ACC, Cisco, and Universal Music Group Join HBCU Partnership Challenge



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Washington, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Alma Adams (D-NC-12) and Congressman French Hill (R-AR-02) announced three companies and organizations joining the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Partnership Challenge: Cisco, Universal Music Group (UMG), and the American Chemistry Council. The <u>HBCU Caucus Partnership Challenge</u> is an effort to promote greater engagement and support between private companies and HBCUs. Already, over 90 companies have taken the challenge.

The announcement comes after the 5th Annual HBCU Diversity in Tech Summit. You can <u>watch the summit on demand here</u>.

"I want to thank all of our partners that have stepped up to support HBCUs in 2022, including every company that endorsed the IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act, as well as our newest HBCU Caucus Partnership Challenge Members Cisco, Universal Music Group, and the American Chemistry Council," 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. As we continue to adjust to the realities of education in a COVID world, it's an important moment for private and public partners to continue to commit to support our HBCUS. I applaud all of our private partners for taking the pledge at such a critical time."

"I am pleased Cisco, Universal Music Group, and the American Chemistry Council, have joined the HBCU Partnership Challenge. Our HBCU Partnership Challenger partners are vital to providing and promoting opportunities on behalf of our HBCU students, faculty, and alumni. Thank you to these industry leaders who have pledged their commitment to the HBCU community," said Rep. French Hill (AR-02), co-chair of the HBCU Caucus.

Companies & organizations joining the partnership challenge are excited for the opportunity:

"ACC is honored to join the HBCU Partnership Challenge. ACC and our members are committed to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in the chemical industry and creating a pipeline of diverse, talented students to build a more sustainable future for all. As a Founding Partner in the Future of STEM Scholars Initiative, we have raised more than \$17 million to provide scholarships, mentoring and internship opportunities to students majoring in preferred STEM fields at HBCUs," said Chris Jahn, President & CEO, American Chemistry Council. "ACC is also proud to join in support of the IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act, which will provide needed funding for infrastructure enhancements at HBCUs. I applaud the leadership of Rep. Adams, Rep. Hill, Senator Coons and Senator Scott on these important initiatives."

"Cisco is thrilled to join the bipartisan HBCU Partnership Challenge and continue our engagement with HBCUs. We are an early investor of the Student Freedom Initiative and are independently working to improve broadband access on all HBCU campuses. There is more work to be done and we are committed to being an active member of the Partnership Challenge," said Francine Katsoudas, EVP and Chief People, Policy & Purpose Officer at Cisco.

Eric Hutcherson, EVP and Chief People & Inclusion Officer of Universal Music Group, the world's leading music-based entertainment company, said, "An educated, skilled, diverse and inclusive workforce is crucial to companies' success. Initiatives like the HBCU Partnership Challenge are essential to robust workforce development and we commend Representatives Adams and Hill for their leadership. UMG is proud to join this important effort as a complement to the work of our Task Force for Meaningful Change, and our summer internship program for HBCU students and recent graduates, which offers professional experiences working across our business. That program and the associated mentorship program has expanded a pipeline of Black talent for permanent positions at UMG, including the development of future music leaders."

Background on the HBCU Partnership Challenge

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 how HBCUs are vital to creating a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Additional information on the challenge is available here. For more information, please contact Sam Spencer (Sam.Spencer@mail.house.gov).

About Universal Music Group

At Universal Music Group, we exist to shape culture through the power of artistry. UMG is the world leader in music-based entertainment, with a broad array of businesses engaged in recorded music, music publishing, merchandising and audiovisual content. Featuring the most comprehensive catalogue of recordings and songs across every musical genre, UMG identifies and develops artists and produces and distributes the most critically acclaimed and commercially successful music in the world. Committed to artistry, innovation and entrepreneurship, UMG fosters the development of services, platforms, and business models in order to broaden artistic and commercial opportunities for our artists and create new experiences for fans. For more information, visit www.universalmusic.com.

About the American Chemistry Council

The American Chemistry Council (ACC) represents the leading companies engaged in the multibillion-dollar business of chemistry. ACC members apply the science of chemistry to make innovative products, technologies and services that make people's lives better, healthier and safer. ACC is committed to improved environmental, health, safety and security performance through Responsible Care®; common sense advocacy addressing major public policy issues; and health and environmental research and product testing. ACC members and chemistry companies are among the largest investors in research and development, and are advancing products, processes and technologies to address climate change, enhance air and water quality, and progress toward a more sustainable, circular economy.

About the Future of STEM Scholars Initiative

The Future of STEM Scholars Initiative was founded in 2020 by the American Chemistry Council, the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, The Chemours Company, and the HBCU Week Foundation. FOSSI is a national chemical industry-wide program which provides scholarships to students pursuing degrees in relevant science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), helping to eliminate financial barriers for historically under-represented groups. Sponsored by chemical manufacturers and related industry stakeholders, FOSSI provides scholarship recipients \$10,000 per year for four years and connects these students to leadership development, mentoring and internship opportunities at participating companies. Learn more at FutureofSTEMscholars.org.

Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. 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, and serves on the House Committee on Education & Labor; the House Financial Services Committee; and the House Committee on Agriculture, which has jurisdiction over the 1890s HBCUs. Sam Spencer Communications Director Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus 2436 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Phone: 202-225-1510 Fax: 202-225-1512

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