

The GNO, Inc. HBCU STEM Connect Internship

The goal of the HBCU STEM Connect Internship is to connect STEM business and industry leaders in the Greater New Orleans region with HBCU STEM undergraduates to increase diversity, equity and inclusion in these employment areas where there is traditionally a deficit in underrepresented minority and gender groups.

Black and Hispanic workers are underrepresented in STEM jobs relative to their shares in the U.S. workforce as a whole. Black workers make up 9% of the STEM workforce, smaller than their share of all employed U.S. adults (11%). They comprise just 5% of those in engineering and architecture and 6% each in life and physical science jobs. Hispanic workers represent 8% of the STEM workforce, substantially lower than their 17% share of all employed. The share of Hispanics is similarly low (8% to 9%) across STEM job clusters (Pew Research Center, 2021). According to another report issued by the Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy in the 21st Century and the Committee on Science, Engineering and Public Policy, due to the recent demographic shifts in the college-age population, the technological and economic strength of the U.S. will depend on the participation and success of minorities in STEM fields, particularly at the highest levels of education (National Academy of Sciences [NAS], 2017). As part of the GNO, Inc.'s Workforce Development and Economic Mobility Strategy, the Region 1 STEM Center seeks to reduce the STEM gap, especially within the minority community, in order to grow our regional economy by attracting and retaining industry and business. Internships provide a meaningful way for students to connect their learning with the real impact that a STEM career can have on the real world. Accordingly, the Region 1 STEM Center proposes to initiate, in partnership with Xavier, Dillard, and SUNO (referred to collectively as "partnering institutions"), the STEM Connect Internship. This program will connect STEM business and industry with a highly trained, diverse workforce that will benefit from real life experience within this ecosystem.

The HBCU STEM Connect Internship is seeking to pair 15 selected juniors and seniors from the partnering institutions with STEM- related business in the region who are seeking qualified, diverse talent. This program is designed to increase access to marketable, resume- building experience for the interns and develop a graduation to employment pipeline for the participating businesses. Participants will gain real life experience in their field of study, receive professional mentorship, and acquire industry contacts to help facilitate their transition into the workforce. Participating interns will be paid a salary of \$15.00 per hour for work performed and extensive professional development.

Successful intern candidates will be expected to:

- Follow company policies for employees
- Fulfill tasks and assignments timely and accurately
- Communicate appropriately and effectively with internship staff and employers
- Gain valuable workforce experience in their respective STEM field of study (160 hours)

Timeline

Below is a tentative timeline to initiating and completing the HBCU STEM Connect first cohort:

- **July-September 2021**
 - Design the scope and trajectory of the HBCU STEM Connect Internship
 - Outreach to HBCU education partners to introduce the internship
 - Outreach and solicit STEM business/industry partners to host interns at their company
 - Develop content for the website, which will be housed on the STEM center website
- **October-November 2021**
 - Finalize internship parameters with university partners
 - Secure funding opportunities to pay interns (if companies are unable to provide pay)
- **December 2021**
 - Meet with HBCU partners to facilitate the creation of an MOU between educational institutions, business/industry partners, and GNO, Inc.
 - Create internship application form (housed on Region 1 STEM Center website)
- **January - March 2022**
 - Host luncheon meeting with HBCU's and business partners to review internship parameters and expectations
 - Select applicant pools to be submitted to host companies
 - Host companies will conduct interviews and choose their selected candidate(s)
 - Inform internship finalists of their selection
 - Graduating seniors begin career trajectory planning with 1881 Research Institute
- **April 2022**
 - Host a meet and greet event with both the selected interns and their respective business representative(s)
 - Host luncheon for finalists who elect to participate
 - Intern Workshop Training Day
- **May-June 2022**
 - Interns will have targeted professional development that focus on topics such as: Building capacity in professional STEM environments, Diversity in STEM, STEM Soft Skills (resume building, curriculum vitae, interviewing, etc...)
- **June 2022**
 - HBCU STEM Connect Internship Program concludes
 - Mentorship Completion Ceremony
 - Program Feedback Surveys
- **August 2022**
 - Program reflection and data analysis