

Proposed Cuts to STEM Education and NASA Spur IT Companies to Rally in Support of "Hidden GEM" on 9/7

Leading Tech Firms Attend NY Gala for GEM: Nonprofit Filling Tech Diversity Pipeline with 4000+ Since 1976

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, USA, September 6, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Proposed Budget Cuts to STEM Education and NASA



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*Brennon Marcano, CEO,
National GEM Consortium*

Spur Leading IT Companies to Rally on 9/7 in Support of Silicon Valley's Best Kept Secret: The "Hidden Figure" Filling Tech's Diversity Pipeline

- Intel, Amazon, Adobe and other tech firms will be rallying to support #HiddenGEM...
- The National GEM Consortium is a focused nonprofit organization that's been filling tech's diversity pipeline in a big way — since 1976 — by providing full-tuition STEM Fellowships to highly qualified graduate students of color (4,000+), as well as finding the GEM Fellows paid internships

and job placement at IT companies and government research institutions such as Intel and NASA.

- You may be surprised to know that GEM alumni are a veritable who's-who in STEM, academia and the corporate executive ranks: GEM Fellows include former Xerox CEO Ursula Burns, former Booz Allen EVP Reginald Van Lee, Chaired MIT Engineering professor Christine Ortiz, Old Dominion University's Engineering School Dean Stephanie G. Adams and GE Senior IP Counsel Cecilia Vega, to name only a few...
- Thursday's fundraiser will honor leaders of diversity and inclusion in STEM: Intel CEO Brian Krzanich, Georgia Institute of Technology President Bud Peterson and Partpic CTO Nashlie Spehus.
- This is an important story because of the persistent lack of diversity in tech and it's interesting because GEM is a highly impactful organization that's been under the radar.

New York, NY – September 6, 2017 – Brennon Marcano, CEO of the National GEM Consortium, explained, "We're excited to hold this fundraiser in the largest media market because GEM is not a household name — yet it should be. Over the decades we've placed scores of brilliant Wonder Women at NASA and other government research institutions. And in light of the proposed cuts, GEM is more necessary than ever. What most people don't know is that each year GEM has roughly 600 applicants who have superlative qualifications, but we have to turn them down because we don't have enough 'American GEMs,' if you will, like Intel and Adobe, who are stepping up to the plate. For America to compete in the global economy, there must be more funding from government—not less. And there must be more investment from the corporate sector. It's not a lack of pipeline. It's a lack of funding."

The White House budget proposal for fiscal year 2018 calls for a \$9.2 billion, or 13.5 percent, spending cut to education spread across K-12 and higher education. The federal government would stop subsidizing the interest on student loans, for a decrease of \$1 billion. This would add thousands of dollars to the cost of college, primarily for low-income graduates. Federal financial support for low-income undergraduate students in the form of Pell Grants would be reduced by \$3.9 billion. The Pell Grant program, the largest federal grant program, awards up to \$5,920 to students in families that earn less than \$40,000 a year and is prioritized for families earning \$20,000 or less.

Marcano added, "If students from under-represented groups can't make it to the undergraduate level, how are they supposed to make it to the graduate level, where STEM scholars are most needed?"

The spending plan would also eliminate \$1.6 billion for the recent federal law, the Every Student Succeeds Act, which state and local school districts use for STEM courses, increased access to STEM for underserved populations, science fairs and specialty STEM schools and afterschool programs, among many other initiatives. Spending on teacher preparation would be decreased by \$2.4 billion, money that school districts use to recruit STEM educators and restructure pay scales for hard-to-fill jobs, which often include math and science teachers.

NASA Would have to shutter its \$115 million Office of Education, space camp and scores of classroom projects geared toward engaging students in STEM. The NASA Education Office consists of K-12 education outreach, scholarships, fellowships, grants, and more. Essentially, it trains the next generation of scientists, engineers, educators and astronauts.

Senior NASA scientist and GEM alumnae Powtawche Valerino explained how she could not have made it to graduate school and NASA without the assistance of the National GEM Consortium. "It was a childhood dream for me to obtain a graduate degree in Engineering with an emphasis in space applications. GEM helped me realize my dream by providing full financial support for my Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering at Rice University, summer work opportunities at NASA-Johnson Space Center and NASA-Stennis Space Center, and ultimately the full-tuition for my PhD from Rice University."

Multiple patent-owner Mary Spio, who recently received Syracuse University's highest alumni award, and who is in large part responsible for the satellite data streaming we all enjoy, shared a similar story about the life-altering impact of GEM. Mary is now CEO of premier virtual reality company CEEK VR.

According to Eric D. Evans, Director of MIT's Lincoln Laboratory, "The National GEM Consortium is a critically important part of our diversity and inclusion programs. GEM has connected us to a much wider pool of top talent pursuing STEM-related degrees."

Marcano concluded, "There are thousands of GEM success stories like Mary's. The bottom line is that America cannot afford to lose the next generation of scientists. Not from a national security standpoint and not from a general advancements in STEM standpoint. We would be shooting ourselves in the foot."

The fundraiser will be held at New York's Marriot Marquis. The event is open to select media representatives by request.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL GEM CONSORTIUM www.gemfellowship.org

Established in 1976, the National GEM Consortium is a network of leading corporations, government laboratories, universities (such as Ohio State University, University of California at Berkeley, Virginia

Tech and SUNY- Albany) and research institutions that provides scholars of color with full-tuition fellowships in STEM at the Masters and PhD level. GEM also assists its Fellows with finding paid internships and full-time post-Fellowship job placement within its network. GEM has awarded more than 4,000 Fellowships to STEM leaders since its inception and each year awards approximately 300 Fellowships.

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