

PhD Project grooms minority professors

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Monique Bell

When Monique Bell receives her Ph.D., she will become one of only 171 African American marketing business school professors in the United States.

The PhD Project has announced that Bell is the first recipient of the \$10,000 Melvin and Patricia Stith Marketing Dissertation Grant. She is defending her dissertation titled, “Self-Enhancement and Self-Transcendence Organizational Values’ Effects on Customer Satisfaction and Corporate Reputation” at Drexel University.

“We decided to create this grant because it represents our life work,” said Melvin T. Stith, Ph.D., dean of the Whitman School of Management, Syracuse University.

“Assisting students to reach their goals is very important. Also, during their Ph.D. program, a little extra financial support can make a big difference in a student’s life.”

Founded in 1994 by the KPMG Foundation, the PhD Project is an organization that recruits minority professionals from business into doctoral programs in all business disciplines. The Project’s vision is to diversify corporate America by increasing the number of minority business professors, who attract more minority students to study business in college.

For Bell, pursuing a Ph.D. in marketing was not on her radar until she heard about the PhD Project. Bell decided to pursue her PhD, after she applied to attend the Project’s annual conference and learned about the benefits of obtaining a PhD and becoming an instructor.

“I was just like I have to at least try because I this could be a really exciting and beneficial career move for me as well. The PhD Project is really connecting with people who weren’t considering academia as a career,” said Stith, who is a native of Rochester, N.Y.

Bell said she worked in marketing for about 10 years and it had never occurred to her to pursue a career in academics.

After graduating in June, Bell will become an assistant professor of marketing at California State University in Fresno.

Since its inception, The PhD Project has been responsible for the increase in the number of minority business professors from 294 to 1,172. According to Project officials, 362 minorities are currently enrolled in doctoral programs, and will take a place at the front of the classroom over the next few years.

“The whole idea of the PhD Project is get more African Americans, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans into the classroom. We’re just trying to expand the size and scope of young men and women who decide to get their PhD,” said Stith.

He noted that many business students who wish to further their academic studies are encouraged to obtain their MBAs and head to corporate America.

“A MBA was always a golden ring for business students so we’re trying to say that’s not the only option. Being a college professor is a very viable option and you can have a wonderful career,” Stith said.

“There is nothing wrong with the corporate side. We are just saying that both sides are a legitimate path to happiness.”

The PhD Project is seeking applicants for the next grant. In order to apply for this scholarship, applicants must be African-American, Hispanic-American, or Native American; U. S. citizen or a permanent resident of the United States (possess a green card); must have completed all course work, passed all required preliminary examinations, and received approval for their dissertation proposal. The deadline for the 2013 grant application is May 1.

For more information and to complete the application, visit <http://phdproject.ning.com/page/funding-1> or contact tperino@kpmg.com.