

Former AACUC Interns Continue to Forge Careers in Credit Union Industry

BALTIMORE — For some college students, choosing a career in the credit union industry might be low on the totem pole but former interns that came through the African-American Credit Union Coalition's internship program say they have discovered an untapped area for professional development.

Since inception, 188 college students have participated in the AACUC's program and 22 have begun careers in the credit union industry, according to the coalition. This summer, 36 students worked at 19 credit unions across the country, at Fannie Mae and PFP Services, an insurance provider to members.

"Each year, the internship program continues to grow and develop," said Bert Hash, chairman on the AACUC internship committee and president/CEO of Municipal Employees Credit Union of Baltimore. "This growth and development has resulted in more interns finding jobs with credit unions, more credit unions willing to hire students as interns and Fannie Mae continuing its participation with the program for a second year."

Former intern Evonne Gibson is has been in the industry for more than three years and is currently a human resources generalist at Aberdeen Proving Ground FCU.

"My first professional job was with a credit union," said Gibson, who would like to see a college career fair formed exclusively by credit unions. "I try to let college students that I come into contact with know about the AACUC's internship program."

Marquell Coleman interned last year and is now a staff accountant at MECU of Baltimore. She said she was surprised at how credit union staff will take the time to walk members through issues such as how to repair their credit or how to get ready to take out a mortgage.

"They're not going to let you fall," Coleman said of credit unions.

This summer marked the second time Kareem McKnight has interned. He worked at PFP of Baltimore and said he has no problem with coming in

on the ground floor. The credit union industry is ripe with mentors willing to provide guidance as young people move up the ranks.

"If I'm doing my job to the best of my ability, I'm sure I can shine," McKnight said.

Myisha Henry was recently promoted to human resource coordinator at SECU in Maryland. While she describes her career experience so far as valuable, she would like to see more minorities—not just African-Americans, but Hispanics and women—in senior positions.

"SECU is big on professional development," Henry said. "The credit union has the opportunities that put us in positions to have the knowledge and the power to better serve the members."

Tamekia Taylor, who had never heard of a credit union prior to interning, was also recently promoted to accounting supervisor at Houston Municipal Employees FCU.

"I love what I do. The [CEO and senior staff] take the time out to hear you out."

NCUA Vice Chairman Rodney Hood is convinced that credit unions would be a top career choice if students knew more about them. "There are not a lot of young folks interviewing at credit unions and not a lot of colleges partnering with students," Hood said.

Hood called on the AACUC to help form a working



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NCUA Board Member Gigi Hyland thanked the AACUC for its work through the coalition's internship program. Hyland is pictured here with former AACUC interns now working full-time in the industry. From left, Evonne Gibson, human resources generalist at Aberdeen Proving Ground FCU; Tamekia Taylor, accounting supervisor, Houston Municipal Employees CU; Hyland; Marquell Coleman, staff accountant at Municipal Employees CU of Baltimore; and Myisha Henry, human resource coordinator at State Employees CU in Maryland.

group by this fall to link up with historically black colleges and universities to familiarize students with the credit union industry. Hood said the Urban League and Inroads have expressed interest in helping with the working group.

Hood said his concerns about the lack of diversity in the industry were highlighted in a recent General Accountability Office report that showed less than 12% of those in management are African-Americans. He reiterated his feelings that credit union senior staff and boards should reflect the diverse makeup of their membership.

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Barbara Stephens Named New AACUC Chairman in Midst of Heavy Campaigning

BALTIMORE — Weeks of heavy campaigning for seats on the African-American Credit Union Coalition's board came to an end during the group's recent conference.

Three seats were up for grabs with five candidates hoping to fill the spots. Long-time AACUC board members Sheila Montgomery, president/CEO of 1st Choice Credit Union, and Helen Godfrey-Smith, president/CEO of Shreveport FCU were among the two hoping to continue to serve on AACUC's board of directors. Newcomers also made the rounds for the seats: Vaughn Johnson, assistant vice president, business consulting at Members United Corporate FCU; Melinda Edmunds, vice president of branch and internal services at

Congressional FCU and Tarra Jackson, vice president of lending at Del-One FCU.

In the end, delegates voted for Edmunds to become the AACUC's newest board member succeeding longtime board member Michael Hale, president/CEO of Andrews FCU, who chose not to run for re-election this time. Edmunds is vice president of branch and internal services at Congressional FCU. Sheila Montgomery, president/CEO of 1st Choice CU, and Helen Godfrey-Smith, president/CEO of Shreveport FCU, were both re-elected to AACUC's board.

Barbara Stephens, president/CEO of Houston Municipal Employees Credit Union, has been named the new chairperson of the African-American Credit Union



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Coalition. Stephens succeeds Bob Harvey, president/CEO of Seattle Metropolitan CU. Stephens has served on the AACUC board in several capacities, most recently as vice chair. Stephens said she wants to "stay focused on [AACUC's] purpose and goals" and will be seeking out volunteers to serve on various committees.

In addition to e-mails sent out to AACUC members over the past few weeks inviting them to cast their vote, candidates have put together flyers detailing their accomplish-

ments, how they have helped the coalition grow and what impact they can bring to the group.

According to AACUC, only one delegate from each credit union or organization was issued a single ballot for voting. Each delegate can vote for a maximum of three candidates only. A certified delegate list is being provided by AACUC's voting election tellers to confirm who actually receives a ballot from the nominating committee during the election. The election took place during AACUC's annual business meeting Aug. 11.

Meanwhile, AACUC Chairman Bob Harvey said he is enthused about the interest the candidates have in running for the board seats jokingly telling them and conference attendees "these are not paid positions, you know." On Hale's departure, Harvey said the venerable leader will be missed. Hale was recognized by AACUC for his board service dating back to the coalition's early days.

"When the board met after the annual meeting for our reorganization meeting, we all felt a little uncomfortable that Michael Hale was not in the room," Harvey said. "His goal was to make room for fresh faces and ideas and Melinda will meet that goal. Michael has set the standard for AACUC and we thank him."

Harvey said he welcomes Edmunds to the board and is looking forward to her contributions.

"Her victory was not easy as there were five candidates running for three positions. I was most pleased and excited to see the serious but friendly campaigning by all the candidates."

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