



University of the Virgin Islands

Dr. James Maddirala, Director

Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change, Ph.D. Program
invites you to the Public

Dissertation *Defense*

for

Una Dyer

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

4:00 PM AST

Join via Zoom

**<https://uvi-edu.zoom.us/j/95727623343?pwd=MGNxbUJHSHZkNTFJVDAyK3Y2emVMZz09> Meeting ID: 957
2762 3343 Passcode: 881512**

TOPIC

**“The Development Of A Composite Leadership Profile Of Presidents Of
Historically Black Colleges And Universities:
Building A Model For Crisis Leadership”**

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ABSTRACT

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have played a vital role in providing educational opportunities and advancing the socioeconomic status of African American students for generations. Despite their profound legacy of achievement, HBCUs face significant vulnerabilities, heightened risks, and disproportionate crises that threaten their viability, relevancy, and sustainability. These crises include economic challenges due to systemic underfunding and resource constraints; reputational setbacks resulting from leadership instabilities and negative media perceptions; distinct vulnerabilities to natural disasters exacerbated by their geographical concentration in areas prone to extreme weather events and negative disaster outcomes; and public health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic that have amplified existing inequities and pervasive campus violence. This qualitative study aimed to explore the essence of the crisis leadership phenomenon in HBCUs by investigating the lived experiences of HBCU presidents during these various crisis situations.

ABSTRACT

Employing a phenomenological approach, this dissertation examined the presidents' leadership styles and decision-making processes within the context of each crisis typology. Fifteen HBCU presidents participated in the study, providing rich, authentic descriptions of their lived experiences. By delving into the unique challenges faced by HBCUs and the multifaceted and complex nature of crisis leadership in these institutions, this study aimed to fill the knowledge gap in the existing literature and contribute to the broader discourse on crisis leadership in higher education institutions, particularly within the context of HBCUs and minority-serving institutions.

Keywords: crisis leadership, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), leadership styles, decision-making, phenomenological study, higher education

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