The Story of Black Colleges and Universities

Tell Them We Are Rising


Monday
FEB 19 9/8c

#HBCURising

House Party Toolkit

Support Provided By: Firelight, ITVS, CPB Corporation for Public Broadcasting, American Graduate, BPM, Lumina Foundation
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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your commitment to rise with us during the national premiere of *Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges and Universities* on the acclaimed PBS series *Independent Lens* on Monday, February 19th at 9pm – 10:30pm ET (check local listings).

I invite you to join us in lifting up a national conversation about historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) on the day of the television broadcast — February 19th, 2018. By hosting an #HBCURising House Party on the night of the broadcast, you will join our national partner organizations, our film team, prominent alumni and the broader community as we reflect on the history of HBCUs and celebrate their impact on our community and nation.

During the broadcast, we invite you to discuss the film with us during a live national twitter chat using the #HBCURising hashtag. After the broadcast, we ask you and your guests to visit the HBCU Digital Yearbook to learn how you can contribute to the rich legacy of HBCUs. By uploading your family or campus photos you will be a part of the all-campus, all-generation historical archive of the HBCU experience.

With this call to to gather to watch the television premiere of the first-ever documentary examining the history and legacy of black colleges on February 19th, we will tell the world we are STILL RISING.

Join the conversation, share your story, and rise with us!

“My hope is that the film reaffirms the indisputable legacy and relevance of HBCUs.”

**STANLEY NELSON**
Director, *Tell Them We Are Rising*
Hosting a House Party

The #HBCURising House Party Toolkit will help you facilitate hosting a watch party of *Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges and Universities* at your home, organization, place of worship or social group on the night of the national television broadcast. Your cultural social gathering can be an intimate evening in your home, at a neighborhood school or church, or a community event co-hosted with a local organization. It is an opportunity to gather with your family, friends and your community to discuss why HBCUs are important American institutions and to share your own HBCU memories. The evening can be formal or casual, depending on your preference, as long as everyone is engaged and joins the national Twitter Chat during the broadcast. This toolkit will provide all the information you need to make planning a breeze.

**WHY A HOUSE PARTY?**
It’s simple and it’s long overdue. February 19th will be a day for family and friends to share in the communal experience of supporting the legacy of African Americans in this country, during an era that threatens the sacrifice and accomplishments of our ancestors. By creating a collective effort to unify not just the HBCU community, but all stewards of black excellence, join us as we celebrate and amplify the legacy of historically black colleges and universities.
**Everything You Need to Know**

General tips for planning your #HBCURising House Party

- Start planning now; early engagement guarantees a successful evening.
- Lock in the broadcast date Monday, February 19th at 9p ET (check local listings) on PBS. *For larger events contact us directly for alternative screening options.
- Identify a quiet, comfortable venue location with adequate space and technological capabilities to stream the television broadcast.
- Think about your target audience size and create a guest list.
- Enlist help early in the planning process; consider partnering with a co-host.
- Be creative with your event schedule.
- Get social and engage with us on Twitter and Instagram tagging @HBCURising and use the official hashtag #HBCURising.

**START-TO-FINISH HOUSE PARTY CHECKLIST**

Prior to the night of your #HBCURising House Party:

- Follow Tell Them We Are Rising on social media and engage @HBCURising

**4 WEEKS BEFORE - JANUARY 19**

- Review all the #HBCURising resources & suggestions
- Confirm your location
- Finalize your guest list and create your #HBCURising invitation
- Start sending out invitations
- Create an evening agenda. Here’s an example:
  - 8:00pm  Guests arrive & sign in
  - 8:15pm  Welcome and discussion led by the Host
  - 8:45pm  Host & guests check in and join #HBCURising Twitter Takeover
  - 8:50pm  Host shares group photo on social media using #HBCURising
  - 9:00pm  Broadcast begins on Independent Lens on PBS
  - 10:30pm  Thank you and HBCU Digital Yearbook mention by Host

**2 WEEKS BEFORE - FEBRUARY 1**

- Plan your food and beverage options; create a shopping list
- Send reminder email to all RSVP’d guests, encouraging them to follow @HBCURising on social media and join the Twitter Chat using #HBCURising
- Follow up with anyone that has not responded or RSVP’d. Consider sending personalized texts or simply make a quick phone call for a personal touch

**1 WEEK BEFORE - FEBRUARY 12**

- Start shopping for all items you need for the watch party, which can include food, beverages, utensils, party favors, etc.
- Survey the party location to ensure all logistical needs are met, like sound volume, comfort and seating capacity for guests, etc.
- Print all the forms and resources you want to hand out during the party
- Send a last reminder email with any updates, parking instructions and what guests should bring to the party
- Check-in on social media and engage with other #HBCURising House Party hosts using #HBCURisingHost
INTRODUCING THE FILM

Share a brief introduction of the film
Directed by award-winning documentary filmmaker Stanley Nelson, *Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges and Universities* examines the impact Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have had on American history, culture, and national identity. Beginning with the earliest attempts at education to today’s campuses, the 90-minute film is the first-ever feature-length documentary to examine the evolution of these uniquely American institutions over the last 150 years.

Share your connection to the story
This is the opportunity to share your personal story about how your respective university shaped your understanding of American history, created an environment for Black pride, and fostered a safe space for individuality and self-identity.

D A Y  B E F O R E  -  F E B R U A R Y  1 8

• Tidy up and be sure the party location is decorated to celebrate HBCUs
• Prepare any food, beverages or activities ahead of time in order to make party day easy & seamless
• Consider making a music playlist and test it out along with video streaming setup

T H E  N I G H T  O F  B R O A D C A S T  -  F E B R U A R Y  1 9

• Arrange furniture and seating so guests are comfortable and have a place to mingle before the screening
• Greet your guests with enthusiasm and have fun!

A F T E R  T H E  P A R T Y

• Show your appreciation with a personal thank you email to guests
• Encourage guests to complete an online evaluation of the film and submit to the HBCU Digital Yearbook
• Share your Eventbrite RSVP report, that includes full names and emails, to the Firelight Media contact person so that your guests can stay informed

Night of Broadcast
February 19th, 2018
Begin your watch party by leading a conversation to share your perspective and life experience. To set the tone and give room for inspiration, leave your guests with these questions to reflect on as you share your personal story. This will help activate thoughtful responses during the pre-screening discussion conversation:

- How did your college experience shape your identity?
- What, if anything, did you know of historically black colleges and universities (be sure to share your exposure to these institutions, if any)?

**Pre-Screening Discussion Questions**

Engaging with your guests is paramount for a successful screening, so be prepared to spend at least 30 minutes discussing key themes surrounding the film. Here are few sample questions to ask your guests leading up to the film screening:

- What life experiences informed your perspective on the value and purpose of education?
- When communities do not have full and equal access to higher education, what is the cost to them and to the rest of the country?
- What are some thoughts around the value of HBCUs, versus general population universities?

**Post-Screening Discussion Questions**

After watching *Tell Them We Are Rising*, anticipate an emotional response from your audience. The film will evoke a range of thoughts and viewpoints, which will be a great opportunity for you to facilitate a post-screening Q&A with your guests. Here are a few questions to continue the conversation after the broadcast:

- What can the history of HBCUs teach us about the role of public and higher education in our democracy?
- How has American culture been shaped by HBCUs and their graduates?
- With dwindling resources and increasingly diverse student populations, what is the future role of HBCUs?

**Free Downloads!**

Download discussion questions, invitation templates and more at:

[www.hbcurising.com/resources](http://www.hbcurising.com/resources)
Call to Action

The future of HBCUs are at question with today’s presidential administration, lower endowments, and the jeopardy of accreditation status at smaller institutions. This is the time for the Black community to mobilize and take action to save our historical institutions and continue their legacy as fixtures in America. Here are few ways you and your guests can help take action after watching Tell Them We Are Rising:

• Buy a copy of the film for a local youth group or community organization and facilitate an open discussion. Visit ShopPBS.org to order.
• If you or your family members attended an HBCU, contribute to the first-ever HBCU Digital Yearbook by visiting HBCURising.com.
• Raise money for HBCUs, local alumni chapters or donate to a scholarship fund.
• Invite HBCU representatives to local college fairs in your area.
• Learn how you can support our HBCU Rising National Partner organizations.

FAQs

HOW LONG IS THE FILM?
The film’s total run time is 82 minutes, however the national broadcast on PBS is two hours long with commercial breaks.

CAN I CHARGE ADMISSION OR TAKE DONATIONS?
You cannot charge an admission fee to screen the film, however, if you represent a non-profit organization you can offer guests an option to contribute a donation to your HBCU-supporting charity.

IS THE DOCUMENTARY APPROPRIATE FOR CHILDREN?
Yes, the documentary is appropriate for children over the age of 12 years old, depending on the young person’s attention span and maturity. There is one scene that documents the 1972 shooting at Southern University that could be disturbing for young viewers.

WHO SHOULD I INVITE?
We encourage you to be open to inviting everyone. This documentary is educational and relevant to all Americans. We also encourage you to consider involving cultural, historical, political, educational, pan-hellenic and university alumni membership organizations.

WHAT IS A TWITTER CHAT?
A Twitter Chat is a public Twitter conversation centered on one unique hashtag — ours is #HBCURising. Utilizing this hashtag allows you to follow and participate in the online conversation before and during the national broadcast. Twitter Chats focus on discrete topics, connect people with similar interests, and allows these topics to get national recognition with a goal to be featured on Twitter’s “trending topics”.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT THE FILMMAKER AND FUTURE PROJECTS BY FIRELIGHT MEDIA?
To learn more about the director Stanley Nelson, see his archive of award-winning documentaries, and support future film projects, visit http://firelightmedia.tv/.
SAMPLE INVITATIONS

Creating an effective invitation is the first step in connecting with your guests. The #HBCURising House Party provides you an opportunity to add a unique twist on your watch party, where the goal is to create a social and interactive viewing experience around the national broadcast premiere of Tell Them We Are Rising. Depending on your personal style and expectation of your event, you can deliver invitations by mail, online or text message. To make things easy, we suggest Eventbrite — it’s simple and integrates with any email account and is shareable on social media. To get started, here is a sample for you to use on any platform. Be sure to customize accordingly:

Hello,
You are invited to attend the #HBCURising House Party hosted by, [Your name here] on Monday, February 19th at [Insert start time]. For one night, join me, along with other #HBCURising House Party hosts across the country, to celebrate the national broadcast premiere of TELL THEM WE ARE RISING: THE STORY OF BLACK COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES directed by award-winning documentarian Stanley Nelson.

[List date, time, address, additional instructions here]

The evening will be filled with HBCU history, fellowship and an opportunity to engage with the filmmakers, celebrities and the nationwide HBCU community through an interactive Twitter Chat, using the official hashtag #HBCURising starting at 8pm ET. I encourage you to follow the film on Twitter and Instagram at @HBCURising and learn more about the filmmakers at HBCURising.com.

Be sure to RSVP no later than February 12th, and feel free to contact me if you have any questions. We will be watching the national broadcast premiere on PBS’ acclaimed Independent Lens series promptly at 9pm ET. Early arrival is suggested.

Thank you,
[Your name]

Free Downloads!
Download discussion questions, invitation templates and more at: www.hbcurising.com/resources
SOCIAL MEDIA (NIGHT OF BROADCAST & TWITTER CHAT)

Before the national broadcast, be sure to share the official film trailer, HBCU facts and other promotional graphics on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to announce and promote your #HBCURising House Party, while engaging with the #HBCURising team. It’s very important to use the official hashtag #HBCURising in each and every tweet in order to be recognized as part of the Twitter Chat. There is also an opportunity for you to connect with other #HBCURising hosts across the country to curate a space to share suggestions, further amplify promotion, and encourage support by posing questions to receive tips & resources using the hashtag #HBCURisingHost.

During the night of broadcast, the filmmakers, key celebrities, national partner organizations such as United Negro College Fund, Thurgood Marshall College Fund, Color of Change, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., AfroPunk and many others, along with the greater HBCU community will join together in discussing the film and their college experiences through a Twitter Chat using the film’s official hashtag #HBCURising. This is a time for you to encourage guests at your #HBCURising House Party to join the conversation — by sharing perspective, asking questions and posting photos from your event while tagging #HBCURising.

1. For starters, be sure to take a selfie and photos with your guests so the #HBCURising team can give you a shout-out and share on the official @HBCURising social media accounts before the national broadcast begins. 
2. Remind guests to log into Twitter and search for #HBCURising and send us a tweet as part of the roll call once they join.
3. Add to the conversation. Share themes and ideas that are covered during your pre-screening discussion. Think about enlisting key people in the room to post questions and responses from your guests to ask and/or share with the filmmaker.
4. Remember, this is a fun way to interact with like-minded people from across the country in creating a safe haven to express excitement around the film and to answer discussion questions posed by the moderator of the Twitter Chat. Here are sample tweets you can use to get you started:

Free Downloads!
Download discussion questions, invitation templates and more at:
www.hbcurising.com/resources
Twitter Posts

- I am excited to host a #HBCURising House Party in [Insert City] on February 19th. Join me & @HBCURising by hosting a viewing party for your friends & family to learn the history of #HBCUs. Register at http://www.hbcurising.com/houseparty-signup/

- Let’s break the internet! Join me @HBCURising on Feb. 19th at 8p ET for the #HBCURising #TwitterChat with special guest moderator, filmmaker @StanleyNelson1, celebrities and #HBCU community for the @IndependentLens premiere of Tell Them We Are Rising. Tune to @PBS at 9p ET and share your perspective.

- The #HBCURising story will finally be told on @IndependentLens @PBS on Monday, Feb 19th Tell Them We Are Rising @HBCURising, a film by master documentarian @StanleyNelson1. Learn more http://hbcurising.com/

- On Feb 19th @IndependentLens brings the timely history of #HBCUs to the national forefront. Check local @PBS listings, Follow @HBCURising & text “HBCURISING” to 555888. Join the #TwitterChat at 8p ET using #HBCURising

- Open your eyes & homes to the rise of Black colleges in America. Host your very own #HBCURising House Party, sign up at http://www.hbcurising.com & join me in creating a safe space to learn #AmericaRevisited history. REGISTER at http://www.hbcurising.com/houseparty-signup/

- @HBCURising covers the 150+ year history of Black Colleges. Share your #BlackCollege experience & photos to the #HBCURising Digital Yearbook after the national broadcast on @IndependentLens. Learn more HERE http://www.hbcurising.com/submissions/
Facebook/Instagram Posts

• I’m excited to host my very own #HBCURising House Party on Monday, February 19th in [Insert City], for national broadcast of Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges and Universities premiering on @PBS’s acclaimed series @IndependentLens. The documentary will open your eyes to the rise of U.S. Black colleges and their undeniable legacies. Join me and learn more at HBCURising.com and follow @HBCURising

• Let’s break the internet! Join me on Monday Feb. 19th at 8p ET for the #HBCURising #TwitterChat to chat with the filmmaker, celebrities and the larger HBCU community for the Independent Lens national premiere of Tell Them We Are Rising, part 2 of the #AmericaRevisited trilogy. All you need to do is tune into PBS at 9p ET and share your perspective of #HBCUs #BlackColleges #BlackExcellence

• After the highly anticipated #HBCURising documentary airs, students & alumni are invited to share stories of student life, homecoming, athletics and so much more through the first-ever #HBCU Digital Yearbook. Share your memories on campus to http://www.hbcurising.com/submissions/

• With 100+ HBCUs in America and a 150+ year history, there are many stories to tell. #HBCURising Award-winning filmmaker Stanley Nelson explores the culture of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in new documentary. Learn more about film and how you can join the conversation at HBCUrising.com

• On February 19th, 2018 open your eyes & homes by hosting a #HBCURising House Party to watch #WeAreRising on PBS stations award-winning series @IndependentLens. Sign-up to get HBCU perks and stay up-to-date on the film project by texting “HBCURISING” to 555888 or visit the site here: HBCURising.com

• Whether you’re an Alpha, AKA, Kappa, Omega, Delta, Sigma, Zeta, SG Rho or Iota... your story matters! Share photos at HBCURising.com to be featured in the #HBCURising Digital Yearbook.
RESOURCES

Firelight Media has created the #HBCURising House Party Toolkit to help you facilitate hosting a watch party of Tell Them We Are Rising. It contains a multitude of tools to help create your event with ease and arm you with information to confidently host a screening of the documentary. Take liberty to personalize your event and add your special touch, and feel free to contact the #HBCURising team should there be any questions.

Download discussion questions, invitation templates and more at:
HBCURising.com/resources

HBCU Facts

Established over 150 years ago to educate formerly enslaved African Americans who were barred from public schools, HBCUs were for a century essentially the only option for African American students to obtain a college education. Even though colleges were desegregated in the 1950s, HBCUs remain unapologetically Black spaces of learning for students who choose them today.

African Americans who were able to attain a higher education played an enormous part in propelling the epic journey toward liberation for Black people in the United States. Beginning with Cheyney University of Pennsylvania founded in 1837, HBCUs have played a central role in the shaping of Black life and identity, creating a Black middle class and dismantling segregation. Today, they continue to be an engine for Black economic progress and incubators of the ongoing movement for justice. Through this rich tapestry of never before seen or heard media — including archival photos, letters, diaries, and film footage — memorable first-hand testimonials with key students, staff, faculty, and alumni, Tell Them We Are Rising brings into sharp focus pivotal role the HBCUs have played in American history, culture, and national identity and illuminates the critical considerations these institutions are facing for their future survival.

For more historical facts on black colleges and universities, visit HBCURising.com.
Promotional Videos & Additional Media

Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges and Universities is the first and only feature documentary and multi-platform project to research, gather, and share a rich mosaic of stories that relay the history and legacy of historically Black colleges and universities. For a greater understanding of the film, our hosts are encouraged to watch and share the official feature trailer along with other key media that are part of the multi-platform campaign, HBCU Rising.

- Feature Trailer (2:30 minutes)
- Promo Trailer (:30 seconds)
- New York Times OpDoc (12 minutes)
- 9-part #HBCURising Audio Stories
- HBCU Digital Yearbook Invitation (1:38 minutes)

HBCU Digital Yearbook

We encourage our #HBCURising House Party hosts to share details of the HBCU Digital Yearbook with your guests after the broadcast. The historical HBCU digital archive can be viewed at [http://www.hbcurising.com/yearbook/](http://www.hbcurising.com/yearbook/).

The HBCU Digital Yearbook, is a national online archive of all generation, all campus photos from HBCUs across the country. Unfortunately within the confines of 90 minutes, not all of the HBCU story is told. To address that, Firelight Media invites you and your guests to share your story, which may include family members or a legacy of lineage at a specific institution or organization. We are inviting students, alumni, faculty and national organizations to help preserve the legacy of black colleges by contributing photos and digital copies of content depicting the rich history of HBCUs. The HBCU Digital Yearbook centers around the following themes — Student Life, Homecoming, Academics, Sports, Organizations, Faculty and Notable Alumni.

**Printable Forms**
As you prepare your #HBCURising House Party, below are a few printable forms to help promote your gathering and track everyone in attendance. These can also serve as tools for sending Thank You emails and invite new friends you may have connected with to your future gatherings. Please be sure to customize with specific details of your events, such as location, key times, parking instructions, etc.

Download discussion questions, invitation templates and more at:
HBCURising.com/resources

**Evaluating Impact**
Firelight wants to learn about your experience hosting an #HBCURising House Party. Please fill out this simple form after your event and email it back to us along with your guest sign-in sheet.