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Bill Cosby helped Berklee College of Music mark its 60th anniversary with a performance at the Wang Center on Jan. 28, 2006.

By Matt Rocheleau

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT NOVEMBER 26, 2014

Berklee College of Music and at least one other college have distanced themselves from Bill Cosby amid accusations that he sexually assaulted more than a dozen women, even as the University of Massachusetts Amherst and other schools are maintaining their ties to the longtime entertainer.

For decades, Cosby has been a vocal advocate for education and has donated millions to numerous colleges. But news coverage over the growing list of accusers presents a quandary for the schools, as many struggle to better address sexual violence amid an outcry from students and others that some colleges have played down rape concerns and mishandled investigations.

Berklee — one of more than 85 colleges nationally facing a federal investigation for their handling of assault cases — has removed Cosby's name from an online scholarship it awards, campus spokesman Allen Bush said Tuesday.

“Berklee no longer awards an online scholarship in Mr. Cosby's name. The college has no further comment at this time,” Bush said.

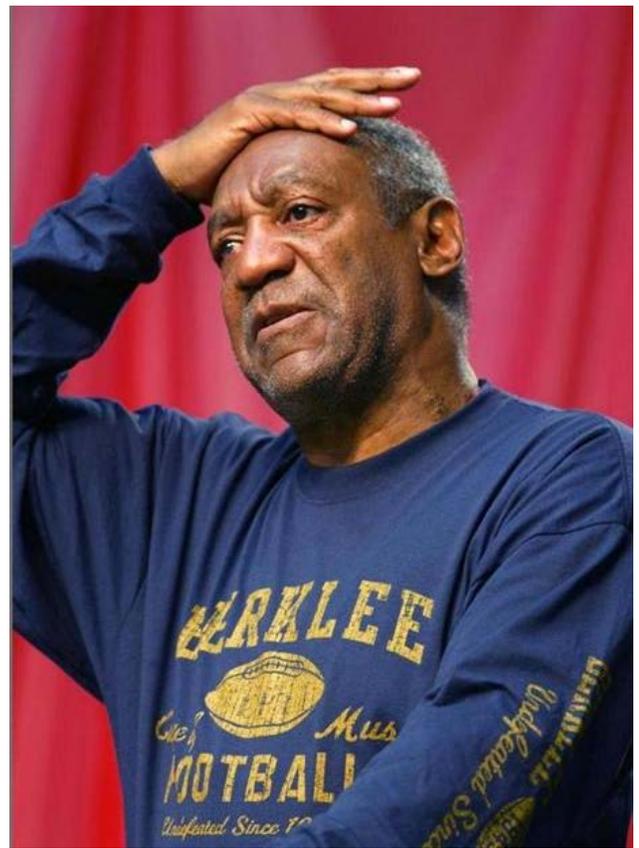
Inside Higher Ed reported that the college made the change last week.

Cosby spoke at Berklee and received an honorary degree at the 2004 commencement. He has a passion for jazz, plays the drums, and has written several songs.

High Point University, in North Carolina, has temporarily removed Cosby from its advisory board “until all information on this matter is available,” said campus spokeswoman Pamela Haynes.

Other schools, meanwhile, have not altered their relationship with Cosby.

A spokesman for UMass Amherst said Tuesday that Cosby, who received a master's and a doctorate in education from the university, remains an honorary co-chairman of the school's ongoing \$300 million fund-raising campaign. He and his wife, Camille, have donated several hundred thousand dollars to the



GLOBE FILE

Bill Cosby was commencement speaker at Berklee May 9, 2004.

school, and the famous actor and comedian is frequently cited as one of the university's most notable alumni.

"I am not aware of any discussions regarding a change in Mr. Cosby's status as honorary co-chair of the university's capital campaign or his other affiliations with the university at this time," said Ed Blaguszewski, a spokesman for UMass Amherst, which is also on the list of schools facing a federal investigation related to its handling of sexual assaults.

Cosby also remains a member of the board of trustees at his undergraduate alma mater, Temple University, according to school spokesman Brandon Lausch. The entertainer has been a trustee since 1982 at the school in his hometown of Philadelphia.

In 2006, Cosby settled a lawsuit filed by a former Temple employee who alleged he drugged and fondled her at his suburban Philadelphia mansion. Cosby was represented by Patrick O'Connor, currently chairman of Temple's board of trustees.

In recent weeks, several women have come forward to say that Cosby drugged and sexually assaulted them years ago. Cosby has never been charged in connection with any of the allegations.

Spelman College, a historically black women's college in Atlanta that received a \$20 million donation from Cosby in 1988, has not had any discussions about returning the gift or otherwise changing it, spokeswoman Joyce Davis said.

At the time, Cosby's donation was the largest ever from a black donor to a historically black college. The gift funded a professorship in the entertainer's name and construction of an academic center named after his wife.

Cheri D. Smith, director of operations for SurvJustice, an organization that assists victims of campus sexual

assault and works primarily with college students, said higher education institutions should be distancing themselves from Cosby.

“I think that it’s just bad business for colleges” to remain affiliated with the entertainer, she said in a telephone interview.

Smith said she believes that if he had been accused of a different type of crime, schools would be more apt to end their relationship with him.

“For whatever reason, sexual assault is still a crime that isn’t taken as seriously as other types of crime,” she said.

Cosby has also given generously to the Thurgood Marshall College Fund’s 47 member schools, which include historically black colleges and universities, medical schools, and law schools, according to the nonprofit’s chief executive, Johnny C. Taylor Jr.

Taylor said his organization, which supports and represents nearly 300,000 students at its member schools, is closely monitoring the controversy involving Cosby but has not taken any action yet.

“Every day we are vigilant about looking for information — substantial, reliable evidence — that the acts that are complained of actually occurred,” he said. But, “We’ve not been able to — at least at this point — have any independent confirmation of the rumors.”

He said that if his organization becomes convinced that Cosby committed any such acts, member schools would probably stop accepting donations from him and may even put any unspent Cosby contributions toward sexual-assault prevention initiatives.

Ann Kaplan, an expert in higher education philanthropy, said many colleges have established policies for what types of donations to accept and decline, based on the schools’ values.

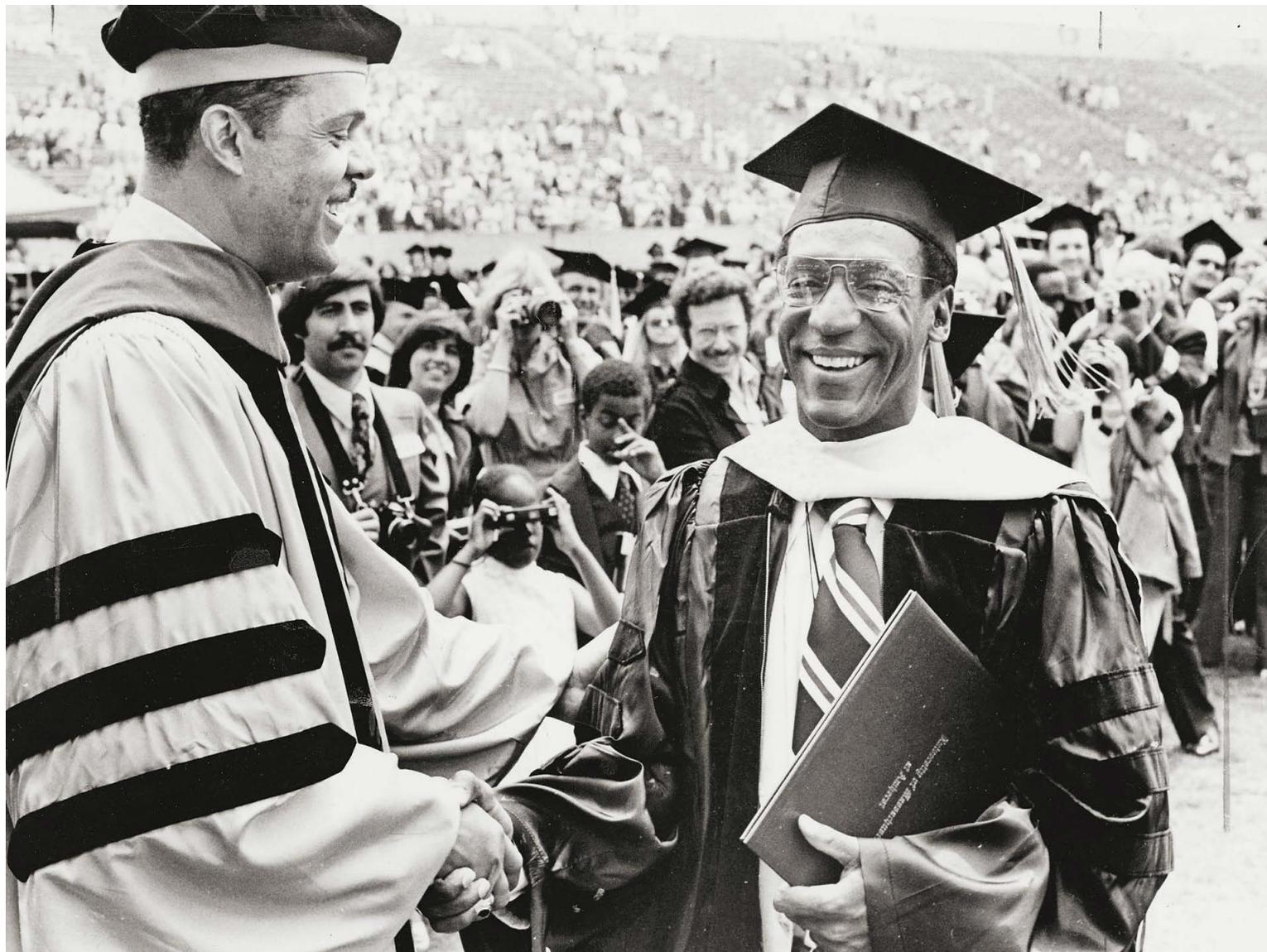
“Each institution is going to have to make those decisions to determine what would be proper for them,” said Kaplan, who oversees the Council for Aid to Education’s annual survey of fund-raising by colleges and universities.

She said some colleges may hold onto donations or continue to accept them since Cosby “hasn’t been tried and convicted of anything.”

“Is there any such thing as a person who has a completely clean record anywhere? And if that’s your standard, it’s difficult to adhere to,” she added.

In light of the allegations against Cosby, [NBC](#) announced it has canceled plans for a new project with Cosby, TV Land stopped airing reruns of “The Cosby Show,” and [Netflix](#) postponed releasing a Cosby comedy special that was due to come out this month.

Cosby's attorney, Martin Singer, has said the sexual assault accusations against his client are "unsubstantiated" and has called for a stop to media coverage, which he has described as "vilification" of Cosby.



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THE COS AND EFFECT: Thirty years after Bill Cosby got his doctorate from UMass, John Ridley studies the funnyman's 267-page dissertation on race and education to learn what's making America's Black Dad so angry. Cover photograph by Dick Carpenter/File 1977 Library Tag 04082007 Magazine

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Material from the Associated Press was used in this report. Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter [@mrochele](https://twitter.com/mrochele).

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