

PhD Project Looks Ahead to Diversifying Leaders and Teachers at Business Schools

Program has made great strides in adding minority professors

By Richard Jackoway and Bernard J. Milano

Diversify the front of the classroom and you diversify the classroom.

It's now almost a given, but 20 years ago, particularly in business schools, little was being done to create a diverse professor base.

Few African Americans, Hispanic Americans, or Native Americans stood at the front of the classroom in U.S. business schools. The figure, comprising less than 2 percent of total business faculty, shocked a group of academics and corporate representatives who somewhat independently had started looking into the problem.

They knew that without faculty of color, colleges and universities could not attract students of color to study business disciplines. There were simply no available role models nor approachable mentors.

In the foreword of *Paying It Forward*, a new book documenting The PhD Project's success, Scott Cowen, president emeritus of Tulane University, detailed the daunting challenge.

"Back in 1993, the idea of diversifying the faculty at business schools to many seemed like a more or less hopeless endeavor," he wrote. "For starters, there were concerns about whether the pool of qualified applicants who were willing to give up lucrative careers would be deep enough."

But over the next several months, the group initiated a systemic and fundamental program to ensure natural and approachable mentors were being developed: The PhD Project.

The result has been remarkable. Two decades ago, there were only 294 minority business professors. Today, that number has more than quadrupled to 1,253.

Now The PhD Project has expanded

its mission, with a new initiative to increase diversity at the next level — business school administration. Many minority business professors are well-qualified to be business school administrators because they typically come to academia from successful corporate careers.

Project AHEAD (Achieving Higher Education Administration Diversity) provides information, encouragement, and support for African American, Hispanic American, or Native American business school professors who wish to advance to the positions of

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department chair, associate dean, dean, and other leadership roles. Minorities are severely underrepresented in these positions. Fewer than 20 dean positions at majority-serving university business schools are held by African Americans, Hispanic Americans, or Native Americans. Even at minority-serving university business schools, fewer than 25 are deans at HBCUs or Hispanic-serving institutions. In total, about 3 percent of university business school dean positions are diverse minorities.

Project AHEAD holds informational programs, like webinars, conference calls, and conferences throughout the year. Minority and majority deans, department chairs, and other administrators affiliated with The PhD Project provide services on a voluntary basis.

Many of The PhD Project's funders agree that the project is making a real difference, both in academia and the workforce.

"The PhD Project is one of a core group of partners the Citi Foundation has sponsored for over 20 years because of the impact we have seen, the value it brings, and because of its close alignment to our mission," said Ana Duarte McCarthy, managing director and chief diversity officer at Citi. "In shaping the diversity of faculty in business schools, The PhD Project creates an inclusive leadership culture that may better inspire young minorities to consider going to business school. This, in turn, creates a pipeline for Citi and others in the finance

industry who are focused on ensuring our talent leadership looks like the communities we serve."

The PhD Project has succeeded in its mission thanks to its four founding organizations, KPMG Foundation, Graduate Management Admission Council, Citi Foundation, AACSB International, and the list of leading corporations, foundations, and associations that fund it in an effort to systemically change the face of corporate America.

They include over 285 participating universities, corporations and nonprofits. ●

The PhD Project is a partner of *INSIGHT Into Diversity*. Richard Jackoway is the editor of *INSIGHT Into Diversity*. Bernard J. Milano is president of the KPMG Foundation, the KPMG Disaster Relief Fund, and The PhD Project.