Secretary DeVos Issues Full Forgiveness of HBCU Hurricane Relief Loans

Today U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced full forgiveness of the hurricane relief loans provided to four Historically Black Colleges and Universities after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck the Gulf Coast in 2005.

“This additional disaster relief will lift a huge burden and enable the four HBCUs to continue their focus on serving their students and communities,” said DeVos. “This relief provides one more step toward full recovery.”

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 made funds available to fully forgive the loans of Dillard University, Southern University at New Orleans, Tougaloo College and Xavier University of Louisiana under the HBCU Hurricane Supplemental Loan program.

“This Administration’s support of the Congressional action to eliminate over $300 million in Hurricane Katrina loans taken out by four HBCUs was the right thing to do and was a big deal,” said Johnny C. Taylor Jr., Chairman of the President’s Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

The loan program is a subset of the HBCU Capital Financing Program, which has provided more than $2-billion to 45 HBCUs to finance or refinance capital projects.

“The Dillard University community is grateful that the President, the Administration, and the Congress provided total loan forgiveness to the HBCUs decimated by Hurricane Katrina,” said Walter Kimbrough, President of Dillard University. “Dillard had six feet of standing water inside of its buildings, and was the most physically devastated institution of higher education.”

C. Reynold Verret, President of Xavier University of Louisiana added, “We are deeply grateful for the bipartisan legislative efforts and to the Trump administration for relief of the Katrina loans to Xavier University of Louisiana and our partner HBCUs. Forgiveness of the loans removes a great impediment to innovation and the delivery of superlative education to talented women and men who build and sustain our communities, cities and nations.”

The next meeting of the HBCU Capital Financing Advisory Board, which provides advice regarding the HBCU Capital Financing Program, will be held on Tuesday, April 3, on the campus of St. Philip’s College, an HBCU in San Antonio, Texas. Meeting details will be published in the Federal Register.