

**African American Architects and Their Education:  
A Demographic Study**

**Working Paper #1  
Winter 2009**

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Professor Bradford Grant, Chair of the architecture program at Hampton University and Dennis Alan Mann, a professor of architecture at the University of Cincinnati have been tracking licensed African American architects since 1989. Our work has resulted in two hard copy directories (1991 and 1996) and two professional surveys (1995 and 2000). We also maintain a web site at <http://blackarch.uc.edu> where we list architects by name and by state of residence.

We continue to be engaged in demographic studies of African American architects. We have concentrated solely on following the careers of licensed architects since licensure is a matter of public record, therefore clearly bounding our demographic group. Our current piece of research work has been to determine which universities each African American architect received his or her degree(s). This information has been drawn from our data base which currently lists 1676 architects of whom 228 are women.

This project originally arose when we noted in an earlier study that nearly forty five percent of African American students in professional architecture programs (B Arch & M Arch) in the USA were attending Historic Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). These programs are located at Florida A&M, Hampton, Howard, Morgan State, Prairie View A&M, Southern, and Tuskegee universities. If this was the case, we hypothesized, would that same percentage transfer through to those who eventually became licensed? And moreover, where did the others receive their degrees? How many continued on to receive graduate degrees? Where did they study?

Since there was no data to draw from, we had to patiently query each architect in our data base to gather this information. We also corresponded with over eighty schools of architecture. We have been successful in identifying universities and degrees for everyone except seven people (less than one percent undetermined at this writing).

The first general statistic that we discovered was that over thirty seven percent of African American architects hold at least one degree from an HBCU (If someone held one degree from an HBCU and another from a majority university they were listed in the total below under HBCU. There were 81 in this category). This aligns well with our earlier finding on where African American students study architecture (This data was attained from the National Architectural Accreditation Board). Given that there are only seven accredited architecture programs at HBCUs and over 110 other accredited programs in the USA, it became readily apparent that the HBCUs were making a significant contribution in educating future African American architects.

**Overall Totals of Where (at least one) Professional Degree Was Granted**

<b>HBCUs*</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>34.8%</b>
<b>MAJORITY SCHOOLS <u>only</u></b>	<b>1011</b>	<b>60.2%</b>
<b>NO DEGREE (or Assoc. degree)</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
<b>INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY Only</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1.4%</b>
<b>UNKNOWN</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
<b>TOTAL Number Licensed</b>	<b>1676</b>	
<b>Male</b>	<b>1448</b>	<b>86.4 %</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>13.6 %</b>

\* We included North Carolina A&T, Tennessee State, Central State, and Lincoln University in these totals. At least one degree from an HBCU.

**The Historic Black Colleges and Universities**

The breakdown among the various HBCUs is illustrated in the list below:

**AT LEAST ONE DEGREE (Licensed Architect) FROM AN HBCU**

		<b>Year Accredited</b>
<b>Howard University</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>1950/51</b>
<b>Hampton University</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>1970/71</b>
<b>Tuskegee University</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>1970/71</b>
<b>Southern University</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>1970/71</b>
<b>Florida A&amp;M University</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1979/80</b>
<b>North Carolina A&amp;T</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>*</b>
<b>Prairie View A&amp;M</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1992</b>
<b>Morgan State</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1991</b>
<b>Tennessee State</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>*</b>
<b>Central State</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>*</b>
<b>Lincoln University</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>*</b>
<b>Norfolk State</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>*</b>
<b>#Howard &amp; Tenn. State (one degree @ each)</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>#Howard &amp; Tuskegee (one degree @ each)</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>583</b>	

1. All professional degree programs are accredited on a regular basis by NAAB. The date listed above is when a program first received accreditation.
  2. Neither university has an accredited B Arch or M Arch program. Their degree is in architectural engineering.
- \* Not an accredited architecture program

## **The Majority Schools**

We defined the majority schools as all the accredited programs at American Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) where a majority of the students were not African American. (we did not poll the ten Canadian schools who belong to the ACSA, newly accredited programs where there were not likely to be any graduates who have become licensed, or some universities in locations in the USA where there were not likely to be many African American graduates). In all we heard back from eighty three programs at the date of this writing.

This is what we found:

## **Universities with TEN or more LICENSED African American Graduates**

		<b>Accredited</b>
<b>Pratt</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1947/48</b>
<b>City College of New York</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>1967/68</b>
<b>Columbia</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Illinois/Urbana</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Harvard</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Cal/Berkeley</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Cornell</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Michigan</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>MIT</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Georgia Tech</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>NYIT</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1977/78</b>
<b>Yale</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Detroit/Mercy</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1965/66</b>
<b>IIT</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Washington Univ.</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Illinois/Chicago</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1969/70</b>
<b>Lawrence</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1974/75</b>
<b>Cal Poly/San Luis Obispo</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1966/67</b>
<b>Kansas State</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Notre Dame</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1949/50</b>
<b>Southern California</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Syracuse</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Kent State</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1962/63</b>
<b>UCLA</b>	<b>17</b>	
<b>Virginia Tech</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1957/58</b>
<b>Cincinnati</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1947/48</b>
<b>Clemson</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1953/54</b>
<b>Florida</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1948/49</b>

<b>Ohio State</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Texas/Austin</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Virginia</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Houston</b>	<b>13</b>	
<b>Kansas</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1948/49</b>
<b>North Carolina State</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1950/51</b>
<b>Rice</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Arkansas</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1958/58</b>
<b>RPI</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1945/46</b>
<b>Texas/Arlington</b>	<b>12</b>	
<b>Catholic</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1945/46</b>

1. Note that the numbers above only account for a person ONCE at a university even though some may have received more than one degree from that University.
2. If someone received a degree from MORE THAN ONE university, they will show up in the totals for each university.
3. Note that numbers include non-professional degrees, master's degrees, and doctorates.

### **Graduate Degrees**

We were also interested in determining how many African American architects hold graduate degrees. Since we had no national statistics to compare with we only listed the overall totals.

<b>Masters Degree*</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>(33.4% of 1669 known universities)</b>
<b>Phd, Doctorate, or LLD</b>	<b>18</b>	
<b>Law Degree (LLD)</b>	<b>9</b>	

- Masters degrees are in a wide variety of fields including Architecture, Urban Design, Landscape Architecture, Regional Planning, City Planning, and Business

### **Born Outside of the United States**

222 of 1676 (13.2%) were born outside of the United States

### **Interpretations**

There are many interpretations and inferences that can be drawn from this data. We can be certain that when nearly forty five percent of African American students attend architecture programs at HBCUs that those figures should eventually transfer through to a similar percent of those who become licensed (34.8%). We have noticed that this percent has slowly decreased from 37+% two years ago. Howard University obviously stands out as the pre-eminent university (as well as the oldest) in providing nearly 17.3% percent (from 19% two years ago) of African American

architects (many of whom have gone on to receive Masters degrees at other universities listed above).

But some fundamental questions remain unanswered. Why do people choose to attend the university that they do? Certainly decisions are made for many, many reasons. Among them would be cost, scholarship support, location relative to family, academic standards, prestige, black experience, and the quality of a program, among others. We do not pretend to understand what reasons a young person chooses to attend one institution over another other than anecdotal stories that we have heard.

We do know that some universities have made a major commitment to diversifying their student body while other are located in areas of the country with a pre-existing diverse population from which to draw students (though from glancing at the numbers above this is no guarantee of success).

We plan to continue and broaden our studies with the long-term goal of continuing to make public who and where African American architects are so that young people who aspire to the profession can seek out mentors.