

Robin Hood's 8th Annual Investors Conference Promotes Inclusion, Diversity

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Robin Hood, New York City's largest poverty-fighting organization, promoted inclusion and diversity this week at its annual Robin Hood Investors Conference, which took place on October 27 and 28, 2020 as a virtual forum. Among the conference's 1,500 attendees were 66 students from historically black colleges and universities, known as HBCUs.

"The number of people of colour, particularly Black people, in leadership roles within the world of high finance is still relatively small and shockingly disproportionate. There aren't a lot of people on Wall Street or in the high echelons of corporate America who look like me," said Wes Moore, CEO of Robin Hood. "I wanted to identify a concrete way to help expose each of these remarkable HBCU students to a virtual, closed-door conference experience with 65 speakers representing over \$5 trillion in asset management. I hope their participation – alongside of industry titans who represent the best and brightest among hedge fund managers, tech innovators, finance leaders, real estate investors, and influential policy experts who are defining the landscape for global investing – will inspire each of these students to manage their own portfolio one day, but also to know that they belong in these rooms. The industry, our nation's economy, and local communities of colour need their skill, passion, and drive."

According to a [2019 Knight Foundation analysis](#) that includes hedge funds, mutual funds, real estate funds, and private equity funds; firms owned by white men manage 98.7% of the \$69 trillion managed by the U.S. asset management industry.

“This conference is a tremendous opportunity for our students to experience, first-hand, the dynamics of discussions among industry executives in finance and asset management who direct many of the resources that shape the future of communities around the world,” said Aminta H. Breaux, President of Bowie State University. “I commend Robin Hood for opening it up to HBCU students, enabling students to begin to visualize themselves in these roles one day.”

Through a generous gift from D.E. Shaw & Co, students attending this year’s conference represented Bowie State University in Bowie, Maryland; Clarke-Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia; Coppin State University in Baltimore, Maryland; Howard University in Washington, D.C.; Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, Florida; and Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.

Student participation in the conference is rare, and this is the first year HBCUs have participated. There are 101 HBCUs in the United States, accounting for only 3% of the country’s colleges and universities, yet they enrol 10% of the nation’s Black college students and their graduates represent about 20% of all Black graduates nationally each year.

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