

Dear 2021 HBCU Making and Innovation Showcase Participants:

Welcome to the 2021 HBCU Making and Innovation Showcase hosted by The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Inclusive STEM Ecosystems for Equity and Diversity (ISEED) Unit and supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF) HBCU-UP Program. Since 2018, we have convened three HBCU Making and Innovation Showcases and supported ~200 HBCU students and faculty from 22 HBCUs to develop and pitch their prototypes in response to one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, teams have participated in professional development sessions, mentoring and coaching in the areas of making, innovation, invention and entrepreneurship.

We are excited to have Bibi Hildago, Associate Administrator, Office of Government Contracting and Business Development (GCBD), U.S. Small Business Administration for our Orientation and Sudip Parikh - AAAS CEO and Executive Publisher of the Science Family of Journals for our Opening Plenary Keynote on Thursday. Our Breakfast Plenary Keynote on Friday will be Baindu Bayon - Principal Consultant, BBC Entrepreneurial Training and Consulting. Friday professional development session topics will include Transdisciplinary Teams (Ron Williams – Coppin State), Career Pathways Panel (LaKisha Greenwade – Wearable Tech, Dorothy Jones-Davis – Nation of Makers), Innovator Basics (Brandon Andrews – Shark Tank), Technology Transfer (Elli Fini – Arizona State, Laura Collins – NC A&T) and Design Thinking Frameworks (Chinonye Nnakwe-Whitley – NSF). Saturday will kick off with our Showcase where HBCU teams will pitch their innovation in front of an expert panel of judges and a Shark Tank Talent Scout for prize money. Our Closing Plenary Awards Luncheon Keynote will feature Chike Aguh, Chief Innovation Officer, U.S. Department of Labor.

Thanks to our AAAS Project Team: Allison Gonzalez, Tarrick Clayton, Janaya Thompson, Beth Ruedi, Kathy Arias, Cassandra Jones and Hannah Weiss; our NSF Program Officers: Carleitta Paige-Anderson, our AAAS leadership: Sudip Parikh, Shirley Malcom and Tavis York, and our Advisory Board: Laura Collins (NC A&T), Ron Williams (Coppin State), Demetria Gallagher, Brandon Andrews (Shark Tank), Dorothy Jones-Davis (Nation of Makers), Joyce Ward (USPTO), Elli Fini (Arizona State), and Quincy Brown (OSTP). As a professional society, AAAS is *working to advance science, engineering, and innovation throughout the world for the benefit of all people*. Please visit <https://iie.aaas.org/> to learn more about our HBCU Innovation Initiative.

Sincerely,

*Iris R. Wagstaff*

*Neela White*

Iris R. Wagstaff, STEM Program Director, NSF PI and Neela White, Project Director, NSF Co-PI

