CONSTRUCTION DIVERSITY INITIATIVE
Diversity Research, Policy and Training for the Building Industries

INDUSTRY BREAKFAST & ROUNDTABLE
TUESDAY, AUGUST 6, 2019 | 8:30 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY | LOW LIBRARY ROTUNDA | 515 WEST 116TH STREET | NEW YORK CITY
The “Construction Diversity Initiative (CDI)” is an interdisciplinary research, policy, and training initiative within Columbia University’s School of Professional Studies to produce, deploy and transfer knowledge around minority, women, veteran and related diversity stakeholders in the building industries.

Research First...

Our mission is to promote and sustain an economic development agenda in New York’s construction market through scholarship, pedagogy and best practice. CDI would be the first of its kind, and its research agenda would be oriented towards three principle domains: (i) learning, training and development, (ii) investigating key diversity research questions and (iii) data collection and analysis.

More specifically, in the initial year, CDI will seek to build the foundations for a set of frameworks, research lines, a body of knowledge and a training curriculum to promote and advance diversity across all phases of the development, design, and construction process, specifically as it relates to institutional, transportation, infrastructure and emerging technologies.

Capacity as a Strategic Necessity...

The New York metropolitan area is currently undergoing one of the largest construction expansions in recent history. Over $200 billion in construction activity is planned in the next five years alone with infrastructure projects sponsored by the public and private sector expected to last well beyond 2030. In aggregate, this will represent the region’s largest building initiative in history, with first and second order effects on our future workforce, community and the equity of our economic development.

Not surprisingly, New York State (“NYS”) and New York City (“NYC”) have made Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprise (“M/WBE”) participation a leading priority in their procurement and economic development strategies. Columbia University was the earliest adopter of high diversity goals. With its Minority, Women and Locally-owned business goal of 35 percent established in 2008, it changed the game for private entities. At the same time, the University also established a workforce goal of 40 percent, which it has achieved every year since its establishment. In his 2014 State of the State address, Governor Andrew Cuomo set NYS procurement goals for M/WBE utilization at 30 percent, the nation’s highest governmental goal. The following year, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the OneNYC plan with a ten-year goal of reaching $16 billion in expenditures with M/WBE, setting the example for a national M/WBE agenda. Strengthening these programs through independent research and evidence-based analysis is the perfect time to spearhead an initiative that can meaningfully contribute to evidence-based policy making through research, dialogue and programming.

Closing the Gap...

This gap is a significant barrier to the agenda’s effectiveness and immediate impact on the industry, the diverse communities it serves and our development initiatives. An opportunity exists to shape New York M/WBE programs in ways that can foster meaningful and sustained change, and just as important, private, NYS and NYC programs can continue setting the example for a national M/WBE agenda. Strengthening these programs through independent research and evidence-based analysis and training should be an important and prominent policy and industry-wide objective no matter where one falls on the policy line.
The School of Professional Studies (SPS) at Columbia University (CU) spans the continuum from high school and pre-college students through lifelong learners with innovative offerings at the highest levels of academic excellence. Our mission is to provide a rigorous education, informed by rapidly evolving global market needs that supports the academic and professional aspirations of our student community. Our vision is to become the premier destination for professional education by generating interdisciplinary thought leadership, developing innovative pedagogy and advancing globally competitive academic solutions for ambitious agents of change and impact.

www.sps.columbia.edu

Columbia University Facilities and Operations supports the core educational and research mission of the University by maintaining a safe, beautiful and functional campus environment and providing services and spaces for campus life and activity outside the classroom. Facilities and Operations is responsible for the safety, preservation and maintenance of Columbia’s real estate portfolio. It provides space planning; supplier diversity; oversight of new building design and construction; renovation, repair and restoration of existing spaces; operations and maintenance of buildings and grounds; and management of the University apartment housing inventory and campus public safety. Within campus, Facilities and Operations also serves the community through the operation of its residential and retail dining program, student health services, event catering and venue management, undergraduate residence halls, student center and bookstore and sustainability engagement.

www.cufo.columbia.edu

Diversity Agenda is a print and digital platform that creates meaningful conversations on diversity and inclusion across every industry. Our publications, newsletters, social media and videos feature key decision makers, new ideas and the breaking news that are important to our readers. Our special events and outreach programs build on industry trends and cutting-edge agendas to create robust conferences and forums.

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