



Omarosa O. Manigault
Director of Communications
The White House
Office of Public Liaison
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

August 18, 2017

Dear Ms. Manigault:

Per my conversations with Ja’Ron Smith, of the White House Domestic Policy Council, regarding the HBCU leadership community’s concerns about the upcoming HBCU Week, we are circling back to share with you that there is pretty strong consensus that the White House consider postponing its planned National HBCU Week Conference. We understand the gravity of this recommendation.

The National HBCU Week Conference provides HBCUs the opportunity to engage federal agencies and partners to increase access to federal funding, internships and research. Those efforts may be overshadowed by compelling stakeholder concerns related to recent national events, ultimately making the conference counterproductive. In fact, a significant number of previously-registered HBCU leaders have made it clear they will no longer attend the Conference.

If the event is postponed, we request that the Administration use the intervening period to focus on hiring an Executive Director of the White House Initiative on HBCUs and appointing the membership of the President’s Advisory Board on HBCUs; these appointments are necessary first steps for this Administration to show its commitment to advancing the HBCU agenda.

TMCF and its member-schools remain committed to opportunities for dialogue and partnership with federal agencies, but we sincerely believe hosting this event for HBCUs at this time will overshadow these opportunities.

Respectfully,

Johnny C. Taylor, Jr.
President & CEO

cc: John F. Kelly, White House Chief of Staff
Ja’Ron Smith, Domestic Policy Council
Arthur McMahan, Senior Associate Director