HBCUs, Industry Partners Launch Initiative To Diversify And Strengthen Cybersecurity Workforce

- Advancing Minorities' Interest in Engineering's HBCU Cybersecurity Industry Collaboration Initiative Pilot launches this year, bringing together four schools and three Fortune 100 corporate partners
- Initiative aims to strengthen HBCU cybersecurity programming while developing diverse pipeline of cybersecurity career-ready students
- Effort begins with nearly 600,000 open cybersecurity positions in the U.S. job market

BALTIMORE, June 2, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- To address the urgent cybersecurity talent needs in the U.S., Advancing Minorities' Interest in Engineering (AMIE) announced a new collaboration to support cybersecurity education at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Together with industry partners Abbott, Microsoft and Raytheon Technologies, the HBCU Cybersecurity Industry Collaboration Initiative Pilot aims to build curriculum capacity within HBCU engineering schools, positioning them as premier national academic institutions for cybersecurity, while creating a strong workforce of students well-prepared for the world's essential cybersecurity careers. The initiative expects to support HBCUs through curriculum development, research collaboration, faculty support and other resources.

Right now, there are nearly 600,000 open cybersecurity jobs in the U.S. and experts anticipate there will be 3.5 million cybersecurity jobs open globally by 2025.

"Our hope is that the initiative will enhance cybersecurity programming at HBCUs, helping connect students, especially African-American students, with opportunities to pursue cybersecurity certifications and degrees," said Veronica L. Nelson, AMIE's executive director. "This effort couldn't come at a more critical time. The U.S. greatly needs skilled cybersecurity workers. HBCU Engineering Schools represent a rich pipeline of untapped, diverse talent."

The 15 Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)-accredited HBCU Schools of Engineering produce more than 30% of the African-American engineers in the U.S. while representing less than 3% of the engineering universities in the U.S. Data from the U.S.

Department of Labor show Blacks and African-Americans make up only 11.8% of information security analysts in the U.S.

The initiative's pilot incorporates expertise and support from Abbott, Microsoft and Raytheon Technologies with the goal of aligning business needs to the pilot schools' cybersecurity curricula and research capabilities. The four HBCU pilot engineering schools of the 15 member schools of the Council of HBCU Engineering Deans are Hampton University, North Carolina A&T State University, Prairie View A&M University, and Virginia State University.

- Professionals from Abbott, Microsoft and Raytheon Technologies will be guest lecturers, participate in mentoring programs and meet with faculty to better understand existing strengths and collaborate toward educating more cybersecurity professionals to help address the nation's talent gap.
- Microsoft is providing funding and support as part of itsCybersecurity Skills Initiative.
- Abbott is providing funding and hosting two Prairieview A&M University cybersecurity students for customized intern experiences during summer 2022.
- Raytheon Technologies is providing funding and works with local students to showcase their cyber capabilities and provide opportunities for students to explore cyber careers.

"With the complete integration of Industry 4.0 or 'smart' technologies into so many aspects of our lives, VSU now sees almost every company we work with needing cybersecurity-trained professionals to secure their products, services, and their business operations," said Dr. Dawit Haile, Dean of the College of Engineering and Technology atVirginia State University. "This includes industries that we never would have previously considered in this context, like manufacturing, construction, and energy. VSU understands that cybersecurity skills are now part of a critical core knowledge base and we are committed to deliver a strong pipeline of students who are well-prepared in this area."

The pilot will run through the end of 2022 with the goal of extending the initiative to the remaining 11 ABET-accredited HBCU Schools of Engineering in the future: Alabama A&M University, Florida A&M University, Howard University, Jackson State University, Morgan State University, Norfolk State University, Southern University, Tennessee State University, Tuskegee University, University of Maryland Eastern Shore and the University of the District of Columbia.

"In today's digital-first world, skilled cybersecurity workers are critical to ensuring the safety of our enterprise as well as the products and technologies we provide people to live better, healthier lives," said Sabina Ewing, Chief Information Officer, Abbott. "That's why, as a founding member of Advancing Minorities' Interest in Engineering, Abbott supports efforts like the HBCU Cybersecurity Industry Collaboration Initiative Pilot, which develops HBCU talent to build a diverse, innovative workforce that will meet the demands of today and tomorrow."

"We are excited to embark on this collaboration with AMIE to broaden education in cybersecurity at HBCUs," saidValecia Maclin, Microsoft Partner, Strategic Cloud Solutions, and AMIE board member. "The pre-eminent role that HBCUs play in graduating the best and brightest engineering talent in the U.S. coupled with our passion to extend global cybersecurity skilling is a unique collaboration and critical for the time that we are in. As part of our commitment to address America's cybersecurity

workforce shortage, we look forward to working together to create a workforce that represents the diversity of our society."

"Closing the enormous cybersecurity skills gap and driving diversity in our talent pipeline are critical business imperatives for our company and industry," said Shanda Hinton, Chief Diversity Officer, Raytheon Technologies. "This alliance offers real world education, experience and mentorship opportunities to HBCU engineering students to help cultivate the next generation of cyber defenders."

About Advancing Minorities' Interest in Engineering:

Advancing Minorities' Interest in Engineering (AMIE) is a nonprofit coalition of corporations, government agencies and the 15 ABET-accredited Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) Schools of Engineering. AMIE's purpose is to expand corporate and government alliances with the HBCU engineering programs to increase diversity in the engineering workforce. AMIE's commitment to fostering partnerships that attract, develop, recruit and graduate minorities in engineering has been its ongoing focus since its founding in 1992. Find out more about our efforts at www.amiepartnerships.org.

About Abbott:

Abbott is a global healthcare leader that helps people live more fully at all stages of life. Our portfolio of life-changing technologies spans the spectrum of healthcare, with leading businesses and products in diagnostics, medical devices, nutritionals and branded generic medicines. Our 113,000 colleagues serve people in more than 160 countries. Connect at www.abbott.com.

About Microsoft:

Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT" @microsoft) enables digital transformation for the era of an intelligent cloud and an intelligent edge. Its mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.

About Raytheon Technologies:

Raytheon Technologies Corporation is an aerospace and defense company that provides advanced systems and services for commercial, military and government customers worldwide. With four industry-leading businesses — Collins Aerospace Systems, Pratt & Whitney, Raytheon Intelligence & Space and Raytheon Missiles & Defense — the company delivers solutions that push the boundaries in avionics, cybersecurity, directed energy, electric propulsion, hypersonics and quantum physics. The company, formed in 2020 through the combination of Raytheon Company and the United Technologies Corporation aerospace businesses, is headquartered in Waltham, Massachusetts.

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