

■ JULIE E. KENDALL, Feature Editor, School of Business-Camden, Rutgers University

This doctoral student issues column is devoted to The PhD Project created by KPMG for minority students in business doctoral programs. I had the distinct pleasure of serving as a guest speaker during The PhD Project Doctoral Students Association Information Systems meeting held in Baltimore last August. It was a life-altering experience, which is why I wanted to share it with you as members of DSI. I hope that you will be able to share personally in this experience in some way, either as faculty or Ph.D. student. The amount of support and love shown at this meeting was truly remarkable. With this solid support that conveys a strong sense of family, the students are bound to succeed. Although I was invited to speak as a faculty mentor, I was the one who felt as if I was gaining great knowledge. I hope you enjoy the following column by our guest columnist, Bernie Milano, executive director of the KPMG Foundation, which is a founding sponsor of the Association.

The PhD Project's Doctoral Students Associations

By Bernard Milano, KPMG Foundation

Presently, African-American, Hispanic American and Native Americans make up less than two percent of all business school faculties. Research has demonstrated that minority students are discouraged by the severe scarcity of minority business school professors serving as role models and mentors.

The five Doctoral Students Associations (accounting, finance, information systems, management and marketing) are part of a broad initiative by the KPMG Foundation to diversify business school faculties. The centerpiece is The PhD Project, an internationally recognized program to encourage African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Native Americans to leave corporate positions and enter doctoral programs in business, where they can serve as mentors and role models to future generations of minority business students.

Three Objectives of The PhD Project

The PhD Project is a collaborative \$6 million effort of universities, corporate America and the leading associations of management education. It works systemically to enhance accounting education, all business education and corporate America. Started in 1994 by the KPMG Peat Marwick Foundation with the help of lead co-spon-

sors Graduate Management Admission Council, AACSB and Citibank, this program has three main objectives:

1. To bring more diversity to American business school faculties by encouraging minorities in successful business careers to leave their jobs and enter business doctoral programs, so they can become business school professors and attract and influence future generations of minority business school students.
2. To bring more diversity to American business by increasing the number of minorities entering business school programs.
3. Ultimately to improve all of corporate America by producing a richer mix of managers whose varying backgrounds, talents, and experience will make stronger and more capable business entities.

Creating Peer Support for Minority Ph.D. Students

The Minority Doctoral Students Associations aim to improve retention by creating a network of peer support, mentoring and information-sharing that doctoral students say can be critical to their success. They establish strong support systems for people of color pursuing Ph.D. degrees. In an iso-



Bernard J. Milano, CPA, is partner in charge—university relations, diversity, and alumni programs for KPMG, and trustee and executive director of the KPMG Foundation. Mr. Milano is the creator and director of The PhD Project, including five

minority Doctoral Students Associations, a systemic effort to increase the pool of minority candidates for business positions by increasing the pool of minority business professors. The PhD Project is co-sponsored by some of the most prominent corporations, academic organizations, and universities in the U.S. Mr. Milano graduated from Temple University with a BS degree in accounting, and started his career with Peat Marwick in the audit practice of the Philadelphia office. In 1975, he transferred to KPMG's Executive Office. He lives in Allendale, New Jersey, with his wife, Sharon, and sons Matthew, 7, and Adam, 5.

lated setting, often as the only minority in their program on campus, these students typically do not benefit from the same peer and mentoring relationships that help majority students withstand the rigors of pursuing a doctoral degree.

In addition to providing peer support in their university setting, the associations provide doctoral students of color with the networking opportunities in their specific business disciplines that can help them achieve their goals. They begin building their support networks, and identify potential mentors, at all critical stages in their doctoral program. Close interaction with leading professors—this population's role models and potential mentors—is especially valuable. The annual conference serves as the catalyst and focal point for the ongoing networking/mentoring that ensues. It also delivers two days of seminars and workshops aimed at equipping doctoral students with the information, guidance, and support they need to complete the challenging course of study that lies ahead for them.

Every African-American, Hispanic-American or Native American student in a business doctoral program in the United States is a member.

Business doctoral programs are by nature very arduous and challenging. Doctoral programs in general have a 25 percent attrition rate. Minority students are faced with the added disadvantage of not having others like themselves in their programs. Often, this loneliness can lead to them dropping out. The associations have been very effective in countering this trend—more than 95 percent of participants finish their programs.

Joining The PhD Project's Doctoral Students Associations

Once participants have chosen to enter a doctoral program, they become members of The PhD Project's Doctoral Students Associations. Improving student retention rates will create more new minority professors of business. It will lead to an increase in output—the number of successful new Ph.D.'s ready to become business professors. The associations were created to achieve this goal and maximize completion rates.

Created in 1994, the five Doctoral Students Associations offer networking opportunities

for minorities who are often the only ones of their ethnic or racial background in their particular programs. Major activities of the associations are annual conferences in conjunction with the annual conference of the association for each discipline of management education. The doctoral students association meeting and the organization's other activities help doctoral students interact, share knowledge with, and get support from each other and from minority faculty. At their annual conference and in follow-on activities, the doctoral students acquire tools and skills in teaching, writing, and research that enhance both their performance as students and their prospects for employment as professors. Moreover, minority students in the association report sharing these tools and skills with all other doctoral students in their programs, contributing further to The PhD Project's positive impact on business education.

Throughout the U.S., there are today just 388 minority business professors—a population that took decades to amass, yet still represents less than five percent of all business faculty. The PhD Project and The PhD Projects Doctoral Students Associations reports that 374 African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Native Americans

are now enrolled nationwide in business doctoral programs, pursuing the Ph.D. that will qualify them to become business professors—far more than ever enrolled before. If you are interested in The PhD Project, feel free to contact Bernie Milano. Below is a list of upcoming association meetings.

Doctoral Students Associations Meetings for 1999:

Marketing, August 5-7, 1999, San Francisco, Calif.

Management, August 6-9, 1999, Chicago, Ill.

Information Systems, August 11-13, 1999, Milwaukee, Wis.

Accounting, August 13-15, 1999, San Diego, Calif.

Finance, October 4-6, 1999, in Orlando, Fla.

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Mel Stith (left), dean of the College of Business, Florida State University, and one of the founders of The PhD Project, and **Bernie Milano (right)** executive director of the KPMG Foundation, present **Alisa Mosley** her honorary cap for being the first of hundreds of minorities to graduate from The PhD Project. **Dr. Mosley** is currently an assistant professor at Jackson State University.