

**John Silvanus Wilson, Jr.,  
Executive Director of the White House Initiative on  
Historically Black Colleges and Universities**

John Silvanus Wilson, Jr. serves as the executive director of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), where the challenge is to ensure that HBCUs are a significant force in helping the nation to reach the goal set by President Barack Obama of having the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by the year 2020.

Before working with the White House Initiative, Wilson was an associate professor of higher education in the Graduate School of Education, and an executive dean at the George Washington University. He spent the first 16 years of his career at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he ultimately served as director of foundation relations and assistant provost. He received a bachelor's degree from Morehouse College, a Master of Theological Studies from Harvard University, and both a master's and a doctoral degree in administration, planning and social policy, also from Harvard University. While working at MIT, he served as a teaching fellow in Harvard University's Afro-American Studies Department as well as in Harvard's Graduate School of Education.