

**IT'S TIME FOR MOVEMENT**



**BLACK LEADERS  
IN  
ADVANCEMENT**

**IT'S TIME FOR POSITIVE CHANGE**



## **UNITED IN ACTION**

We are all at an immense moment of great change, and as leaders in our industry, now is the time to truly embrace this moment by ensuring that the field of advancement reflects the virtues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

This is a pivotal moment that requires institutions to examine their true commitment to inclusivity by having leadership and a professional talent pool that is reflective of the diversity of the stakeholders they serve. Many leaders from historically underrepresented groups struggle in an industry whose mission is to advance the work of our communities and the American dream, only to find that regardless of their accomplishments, they continue to survive, and not thrive. Less than 11% of professionals in higher education advancement are diverse – and the current system and means of developing and nurturing future leaders often excludes African Americans.

It is our summation that leadership roles in higher education advancement, as well as all talent sourcing efforts should focus on adding a significant number of African American and historically underrepresented professionals to the sector. It is only through authentically intentional efforts that our profession can have diverse voices around the decision-making table that reflect the moment that we are realizing.

**COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT**

# A PATH FORWARD

For these reasons, we are collectively **coming together to issue a call to our industry** to be the agent of change, to lead the field of advancement in realizing its mission to effect meaningful change -- a change that can create purposeful opportunities for marginalized professionals.

Therefore, **on behalf of hundreds of black leaders** in the advancement industry, this leadership group is asking every organization to make a commitment to be the difference maker -- to be the change.

- Floyd Akins, Associate Vice President for Advancement, Michigan State University
- Dexter Bailey, Vice President for Advancement and Alumni Relations, CalTech
- Lishelle Blakemore, Associate Vice Chancellor of Development, University of California, Berkeley
- Birgit Burton, Founder of the African American Development Officer Network (AADO)
- Robiaun Charles, Vice President of College Advancement, Agnes Scott College
- Chris Clarke, Senior AVP, Trinity College & the Graduate School, Duke University
- Bernadine Douglas, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Barry University
- Angelique Grant, Ph.D. Senior Consultant and Vice President, Aspen Leadership Group
- Bennie Harris, Senior Vice President of Institutional Advancement, Morehouse School of Medicine
- Yolanda F. Johnson, Founder & President of Women of Color in Fundraising & Philanthropy (WOC)
- Kendall Joyner, VP of Professional Development, Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP)
- Brandon T. McCray, Associate Vice President, Development Constituent Programs, The Florida State University Foundation
- Rickey N. McCurry, Vice President for Advancement and Foundation CEO, Northern Arizona University
- Tim Minor, Vice President, Univ. Advancement, The University of North Carolina System
- Kim Nyoni, Associate Vice President for Development at University of Nevada-Las Vegas
- Jacquie Patterson, Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Community Relations, Salus University
- Gregory S. Perrin, AVP for Development and Alumni Relations, St. Edward's University
- Rita Walters, Vice President of Development & Alumni Relations, Union Theological Seminary
- Cory Witherspoon, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, Florida Memorial University

To address change, we have developed the following actionable commitments that we pledge to live by and are advocating for the field of higher education advancement to enact.

**"THE ULTIMATE MEASURE OF A MAN IS NOT WHERE HE STANDS IN MOMENTS OF COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE, BUT WHERE HE STANDS AT TIMES OF CHALLENGE AND CONTROVERSY."**

-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

# AS BLACK LEADERS IN ADVANCEMENT...

**We pledge to be the difference makers** and work intentionally within our organizations to **create a path for diverse leadership** through the following scalable and measurable initiatives:

- **Mentorship:** Mentor an emerging professional from a diverse background.
- **DEI Leaders:** Serve in a DEI leadership capacity at our respective organizations.
- **Diversify Philanthropy:** Decolonize the philanthropy stigma, and encourage new community members to engage in volunteer activities and provide philanthropic gifts to nonprofit organizations.

**We actively advocate** that higher education leaders should authentically **commit to implementing:**

- **Mentorship Programs:** Develop an internal mentorship program for diverse professionals. This may also include internship programs focused on building a pipeline of diverse talent and supporting participants as they grow into entry-level positions.
- **Recruitment Practices:** Inspired by the Rooney Rule, commit to ensuring that African American and other historically underserved candidates are included and actively considered for advancement leadership vacancies -- especially at the President, Vice President, and AVP levels.
- **Anti-Bias Recruitment Trainings:** Assure that every hiring manager, search committee member, and all supervisors participate in anti-bias training, in addition to every team member involved in the hiring process.
- **Pay Equity:** Adopt fair pay equity practices. Review all wages and make the necessary adjustments needed to provide adequate and equitable pay.
- **Inclusion Council & Employee Resource Groups (ERGs):** Initiate the creation of, or continue to invest in, an inclusion council within your organization (i.e., DEI Council, etc.), and commit to having a senior leader serve as a member. Develop a plan of action and accountability measures.
- **Continuous DEI Conversations:** With the goal of eradicating biases, create a series of annual ongoing DEI trainings, workshops, and conversations - especially at the leadership level.
- **Volunteers:** Diversify the membership of key stakeholder boards and groups, such as Governing, Advisory, Alumni, and Campaign volunteers.
- **Donor Engagement & Philanthropic Approach:** Dispel the philanthropy stigma by changing the institution's traditional approach to volunteer and donor engagement. Engage all stakeholders.

**HAVE COURAGEOUS  
CONVERSATIONS + ACTIVELY  
LEAD CHANGE + INTEGRATE DEI  
INTO PRACTICES + ESTABLISH  
ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES +  
CREATE SPACE FOR A SENSE OF  
BELONGING + HIRE DIVERSE  
PROFESSIONALS + ENGAGE ALL  
STAKEHOLDERS + CREATE  
ACTIONABLE NEXT STEPS +  
BECOME THE AGENT OF CHANGE +  
ASSURE THAT ALL VOICES ARE  
HEARD AND HAVE A SEAT AT THE  
TABLE + FINANCIALLY INVEST IN  
DEI EFFORTS + ACTIVELY RECRUIT  
DIVERSE TEAMS + DEVELOP  
LEADERSHIP TRAINING  
OPPORTUNITIES + BE A SPONSOR  
& MENTOR + SEEK DEI EXPERTISE  
IF NEEDED + ADDRESS BLIND  
SPOTS + CREATE ZERO  
TOLERANCE DISCRIMINATION  
POLICIES & PRACTICES =  
MOVEMENT AND CHANGE**