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Congressional Challenge Grows, New Cohort Pledges Support for Workforce Diversity

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, September 12, 2019
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Congressional Challenge Grows, New Cohort Pledges Support for Workforce Diversity

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, the Congressional Bipartisan Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Caucus announced the addition of seven new entities into its landmark HBCU Partnership Challenge (Challenge). The Challenge is now comprised of 36 national partners committed to working with Congress to help level the playing field for HBCUs and their students.

The Challenge, launched in 2017 by the Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus, is an initiative that brings together government, industry and HBCUs to create strategic, more sustainable HBCU partnerships. Challenge participants make a public pledge to ensure that HBCUs and their students are an equal part of their recruitment and hiring efforts. HBCUs produce 50 percent of all Black professionals, and 42 percent of all Black engineers; they are key to powering diverse innovation. Challenge participants, Members of Congress and HBCU leaders convene quarterly to help forge stronger relationships which is the foundation for successful and meaningful HBCU partnerships.

"HBCUs have historically been underfunded and undervalued. I made it my mission in Congress to create a Bipartisan Caucus to address the issues facing our schools. We made great strides, but we realized we cannot do it alone," said Congresswoman **Alma S. Adams, Ph.D., founder and co-chair of the Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus.** "Addressing the more than 200 years of systemic inequity that has faced HBCUs requires a more collective impact. It requires government, industry and schools working together to figure out how we can best ensure all students have equal access to HBCUs. That's why my colleagues and I launched the Challenge in 2017. We sought out to get eight companies to work with us. I'm proud to say that in less than two years, 36 companies have stepped up to the plate. We meet quarterly and we've seen the results of our collective efforts."

"The important mission of HBCUs will ultimately be more successful if private establishments, faith-based groups, and public institutions work together to invest in students and give them the tools to create a better future for themselves and their communities," said Congressman **French Hill, vice-chair of the Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus.** "It is critical that we continue to invest in these students, which is why the HBCU Partnership Challenge is so valuable."

"We are proud to join the HBCU Partnership Challenge in conjunction with the kickoff of our third annual HBCU Leadership Summit, which will bring together over 100 students from 37 HBCUs to explore what it means to work at Goldman Sachs," said Goldman **Sachs CEO David Solomon.** "We are looking to bring fresh insights and perspectives from HBCU students to shape the future of our workforce and help us remain competitive and at the edge of innovation."

"We're proud to reinforce JPMorgan Chase's long-standing commitment to diversity and inclusion, which includes extensive partnerships with HBCUs, by joining the HBCU Partnership Challenge," said Sekou **Kaalund, Head of Advancing Black Pathways.** "Thanks to the efforts of our dedicated team of recruiters who work with these schools, JPMorgan Chase has been recognized as a top employer for business students at HBCUs. Now, through JPMC initiatives like the HBCU Diversity in Tech Conference, the HBCU Summit and Advancing Black Pathways, we're doubling down on our investment in HBCUs and the next generation of black financial services talent."

"Accenture is proud to sign the HBCU Partnership Challenge, joining the HBCU Caucus in promoting our next generation of great leaders," said Marty **Rodgers, senior managing director — US Southeast, Accenture.** "Accenture is passionate about championing inclusion and equality in the workplace and preparing our future workforce for both success and for significance. When people feel a sense of belonging and are valued by their employers for their individual contributions and perspectives, they are more likely to advance and feel empowered to innovate. It is really a simple equation: inclusion and diversity sparks innovation, which fuels differentiated growth, and produces profits."

"Adobe is excited to be part of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Partnership Challenge. HBCU students offer a wealth of creative and highly skilled future talent," said **Katie Juran, Sr. Director Diversity & Inclusion, Adobe.** "We are grateful to be joining with government, university and industry leaders to develop new approaches to building the pipeline from higher education into great careers."

"TIAA recognizes the critical role HBCUs play in American higher education and is proud to join the HBCU Partnership Challenge," said Roger **W. Ferguson, Jr., CEO, TIAA.** "We recognize that this is a time of challenge and transformation for HBCUs – as it is for all of higher education – and it is important that we help HBCUs remain strong and vital to continue fulfilling their mission for the benefit of generations to come."

Today the new entities will join Intel, Lyft, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina, SAP SE, Dell, GM Financial, AnitaB.org, Regions, Pandora, Nielsen, Amazon, Airbnb, Duke Energy, Adtalem, Microsoft, Wells Fargo, Spotify, Ally Financial, Live Oak Bank, SAS, Bank of America, BB&T, SunTrust, IBM, Visa, Twitter, Allstate, Zillow, and GlaxoSmithKline.

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