



The Pennsylvania Black Conference
on Higher Education, Inc.

Welcome to the Pennsylvania Black Conference on Higher Education, Inc. (PBCOHE). We exist to ensure equal access to higher education opportunities for students, faculty and staff of color throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. PBCOHE was founded in 1970 by the late *Honorable K. Leroy Irvis*, the first black speaker of any state House of Representatives since Reconstruction in the United States. We work with institutions of higher learning, primary & secondary schools, community based organizations such as the NAACP, and politicians to advance our mission.

Each year PBCOHE has many exciting and engaging activities for campus connected professionals and students. Professional development opportunities include: **Annual Conference, Institute for Educational Management and Leadership (IEML)**, and **Emergent Leaders Program**. Student development opportunities include: **Student Leadership Development Institute** and a host of scholarships for deserving high school seniors, undergraduate, and graduate students of color to help defray higher education costs.

Our membership is open to everyone who supports our mission regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or socioeconomic background. I invite you to consider joining our organization. If you are already a member, thank you! As President, I bring to the PBCOHE my commitment to education, student development and fiscal responsibility. My vision for PBCOHE is reflected in my top three priorities:

1. **To see and hear you:** To continue to foster a collegial culture of professional development and support through my motto: “sawu bona” /sawubó:na/, in Zulu means “I see you”. In the fierce warrior spirit of the Zulu, we take authority over our space in higher education. Often, we as higher education professionals and students are engaged in scholarship, service, and innovation inside and outside our institutions that go unnoticed and unacknowledged. *We not only see your talent, efforts, and innovation-- we applaud them.* It is my greatest desire that as you engage with PBCOHE that you in return say, “sikona” in Zulu means “I am here.”
2. **To support and strengthen you:** Maintain and cultivate mutually beneficial partnerships and relationships with PASSHE, the PASSHE universities, our State-related universities, and public and private universities and colleges across the State. Develop robust partnerships with K-12 schools and business & industry across the Commonwealth.
3. **To steward and steer you:** Situate PBCOHE as the premier higher education resource to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by developing our technologies and resources to ensure our stakeholders receive and engage with the most current issues, scholarship, and resources to support their endeavors in higher education.

Thank you for your interest in PBCOHE, please continue to visit our website for updates. If you are not a member, I encourage you to consider joining. Please do not hesitate to contact me, I look forward to interacting with you. To each and every one of you, I say, “sawu bona”. I look forward to your response, “sikona”.

In Dedicated Service,

Valdijah Ambrose Brown

Valdijah Ambrose Brown, LMSW, MSHE
President