Inaugural HU Entrepreneurship Week Launches Howard University and PNC National Center For Entrepreneurship

Launch event features prominent speaker lineup reflecting commitment to serving as a catalyst for economic opportunity for HBCU students, alumni and Black entrepreneurs

WASHINGTON, April 4, 2023 – The Howard University and PNC National Center for Entrepreneurship announces its official launch today, the pinnacle of Howard's inaugural HU Entrepreneurship Week.

Over the past several days, Howard has hosted panel discussions, networking events and a business pitch competition, with activities culminating today in the national launch of the Howard University and PNC National Center for Entrepreneurship. The event, a celebration of the shared commitment to advancing Black entrepreneurship, brought together students, alumni, business experts and aspiring entrepreneurs to network, strategize and spark engagement across the community.

The keynote fireside chat included a moderated discussion between Wayne A.I. Frederick, Howard University president, and T.D. Jakes, chairman and CEO of the T.D. Jakes Group. Other prominent speakers included Nicholas Perkins (Fuddruckers owner and CEO), Askale Davis (TV personality and lifestyle content creator), Kayla Austin (current Howard student and 2022 Black Ambition HBCU Prize Winner), and Gary Rahman and his children Kali and Spirit (founders of Stock Up).

"The Howard University and PNC National Center for Entrepreneurship is focused on serving as a catalyst for economic opportunity for HBCU students, alums and Black entrepreneurs broadly," said Erin Horne McKinney, national executive director for the Howard University and PNC National Center for Entrepreneurship. "Today's lineup of events is reflective of that commitment as we galvanize to strategically support aspiring and active entrepreneurs and collectively strengthen our economy."

Established in 2021 with a five-year, $16.8 million grant from the PNC Foundation, The Howard University and PNC National Center for Entrepreneurship is aimed at building resources and support for Black business owners across the country. The National Center will support expanded opportunities for Black entrepreneurship with educational, leadership and capacity-building resources and programs nationwide.

"HBCUs are driving impactful change in entrepreneurship, education and economic development for Black businesses and the broader community, which directly aligns with PNC's efforts to provide economic opportunity for all," said Richard Bynum, chief corporate responsibility officer for PNC. "Through PNC's partnership with Howard, we're building extensive resources to enhance entrepreneurial opportunities for aspiring Black business leaders for the betterment of all the communities we serve."

A regional roadshow will follow the National Center launch event beginning April 11 at Clark Atlanta University, April 13 at Texas Southern University and April 19 at Morgan State University. These HBCUs will partner alongside Howard as regional hubs for the National Center, allowing for the effective coordination of

programs and activities across the nation's network of more than 100 HBCUs and their communities, including education programs, research strategies and business outreach.

A major focus for the National Center and its regional partners is to create an innovative national entrepreneurial network across HBCUs and Black entrepreneurial support organizations. This effort will expand access to entrepreneurship opportunities by engaging youth, HBCU students, and Black business owners in growing their enterprises, with a goal of increasing employment and generational wealth in Black communities. The partners will also come together for the inaugural Howard University and PNC National Center for Entrepreneurship National Conference in Washington, D.C., June 14-16.

The PNC Foundation grant is part of PNC's $88 billion Community Benefits Plan that began Jan. 1, 2022. The plan will provide at least $88 billion in loans, investments and other financial support to benefit low- and moderate-income (LMI) individuals, communities, and people of color over a four-year period.

About PNC Foundation
The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (www.pnc.com), actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture. Through PNC Grow Up Great®, its signature cause that began in 2004, PNC has created a bilingual $500 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.

About Howard University
Founded in 1867, Howard University is a private, research university that is comprised of 14 schools and colleges. Students pursue more than 140 programs of study leading to undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees. The University operates with a commitment to Excellence in Truth and Service and has produced one Schwarzman Scholar, three Marshall Scholars, four Rhodes Scholars, 12 Truman Scholars, 25 Pickering Fellows and more than 165 Fulbright recipients. Howard also produces more on-campus African American Ph.D. recipients than any other university in the United States. For more information on Howard University, visit www.howard.edu.

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