2D Ketra Armstrong, University of Michigan & Kristal McGregor, University of Michigan
“For Us, By Us: Preserving the Salience of HBCU Sports (The Marketing Implications)”

Black consumers have long demonstrated an affinity to HBCU sports, particularly the HBCU classics and HBCU conference tournaments. This presentation is based on some findings of a preliminary investigation of the attendance motivations, sport consumption profile, and general (non-sport) brand preferences of a convenience sample of Black consumers (n=134) in attendance at a prestigious HBCU sport event. The findings attested to the unique opportunity offered by HBCU sports as a venue to allow Black consumers to experience the wholeness of their double-consciousness: their racial self and their affinity to sport. The findings also revealed the consumers’ sense of ownership of HBCU sport event rites and rituals, and their growing angst over ‘public’ engagement and infiltration into ‘their’ event - a genuine cultural experience in its own right (Benzecry & Collins, 2014). This presentation will discuss the findings relative to: (a) the cultural aesthetics and racial effervescence of HBCU sport consumption, (b) Black consumers’ ties and symbiotic relationships with HBCU sports, and (c) the marketing implications for preserving the salience of HBCU sports.

2D Courtney Flowers, Texas Southern University & Aaron Livingston, Hampton University
“Playing from the Rough: Examining the Golf Sporting Culture at HBCUs”

Golf has been linked to an insurmountable number of health benefits; it promotes ethical standards, and strengthens cognitive skills. In addition, golf is a mental game that builds character and promotes self-efficacy. The game of golf is much more than a sport. In the movie “The legend of Bagger Vance” Will Smith eloquently stated, it’s a path towards finding your “authentic swing.” However due to athletic budget cuts many smaller institutions have eliminated golf programs leaving fewer opportunities for African American golfers to compete or obtain a college scholarship (Flowers, 2016). In addition, HBCU athletic departments have suffered colossally due to financial hardships. According to the USA Today NCAA finance database, the top 10 revenue-generating HBCU athletic departments generated approximately $117M combined in 2014, whereas, top money generator Texas A&M University amassed approximately $192M. Furthermore, in his article titled “Blacks in Golf,” Dr. Wornie L. Reed states “If blacks are to reestablish a presence in the professional golfing world, more individuals must compete at the collegiate level” (p. 22). However, less than 3% of NCAA golfers during the 2014-15 competition season were African American. This paper presentation will highlight the golf sporting culture at HBCUs and aligns with the conference theme of “Publicly Engaged Sociology of Sport” since the objective of this presentation is to reframe dialogue on HBCU golf programs. In addition, the sport of golf will be reintroduced as a vehicle for reinvigorating the HBCU sporting culture.

2D Geremy Cheeks, Alabama A&M University, J. Kenyatta Cavil, Texas Southern University, & Joseph Cooper, University of Connecticut
“An Exploratory Examination of the HBCU Label Impact on Brand Perception”

The HBCU experience is embodied by the notion of cultural empowerment and community (see Armstrong, 2002; Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Cooper, Cavil, & Cheeks, 2014), which in turn is passed on through the connection of consumers to HBCU athletics. However, systemic oppression and the implementation of a classist structure within intercollegiate athletics has led to the devaluation of HBCU athletics in comparison with their historically White counterparts (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015). This notion of disparity is further enunciated by Gill and Hart (2015) in their description of the negative impact of both financial and academic disparities between HBCUs and HWCUs. Even in the
face of these disparities, HBCUs continue to build on a strong historical legacy which has collectively built the HBCU brand. Understanding the impact of the devaluation of HBCU athletics and the residual effects of systemic oppression on access to revenue generation opportunities for HBCU athletic programs, it becomes imperative to understand from key administrators just how the HBCU brand is perceived by those from which they seek financial support. Thus, the purpose of this presentation is to explore the perception of the impact of the HBCU label on the HBCU athletics overall brand perception.

**2D Adriene Davis**, Mississippi State University; **Rachel Allison**, Mississippi State University & **Raymond Barranco**, Mississippi State University

“Race and the City: A Comparison of City Socioeconomics and Demographics for Black and White Elite Football Players in the U.S."

Popular cultural imagery in the United States presents sport as a meritocratic institution free of racial bias where black athletes from impoverished backgrounds may rise to fame and fortune. Despite this narrative, however, there is little empirical research on the social origins of those who play college and professional sport in the U.S. or how these vary by race. We use the case of American football, linking ESPN’s national recruit rankings data on incoming college football players from 2007-2016 with U.S. Census data. Our study compares city of origin, socioeconomic, and demographic indicators for black and white college athletes and then for those college athletes drafted into the National Football League (NFL). Findings show that the socioeconomic and demographic profiles of the cities producing elite football athletes vary by both athlete race and draft status.