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ABFE: A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities

Announces a Trailblazing Partnership with Bowie State University

(NEW YORK, NY) – ABFE is excited to announce a trailblazing partnership with Bowie State University (BSU) – one that will deepen both institutions’ commitment to contributing to a just society by enhancing the capacities of philanthropic institutions and nonprofit organizations to be more responsive to Black and underserved communities.

Once approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission and University System of Maryland, this partnership will implement and sustain a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) Philanthropy Initiative, the Master of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Management Degree (MPNM) Program within the Bowie State University College of Business.

“ABFE has long been committed to developing the next generation of Black philanthropic leaders through our Connecting Leaders Fellowship Program and is excited to help expand the pipeline through our partnership with Bowie State University,” said Susan Taylor Batten, ABFE president & chief executive officer. “Partnering on the master’s degree program will attract greater talent to the field of philanthropy.”

As a precursor to the degree program, the BSU College of Business launched a pilot philanthropy fellowship program to better prepare students interested in pursuing careers in philanthropy and non-profit management. The initial cohort of four students began their year-long immersion in the program this month. Sponsoring organizations include ABFE, Tides, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

“Tides is delighted to create space and opportunities for the next generation of Black social change leaders. It is important to us that students understand the vital role of philanthropy in addressing social justice and creating a world of shared prosperity,” said Janiece Evans-Page, CEO of Tides. “Students of color often learn how their communities are disproportionately impacted by inequities, but that is not where we want the narrative to end. We want them to understand best practices in strategic philanthropic and social impact, particularly in service of BIPOC-led organizations. Real change is possible, and these students will play an instrumental role in accelerating social change.”

Student fellows will be required to maintain a minimum, six-credit course load throughout the fellowship year and will be paired with and mentored by a C-suite executive within the fellow’s sponsoring organization. Fellows will also be required to attend monthly BSU Philanthropy Fellowship Seminars for 12 months, which provide a vehicle for mutual sharing, group projects, and guidance.

“There are more than 1.5 million charitable organizations in the United States according to the National Philanthropic Trust,” said Dr. James Hyman, assistant professor of public administration in the College of Business. “In 2020, Americans gave \$471 billion to education, health, and other causes. “Our Fellows program will enable students to derive a better understanding of the business of philanthropy and prepare them for jobs within the sector.”

In addition to exposing fellows to grant making contexts and procedures, the fellowship will emphasize four specific exposures; (1) strategic planning in the context of program development and review; (2) program assessment for planning evaluations; (3) familiarity with reading and assessing financial documents; and (4) real life, in-community experience.

The Master of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Management (MPNM) Program objectives are to (1) increase the numbers and capacities of black executive leaders in the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors; and (2) to produce a new crop of HBCU graduates who can be more effective as change agents on issues affecting communities of color. ABFE will inject a practitioner perspective into BSU’s curriculum development efforts for the Philanthropy Program and lend its support to its funding and human resource development.

The MPNM Program is scheduled to launch in the Fall semester of 2024 with a curriculum that is contextualized to better address the political, social, civic, and economic concerns and needs of communities of color.

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About ABFE:

ABFE is a membership-based philanthropic organization that advocates for responsive and transformative investments in Black communities. Partnering with foundations, corporations, nonprofits, and individuals, ABFE provides its members with professional development and technical assistance resources that further the philanthropic sector’s connection and responsiveness to issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Established in 1971 as the Association of Black Foundation Executives, the organization was credited with many of philanthropy’s early gains in diversity. It since has evolved into an influential network. For more information, visit www.abfe.org.