

The Dallas Morning News

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Study finds shortage of minority business school leaders



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Published: 05 May 2015 10:27 PM

What business is it of yours? Or, put another way: It's none of your business.

These familiar smart-aleck retorts could sum up a recent national study that found a serious shortage of black and Latino deans among top U.S. business schools, leading to a lack of role models to influence blacks and Latinos who aspire to these positions.

By contrast, though, blacks and Latinos are far more likely to serve on the boards of directors of leading corporations, the study found, and the public is more likely to see those positions as more prestigious and laudable than the job of business school dean.

What difference does it make?

The study by The PhD Project, a nonprofit that seeks to increase faculty diversity, asserts that the public should push for more blacks and Latinos to seek positions as deans of business schools. Also, more midcareer

professionals should consider switching careers to become business professors, the study urges.

KPMG Foundation formed The PhD Project 21 years ago to recruit black, Latino and American Indian midcareer business professionals and increase their numbers on business school faculties. The number of deans and high-level business school administrators has since more than quadrupled, project leaders say, adding that the numbers need to keep growing to address the imbalance.

Here are other findings of the study:

The nation's 1,601 business schools include 33 black deans, or 2 percent of the total, nine Latino deans (0.5 percent) and one American Indian dean.

By contrast, the boards of directors membership of the nation's 200 largest S&P 500 companies is 8.5 percent black and 4.5 percent Latino. Of those same 200 companies, 73 percent have at least one black board member and 47 percent have at least one Latino director.

The numbers suggest to black, Latino and American Indian MBA, undergraduate and doctoral students that "business isn't for them," project co-founder and KPMG Foundation president **Bernard Milano** said in a prepared statement. He added that the small numbers mean students have few role models and mentors among business leaders.

"Placing more role models and potential mentors in front of the classroom and in the dean's office will help to attract more under-represented minorities to business studies and business careers," Milano said.

Several dozen companies, organizations and universities support the project, including Rockwell Collins, Wal-Mart Stores Inc., Cigna, Lincoln Financial Group, 3M, John Deere Foundation, and the American Accounting Association. To learn more, visit www.phdproject.org.