



Alumni giving at Claflin University sets national black college standard



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Whittaker V. Middleton, Claflin University's vice president of institutional advancement, had just gotten off the road from a trip to Atlanta – but he wasn't tired. He had just scored a \$100,000 donation from an alumna to create a leadership academy.

"I do a lot of traveling," Middleton said. "You have to go where the prospects are." At Claflin, the prospects – at least among alumni donors – are everywhere. The school reports that in 2016, more than \$1 million was raised by 52 percent of the alumni, by far the highest percentage of any black college in the country and consistent with some of the leading schools in the nation.

"African Americans, when they give, they like to see results immediately," said Leo Twiggs, a 1956 graduate of Claflin and the first African American to receive a Doctorate of Arts from the University of Georgia. "If you give \$100 for a new building, you want to see that building the next time you come on campus. That is not reasonable, but, at Claflin, we are seeing immediate results of our giving."

According to U.S. News and World Report, only 11.2 percent of all HBCU graduates donate back to their schools.

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Between 2013 and 2015, Claflin was one of only four HBCUs whose alumni give at at least a 30 percent clip, along with Spelman, Lane and Bennett. All four of the schools are private and Spelman and Bennett are all-women's colleges.

Here were the top 10 schools during that period, based on the U.S. News study:

1. Claflin (47.7 percent)
2. Spelman College (39.3 percent)
3. Bennett College (35 percent)
4. Lane College (32.9 percent)
5. Fisk University (22.8 percent)
6. Tougaloo College (18.7 percent)
7. Tuskegee University (18.3 percent)
8. Johnson C. Smith (17.4 percent)
9. Xavier University (16.7 percent)
10. Hampton University (15.2 percent)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution visited Claflin and talked to its alumni about why they give to get a better sense of the college's mission as part of the newspaper's three-part series on HBCUs.

To read more about Claflin, [click here](#), or go to www.myajc.com to read the entire series and check out our podcast, HBCU Journeys.