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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES
SUMMER 2024



EXPLORING SUSTAINABILITY AND CULTURE: SARAH AKIWUMI'S JOURNEY IN COSTA RICA

On May 13, at 4:45 am, Sarah Akiwumi felt the thrill of embarking on her journey to Monteverde, Costa Rica. For six weeks, studying abroad with CIEE's Sustainability + Environmental program was an extraordinary chance to explore and innovate within an environmentally sustainable setting. Living on a campus with farms and animals, she delved into sustainability, engaged with the local culture, and crafted an educational program from student and educator perspectives.

Akiwumi's most memorable experience was staying with a local family in Monteverde, which deepened her connection to Costa Rican culture and demonstrated the impact of sustainability on daily life. Beyond academics, she enjoyed hiking in El Tigre and visiting Puerto Viejo, where she stayed at a Black and women-owned hotel and explored Afro-Caribbean culture.

Akiwumi encourages everyone to seize study abroad opportunities–they offer invaluable learning and personal growth. Akiwumi's travel was funded by an IDEAS Grant.





PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SPOTLIGHT: US DOD OPPORTUNITIES WORKSHOP 2024



Dr. Gwenn Bookman, Professor Yamuranai Kurewa, Ms. Joan Williams, and Dr. Shenna Shearin attended the US Department of Defense (DoD) Opportunities Workshop 2024 from July 25 to 26 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, VA. The event focused on Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions (HBCU/MI), offering valuable insights and networking opportunities, especially in STEM disciplines.

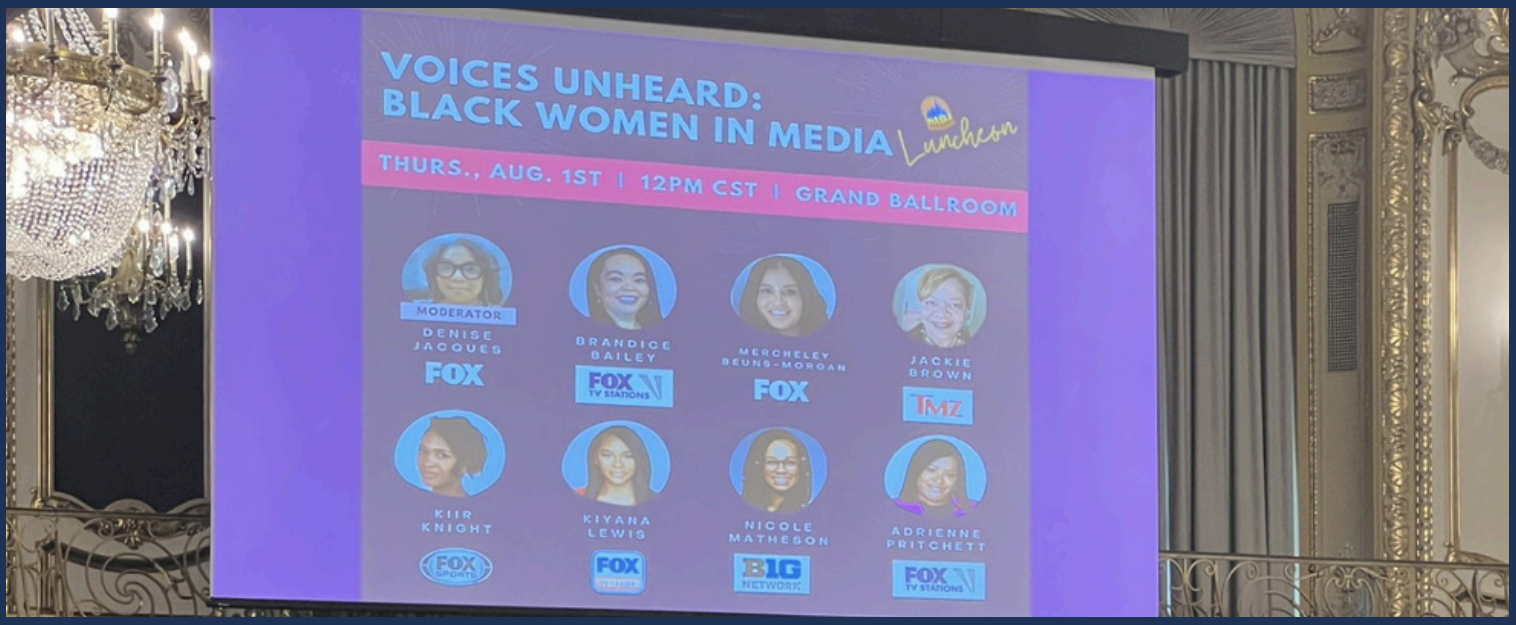
Dr. Bookman found the workshop beneficial for professionals across fields, particularly noting opportunities for student internships with the US DoD. A key highlight was her engagement with leaders from the Research Triangle in Durham, NC, who invited her to explore collaboration opportunities.

Professor Kurewa gained significant insights on research opportunities for faculty and students and paid internships. Although the workshop didn't specifically address social work, she plans to encourage her students to share their research and internship experiences.

Dr. Shearin discovered various research and funding opportunities for students and faculty, including programs like the National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate Program, SMART, SPARK Internship, and several US DoD fellowships and awards.

Ms. Williams valued the networking opportunities and learned about a new SaaS platform to increase HBCU and MSI participation in federal space technology contracts. She is eager to share this information with the Bennett College community.

CONNECTING WITH THE INDUSTRY: NETWORKING AT NABJ



This summer, Phanalphie Rhue, Chief Global Communications & Experience Officer at Bennett College, attended the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) convention in Chicago. The event, a cornerstone for journalism education and professional growth, offered crucial insights into digital journalism, media technology, and storytelling trends.

Rhue earned a Google News Initiative (GNI) certification in advanced digital reporting, which she plans to integrate into Bennett's internal news operations. The convention also featured sessions from prominent women in media, including Michelle Johnson and Allison Davis, who provided practical advice on AI and new media tools.

The event's focus on media industry job opportunities and its robust job fair, featuring top-tier organizations like ABC, NBC, CBS, and ESPN, highlighted the value of such opportunities for Bennett's students. Rhue recommends the NABJ convention for its networking and professional development benefits, which will significantly enhance storytelling at Bennett College.



