



February 14, 2022

### Open letter of support to HBCUs

The United States Agricultural Information Network (USAIN) is writing you to express our solidarity and to offer our support during this hectic time. We are a community of professional librarians, dedicated to the values of serving others to grow through the educational resources and knowledge. The recent bomb threats targeting HBCU campuses are intolerable and antithetical to the core values of USAIN. We stand opposed to impediments to a safe environment for higher education, especially those implementing or threatening hate crimes.

As librarians, we recognize the wider context of these racially-motivated hate crimes. We see political actions to ban books and curricula addressing the history of racism in the U.S. as further restrictions on our rights to inform citizens.

As agricultural information professionals, we are aware of the history of injustices that led to the formation of land-grant HBCUs by the Second Morrill Act in 1890 in 18 states where segregation laws tried to prevent African Americans from pursuing higher education. To have HBCUs the target of bomb threats on the opening of Black History month is unconscionable. These efforts to instill fear on HBCU campuses hurt – they hurt all of us.

We are humbled by your responses – to continue, rededicated, to offer higher education opportunities to students, especially those of African descent, and through these efforts to develop future community leaders. The courage to face injustice and threatened violence reveals resilience and dedication to justice. No one should study, work, and live in fear. It is imperative that we come together as institutions of higher education to protect the rights of our communities to learn and grow in supportive environments, free from hate, violence and fear.

USAIN is a member-run organization with a mission to provide professional development and support to librarians and information professionals at institutions of higher education. We are proud to have librarians from several HBCUs as members. To support greater engagement by information professionals from HBCUs, USAIN established the Scholarship for Librarians Representing HBCUs in 2020. We also support preservation of historic agricultural publications and current research relevant to food, fiber, and natural resources. We look forward to learning how we can better support HBCU faculty, staff and students in the future.

In solidarity,

Megan Kocher, President

On behalf of the Executive Council of USAIN

<https://usain.org/>