# DIVERSITY ABROAD CONFERENCE

April 7-10, 2018 • Miami, FL



## **“Don’t Worry Mom, I’ll Be Okay!”: Supporting Minority Students Abroad**

**Dr. Arthur McMahan, HBCU-LEEA Director Curtis Johnson & Chief Jacques S. Battiste**

# Agenda

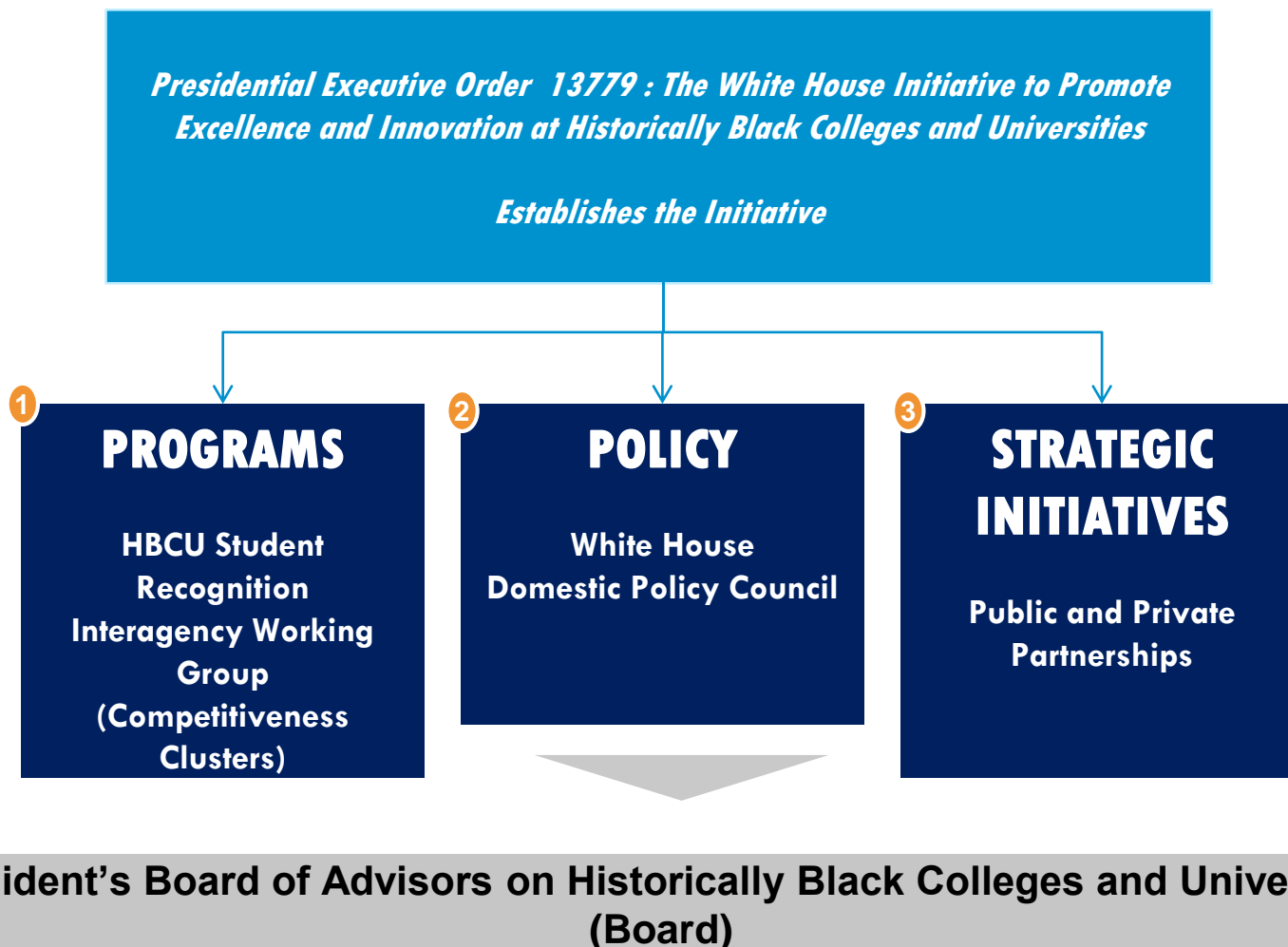
## Introduction

- WHI-HBCU Overview
- Campus Safety vs. Safety Abroad
  - Concerns abroad
  - Security awareness protocols
- Q&A
- Connect with us

# The WHI-HBCU Origin Story...

- In 1980, President Jimmy Carter signed an Executive Order
  - to distribute adequate resources and funds to strengthen HBCUs.
- His Executive order manifested the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (WHI-HBCU)
- WHI-HBCU is a federally funded program that operates within the U.S. Department of Education and the White House.

# Organizing Our Work



## HBCU Competitiveness



**HBCU competitiveness is the ability of institutions, students and graduates to succeed in markets *while* raising their living standards and those in the communities they principally serve.**



# International Affairs Working Group

## Mission:

- To provide a platform for federal partners and HBCUs to collaborate and share resources and information that will improve the internationalization of institutions, faculty and students





# IAWG Partners

## Active Federal Agencies Members



## Partner Organizations



# Outreach Events

## Savannah State University 2016 Peace Corps Car Tour



## Norfolk State University Students 2016 Peace Corps Car Tour





# Outreach Events Cont.

## Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Peace Corps Car Tour 2016



## Spelman College International Opportunities Panel



# 2017 Peace Corps HBCU All Star Fly-In



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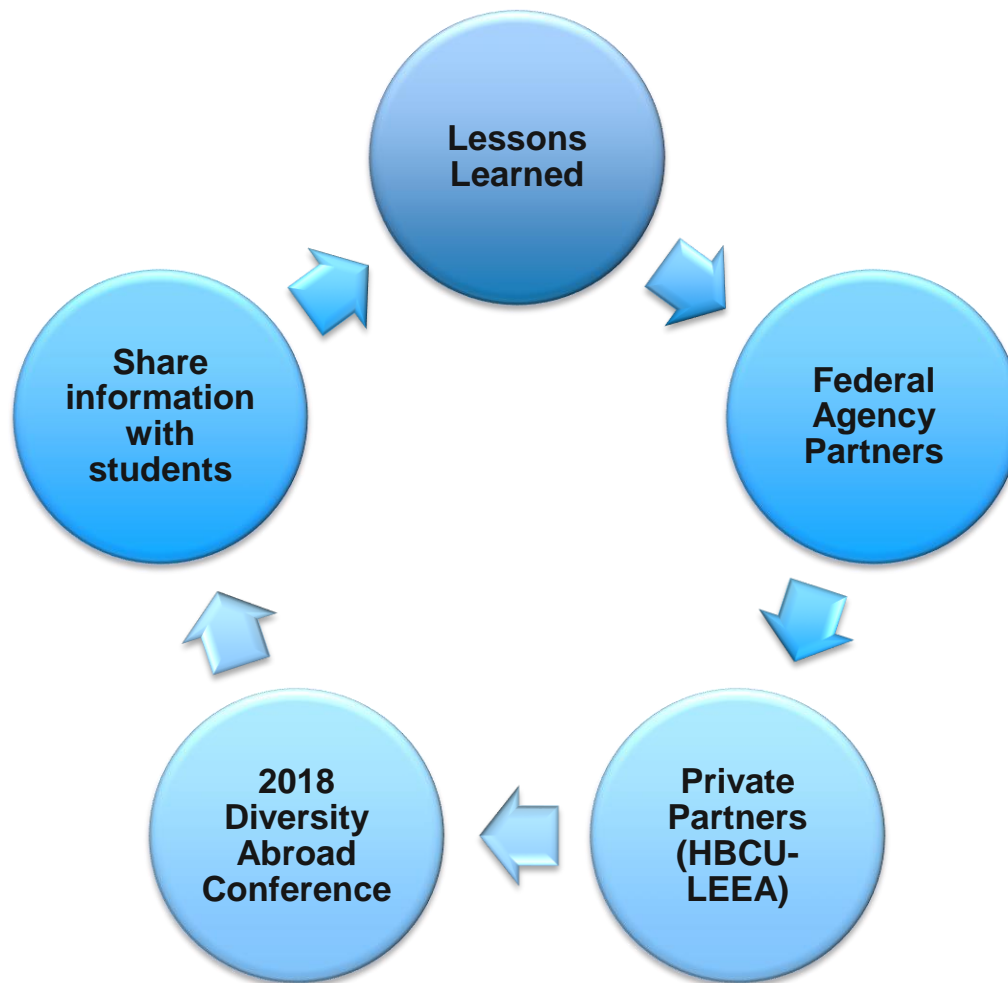
# 2017 MSI Global Summit



# Lessons Learned at the 2017 MSI Global Summit

1. Fear factored into student's decision to travel abroad
2. Families were vital to the decision making process
3. Students of color felt unprotected overseas

# Addressing the Need





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## Travel Security Awareness Briefing: Don't Worry Mom I'll Be Okay...

**HBCU-LEEA Briefers: Director Curtis Johnson & Chief Jacques S. Battiste**

# PROMOTING SAFETY ABROAD...

Parents are understandably concerned about the safety and security of their children, leading to questions such as the following:

- Is traveling and living in another country inherently more dangerous than staying home?
- Are some countries safer than others?
- Within a single country, do study abroad programs differ in terms of safety and security?
- How can parents help to minimize risks and maximize the safety and security of their children?

# A Comparative Perspective

## First, a comparative perspective:

- The United States is known around the world as a dangerous country, and our street crime statistics back up this view.
- No country has as many guns in the hands of private gun-owners, nor as many gun-related injuries and deaths.
- U.S. rates of drug and alcohol abuse are among the highest in the world.
- Although tourists and other international visitors (including 450,000 degree-seeking students) come in great numbers to visit the U.S., many arrive concerned about what they think they will find.
- Yet, the perception that life at home is still safer than life “**over there**” leads some to conclude that maybe our students should stay home, “**where they belong.**”

# PROMOTING SAFETY ABROAD CONT.

- U.S. media coverage of the rest of the world focuses, often sensationalistically and melodramatically, on overseas overseas political upheavals, violent strife, and natural disasters, rather than on positive political and social developments or on the richness and human warmth of life as it is actually lived.
- One of the first responses students who study abroad have to their overseas environment is how “normal” life seems and people are, in spite of the cultural differences.



# PROMOTING SAFETY ABROAD CONT...

- That discovery comes when they sweep away stereotypes and misperceptions, seeing things with their own eyes.
- Finally, a sober and realistic assessment by students and parents of safety risks associated with any region, and the study abroad programs that take place there, is therefore strongly advised.

**Parents should be duly skeptical if a program or institution suggests that its offerings are completely free of risk, or if its representatives seem unwilling or unable to discuss the risks involved.**





## REDUCING THE RISK OF CRIME, VIOLENCE, TERRORISM, AND ACCIDENTS WHILE ON TRAVEL

- Students living or traveling in countries that are internally unstable or at odds with their neighbors can sometimes be put in harm's way.
- Carrying a U.S. passport is no guarantee of safety or absolute security.
- In certain places and at certain times, it is possible to get caught in the midst of forms or political strife that may not be directed at foreigners but nevertheless may be very dangerous.
- Such risks, however, are usually known well in advance, so precautions can be taken.

# REDUCING THE RISK CONT.

- ❑ With regard to the threat of terrorism, in those few sites where even remote danger might occasionally exist, program directors can work with local police, U.S. consular personnel, and local university officials to set practical security measures.
- ❑ In such places students will be briefed during orientations and subsequently as needed about security consciousness in their daily activities.
- ❑ **Terrorism continues to be a twentieth-century reality.**

## REDUCING THE RISK CONT...

- Simply being foreigner makes any traveler a more likely victim of crime or accidents.
- There are certain rather obvious precautions that American students abroad can take to maximize their safety and minimize their risks.



# Do's and Don'ts

- Keep a low profile and try not to identify yourself by dress, speech, or behavior as targetable individual.
- Do not draw attention to yourself through expensive dress, personal accessories (cameras, radios, sunglasses, etc.) or careless behavior.
- Avoid crowds, protest groups, or other potentially volatile situations, as well as restaurants and entertainment places where Americans are known to congregate.
- Keep abreast of local news. Read local newspapers and speak with local officials to learn about any potential civil unrest.
- **In the event of disturbances, do not get involved.**
- Be wary of unexpected packages and stay clear of unattended luggage or parcels in airports, train stations, and other areas of uncontrolled public access.



# Do's and Don'ts Cont.

- If you travel to countries beyond your program site and expect to be there more than a week, register upon arrival at the U.S. consulate or embassy having jurisdiction over that location.
- Make sure the resident director, host family, or foreign university official who is assigned responsibility for you always knows where and how to contact you in an emergency.
- When you travel, even if only overnight, leave your itinerary.
- Know the local laws and customs. Laws and systems of justice are not universal. **Do not assume that because something is legal in the U.S., it is legal abroad!**



# Do's and Don'ts Cont....

- Use banks to exchange money.  
Do not exchange it on the black market, that is, on the street.
- Do not carry on your person more money than you need for the day.
- Carry your credit cards in a very safe place.
- Do impair your judgement through excessive consumption of alcohol, and do not fall under the influence of drugs.



# REDUCING THE RISK: Female Travelers

Female travelers are sometimes more likely to encounter harassment, but uncomfortable situations can sometimes be avoided by taking the following precautions:

- Dress conservatively
- Although short skirts and tank tops may be comfortable, they may also encourage unwanted attention.
- Avoid walking alone late at night or in questionable neighborhoods
- Do not agree to meet a person whom you do not know in a secluded place.
- Be aware that some men from other countries tend to mistake the friendliness of American women for romantic interest



# MORE PRATICAL TIPS FOR SAFE TRAVEL...

Parents are naturally concerned about their child's safety overseas.

- Make plans to have your daughter or son send a postcard or telephone to confirm safe arrival and to inform you of the local address and telephone number abroad.
- Contact program sponsors if a private arrival confirmation cannot be made.
- Do not expect a call immediately upon arrival, however; students are frequently tired and distracted, and you will end up worrying needlessly.



# Self-travel Tips

**Packing:** Don't carry everything in one place!

- Never pack essential documents, medicine – anything one could not do without – in checked luggage. Put them in a carry-on bag.

**Cash:** Never carry large amounts of cash. Make three lists of traveler's checks. Leave one at home, carry one with the checks, and keep the last in a different place, along with the receipts.

- For the small amount of cash needed immediately and for the first few days, use a neck pouch or money belt.

**Credit Cards:** Take only the cards that will be used on the trip. Keep a list or a copy of cards, numbers, and emergency replacement procedures.

**Medicines:** Take everything needed for the trip, along with copies of all prescriptions and the generic names of drugs.

- Keep medicines in original drugstore containers. Take extra eyeglasses and the lens prescription.

# Self-travel Tips Cont.

**Passport:** Carry separately from your passport two extra passport pictures, a copy of your passport, and a certified copy (not the original) of your birth certificate or expired passport.

- If the passport is lost, report the loss to the local police, get written confirmation of the police report, and take the above documents to the nearest U.S. consulate and apply for a new passport.

**Ticket:** Make a photocopy of your ticket or list its number and all flights along with name and address of the agency that issued it, and keep this information separate from the ticket.





# Contact Us!

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