Opinions Matter

Accomplishments at Howard University

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Major Topics:
- 2012 Academic Honors Awarded by HU
- Interviews of Students and Alumni
- 2013 Howard University Alumni Project

Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation (OIAE)

This volume focuses on student and alumni accomplishments throughout their educational experience at Howard. The accomplishments include not only academic performance such as grade-point averages (GPAs), but also skills and capacities that they developed at Howard which have prolonged impact on their careers and lives. Included herewith are academic honors awarded by Howard University in 2012, interview summaries of Howard students and alumni, and an introduction of the 2013 Howard Alumni Project.

We continually urge all stakeholders (administrators, faculty, students, parents and community supporters) to participate in assessment activities and to utilize available assessment information in order to help the institution to steadily improve and move forward. Your actions matter!

2012 Academic Honors Awarded by HU

In 2012, Howard University awarded a total of 703 academic honors to its graduates, including 250 CUM LAUDE (3.20 - 3.49), 260 MAGNA CUM LAUDE (3.50 - 3.70), 111 SUMMA CUM LAUDE (3.80 - 4.00), 11 HONORS PROGRAM, and 71 PHI BETA KAPPA. Congratulations to HU graduates for their accomplishments!

![Academic Honors Awarded by HU, 2012](image)

Working together to cultivate a culture of evidence-based decision making..
Interviews of Students and Alumni

This is the first time that the editor of Opinions Matter conducted in-person interviews with Howard students and alumni. Below are their opinions regarding their accomplishments related to their educational experiences at Howard University.

Ms. Heran Abiye: Graduating senior student in the Division of Allied Health Sciences, Executive Director, Students Speak Research Institute, HU Vice President, LadyDiva Corporation, Legacy Scholarship Recipient and Dean’s List Honoree.

She describes one of her major accomplishments as “... I have grown up and learned to take on responsibilities. I switched from pointing fingers when I felt things were unfair to finding more goal-oriented solutions.” She explains that she has benefited from her research experience through part-time work experiences at the Howard University Hospital and the OIAE. She is concerned about the high attrition rate at Howard University. When asked about assessment on campus, Ms. Abiye thinks it is important to get good data and to use the data as evidence for performance and improvement. She thinks that data is generally not utilized enough on HU’s campus. She also feels that on-campus assessment units should work closely with student leaders who can then provide leadership roles to increase overall student involvement in assessment efforts.

Mrs. Ruth Franks: Non-traditional student — Howard full-time employee and part-time student. She obtained her Bachelor of Science degree from the School of Education with 4.0 GPA in 2012, and is now pursuing a master’s degree at the HU School of Divinity. She is a member of Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society, was selected Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges, and is a member of the Golden Key International Honor Society.

As a part-time student, she took two courses per semester and completed her undergraduate degree in eight years at the age of 50. “At Howard, I am inspired to achieve more academically regardless of my age. I have had great mentors and I sincerely enjoy serving students. I have an advantaged view of how student services work at the institution due to my experience on both sides of the desk; as a student and also as an employee. I opened my mind to diversity, cultural and background sensitive teaching techniques, and I gained a global awareness of effective educational practices.” When asked about how she manages her time among work, study and family, Mrs. Franks emphasized prioritizing things based on their importance and specific deadlines. She suggested that Howard needs to improve its student services. She thinks that assessment is a vital means of personal and institutional improvement. She does self-assessment frequently. As a student, she improved her writing skills through editing assignments, improved her organizational skills through necessary multi-tasking, and improved her computer skills through training and practice. Says Mrs. Franks, “I’ve learned to maintain a ‘bulldog tenacity’ and to persevere even amidst difficulty.”
Interviews of Students and Alumni (cont’d)

From the alumni’s perspective, information is provided concerning recommendations for institutional progress and factors that influence alumni giving.

Dr. Kpakpundu Ezeze: Class of 1972, Fine Arts Major. He then received the Lucy E. Moten Fellowship to study in Paris. He earned a Master’s degree in Counseling Psychology from Tufts University and a Doctorate in Education from Harvard University.

Through his educational experience at Howard, Dr. Ezeze was able to witness and benefit from the intellectual voices of diverse faculty representing several countries. Educated to think of himself as a leader both on the national and world stage, Dr. Ezeze finds himself as the president of his own educational consulting firm, Future Quest, Inc.

*How does your education from Howard help your career?* “In an outstanding way because at Howard I learned how to think and how to question. I often say I attended Tufts and Harvard but I was educated at Howard. It empowered me to think critically on important domestic and foreign matters; to write and communicate effectively; and to have the confidence to develop my own company.”

*What are the differences between your educational experience at Howard and the other institutions that you attended?* “At Howard, I did not have to worry about race matters. I was educated among people who looked like me, the institution was run by folk who looked like me, and while the faculty were diverse, many of them also shared my phenotype. I was indeed in the majority, while at Tufts and Harvard I was in the minority. Being in the minority where class and race still matter can disadvantage one, but I have never thought of myself as a victim.”

*Any suggestions for moving Howard forward?* “Howard needs to pay more attention to the quality of student life on campus. I sometimes hear Howard characterized as a passive-aggressive institution, which is no longer student-centered. If students weren’t there, there would be no Howard. The administration and faculty need to pay attention to that reality.

“Secondly, the physical plant needs to be upgraded and the grounds need to be better manicured. Years ago, Howard could boast of having an immaculate campus. The way a campus looks informs how it is run. If it looks disheveled that problem is an indication that it is not administered efficiently.

“Finally, I think the alumni office should be more aggressive about asking for money. Tufts and Harvard ask me for money at least 5 or 6 times a year in one form or the other. There is no guarantee that I will give if asked, but if you don’t ask you know what the answer is going to be.”

“I often say I attended Tufts and Harvard but I was educated at Howard.”
The appraisal of what alumni have accomplished in years subsequent to degree completion is the foundation of the outcomes approach to alumni assessment that is most often employed by institutions of higher education. This approach also aims to examine the association between college work and self-reported measures of college preparation for the world of work.

The HU Alumni Assessment Project 2013 was designed and implemented by the Office of Institutional Assessment & Evaluation (OIAE) and the Department of Alumni Relations to address those and other aspects of the HU experience, as reported by many of those that have walked these hallowed halls before. It is a study that includes not only survey data, but rich focus group interview data, as well. Alumni focus groups were conducted during Homecoming Week 2012 and the online and snail mail surveys are presently being conducted and analyzed.

A full report of the findings will be available to the HU community this summer on the OIAE website. Please look forward to the findings of this important and interesting study. The following graph is a glimpse of the representation among survey respondents.