As the newly elected Presidents of the University of Pittsburgh African American Alumni Council (AAAC) for FY 2017-2019, I am very excited about serving you as we continue to make the AAAC a vibrant organization for our alumni and the larger Pitt community.

As shared in my open letter to the alumni community, our overarching goal is to support the many experiences of Pitt’s African Diaspora whether we identify ourselves as African-Americans, Africans, African-Caribbean, or any other identification of African decent.

We take tremendous pride in our diversity and the fact that we share a common ancestry as well as the unique Pitt experience. As an umbrella organization representing thousands of alumni of African descent, the AAAC seeks to unify and support each group around shared purposes, goals, interests, and activities. The challenge before us is to maintain our unity and earnestly service the needs of our constituent groups.

The theme for FY 2017-2019 program year is “Building a Sustainable Future for Our Enduring Legacy,” which is steeped in five strategic goals:

**Student Engagement** - to connect with and engage students through the various student organizations by supporting their goals and dreams and building a stronger reserve to support student scholarships

**Alumni Cultivation** - to grow the AAAC membership by retaining the current members, reclaiming alumni who were once active and recruiting new members to join the ranks; to strengthen the local affiliates where alumni can connect to the University at the local level.

**University Partnership** - to develop and nurture partnerships with the senior University leadership to enhance its mission and purpose; to create "Friends of the AAAC” with those who align with our values and principles and support our mission, goals, objectives, and positions

**Organizational Sustainability** - to build upon the work of past administrations to ensure the future and optimum sustainability of the organization operationally and financially

**Fundraising/ Financial Campaign** - to build a financial foundation to support the ongoing operations of the organization and to strengthen the scholarship program

For more details about each of the priorities and to find out how you can join the effort, get connected and involved, click here. Email your thoughts and recommendations on each of the strategic goals to Vaughn Clagette at vclag@bellsouth.net.

I look forward to working with you to build a powerful organization to meet your needs and those of the larger African Diaspora community at Pitt. Thank you for allowing us to serve you and the AAAC!

H2P,

Vaughn

Vaughn Clagette MD, MBA

Follow us on FB and LinkedIn @Pitt AAAC, and Twitter @AAACPitt; #AAACPitt
AAAC Awards $19,000 in Student Scholarships To The Class of 2021

Raynard Washington, AAAC Scholarship Chair

Annually, the AAAC Scholarship Fund awards approximately $19,000 in merit and need based scholarships to incoming first year students. These awards are made possible as a result of the generous contributions of the alumni community to the AAAC Scholarship Fund. Students are selected by a panel of distinguished alumni based on academic excellence, community involvement, and responses to several essay questions. We are proud to present this year’s awardees.

Sydney Dubose
Arts & Sciences—Pharmacy

Zainab Hakeem
Arts & Sciences – Molecular Biology

Morgan Johnson
Arts & Sciences—Neuroscience

Henry Ramos Acosta
Arts & Sciences—Neuroscience

Ravyn Johnson
School of Health Science & Rehabilitation

Amari Long
Arts & Sciences - Nursing
Adaoro Okigbo
Arts & Sciences –Neuroscience

Justin Thomas
Swanson School - Engineering

Stephen Wesley Dyer
College of Business Administration
Marketing

Eloise Eyo Parry-Nweye
Swanson School – Engineering

PLEASE JOIN US ON SOCIAL MEDIA
FB fan page: https://www.facebook.com/PittAAAC/
Twitter: @AAACPITT
Website: https://www.alumni.pitt.edu/alumni/groups/african-american-alumni-council/
Linked In: Pitt African-American Alumni Council

Alumni at the Appleseed Community
Building a Sustainable Future for Our Enduring Legacy

The Sankofa Legacy Series — Part I

In building a sustainable future for the AAAC, it’s very important to remember and chronicle the contributions the organization has made to the University over the years. The next few issues of the Sankofa Newsletter will feature The Legacy Series, a “Q &A Commentary” on issues and topics that outlines the pride, progress and partnership between the Pitt AAAC and the University.

The commentaries will shed light on the contributions, influence and impact the Pitt AAAC has on University life in general and programs in specific. Some examples of the influence and impacts are the seed and design implanted for the RISE mentoring program, originally named “Reaching Inside Your Soul for Excellence” with then Provost James Maher, the alumni community service project, which begin 13 years ago with the Appleseed project in the Pgh Public Schools, the Baccalaureate Service, which now involves all students and religious denominations and development of the alumni affiliate structure that allows alumni to connect to the University from their geographical locations and according to their professional and career interests.

This first in a series of 4 Legacy issues is presented by Dr, Dr. Kathy Humphry, who is the University's Senior Vice Chancellor for Engagement, Secretary of the Board of Trustees, and Chancellor Patrick Gallagher’s Chief of Staff. Herein she s about the RISE Mentoring program..

Student Engagement - (RISE)

SN—Who oversees the University of Pittsburgh’s student engagement programs for Pitt students from the African Diaspora? How many incoming freshman during the academic year attend student engagement activities/projects on a consistent basis?

KH—This RISE program is housed within the Division of Student Affairs. Each year we have approximately 150-200 that sign up to participate in the organization. On average we have about 100 students that engage regularly in our Activities.

SN—Would you please tell us more about the student engagement programs that enhance the Pitt African American student college experience, increase retention, and graduation rates? What new skills are the students learning, how are they applying them in the workforce, and are there surveys that Pitt has in place to capture this information?

KH—RISE’s primary focus is to assist the student in being academically successful while here at the University. We provide each student with an Academic Coach (Graduate Student). We host Study Sessions M-R weekly that allow students to meet with their Coaches for additional support. We also host study groups during those sessions. We also provide monthly workshops for the student around topics that assist them in being successful at the University. Topics such as Networking, Time Management, Interviewing Tips, Resume Building, Tips for Applying for Graduate School, our Annual Guaranteed 4.0 workshop. An incentive for the RISE students who participate in our program is a $250 Book scholarship each semester. We develop goals and outcomes for our RISE program each year as part of the Division Wide Planning Document.

(Cont’d Pg. 4 - RISE)
Another program on campus that assists students in their academic success is our Bridges Program housed in the Dietrich School of Arts and Science. Bridges is designed to support students who are on Academic Scholarships here at the University through Study Session and one on one Mentoring. Students are able to gain the tools needed to persist through the University.

SN—When are the faculty advisors meeting with the students? If a student is failing in class, what is the process to help them improve their grades and not lose financial aid?

KH—As Program Coordinators, we encourage our students to develop a relationship with their Faculty and Academic Advisors. We provide them with the skills and tools needed to be productive in their meeting. We also invite Faculty into our Sunday Dinners to share with our students the tools for being successful in the classroom. The BRIDGE program is designed to assist students in maintaining their scholarship while here at the University.

SN—Where can college students who are parents of young children go for supportive services on Pitt’s campus? Is there a student organization that represents them?

KH—I am not aware of any student organizations on campus that support our students with children. We do have a childcare facility on campus but it is designed cost-wise for our Faculty and Staff, and often times there is a lengthy waiting list.

SN—How does the University of Pittsburgh work collaboratively with elected officials, and community leaders in the City of Pittsburgh to promote student engagement? What do you envision for the future, and your place in it?

KH—The University is actively engaged with our elected officials and Community. Our students often volunteer in our community in the schools primarily. In the past RISE has assisted the community and campus with voter registration.

For more information about RISE, call Mrs. Linda Williams-Moore, Associate Dean of Students & Director of Student Life at (412)-648-1053 or email lwmoore@pitt.edu.
Reaching out to and welcoming incoming freshman to the University is one of AAAC’s most exciting and cherished traditions. It’s family time for sharing information, giving advice, talking about issues of concern and answering pressing questions. The send-offs began in 2005 in Washington DC and has grown since then and is held in several cities including Baltimore, Harrisburg, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago and Cleveland.

During the send-off events, alumni come together and show “some love” to incoming freshmen and their families. Alumni give an old-fashioned welcome to the newest members of the Pitt family. This year, events were held in Washington, DC, and conjunction with the Pitt Alumni Association in Baltimore, Atlanta, Philadelphia.

The “Welcome Freshmen to Pitt Send—Off Event” is the African American Alumni Council’s way of touching freshmen, their parents and family members in a very heartfelt and special way.

Hail to Pitt!
The Pitt Alumni Association is your lifetime connection to Pitt. Chancellor Gallagher began the slogan “Pitt For Life” and we’re proud that the AAAC has demonstrated that belief for over a decade with our banner programs and events: Freshman Send Offs, Parent/Freshman Dialogue, Apple Seed Service Project and the Baccalaureate Program. Throughout the year we engage with students and offer them a variety of opportunities to interact with the membership in an effort to assist them with networking, career development, community engagement, leadership development and support as they navigate their way through the college experience. We cultivate and nurture relationships with students that are intended to last beyond graduation into their professional careers.

The following highlights our student engagement activities in Pittsburgh this year:

**Dinner With 12 Panthers:** The PAA sponsors an event each January for the Blue and Gold Society and Student Alumni Association. AAAC hosted one of the dinners and again this year our group of active student leaders joined us for the occasion.

**The Interfaith Baccalaureate Service** during Commencement 2017 in April celebrated the 11th anniversary since AAAC brought the tradition back to Pitt. The university joined us the past two years to make it possible for all Pitt graduates to participate in the service. The program was particularly inspiring this year with students of all faiths expressing how faith impacted their experience and growth while at Pitt.

**The Parent/Freshman Dialogue** was a huge success this year with 100 freshman, student leaders, family members, Pitt staff and AAAC members in attendance. Kenyon Bonner, Vice Provost gave greetings followed by a panel of Pitt staff who addressed Getting Down to Business – Resources and Academic Support. A panel of 12 student leaders representing 10 organizations addressed Strategies for Success and Extracurricular Opportunities. The event was well advertised and was the most productive one we have hosted. Thanks to all the affiliates who promoted the event at the send offs.

**The Apple Seed Service Project** has provided us an opportunity to give back and
use our talents during Homecoming Weekend when members volunteer public schools. This year the Pittsburgh Affiliate started early by joining the Bidwell Training Center Alumni Association in a Book bag and School Supplies Drive for students in need. Simultaneously AAAC reached out to the Heinz Fellows in the School of Education and we plan to support the three Hill District schools that the 15 fellows are assigned to this year. AAAC donated 40 of the 200 book bags distributed and 75 book bags were given to students at Heinz schools; Weil, Miller and University Prep.

We’re looking forward to volunteering on Friday, October 13, 2017.

For more information please email Mrs. Valerie Njie at: val68njie@yahoo.com
Building a Sustainable Future for Our Enduring Moments From Homecoming 2017

Blue, Black & Gold: Bring Back the Noise

The African American Alumni Council

Established in the late 1980’s, the University of Pittsburgh African American Alumni Council (AAAC) promotes the core values of excellence, relationships, learning, diversity, traditions, and advocacy through its ongoing engagement of African American alumni.

The AAAC connects with more than 12,000 alumni worldwide through its signature events such as the annual Sankofa Homecoming Weekend, networking events and other alumni programming that seeks to engage current Pitt students and the community. For more information, visit www.alumni.pitt.edu/aaac/

Join a Pitt AAAC Affiliate chapter near you. For more information, contact Tracy Floyd at Floyd at tf4pitt@gmail.com

Have ideas, issues and concerns, please contact Dr. Vaughn Clagette, AAAC National President at vclag@bellsouth.net.

Want to get connected and learn more about the AAAC, contact James Gleaton, jcleaton@davidmason.com.

Have ideas for the Sankofa Newsletter, write the managing editor, Latara Jones at goldie.flossie@yahoo.com.
Let’s Celebrate and Support Our New Leadership Team and Thank Our Past Leaders!

In Picture (left to right): AAAC former presidents Bernard Mack, Steve Jones, and Dr. Linda Wharton Boyd, with newly elected AAAC National President, Dr. Vaughn Clagette