

The Conversation Launches Ambitious Initiative to Increase Diversity in Expert Voices

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, December 3, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Conversation U.S. is launching an ambitious plan to ensure experts in the American media look more like the American population. Supported by many leading universities and foundations, the strategic initiative extends The Conversation's successful efforts to unlock the knowledge of academic



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Beth Daley, Editor and General Manager

experts through journalism for the public. It is also designed to help other media organizations easily tap into a pool of diverse expertise for their own reporting and interviews.

This Diversity Initiative is funded by 41 colleges and universities – listed below – as well as the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the Lumina Foundation.

"We're grateful to these funders, who have recognized that a key part of rebuilding America's trust in expertise and

facts is helping people to see themselves represented among expert voices in the media," said Bruce Wilson, Chief Innovation and Development Officer of The Conversation U.S. "Our approach will identify, cultivate, listen to and develop these academics to be public voices, enabling them to share their scholarly expertise on all the subjects researched in America's great colleges and universities."

Since its launch in the fall of 2014, The Conversation has become the leading forum for scholars to share their expertise with the public through a unique collaboration with experienced editors. The result is 10-12 stories a day published on www.theconversation.com, distributed by The Associated Press, and republished under a free Creative Commons license by hundreds of news outlets in every state. Readership has more than doubled since before the pandemic, reaching over 20 million readers monthly, as the public searches for reliable information.

By working with scholarly experts who are more representative of the U.S. public, The Conversation aims to increase trust in expert perspectives.

"These perspectives will provide authentic authority in the public discussion. Events of the last few years have underscored the dangers when citizens distrust researchers and the media," said Beth Daley, Editor and General Manager of The Conversation U.S. "Our vision is for The

Conversation U.S. to be recognized as the most important platform for bringing inclusive voices to diverse audiences in the U.S. and beyond.”

The effort encompasses a variety of definitions of diversity. “We aim to help Black, Latinx, AAPI and Indigenous scholars be heard and seen, but also share the knowledge of a larger number of American experts who are women, from rural areas, immigrants, identify with LGBTQ+ communities, work for minority-serving institutions or are in other ways under-represented voices,” said Daley.

As of Nov. 18, The Conversation has raised over \$250,000 to support this effort. The funding will go toward:

Professional development for promising scholars of color to be trained in public engagement, and creating a community of these scholars for the long-term nurturing of their public scholarship efforts.

Development of a database of scholars of color both for use by The Conversation for its journalism and to share with other news outlets looking to diversify their sources. Several leading media brands have expressed interest in using this database.

Mentoring scholars of color with opportunities to discuss story ideas with our editors during regular “office hours.”

Outreach to scholars of color to encourage the sharing of their knowledge with readers of The Conversation and across the media ecosystem.

Convene events with key stakeholder groups to bring attention to this critical issue.

As of Nov. 18, 41 college and university members of The Conversation have also committed additional funding to this initiative. These institutions are:

American University
Amherst College
Arizona State University
Bowdoin College
Brandeis University
Clarkson University
Clemson University
Colorado State University
Indiana University Bloomington
Iowa State University
Michigan State University
The Ohio State University
Oklahoma State University
Penn State University
Purdue University
Rochester Institute of Technology

Rutgers University-Newark
Texas A&M University
Texas A&M University San Antonio
Texas State University
Tufts University
University of Arizona
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Connecticut
University of Florida
University of Maryland Baltimore County
University of Massachusetts Amherst
University of Massachusetts System
University of Memphis
University of Miami
University of Michigan
University of Nebraska Omaha
University of Richmond
University of South Florida
University of Southern California
University of Tennessee Knoxville
University of Texas at Austin, College of Liberal Arts
University of Virginia
Vanderbilt University
Wayne State University
West Virginia University

About The Conversation

The Conversation U.S. is an independent source of news commentary and analysis from academics and researchers delivered directly to the public. A team of professional editors work with academic scholars to translate their research for the wider public. Access to trusted, independent, high-quality and authenticated explanatory journalism is critical to a functioning democracy. Our goal is to promote better understanding of current affairs and complex issues, leading to a better quality of public discourse. Visit theconversation.com/us.

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