

Adams, Hill Announce New HBCU Partnership Challenge Members During HBCU STEAM Days of Action



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Washington, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Alma Adams (D-NC-12) and Congressman French Hill (R-AR-02) announced 7 companies joining the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Partnership Challenge during the 5th Annual HBCU STEAM Days of Action event. The companies include Blockchain Association, Cintas, DataRobot, Enact, Grant Thornton LLP, Novartis, and Synchrony.

The HBCU Partnership Challenge is an effort to promote greater engagement and support between private companies and HBCUs. Already, **94** companies have taken the challenge.

"I am excited to announce that **Blockchain Association, Cintas, DataRobot, Enact, Grant Thornton LLP, Novartis, and Synchrony** are joining the Bipartisan HBCU Caucus' HBCU Partnership Challenge during this important moment for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. These companies recognize diversity creates a stronger workforce, and that HBCUs play a critical role in building the diverse workforce of the future," **said Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12), founder and Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Congressional HBCU Caucus.**

"Workplace diversity, especially within STEAM fields, requires HBCU talent. These companies are joining us during the **5th Annual HBCU STEAM Days of Action** because they know the power of partnerships with HBCUs."

"I am pleased to announce Blockchain Association, Cintas, DataRobot, Enact,

Grant Thornton LLP, Novartis, and Synchrony have joined the HBCU Partnership Challenge. Since the foundation of our challenge, we have seen numerous companies step up to support our Historical Black Colleges and Universities. By recognizing the significant role HBCUs play in our communities, these companies are recognizing the talented students that come from these universities." **said Rep. Hill, Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Congressional HBCU Caucus.** "I encourage more companies to join in the HBCU Partnership Challenge, investing in our HBCUs and working to make a difference in our community."

Companies joining the partnership challenge are excited for the opportunity:

"HBCUs provide an invaluable education to their students and service to the nation. Synchrony is proud to have partnerships with institutions like North Carolina A&T State University and Howard University, which strengthens our commitment to retaining and developing diverse talent. More importantly, we recognize the value of HBCUs extends beyond our own priorities. Our \$20 million initiative, Education as an Equalizer, was created to expand access to education and financial literacy to underserved communities. We are committed to building a more inclusive future within our company, and the communities we serve," **said Tom Quindlen, EVP & CEO, Diversified & Value and Lifestyle, Synchrony.**

"Grant Thornton is incredibly humbled to join this partnership challenge, and we're eager to elevate the achievements of these storied institutions and their talented graduates," **added Rashada Whitehead, Grant Thornton's national managing director of Culture, Immersion & Inclusion.** "In addition to playing an integral role in our nation's history, HBCUs are actively shaping our present. These students are advancing business and their communities in every way imaginable, and powering that difference is a true honor."

"HBCUs have made an indelible impact on our society, and they're poised to have even greater influence going forward. They develop incredible talent who graduate and become innovators and leaders in the private and public sectors," **said Max Langenkamp, Cintas Senior Vice President of Human Resources and Chief Diversity Officer.** "Cintas has a long-standing belief that a diverse workforce is an important element of a successful business strategy, and we've prioritized developing our pipeline of diverse talent for almost 30 years. We're excited to join

the HBCU Partnership Challenge with Rep. Adams and other similarly focused companies to support HBCUs and increase our engagement with their students and alumni."

"Diversifying the mortgage finance industry is a critical step in addressing the homeownership gap and a primary focus for Enact Mortgage Insurance. We are excited to join the HBCU Partnership Challenge and continue our support of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. We know the importance of representation and believe we will serve the homeowners of today and tomorrow best if we have a workforce that looks like the homeowners we are serving. This is why we created the mortgage industry development program for HBCU students across the country and look forward to furthering our efforts with the HBCU partnership challenge," **said Duane Duncan, SVP, Government and Industry Relations, Enact Mortgage Insurance.**

"The exclusion of Black and African American people from the research and development ecosystem has resulted in mistrust and a delayed uptake of life-saving innovative medicines and effective care models, further exacerbating racial disparities in care and outcomes," **said Patrice Matchaba, MD, President of the Novartis US Foundation.** "Novartis and the Novartis US Foundation are proud to have established the Beacon of Hope, our 10-year, \$33.7 million collaboration with 27 HBCUs and Historically Black Medical Schools, to co-create programs that will help achieve sustained change."

"DataRobot is dedicated to democratizing artificial intelligence technology for all, for the benefit of both businesses and society. A diverse, inclusive and equitable workforce at all levels of our organization is critical to this mission," **said Elise Cole, Chief People & Administrative Officer of DataRobot.** "We're proud to join the HBCU Partnership Challenge and are committed to making diversity, equity, and inclusion part of everything we do at DataRobot — from building our team to our technology innovation to enabling our customers and communities in the United States and around the world."

"On behalf of our 85+ member companies, the Blockchain Association is honored to join the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Partnership Challenge to deepen our investments to build an inclusive crypto industry and marketplace,"

Blockchain Association Executive Director Kristin Smith said. "We commend U.S. Representatives Alma Adams and French Hill for convening this year's robust HBCU STEAM Days of Action forum and for their steadfast leadership and willingness to engage industry partners to empower HBCUs, which are preparing the next generation of blockchain and cryptocurrency innovators."

The **5th Annual HBCU STEAM Days of Action** will take place **the week of March 28**. While most events are closed press, at **12:00 Noon EDT on Thursday, March 31** Rep. Adams will host "HBCU Partnerships 101: Best Practices for Engagement Across Industry," a panel discussion that is open to the public. [Interested attendees, including press, can register here.](#)

"HBCUs contribute nearly \$15 billion to our annual economy and have provided pathways of opportunity to millions of Americans, many of whom are first generation college students. I would not be in Congress today if not for the North Carolina A&T University," **said Congresswoman Adams, Founder and Co-Chair of the Bipartisan HBCU Caucus.** "That is why HBCU STEAM Days is such an important event. It's a time when HBCUs come to Capitol Hill to advocate for more equitable federal resources – and they don't come alone. They are joined by industry leaders who have made a commitment to creating strategic and sustainable partnerships with HBCUs. As we continue to face the COVID-19 pandemic and contemplate future challenges, it has never been more important to make sure every talented student has access to a world class science, technology, engineering, arts, and math education."

During STEAM Days, HBCU and business leaders will meet with Republican and Democratic Members of Congress in the House and Senate. Over 100 HBCUs, organizations, technology companies, and industry leaders are sending representatives to participate in these days of advocacy.

As co-chair of the HBCU Caucus, Rep. Adams also leads the HBCU Partnership Challenge, which will be highlighted during HBCU STEAM Days. A major announcement of new partnership challenge members will be made during the event.

Sixty-seven percent of job seekers say a diverse workforce is important when considering job offers, and organizations that report higher levels of racial diversity

bring in nearly 15 times more sales revenue than their counterparts. The Bipartisan HBCU Caucus believes that in order to achieve true diversity in our workforce, we must focus on the front-end of this conversation – our students and the schools they attend.

The impact of HBCUs on our workforce is clear. HBCUs produce:

- **27 percent of all African-American STEM graduates;**
- **40 percent of all African-American engineers;**
- **50 percent of all African-American lawyers;**
- **50 percent of all African-American public-school teachers; and**
- **80 percent of all African-American judges.**

These statistics demonstrate it is impossible to have a diverse and inclusive workforce without HBCUs.

For more information, or to RSVP, please contact Sam Spencer (Sam.Spencer@mail.house.gov).

About Blockchain Association: The Blockchain Association is the collective voice of the cryptocurrency industry. Our members include the sector's leading investors, companies, projects, and protocols, working together to support a future-forward, pro-innovation national policy and regulatory framework for the crypto economy. Find us at theblockchainassociation.org. Follow us @BlockchainAssn.

Congresswoman Alma Adams represents North Carolina's 12th Congressional District (Charlotte, Mecklenburg County). In 2015, she founded the first bipartisan Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Caucus in Congress. She is a double graduate of North Carolina A&T, the largest HBCU by enrollment in the United States.

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