The Lost Black Scholar is an important contribution to our understanding of the history of twentieth-century social science in the United States. Varel does an excellent job in explaining the social and intellectual context for Davis’s work. Occasionally, Varel’s claims outpace his evidence. While Varel calls Deep South “an environmentalist project” (p. 106), the Deep South authors’ environmentalism was not always consistent, as they sometimes considered race a biological, not a social or historical, construct. For example, the authors asserted that “some Negroes are biologically white [emphasis in the original].”\(^1\) They also referred to a “Negroid genetic structure” and a “Caucasoid genetic structure.”\(^2\) Nonetheless, David Varel’s biography, based on his thorough reading of Davis’s publications and papers, as well as the published work and papers of Davis’s peers, enhances our understanding of American and African American intellectual history and rightly “resurrects Allison Davis in American social thought and makes the case that he belongs within the pantheon of eminent twentieth-century American intellectuals” (p. 4).

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In Jim Crow Campus, Joy Williamson-Lott reminds us that the history of southern higher education remains understudied. This book, which draws from a wealth of archival sources, is an important contribution to this field. Williamson-Lott rightfully points out that no comprehensive history of southern higher education exists, and she argues that the canon in this arena discusses northern and western institutions. From the outset, Williamson-Lott clearly states that her study is not by any means exhaustive, and the parameters of this work are clearly drawn in the introduction. I would posit that it provides an important set of

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\(^2\) Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, Deep South, 8.
“snapshots” of southern higher education, student protest, and academic freedom in the context of the changing landscape of the South from the late 1950s through the mid-1970s, as opposed to a comprehensive chronological narrative of southern higher education. In particular, Williamson-Lott reminds us of the heterogeneity of the South and its higher education institutions. For example, she highlights that public and private institutions as well as historically black, segregated, and desegregated colleges and universities reacted and responded quite differently to change during the mid-twentieth century. Additionally, Williamson-Lott argues convincingly that the late 1950s and early 1960s were different than the late 1960s and early 1970s, and she effectively divides those time periods. Within these contextual borders, Williamson-Lott discusses student and faculty activism and protest on campus as well as academic freedom across these decades. These issues are given a fresh perspective when considered within the framework of southern higher education.

While the nation was struggling with these issues, the addition of race, racism, and the quest for black equality created a more complex encounter with the problems facing higher education in this time period. Williamson-Lott’s chapter 1 introduction is dedicated to setting the conditions of discussion for the book’s chapters. The second chapter provides a cursory history of southern higher education, starting with the colonial period and the establishment of the oldest state universities on to the development of historically black colleges in the mid-nineteenth century and the ensuing challenges of higher education through the mid-twentieth century. This chapter provides some context for the following chapters. Chapters three and four are set within the 1955-to-1965 decade. Chapter three focuses on the shifts in students’ First Amendment rights and considers students’ struggle to exercise these rights on different campuses. For example, she discusses what freedom of the press looked like on the campus of Jackson State College, a public black institution in Mississippi, versus how this played out on the private campus of Tougaloo College in the same state. Williamson-Lott also brings public and private white institutions into the discussion, creating a more complex conversation, with ample opportunities for comparison and contrast without drawing a monolithic conclusion.

Chapter four turns its focus to the faculty on these campuses in its discussion of the “Red Scare, the Black Scare, and Faculty Purges” (p. 48). In this chapter, she brings the anti-communist sentiment into conversation with the movement for black equality. How did colleges and universities respond to the actions of their faculties whose research, teachings, and opinions were considered a threat to the status quo? There was a battle for the academic freedom of professors
across these varied southern institutions. As in all of the chapters, Williamson-Lott’s work is thought provoking about the issue of academic freedom and a changing social order within the South.

Chapters five and six take up questions similar to those in earlier chapters. Williamson-Lott revisits the question of students’ First Amendment freedoms and their expansion during the late 1960s and early 1970s. While much attention is paid to student activism on white northern campuses, Williamson-Lott’s work calls attention to student activism on black campuses and southern campuses that represented the time not just the reason. For example, students on campuses around the country were protesting in loco parentis as well as the gender restrictions for women on campuses. In addition, students on black and white campuses were advocating for racial reform. These vignettes of growing student organizations, protests, and resistance are placed within the context of the late 1960s and the desegregation regulations. This provides a new view of student activism within the burgeoning Black Power movement.

Chapter six returns to a consideration of academic freedom and faculty activism within the context of the Vietnam War era and Black Power movement. Williamson-Lott delves more into the differences between public and private institutions and how they responded to faculty activism. Additionally, she takes into consideration the growth of black campuses, the role of white faculty at those institutions, and the involvement, or lack thereof, of the American Association of University Professors in representing issues of academic freedom. Williamson-Lott also makes distinctions between conservative and progressive southern states, adding to the complexity of the discussion. The conclusion of this work reiterates the parameters of the study, reminding us of the elements that contributed to the progress of student and faculty activism between 1955 and 1965 and how region, race, and private or public funding influenced these movements.

Jim Crow Campus is an important contribution to higher education literature. This work expands the understudied fields of African American and southern higher education. There is no simple conclusion to how education in the South operated—there were too many variables. The broad scope of this work raises more questions than it answers, and that is one of its strengths. It provides a scaffold upon which to build further research.

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