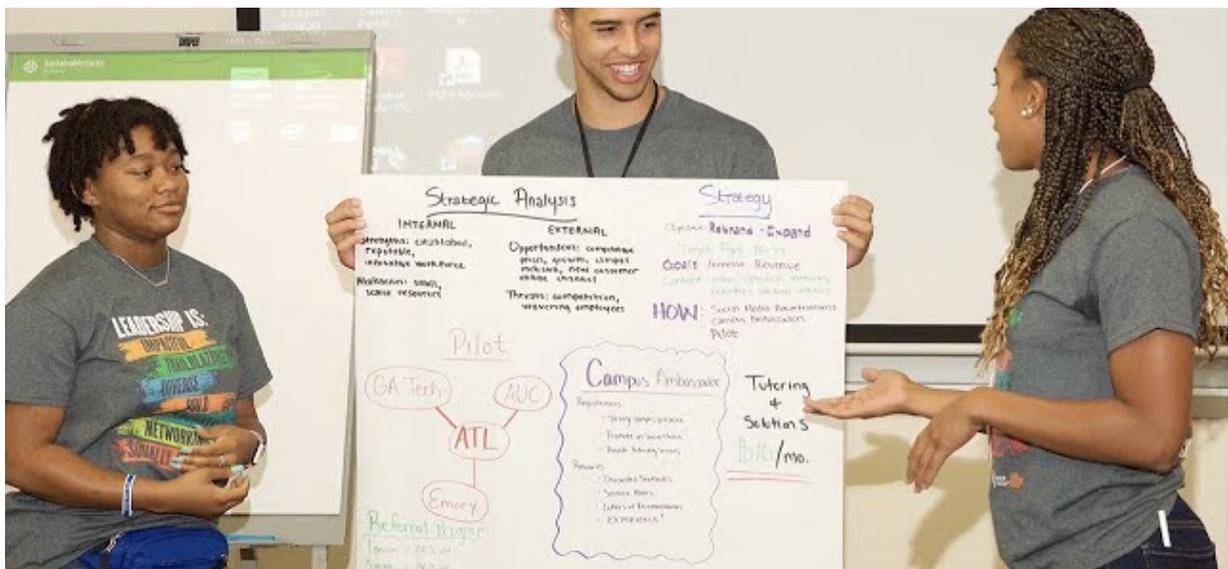


INNOVATE

Empowering 10 Years of Black Impact: The Walton/UNCF K-12 Education Fellowship Program—Moving from a Dream to an Established Reality in K-12 Education



The 2018-2019 academic year marked the 10th anniversary of the Walton Family Foundation’s collaboration with UNCF, a collaboration that’s kicked efforts to improve K-12 education by and for African Americans into a true reality.

In 2009, UNCF partnered with the foundation to create a unique venture originally called the UNCF Social Entrepreneurship (USE) Program. The USE Program offered paid internships for undergraduate students enrolled at select HBCUs and worked to support Black students who wanted to become social entrepreneurs. In 2012, the program was revamped,

streamlining focus and changed its name to the Walton/UNCF K-12 Education Fellowship Program. While the program continued to offer paid internships and professional development training for HBCU students, the focus of the new program became laser-aimed at building a robust pipeline of students from HBCUs who are interested in pursuing careers in K-12 education. Today, the program offers HBCU juniors a paid summer internship at K-12 schools and education enterprises, leadership and professional development, a senior year experience (i.e., mentoring, career coaching, job search and graduate school application assistance), an online community and alumni engagement and training opportunities.

Because education has proven to be a path toward social mobility and economic independence, quality education has always been of supreme importance to the Black community—from desegregating K-12 schools and colleges to advocating for HBCUs, the African American community has always championed access and equitable educational opportunities for students. That path to education equity requires a workforce of strong and committed Black leaders in K-12 education. And, the Walton/UNCF K-12 Education Fellowship program is working to flood the education landscape with skilled teachers, school administrators, grassroots education policy advocates and even policymakers who will make changes at all levels.

What's been the impact? The Walton Family Foundation investment in UNCF during the past decade has meant:

- Student internship placements in 11 cities across the nation.
- Students from 52 HBCUs have become Fellows.
- Nearly 300 students have participated in the program and received valuable paid internships and professional development.
- Over 60 organizations have participated as host organizations for student internships.
- Two program alumni have been named International Fulbright Scholars.

To celebrate the 10th anniversary, the program marked its major milestone during the annual Closing Conference in Washington, DC, July 27-29, 2019. The Closing Conference is the culminating event concluding Fellows' internship experiences, preparing them for the next step in their academic lives as they advance to their senior year of college studies and post-graduate careers. Students heard from keynote speaker, Sharif El-Mekki, CEO of the Center for Black Educator Development, who delivered a powerful and inspirational message about the importance of advocating for education equity for Black students. Also, during the conference, UNCF presented Achievement First Public Charter School with the 2019 Legacy Award in recognition of its longstanding commitment to providing

internship opportunities to Walton/UNCF K-12 Education Fellows. This network of public charter schools, located across multiple states, has hosted 18 fellows over 10 consecutive years.



(FROM R TO L) BRIANNA NAVE CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY, LEIGHANNA MAHONEY CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY, RA'KYIA LEWIS PHILANDER SMITH COLLEGE

And, to add further definition to its noted 10 years of success, also in 2019, UNCF released findings from an evaluation conducted by WhitworthKee, an education consulting firm. Designed to assess the implementation of the Walton/UNCF K-12 Education Fellowship Program and its outcomes, the evaluation sought to understand the degree to which the program produced graduates who pursue professional degrees and/or prepared alumni for careers in education leadership. Of the alumni who participated in the survey, 43% were employed in K-12 education—a fairly significant portion of the Fellows—and the majority indicated that skills gained at the Student Leadership Conference (the program's annual three-day professional development conference held prior to the start of Fellows' internships) positively exposed them to workplace professionalism, current K-12 issues and networking skills. In addition, 66% of alumni have gone on to pursue graduate degrees.

So, what makes more Black impact than a simple cash investment? Empowered African American students who know how to make real change in the environments in which they grew up, given the tools they need, going back in to do the real work it takes to make a difference. And, thanks to UNCF partners like the Walton Family Foundation, that kind of growing impact has been rippling across America for 10 years.

ALUMNI REFLECTIONS

Nothing is more meaningful than the impact of these programs on the lives of the students.



Isis Spann

Johnson C. Smith University

Cohort Year 2010

Currently the founder and CEO of FUNdamentals of Learning, LLC; building and leading programs for pre-K through fifth grade families, consulting with schools and organizations to narrow equity and educational practice gaps.

“I do this for the seventh grader who computes math on at third grade level. The third grader that reads on a first-grade level and the kindergarten student that enters the school system already at a deficit because their families lack the resources. ‘What good is it if Black and Brown boys/girls can now sit at the counter if they can’t read the menu.’ This was a quote that Dr. Fuller said at a BAEO conference that I attended as a UNCF Fellow alum, and it has stuck with me forever.”



Jonathon Pulliam, II
Tuskegee University
Cohort Year 2017

Currently a third-grade English language arts teacher and M.Ed. student.

“My Walton Fellowship experience gave me the opportunity to look at educational equity from many different perspectives. It was my first time stepping into the classroom and is a large reason why I am still teaching. My Walton experience exposed me to what it means to be an intentional and effective educator and leader. I am thankful for my time at Walton and am currently teaching at the school that I was an undergraduate fellow at.”