



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **President Andrea Lewis Miller remains ‘cautiously optimistic’ following meeting with President Donald Trump**

**MEMPHIS, TN (Feb. 28, 2017)** President Donald Trump invited presidents from the nation’s 103 historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) to a listening session at the White House yesterday. LeMoyne-Owen College President Andrea Lewis Miller was among the invited guests who met with President Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and top White House aides to discuss the historical significance, role and impact of HBCUs in America’s higher education landscape. The presidents received the invitation only days ago, but converged to speak with one voice to our nation’s most powerful leader.

“I was curious to hear President Trump’s vision regarding his administration’s support of HBCUs, especially as it relates to ensuring we not only survive, but also thrive as we continue our mission of transformation through education,” Dr. Miller said.

“There remains an opportunity divide in our country between minorities and the majority,” she added. “As long as that exists, we cannot reach our greatest potential as a nation, and that is why HBCUs are so critical to our country’s continued prosperity. HBCUs were founded to provide what I consider a basic, fundamental right—the right to be educated and to realize your best self through knowledge. HBCUs were established to bridge an unconscionable divide and were the only choice for freedmen and runaway slaves to have a chance to thrive in the brave new world that emerged after The Civil War and the abolition of slavery. That historical significance cannot be denied or diminished.

“Today, HBCUs are no less necessary or significant. We are the school of choice for thousands of college-bound students, including many of whom are the first in their family to go to college. While our students make up only about three percent of the higher education student population in America, we graduate over 20 percent of African Americans with bachelor’s degrees and more than half of those who earn doctoral degrees. That’s an impact that cannot be denied or ignored; but rather must be acknowledged, nurtured and advanced.

“President Trump’s invitation was welcome and I remain cautiously optimistic,” Dr. Miller continued. “I hope our visit is only the beginning of what will be a relationship based on enlightenment and marked by empowerment and progress.”

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