

[COVID Information Commons \(CIC\) Research Lightning Talk](#)

[Transcript of a Presentation by Felicia Jefferson \(Fort Valley State University\), July 15, 2020](#)



[Title: RAPID: Effects of the Move to Online Teaching on the Rural HBCU Community due to the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#)

[Felicia Jefferson CIC Database Profile](#)

[NSF Award #: 2028573](#)

[YouTube Recording with Slides](#)

[July 2020 CIC Webinar Information](#)

[Transcript Editor: Macy Moujabber](#)

[Transcript](#)

[Felicia Jefferson:](#)

Slide 1:

Thank you. Thank you so much and thank you Florence thank you Renata because I know you're the Southeast Hub director so thank you for this invitation. Our project RAPID: Effects of the Move to Online Teaching on the Rural HBCU [Historically Black Colleges and Universities] Community Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic was a huge collaborative effort, particularly the co-PI Dr. Paul. She's doing most of the heavy lifting on this project as an online teaching expert who has decades of experience in that. We are both associate professors at the Department of Biology College of Arts and Sciences at Fort Valley State University and if you could change the slide.

Slide 2:

I'm going to tell you a little bit about how this project came about. So, for those of you who aren't familiar with Fort Valley State University, we are a Land-grant institution. We're one of only two in the state of Georgia, University of Georgia being the other. So, we are part of the university system of Georgia. We have a huge college of agriculture, engineering, you know everything you think about when you think about land-grant institutions and we are rural as many land-grant institutions are. Florence said that we are an HBCU and we are a primarily undergraduate teaching institution. However, we do have graduate programs and we do have quite a bit of research capacity. A lot of research does go on at our institution. So, I introduced you briefly to Dr. Jasmine Paul, but she again is doing a lot of the heavy

lifting. She has that online teaching expertise and she's one of the few who started early, early on far in advance of the pandemic. I actually before coming to academia worked in industry for some time, actually on vaccine development, and looking at G-protein-coupled receptors you know, worked at pharmaceutical companies you know, trying to find drugs and looking at drug delivery. So, I did a lot of that but you can see from the small slide that I have over here from my lab, we do a lot of other research: engineering, computer science, neural technologies development. We do a lot of sleep research and you can see some of the students who- they've gone to quite a number of conferences: Society for Neuroscience Sleep, which was in Boston, Gordon Research Conference on Sleep- we were scheduled to go to that this March in Italy, but of course that did not happen. So, we were going to present there. But our project came about Dr. Paul and I- we recently published a paper November of 2019 in *Frontiers in Computer Science* looking at the differences between face-to-face and online teaching. And the citation is here in case you want to check it out, but what we found after years of online teaching: there really wasn't a vast difference in the outcomes when we look at variabilities including differences for gender between online versus face-to-face teaching. However, with the pandemic, we did not see that. One of the major reasons that we hypothesized that was because these are students who, when we looked at our study, those students chose to take online courses, right? Students who were forced to take courses online did not sign up to take courses online. So, we knew that there would be some difference there. There would also be some differences in how faculty taught. But particularly for rural HBCUs, we noted that the availability of internet not only for students but for faculty was somewhat limited even being a Land-grant institution and having all of, you know, USDA [United States Department of Agriculture], lots of funding, it just is not available in certain areas. So, we knew that that would affect performance. We wanted to look at that and see if this was standard across rural HBCUs. We also wanted to look at our particular student population because the on-campus experience particularly for African-American students tends to be more like family from previous research that we've done and, you know, if you go look at our grant you can see more information there in the abstract. But it's a different experience, and then you're in a rural area lacking online technology, sometimes the internet. And so, we wanted to see what those effects were. So, if you turn to the next slide please Florence.

Florence Hudson:

Yes ma'am.

Felicia Jefferson:

Slide 3:

We sent out a number of surveys not only to rural institutions but also to other institutions nearby. Okay because if you notice we've got a list here of some of the institutions that we're working with. The majority are HBCUs, but you'll see in there Louisiana State University, University of Texas at Arlington, okay. There are a lot of other universities that we're looking at too for comparative analysis and we're trying to see what the experiences are there. We're also looking at urban HBCUs, obviously some urban institutions, and we want to see how these differences- if there are- and we have some preliminary data

that shows that there are- you know what these are like. But we are also trying to recruit additional people to participate. We've been surveying faculty, students, graduate teaching assistants, post-docs who teach classes, any of those group populations. We have different surveys for all of these groups and we really want to make this an even more collaborative effort to get as much information and as much data back as we can to make this an excellent project. The result should be great. And I would definitely- making sure, looking at my time- couldn't do this without a number of people: Dr. Eric Jones, who I know- he also has a another grant he has an EAGER COVID-19 grant at University of Texas Arlington and just so many people at our institution that are helping out with this project: online teaching resources, our stats people, office of institutional development. They're all assisting with this and I want to thank those people, but if you have any questions for me please feel free to ask, and I'm sure Dr. Paul's on the call too. If you're interested, you can email her: paulj@fbsu.edu.