

Adams, Hill Announce 4 New HBCU Caucus Partnership Challenge Participants



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Washington, D.C. – Today, **Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12)**, and **Rep. French Hill (AR-02)**, co-chairs of the bipartisan Congressional HBCU Caucus, announced four new companies and organizations – **Academic Partnerships, Dominion Energy, Humana, and PhRMA** – are joining the Congressional Bipartisan Historically Black Colleges and Universities Caucus Partnership Challenge, **bringing the total number of HBCU Partnership Challenge participants to 84.** [The HBCU Partnership Challenge is an effort to promote greater engagement and support between private companies and HBCUs.](#)

"Thank you to everyone who has stepped up to support HBCUs this year, including every cosponsor of the *IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act* our newest challenge partners Academic Partnerships, Dominion Energy, Humana, and PhRMA" **said Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12), founder and Co-Chair of the Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus.** "Right now, our HBCUs are facing a major capital infrastructure and funding challenges. Especially after the threats to eight HBCU campuses this week, it's an important moment for private and public partners to come together to support our HBCUs. I applaud all of our private partners for taking the pledge at such a critical time.

"I'd like to thank all our HBCU Challenge Partners, including our newest partners Humana, PhRMA, Dominion, and Academic Partnerships," **said Rep. French Hill (AR-02), Co-Chair of the Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus.** "Public-private partnerships are critical to the success of our HBCUs, and their support is a vital part of the *IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act* that will provide opportunities for HBCU schools and students in Arkansas and across the nation."

"HBCUs have a rich history of developing diverse talent pipelines in various sectors. PhRMA

is honored to join HBCU's Partnership Challenge to help continue this legacy and help open doors for students in the biopharmaceutical industry. This partnership, along with other efforts like an upcoming graduate student summit and career expo, are helping to advance equity in our industry," **said Steve Ubl, PhRMA President and CEO**

"Growing diverse talent within our workforce remains a top priority," **said Humana Inc., President and CEO Bruce Broussard.** "Joining the HBCU Partnership Challenge is a meaningful step that further enables us to deliver on our human care strategy. This, coupled with our targeted recruitment efforts to attract and promote diverse talent, reinforces our commitment to diversity and inclusion at every level of the organization. While we've made progress, it's imperative we continue to push for positive change. Our associates demand it, our customers demand it, and it's something we need to do today to be the company we want to be tomorrow."

"Dominion Energy is dedicated to expanding our four-decade long support for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and is pleased to join the Partnership Challenge. Ensuring the success of HBCUs and their students through our Foundation support, scholarships and diversity, equity and inclusion commitments deepens our understanding of our customers' views, making us more responsive and innovative," **said Robert M. Blue, Chair, President and CEO of Dominion Energy.**

"One of my primary focuses as the CEO of Academic Partnerships has been to encourage an inclusive culture that allows employees the opportunity to be their authentic selves. To that end, we are very excited to join the HBCU Partnership Challenge and further strengthen our employee base. We are strong believers that a diverse workforce is a strong workforce, and this partnership is a natural extension of AP's mission to expand equitable access to higher education," **says Rob Ganji, AP CEO.**

The Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus' Partnership Challenge is a bipartisan effort to promote greater engagement and support between private companies and HBCUs. Congresswoman Adams created the Challenge in 2017 to strengthen public-private relationships with HBCUs to ensure the schools' future sustainability, increase career prospects for their students, and advance diversity, equity, and inclusion within all sectors. The Challenge encourages participating organizations to make greater investments in HBCUs as well.

The Caucus hosts numerous events every year including HBCU STEAM Days of Action,

HBCU Day, the HBCU Braintrust, the Virtual Partnership Luncheon, and the Diversity in Tech Summit. For more information, please contact Sam Spencer (Sam.Spencer@mail.house.gov).

Finally, the HBCU Caucus recently announced that the 5th Annual STEAM Days of Action will be held the week of March 7th, 2021. [Sign up here to stay in the loop.](#)

About Alma Adams

Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. represents North Carolina's 12th Congressional District (Charlotte) and serves as Vice Chair of the House Committee on Agriculture. Additionally, she serves on the House Financial Services Committee and the House Education & Labor Committee, where she serves as Chair of the Workforce Protections Subcommittee. In 2015, she founded the first bipartisan Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Caucus in Congress.

Brief background on Academic Partnerships

In its role as an online facilitator, Academic Partnerships, LLC ("AP") takes an integrated, comprehensive approach to supporting not-for-profit universities. AP delivers on its mission to expand access to top-quality, affordable, and workforce relevant education by providing support services such as prospective student outreach, retention services, and expertise in helping convert traditional courses to an online format. In this way, universities and faculty can focus on what they do best – delivering a high-quality educational experience. Championing affordability with a weighted average tuition of approximately \$14,000 for the entire degree across all AP-supported programs, AP supports programs in high-demand employment fields such as healthcare/nursing, education, business and technology, which help support state and local economic development.

Background on Academic Partnerships' DEIB efforts

Academic Partnerships is committed to continuing to recruit, develop, mentor, sponsor, and promote diverse talent. AP has established a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) employee engagement committee to facilitate employee listening sessions that encourage courageous conversations and increase awareness. As AP expands its recruitment and development outreach efforts with HBCUs, it will continue to engage its existing internal employee base of HBCU graduates.

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