



HBCU RaCE

Research and Collaboration Exchange

Practical Lessons in Launching a Multi Institutional Research Information System

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What is the Value of Research?

- Drives institutional reputation, graduate outcomes, and external partnerships
- Serves as a mechanism for attracting funding
- Serves as a mechanism for talent attraction, development, and retention
- Provides a basis for fostering collaborations
- Societal and economic impact of knowledge generation

Research is Increasingly Network-based Rather than Institution-bound

Thus...

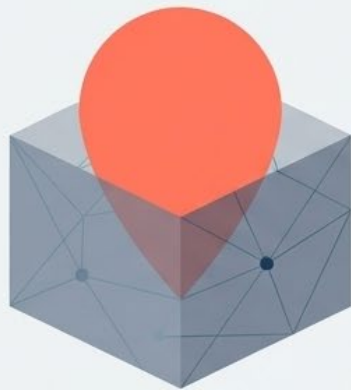
- Research that is not visible is functionally underutilized
- Collaboration requires awareness of expertise beyond one's immediate network
- Institutions with strong discovery infrastructure have structural advantages in forming teams, responding to opportunities, and building reputation

Discovery Tools as Infrastructure

Infrastructure for

- collaboration
- external engagement
- institutional narrative

The Gap and The Opportunity



“Research that is not visible is functionally underutilized.”

Significant Output

HBCUs produce transformative scholarship, but lack the integrated digital systems required to effectively surface it to the broader ecosystem.

Informal Networks

Faculty collaboration networks are heavily reliant on local, informal connections rather than being systematized for institutional scale.

Misaligned Tools

Existing commercial platforms (ResearchGate, LinkedIn) are individualized and not strategically aligned with institutional goals.

Project Genesis

NSF ARC-HBCU Ideas Lab

30 leaders and research scientists chosen nationally to brainstorm and tackle challenges in the HBCU STEM community.

Team Pitch & Collaboration

Teams coalesced around a prominent structural idea, formally pitching an infrastructure solution for hidden talent.

Awarded \$1.5M Pilot

HBCU-RaCE awarded nearly \$1.5M across 6 partner universities to launch a pared-down, high-impact 2-year pilot.

Original Narrative of the Project

Collaboration as a strategy for overcoming HBCU research challenges was the underlying principle of the project.

Professional and collaborative networks are key contributors in faculty success, including increasing the number of publications, and are increasingly necessary to be competitive for federal grants.

Viewed through the lenses of social capital theory and communities of practice, our project emphasizes the importance of social networks in providing individuals with access to valuable resources and opportunities.

The **HBCU Research and Collaboration Exchange (HBCU RaCE)** is the new online research support resource of our project.

HBCU RaCE is the result of funding from the NSF IDEAS Lab to the collaborating institutions of Virginia State University, NC Central University, Winston Salem State University, Alabama A&M University, Fisk University, and University of Virgin Islands.

HBCU RaCE enhances research capacity by connecting researchers with other researchers, projects, and equipment to develop a robust network of HBCU researchers that produces new collaborations, papers, projects, and successful grants, while developing social capital and communities of practice within the users.

The HBCU-RaCE concept has three major components: (a) an expertise directory; (b) an HBCU user facilities network; and (c) a discussion platform for the sharing and development of collaborative activities.



The original idea: 3 complementary components to bring HBCU researchers together

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Online platform to build HBCU research collaboration for increased capacity



Push traffic to Exchange through local pilots and proactive curation

1. Repository of Faculty Research Capacity

Areas of Expertise

Ongoing Projects

Equipment

2. Collaboration Central: Social Connections

"Research Reddit" Q&A

"In Search Of" / Matchmaker

3. HBCU User Facilities Network

Existing centers

Remote use

Opportunities

@ HBCU

Other Networks/
Projects

External Opportunities

Collaboration Programming

Links

Articles

Webinars

Running analytics dashboard / infographics

Pull users to Exchange through events and equipment

Research Project: Track Metrics of Use/Impact/Outcomes, Social Network Analysis

Funded pilot: focus on faculty expertise directory for 6 partner HBCUs

Funded pilot: focus on faculty expertise directory for 6 partner HBCUs

Vision: To connect and elevate all researchers across all institutions.

Mission: To enhance resources, impact, and productivity for HBCU faculty through increasing connectivity and visibility of institutional talent using a digital resource platform

Participating
pilot
institutions

				Enrollment		
	Public?	Land grant?	Carnegie	Undergraduate	Graduate	Doctoral
Alabama A&M U	Y	Y	Research	~5200	~1300	
Fisk U	N	N	Research	1002	43	0
North Carolina Central U	Y	N	Research	6082	1542	20
U of the Virgin Islands [†]	Y	Y	Research	1564	155	68
Virginia State U	Y	Y	R2	5243	362	53
Winston-Salem State U	Y	N	Research	4192	422	135

Identify and build platform (Pure) → Populate with users → Promote (and analyze) use

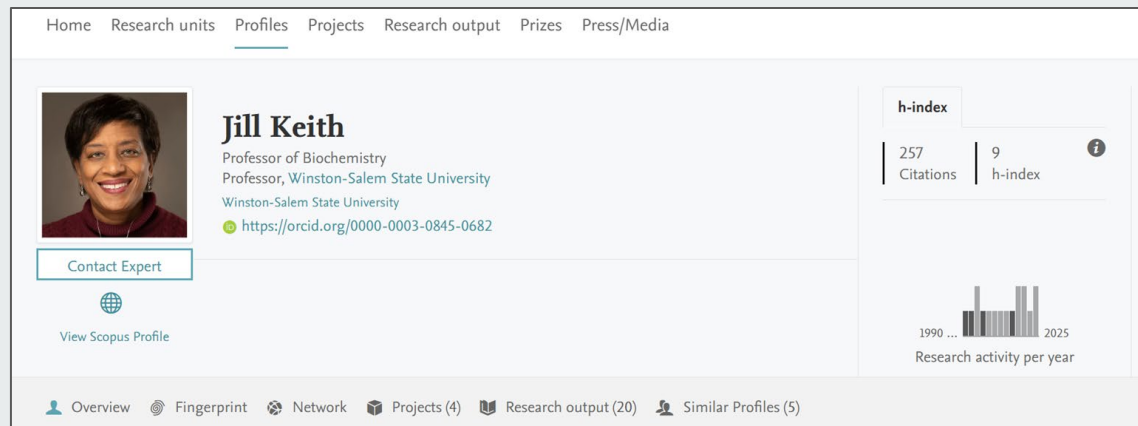
What is Elsevier Pure?

A Research Information Management System (RIMS)

Used by universities to **collect, manage, and showcase research outputs**

Central hub for:

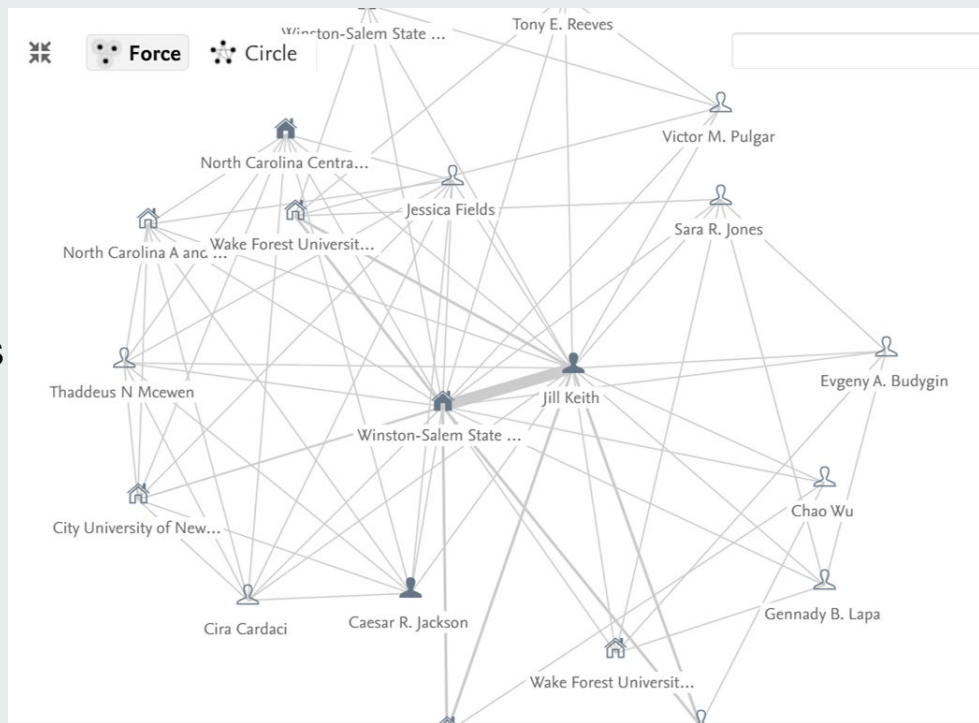
- Publications
- Grants
- Research activities
- Connections within and between institutions



Features of Pure

Researcher Profiles:

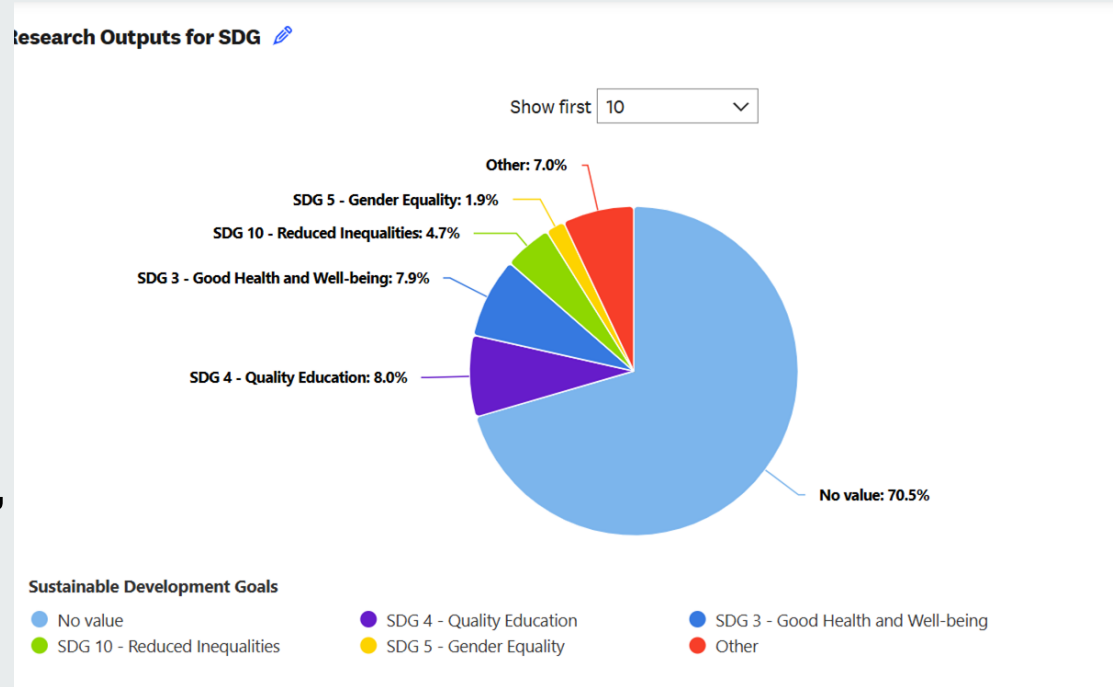
- Auto-populated with publications and activities
- Publications imported from databases (Scopus, PubMed, etc.)
- Show connections with other researchers with similar publications, key words, projects, etc.
- Automated CV management



Features of Pure

Reporting Analytics:

- Generate reports for leadership, accreditation, and funding
- University snapshot of research impacts
- Grant funding status
- Collaborations & partners
- Deadlines and deliverables
- Dashboards for leadership and research offices



Solving Institutional Challenges

The Status Quo Challenge	The Pure Solution
Fragmented research data scattered across disjointed departments.	✓ Centralized Hub: All publications, grants, and projects automatically reside in one place.
Time-consuming, manual faculty activity reporting processes.	✓ Automated Reporting: Faculty activities and institutional outputs are instantly ready for review.
Burdensome compliance and accreditation data gathering.	✓ Compliance Tracking: Automatically tracks open access and funder mandates.
Difficulty tracking systemic research impact and collaborative scale.	✓ Collaboration Insights: Algorithmically identify hidden internal and external research partnerships.
Inability to effectively benchmark against peer institutions.	✓ Benchmarking & Analytics: Robust data extraction supports strategic planning and tier rankings.

Other Multi-Institutional Deployments of Pure

[SUNY system](#)

[Florida ExpertNet](#)

HBCU RaCE: Empowering Research through Connectivity

A collaborative initiative linking six HBCUs through a digital platform to showcase faculty expertise, foster cross-institutional partnerships, and strengthen the research ecosystem.

Mission to Elevate Research Talent

Aims to increase faculty visibility and break down institutional research silos.

Connecting Six Partner Institutions

Pilot includes the six listed universities to elevate research talent and break down institutional silos.

Alabama A&M

Virginia State

Fisk

UVI

NCCU

Winston-Salem State

The Collaborative Network

Dynamic Expertise Directory

Powered by Elsevier Pure to showcase publications, grants, and scholarly outputs.

Automated Research Fingerprinting

Uses natural language processing to automatically identify and map key research topics.

250
Initial Faculty Profiles
established as a pilot cohort foundation

The Digital Exchange Ecosystem

Collaboration Network Visualizations

Interactive tools that map research partnerships and identify potential new collaborators.

Innovation

Novel concept for enhancing research capacity; no similar model exists at HBCUs at this scale.

- Approach offers both rapid (<3 years) and long-term impact.
- Research will examine how effectively the platform boosts capacity by connecting researchers and equipment.
- Community-driven platform designed to evolve with HBCU researchers' needs.
- Will create an interconnected research ecosystem that strengthens capacity.
- Serves as a model for a distributed research network

Year 1 Accomplishments

Year 1 Deployment: 100% Complete



Contract Finalized

Elsevier contract fully executed and the central platform framework successfully built.



Network Seeded

Phase I institutional interviews and baseline network seeding operations completed.



Profiles Established

250 initial faculty profiles definitively identified and populated with research data.

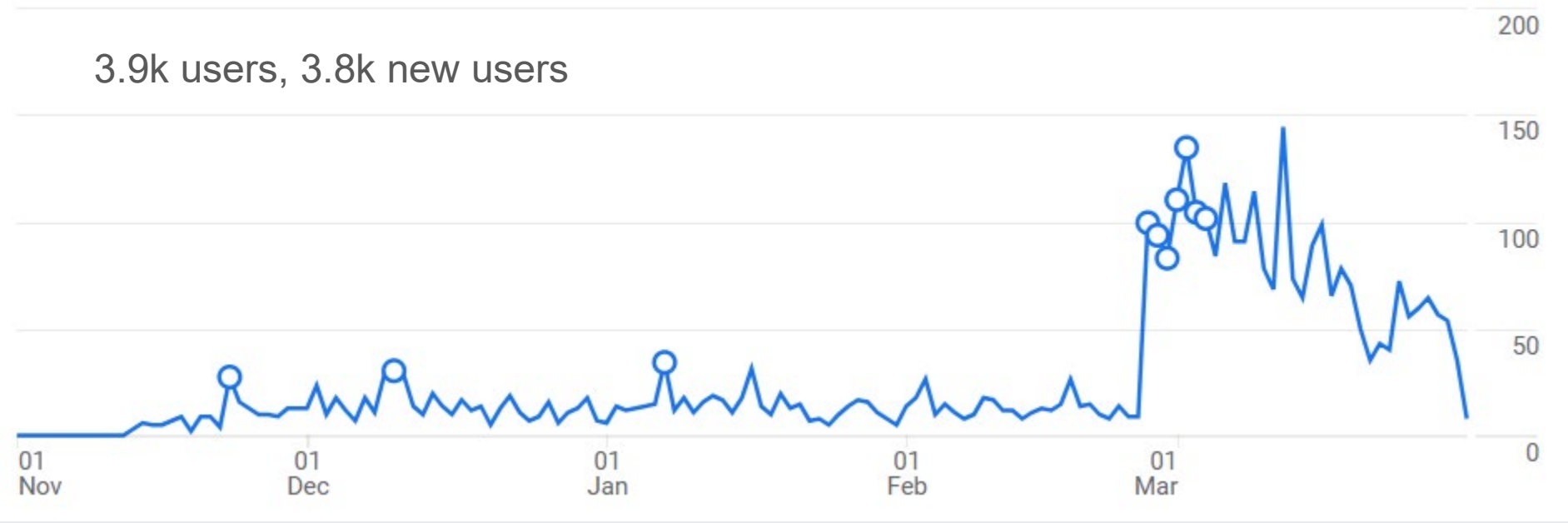


Campus Socialization

Active deployment and socialization of the tool initiated across all participating HBCUs.

Usage

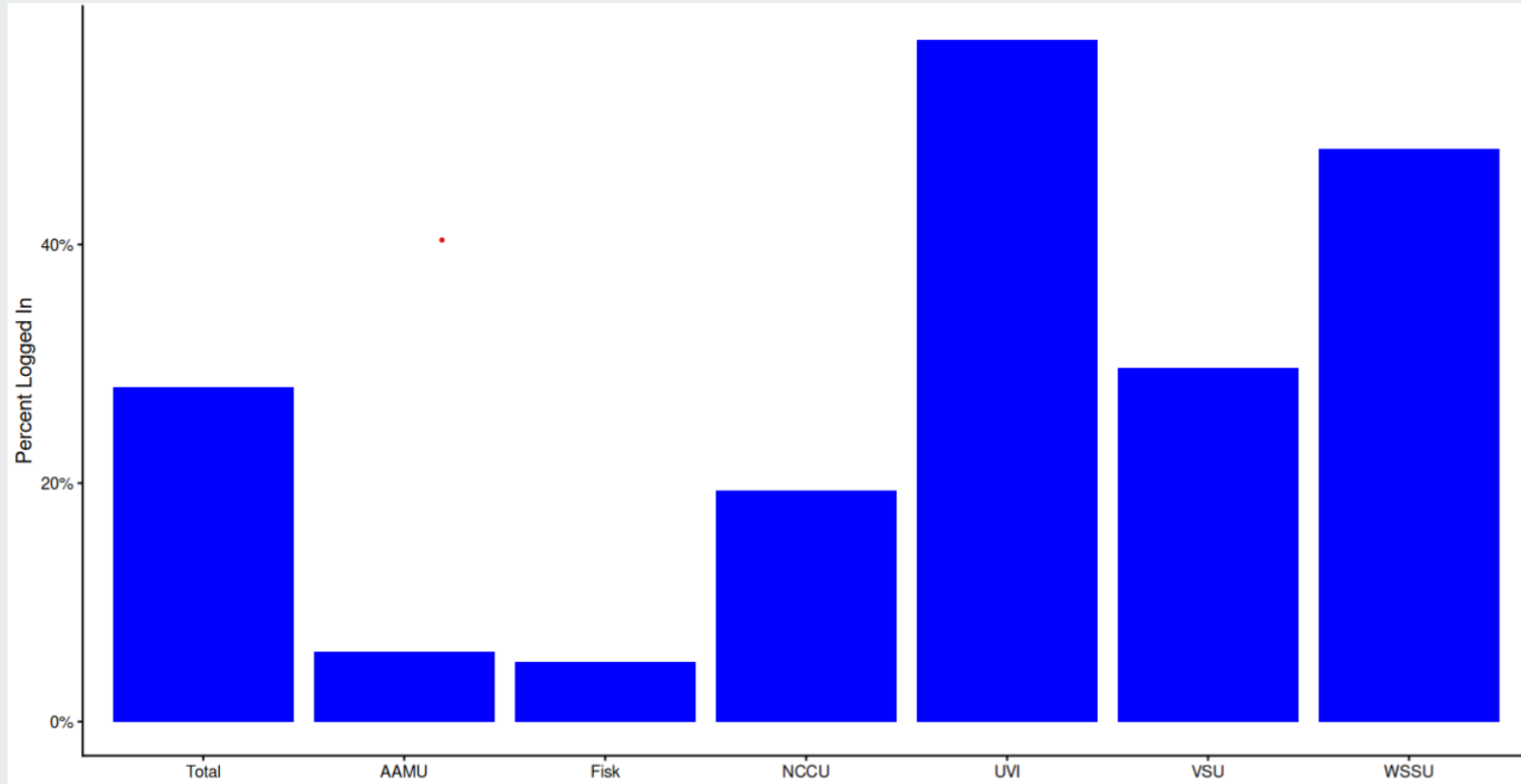
3.9k users, 3.8k new users



Barriers

- Demonstrating impact
- Misconception regarding difference between research and teaching faculty
- Overall participation is low
- Competition with other platforms (i.e., Halo)
- Research identity of faculty not amplified

Participation Rates



Data Collection: Understanding faculty use and perceptions of expertise directories

You are invited to participate in a brief online survey examining how faculty and staff at HBCUs use and perceive faculty expertise directories and research information management systems. This study is part of the HBCU Research and Collaboration Exchange (RaCE) initiative led by Virginia State University. The survey seeks to understand experiences, attitudes, and institutional supports that shape engagement with these systems. Your input will help guide efforts to strengthen research visibility, collaboration, and digital infrastructure across HBCU campuses. The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete and can be accessed from any computer, tablet, or mobile device. Participation is completely voluntary and anonymous. You may skip any question or exit the survey at any time without penalty.

To participate, please click the link below:

<https://forms.office.com/r/bundHej6Md>

HBCU Research and Collaboration
Exchange Survey

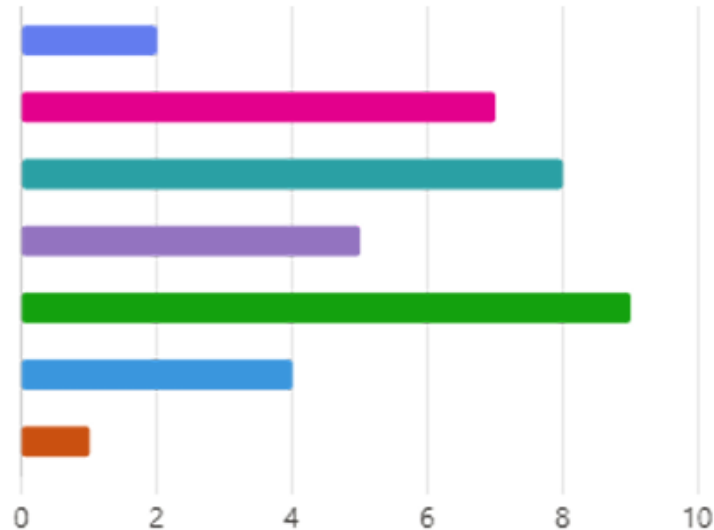


Faculty Concerns with Expertise Directories

13. What concerns do you have about using faculty expertise directories

- Privacy or data security
- Accuracy of information
- Time required to update or maintain profiles
- Low institutional support
- Lack of relevance to your work
- None
- Other

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HBCU RaCE

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Thank you for your attention!

Questions?