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Equality and Inclusion

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Oct. 14, 2020



The Maryland Association of CPAs has formalized its commitment to a more diverse, equal, and inclusive accounting and finance profession by restructuring its 28-year-old Education Foundation to focus increasingly on DEI-related issues, conversations, and potential solutions.

As a sign of its commitment to those ideals, the MACPA's Board of Directors has appointed a new Education Foundation board to oversee the group's activities. The appointment of the 12-person board took place during the MACPA Board of Directors' meeting on Sept. 25.

“With the heightened imperative for change that our country and profession is feeling, we need to advance our leadership role to be a voice for that change,” said

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- Avonette Blanding, CFO for Maritime Applied Physics and chair of the MACPA’s Board of Directors.
- Sharonne Bonardi, deputy comptroller for the State of Maryland.
- Samantha Bowling, partner with Garbelman Winslow.
- Susan Chutka, a managing director with Deloitte.
- Herb Geary, partner with TGM Group.
- Jessica McClain, controller for Brand USA.
- Anoop Mehta, CEO of Science Systems and Applications, Inc.
- Nik Tatum, senior director, Corporate and Global Accounting for Under Armour.
- George Willie, a managing partner with Bert Smith & Co.

In keeping with the MACPA’s rich history of diversity and inclusion of thought, the board includes six men and six women, four of whom work for local firms, two of whom work for national / international firms, three of whom work in business and industry, and three of whom work for governments or non-profit organizations.

The foundation’s initial objective will be to share stories and candid conversations that will help move the profession from a point of uncertainty or fear to one of learning, understanding, hope and, eventually, change.

“As our Education Foundation leaders, members, and future members share their perspectives, insights, and influence into how the MACPA can impact the profession and transform the world, we believe we can inform and lead a community that creates lasting change,” Hood said. “Together, we will develop that strategy and focus.”

The foundation will focus its efforts in a number of ways, including:

- **Sharing stories:** We all respond to and learn from the story of human experiences. Setting context with stories of our history, our current reality, and profiles of

people who are the future of our profession could be a powerful catalyst.

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Audiences for these messages include MACPA members, future members (including students and educators), leaders throughout the profession, and strategic partners at organizations such as the AICPA, the National Association of Black Accountants, Ascend (which focuses on Pan-Asian leaders), and many others.

“We are fortunate to have a diverse board of leaders who have influence and will give us good guidance,” Ellison-Taylor said.

Added Jackie Brown, chief operating officer of the MACPA: “We have passionate people, purpose, and a plan.”

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