

Executive Network

November 16, 2021

Creating Impactful University Partnerships

Welcome and Opening	5 Minutes	Carolyn Berkowitz, ACCP
Fireside Chat	30 Minutes	Carolyn Berkowitz, ACCP Debbi Jarvis, Howard University
Large Group Discussion	20 Minutes	Open discussion and questions
Closing	5 Minutes	Carolyn Berkowitz, ACCP

Creating Impactful University Partnerships

[Debbi Jarvis](#), Senior Vice President of Corporate Relations, Howard University

Debbi Jarvis has oversight of corporate relations and is charged with developing and implementing a global strategy for corporate development and the funding of those programs. She also oversees the management of Howard's broadcast properties, WHUT-TV and WHUR-Radio, ensuring their business operations are in alignment with the University's mission. Jarvis has a demonstrated history of leading teams to develop strategies and programs around corporate goodwill, philanthropic initiatives, corporate reputation and image building through effective nonprofit and community engagement, and marketing and communications. As a member of Howard University President Wayne Frederick's leadership team and Cabinet, she participates in the overall management of the institution. Although Jarvis officially joined the Howard family, October 1, 2018, she's been a Bison by choice for quite some time. The former NBC4 anchor is married to Ernest Drew Jarvis, the grandson of the late, great Dr. Charles R. Drew, blood-plasma pioneer and former chief of surgery at Freedmen's Hospital, now Howard University Hospital.

Jarvis joined Howard University after serving 14 years at Pepco Holdings, Inc. (PHI), now Pepco Holdings, an Exelon Company. Jarvis was promoted to VP of Corporate Communications overseeing all internal and external communications including media relations, advertising, and website content, and served as the company spokesperson. Most recently, Jarvis served as VP of Corporate Relations and was an essential part of the team managing the company's Pepco and Exelon merger. She also had oversight of the integration of Exelon's Corporate Social Responsibility processes and transition to a new CSR database. Additionally, she implemented the Exelon Energizing Student Potential STEM partnership with DC, Montgomery and Prince George's County Public Schools impacting more than 35,000 elementary school students. Jarvis was also instrumental in creating the Pepco Hispanic Engineering Scholarship and internship program. Before joining Pepco, Jarvis worked at NBC4 – Washington, where she was a reporter and anchor for nearly a decade. At NBC4 she fell in love with the DC community and worked to provide a “voice to the voiceless” through her reporting.

Jarvis is a community advocate and has a passion for being a servant leader as evidenced by the creation of significant community projects throughout her career in the Nation's Capital. Jarvis has served on the boards of dozens of nonprofits including the Washington Area Women's Foundation, DC Ed Fund, Teach for America, Leadership Greater Washington, Catholic Charities, Imagination Stage, and the Recreation Wish List Committee to name a few. Jarvis earned a bachelor's degree in International Business from Hope College in Holland, Mich.; took graduate courses at American University in broadcast journalism as well as classes toward an MBA at Southeastern University. She was in the 2011 class of CSR Executive Education Program at Harvard Business School.

Key Discussion Themes

- **There is no one size fits all approach for impactful university partnerships.**
 - Come to the table ready to discuss your needs and how, together, a university can help fulfill them. It is important to have an open mind to create a partnership that best suits both the company and the university.
 - Speak honestly about what your company needs are and be open to input in how to address those needs.
 - Enter the conversation with respect. Do your homework and learn about the university, its values, and its leadership before reaching out.
- **Building multi-dimensional relationships with faculty, staff, and students is key to impactful university partnerships.**
 - Relationships should be multidimensional and can include internships, scholarships, mentorships, academic programs, research, multi-disciplinary centers, on-campus events and experiences, and other opportunities that meaningfully connect your company beyond recruiting or sponsorship.
 - If students know who you are as a brand and how your company lives its values, they will be more interested in working for you. Companies should consider opportunities to build brand awareness with the student body, faculty, and staff prior to/in addition to recruiting.
- **When thinking about a university partnership, consider reciprocity and be prepared to answer these questions:**
 - Why are you approaching this specific university? What do you expect from the partnership?
 - How will this university partnership support your business goals? Conversely, how might your company support the university's goals?
- **When engaging students, companies should be ready to address these questions and/or consider:**
 - What are the actual opportunities available for a student to come work at your company?
 - What is the culture at your company and how can they become a part of it?
 - What is their future career trajectory at your company? Is there access to mentorship opportunities to help students succeed in their roles?
 - Bring representatives from your company who look like the students you are seeking to engage and recruit. Share personal stories of career journeys.
- **Why work with HBCU's? Make it about more than "diversity."**
 - Yes, the majority of students are BIPOC. But more importantly, investing in an HBCU partnership gives your company access to students who have been given the safety and space to build a powerful identity that they will carry with them into the workforce.
 - HBCUs are often well-connected within their communities and collaborative with one another. They are underfunded relative to other colleges and universities. Together, this provides a powerful set of opportunities to build out meaningful, long-term relationships.

Up Next

See you in 2022!

Stay tuned for
2022 meeting
dates and times.

