

Letter to the Editor

Methodological Note on Kaba's Article

A brief methodological note on Kaba's "Demographics and Profile: The Most Cited Black Scholars in the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities."

I recently read with interest Professor Kaba's article "Demographics and profile: The most cited black scholars in the social sciences, arts and science." As a black scholar myself, I naturally find such works interesting. However, after reading through the article, one question came to mind: where does the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (JBHE) receive the names of scholars for their annual study? Admittedly, my curiosity stemmed from the fact that in the social science section of the study none of the well-published and cited black criminologists cracked the list. Since Professor Kaba's article didn't say how JBHE *identified* scholars for possible inclusion on the list, I contacted JBHE. The contact person at the journal informed me that because it is impossible to identify Black scholars through the works that appear in the numerous disciplines in the social sciences, they rely on colleges/universities and individual scholars to submit the names of black scholars for possible inclusion in their annual study. This was a critical piece of information. Consequently, there are a few lessons we can learn from this revelation. First, the list is likely biased toward those "high profile" scholars who are easily identifiable as being black. On the flip side, well-published black scholars who have low profiles will have difficulty ever making the list. Second, scholars in emerging disciplines such as criminology will also have difficulty making the list because people know less about the discipline and who are the "high profile" black criminologists. Third, to offset some of the aforementioned limitations, if you or someone you know meets the criteria for inclusion (black scholar with 10 or more citations in a single year) in JBHE's 2010 "most cited Black Scholar's list," contact the JBHE editorial office at: Tel: (212) 399-1084 or Email: info@jbhe.com Finally, I do think that Professor Kaba's article, while interesting and informative, should have included this critical limitation of the JBHE data.

Sincerely,

Shaun L. Gabbidon, Ph.D.
Professor of Criminal Justice
School of Public Affairs
Penn State Harrisburg
Middletown, PA 17057
Email: slg13@psu.edu

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