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## HBCU Social Impact Leaders Forum and Nasdaq Tour Exposes Students to Finance Careers, Social Impact Investing

**ATLANTA (June 19, 2024)**—A coalition of 22 students from five Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) will be traveling to Times Square on June 20-21 to visit Nasdaq and meet with global finance and corporate executives as part of the HBCU Social Impact Leaders Forum, an initiative launched by Shared Interest, a New York-based nonprofit guarantee fund promoting global investment in communities of color nationwide and in Southern Africa. The financial market tour, funded in part by the Nasdaq Foundation and Henry Schein, Inc., is designed to expose diverse students to careers in social impact investing, innovative finance, and entrepreneurship, growing fields where Black talent is vastly underrepresented.

National studies show that only [5 percent](#) of finance professionals are Black while 13 percent of the nation's population is Black. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [reports](#) that overall employment in business and finance is projected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through 2032, driving the need for diversifying the fields. In addition, Black women [receive less than 0.35 percent of all venture capital funding](#), according to Crunchbase.

Students representing Howard University, Morehouse College, Spelman College, Clark Atlanta University, and Florida A&M University will be participating in the HBCU Social Impact Leaders Forum tour and the Nasdaq Closing Bell on Thursday and Friday. More than 200 students in [Shared Interest's](#) HBCU Social Impact Leaders pilot program have benefitted from the organization's outreach on careers in innovative finance, social impact investing, and entrepreneurship in the US and Southern Africa.

"The nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities have an outsized impact on the development of successful Black professionals in all fields. Shared Interest launched the HBCU Social Impact Leaders Forum to encourage more students to pursue careers in finance, entrepreneurship, and impact investing that can advance inclusive and sustainable development in Black communities nationally and globally," said Ann McMikel, Executive Director of Shared Interest and proud alumnus of Spelman College. "Shared Interest is committed to fostering the development of the next generation of social impact investors, financial leaders, and entrepreneurs who are critical to driving sustainable development campaigns and solutions for addressing climate change, gender equality, food security, affordable housing, and the digital divide in their communities."

In 2023, Shared Interest received a grant from the Nasdaq Foundation to address the dearth of information and resources available to HBCU students focused on social impact and ESG investing, innovative finance, and global entrepreneurship, which is critical to addressing the unique social barriers to economic mobility in the black community.

In addition to its work with HBCUs, Shared Interest serves as a leading nonprofit guarantee fund dedicated to providing Black women entrepreneurs and other small-and-medium-sized enterprises with access to the financing, markets, and skills they need to build wealth and drive prosperity for their communities in Southern Africa. The organization has provided \$34 million in loan guarantees that has unlocked \$131 million in local capital for Black small-and-medium-sized businesses in Southern Africa, ultimately benefitting the lives of 2.3 million people in Southern Africa.

Henry Schein's support of Shared Interest's mission reflects the company's mutual commitment to create a pipeline of Black professionals into the business community and to help ensure lasting change and empowerment for low-income entrepreneurs, small businesses, and marginalized communities.

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#### **About Shared Interest**

Shared Interest is a nonprofit guarantee fund that grew out of the US-based anti-apartheid movement to move local financial institutions to lend to black women entrepreneurs and other small and growing businesses in Southern Africa who are vital to the region's emerging democracy and economic growth. To date, Shared Interest has provided \$34 million in loan guarantees that has unlocked \$131 million in loans to Black-owned small and medium-sized enterprises in South Africa, Mozambique, Eswatini, Malawi and Zambia, reaching 2.3 million beneficiaries from black and economically disenfranchised communities. Its latest business model is designed to reach 100,000 beneficiaries from Southern Africa – 60 percent of whom are women and youth.

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