QM CONNECT CONFERENCE

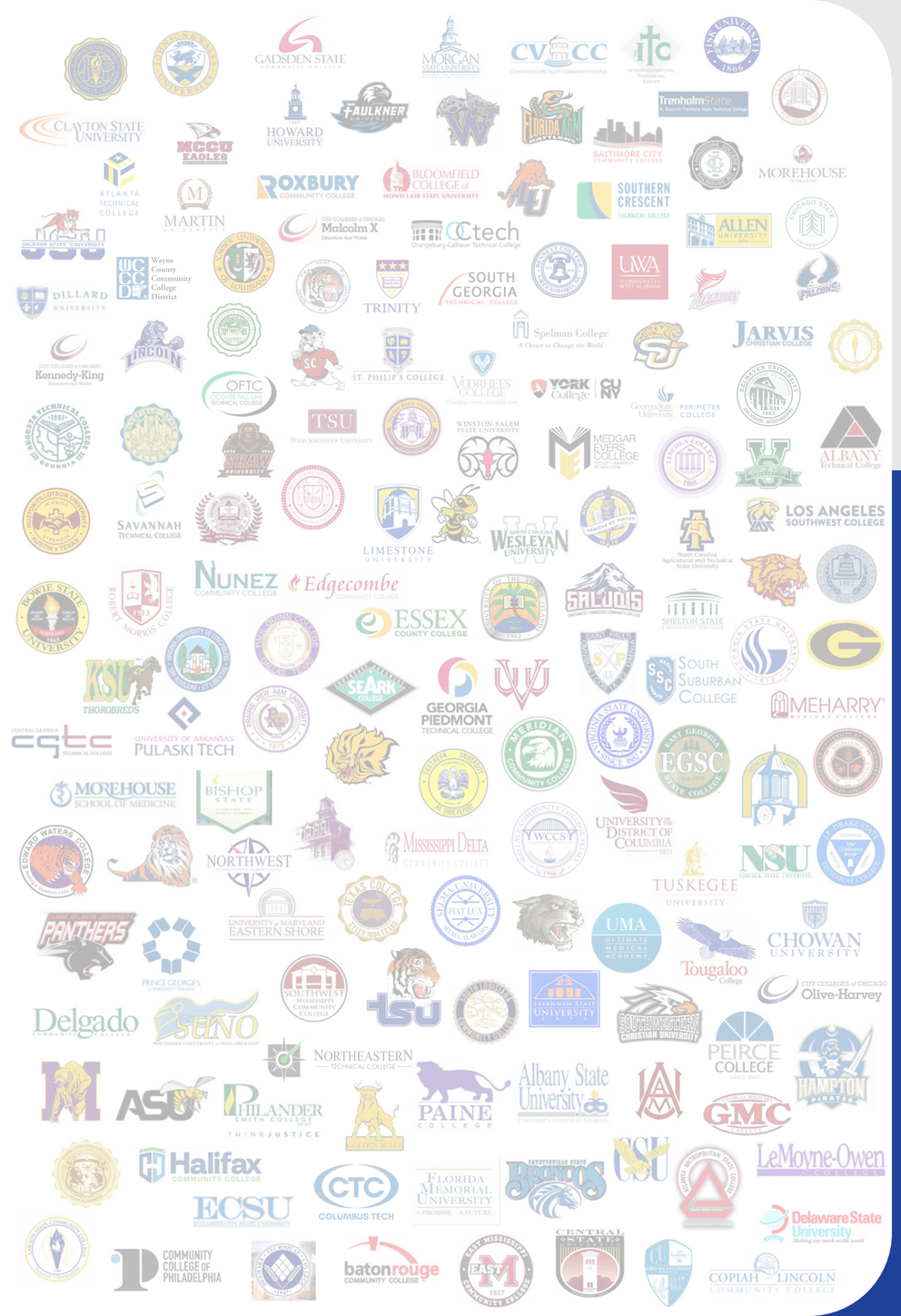
IMPACT THROUGH QUALITY CONNECTIONS

SYMPOSIUM ON EXCELLENCE IN ONLINE LEARNING: HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (HBCU) AND PREDOMINANTLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS (PBI) LEADING THE WAY

November 3, 2025
8:00 AM-12:00 PM MT
Loews Ventana Canyon Resort
Tucson, AZ

Racheal Brooks, Ph.D.
Director of Quality Assurance Implementation Solutions
Quality Matters

Morris Thomas, Ph.D., MBA, PMP
Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs & Professor of Higher Education Administration
Wiley University



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Brilliance in the Room: Your Work, Your Why

QM Connect 2025 | **Symposium on Excellence in Online Learning: HBCUs and PBIs Leading the Way**

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Brilliance in the Room

Share Your Work & Your Why

- Share your role(s) and expertise in online learning.
- What is one thing you and your team consistently do well in online learning that others could learn from?
- Why was it important for you to be part of this conversation today?

https://padlet.com/qmconnect/excellence

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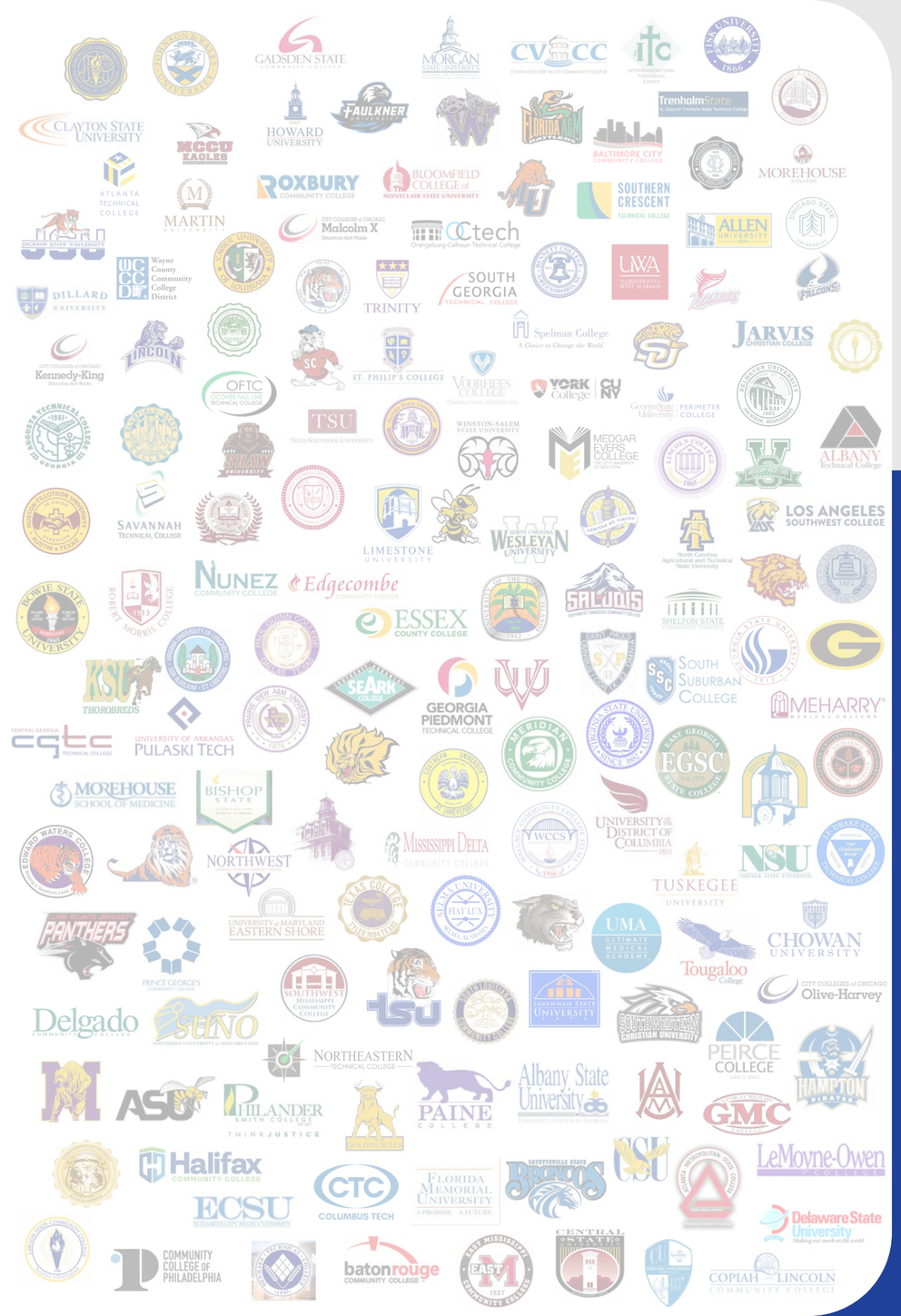

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Collaborative Excellence: Supporting HBCU and PBI Leadership in Online Learning Innovation

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Session Overview

Explore how **HBCUs** and **PBIs** are **partnering** with **Quality Matters** to lead online learning innovation through collaboration, peer exchange, and data-driven strategies—while honoring their missions and **strengthening institutional effectiveness**.

Leading from Our Missions

- HBCUs and PBIs have always been rooted in access, equity, and community impact
- Online learning represents a vital opportunity to further these foundational missions
- Digital expansion = strategic growth + student success aligned with institutional values

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Deficits to Distinction

Redefining the Narrative

- **Challenge:** HBCUs and PBIs often excluded from national digital learning conversations
- **Reality:** These institutions are leaders in:
  - Student-centered design
  - Faculty commitment
  - Resilient educational models
- **Shift:** Positioning HBCUs and PBIs as exemplars in higher education

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Building Excellence Through Partnership

Why Collaboration Matters

The Power of Collaboration

- **Strategic Approach:** Collaboration as a core strategy for strengthening online learning capacity
- **Shifting Power Structures:** De-emphasizing hierarchies, emphasizing peer partnership
- **Collective Impact:** Addressing shared challenges through inter-institutional cooperation

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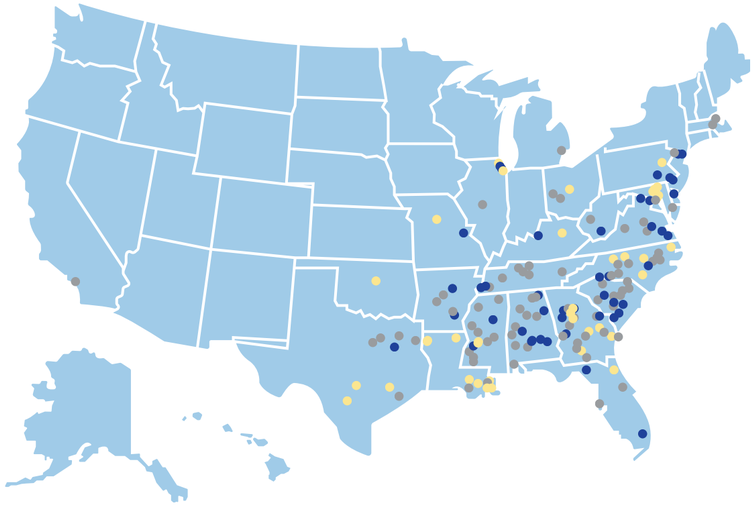
Centering the Community



- **166** HBCUs & PBIs
- **82** HBCUs & PBIs are QM members
- **38** HBCUs & PBIs are members of QM Systems or Consortiums

About the Initiative

- **Partnership Model:** Network created with institutions, not **for** them
- **Quality Matters Support:** Leveraging the gold standard for online quality assurance
- **Community of Practice:** Convening HBCU and PBI leaders for shared learning

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About Quality Matters

- Quality Matters is the global organization leading quality assurance in online and innovative digital teaching and learning environments.
- Began in 2003 by faculty and institutions seeking to determine quality standards for online design.
- Bootstrapped into a non-profit and a community of over 90,000 individual members worldwide.
- Centered around collaboration, collegiality, continuous improvement, and research.

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Increasing Quality and Value

What the Network Supports

- **Decreasing Duplicative Services:** Systems-level transformation through knowledge/resource sharing
- **Expanding Resources:** Collaborative approach prevents starting from zero
- **Effective Ecosystem:** Providing a model for sustainable partnership
- **Institutional Autonomy:** Reinforcing identity while building connections

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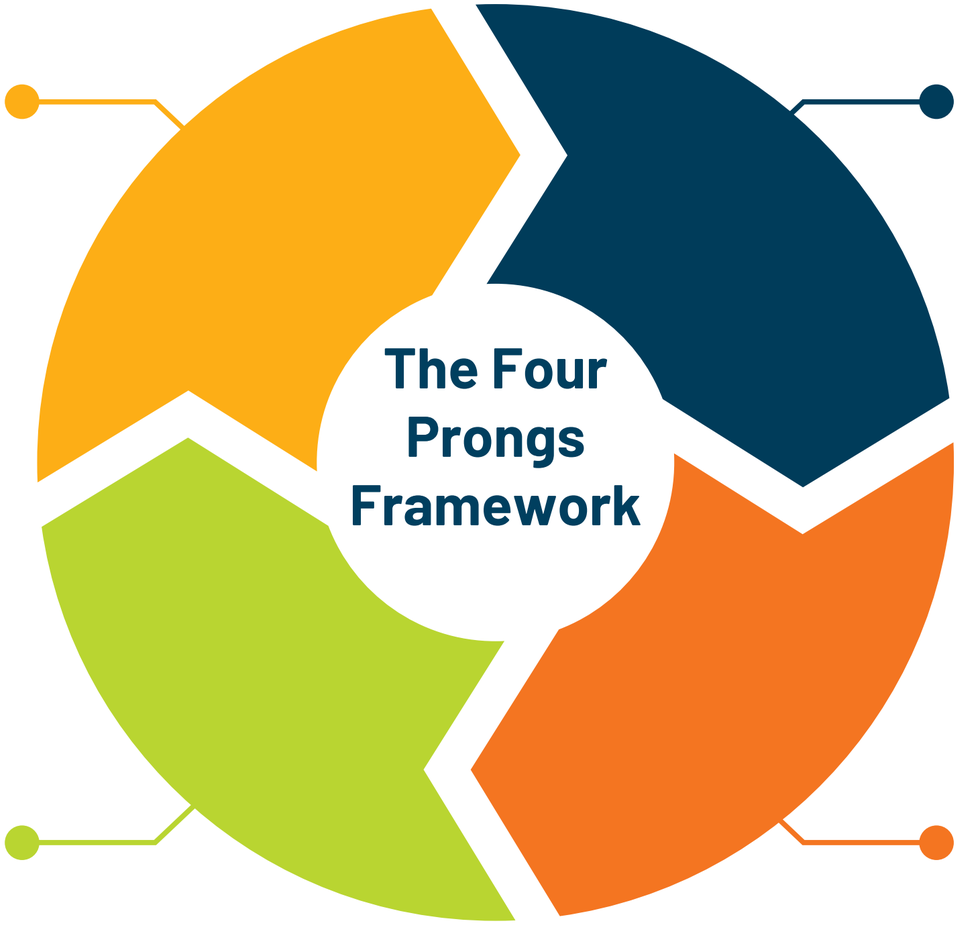
Our Strategic Components

Our Strategic Components



These prongs represent major components aligned with Quality Matters systems and supported by ***CHLOE data***

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Strengthening Online Learning Teams

Prong 1 – Faculty Empowerment

- **Faculty as Subject Matter Experts:** Placing faculty at the forefront of online learning excellence
- **Peer Review as Professional Learning:** Cross-institutional course review models
- **Benefits:**
  - Shared expertise across institutions
  - Professional development through review process
  - Quality improvement through collaboration

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Empowering Institutional Decision-Making

Prong 2 - Data-Informed Strategies

- **Telling Our Own Story:** Using data to demonstrate impact and effectiveness
- **Collaborative Benchmarking:** Sharing insights for mutual improvement
- **Peer Learning:** Capitalizing on shared progress (e.g., QM Connect Symposium)
- **Strategic Decision-Making:** Data-driven approaches to online learning enhancement

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Shared Learning for Local Relevance

Prong 3 – Professional Development

- **Culturally Relevant PD:** What professional development means for our institutions
- **Centering Equity:** Ensuring development opportunities reflect institutional values
- **Collaborative Approach:** Shared resources, locally applied solutions
- **Faculty Growth:** Supporting continuous improvement in online teaching

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Institutional Effectiveness Via Community

Prong 4 - Systems-Level Transformation

- **Beyond Individual Courses:** Strengthening institutional structures, not just content
- **Scalable Model:** Moving from pilot programs to sustainable, community-led transformation
- **Long-term Impact:** Building capacity for ongoing innovation
- **Community Leadership:** Institutions driving their own transformation

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The Path Ahead: Building for Tomorrow

Building Sustainable Community

Future Directions

- **Shared Leadership:** Community-driven governance moving forward
- **Ongoing Engagement:** Multiple ways to stay connected and contribute
- **Continuous Innovation:** Adapting to evolving needs and opportunities
- **Model for Higher Education:** Demonstrating collaborative excellence

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Catalyzing Meaningful Change

Key Takeaways

- **Thoughtful Partnerships:** Collaboration that reinforces institutional autonomy and identity
- **Trust-Based Ecosystems:** Built on cultural relevance and shared goals
- **HBCUs and PBIs as Leaders:** Co-creators of online learning excellence
- **Reimagining Digital Learning:** A model for the entire higher education landscape

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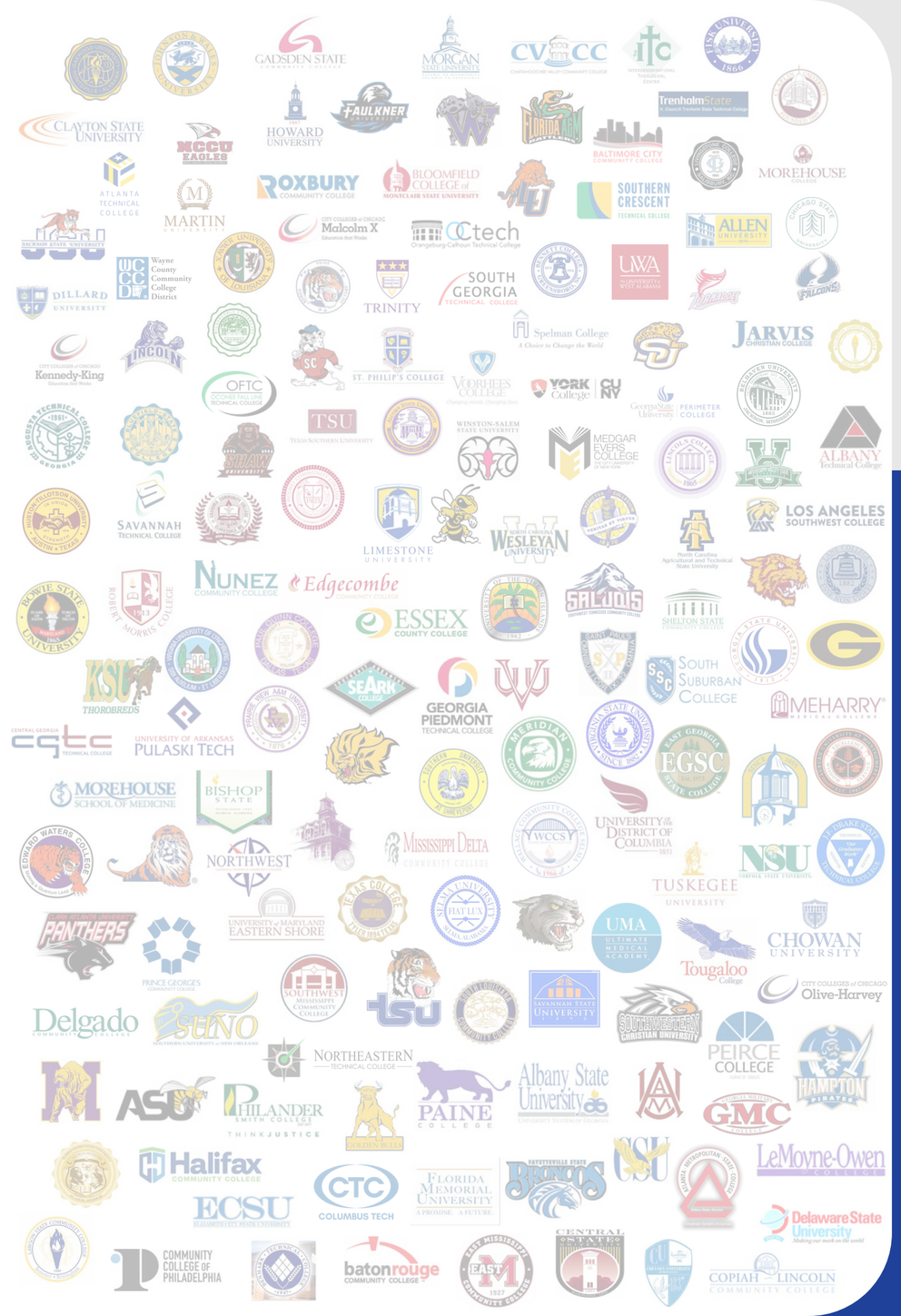

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Networking Break

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Exemplary Practices Showcase

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PANEL DISCUSSION

Challenges and Opportunities in Online Learning for HBCUs and PBIs

Kelby J. Lamar, Ed.D.
Director of Outreach for the Keen on Being Excellent (K.O.B.E.) Program
Southern Crescent Technical College

Tamasa Nelson, M.Ed.
Director of Learning Design & Quality Assurance
Howard University

JaNeen N. Roberts
Online Student Support Services Specialist/Acadeum Administrator
Tuskegee University

Dionne Thorne, Ph.D.
Assistant Dean, Curriculum and Operations, The College of Interdisciplinary & Continuing Studies
Morgan State University

What do you see as your institution’s proudest achievement in online learning over the past few years, and what made it possible?

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How have you approached building institutional buy-in for online learning, particularly from faculty and senior leadership?

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What unique opportunities or challenges do HBCUs and PBIs face in delivering high-quality online learning, and how is your team navigating them?

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In what ways has online learning supported your institution’s mission to serve historically underserved or underrepresented student populations?

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Can you share an example of how cross-campus collaboration has enhanced your online programs?

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How are you measuring success and quality of your online courses or programs? How are those data informing your next steps?

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What advice would you offer to other HBCUs or PBIs looking to scale and strengthen their online learning efforts?

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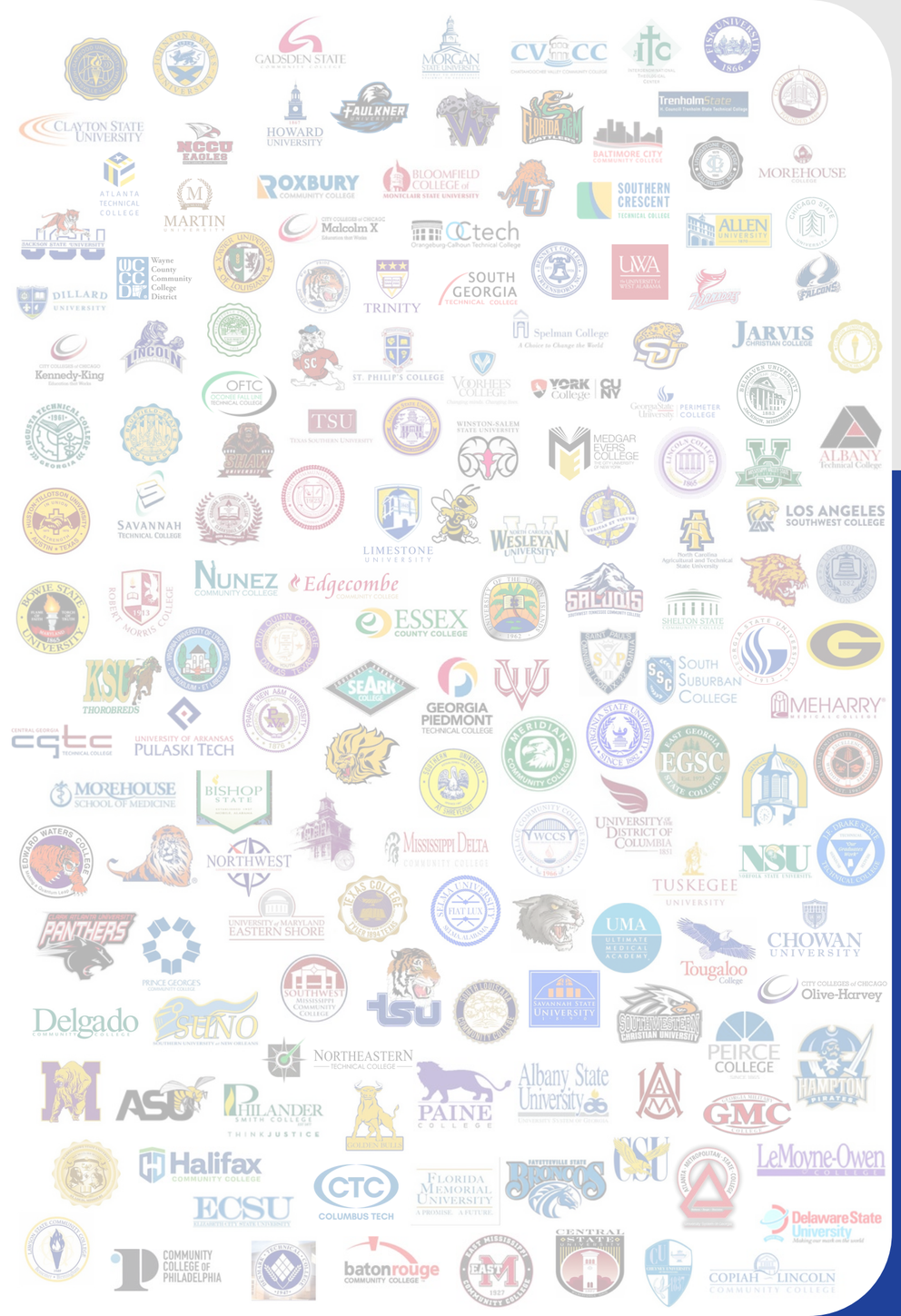

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The Launchpad: Activating Excellence at Your Institution

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Let's Reflect, Connect, and Activate!

- **Reflect on today's sessions**
  - *What 1-3 ideas, tools, or strategies inspired you most?*
  - *Which could be implemented at your institution right away?*

- **In small groups, discuss:**
  - Which idea(s) do you want to adopt?
  - How would you implement them at your institution?
  - What support or collaboration might help?

- **Group Debrief**
  - Be ready to share 1 key takeaway or action step from your group with the room!

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Join the Movement!

Join the Movement

bit.ly/HBCUPBIxQM

Call to Action

- **Connect:** Ways to engage with the initiative
- **Collaborate:** Opportunities for partnership
- **Lead:** Contributing to the community of practice
- **Transform:** Supporting systems-level change in online learning

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Join the Movement

"One light feeds another.

One strong family lends strength to more.

One engaged community can ignite those around it.

This is the power of the light we carry."

– Michelle Obama

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