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## February 2022 Newsletter

During Black History Month, we want to shine some light on our talented Black Scholars and alumni and thank the STEM professionals in our community who are outstanding role models and mentors.

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### Meet STEM Advantage Scholar Zainab



Zainab is earning a bachelor's degree in Computer Science at Cal State LA. She has accepted a summer internship with Accenture as a Technology Development Program Analyst.

"I learned about computer science right before I started college. I did not think about programming or coding at all before, nor did I think about this as something I could be involved in. During the summer before college, I switched my major to Computer Science after finding out more about it and seeing this as something I could really enjoy learning. The STEM Advantage program really provides those building blocks and the guidance that is necessary to step into this field and other STEM fields after graduation. I love being able to use the resources that are available to me so that I can thrive and succeed in this field.

As a woman of color, as a Black woman, I want to also provide girls like me with these resources to succeed in STEM. This industry tends to be dominated by those who are white and male, so it is very important that those who are not, see that they also have a chance to be in these STEM spaces also. I think it is so powerful that this program serves so many minorities and women, as that means they give people a way in and a chance to succeed that otherwise they might not have. This program will give me an opportunity to be a mentor myself when I become part of the industry. That is something I would love to do – being able to help others is something that I value so greatly."

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### Meet STEM Advantage Alumnus & Entrepreneur Abdul-Haqq

"We make the nerds cool & the cool smart!"



Abdul-Haqq is a mathematician initially from Brooklyn, NY who now lives in Pomona. He graduated from Cal Poly Pomona in 2020 with a B.S. in Applied Mathematics and Statistics. As a first-generation college student, husband, and father, he is a role model for his children and other young girls and boys.

"When I graduated in 2020 at the start of the pandemic, companies were laying off employees and were not enthusiastic about hiring recent college graduates. As a husband and father, I pursued other opportunities that would help me provide for my family financially. I enrolled in trucking school, graduated within three months, and worked in that profession for a year. During that time, I learned about the difficulties of truck driving, such as being away from family and dangerous weather conditions. I knew that this type of work was only temporary, and I needed a different solution.

After reflecting on my time as a student, my passion for STEM, and my desire to help others with similar circumstances. I remembered a goal and vision that I had to create a pathway for all underrepresented students interested in STEM education. The creation of **STEMFLAG** happened.

**STEMFLAG's** clothing brand makes it cool to be a nerd, be smart, be the next Einstein or Elon Musk. We use fashion as a tool for liberation to remove the intimidation of STEM education. The STEMFLAG clothing brand is for everyone who loves science, technology, engineering, mathematics, fashion, fun, and field.

To learn more about STEMFLAG, a Black-owned business, email [contact@thestemflag.com](mailto:contact@thestemflag.com) and follow on Instagram: stemflag

#### Black History Month Panel

"Talent cannot be denied. Opportunity can be denied, but talent cannot be denied."



**STEM ADVANTAGE**  
ADVANCING EQUITY THROUGH EDUCATION

### How to influence and navigate your career as a Black STEM professional

Friday, February 25, 2022 from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM

MODERATED BY:

 <b>Afua Donkor</b> Diversity Inclusion & Belonging Program Manager Reddit	 <b>Gina Eriksson</b> Vice President - Corporate IT Sony Pictures Entertainment	 <b>Kevin Gray</b> Chief Information Officer City of Burbank	 <b>Karolyn D Young</b> Principal Engineer The Aerospace Corporation
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Thank you to our moderator Afua Donkor (Reddit) and panelists Gina Eriksson (Sony Pictures Entertainment), Kevin Gray (City of Burbank), and Karolyn Young (The Aerospace Corporation) for sharing their experiences and advice to help our Black scholars and alumni influence and navigate their careers. We appreciate allies who joined also and are helping us build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive skilled workforce.

Sharing a few pieces of advice from this stellar panel:

- Know that you are worthy and valued. Talent cannot be denied. Opportunity can be denied, but talent cannot be denied.
- Believe in yourself and have a support system or tribe, like STEM Advantage and mentors, to help you build confidence.
- Build and cultivate your network.
- Being a person of color in corporate America is not always easy, but that's OK. That's life. It's all about how you react to the struggles.
- If you stay positive, positivity will help you.
- Be well-rounded and prioritize health, including mental health, and wellness.
- Learn something from everyone, including those who have been successful and those who have not. Never stop learning.

#### Hire Summer Interns & New Graduates

If you or your company can provide paid summer internships and/or hire new graduates, please reach out to Lee Ann at [leeann@stemadvantage.org](mailto:leeann@stemadvantage.org).

We have vetted diverse talent earning a bachelor's degree in computer science, technology, homeland security, computer information systems, math, and engineering - aerospace, biomedical, chemical, civil, computer, electrical, manufacturing systems, mechanical, and software.

#### Invest in Diverse STEM Talent

Talent is equally distributed, but opportunity is not. STEM Advantage mentors, prepares, and inspires women and underserved communities to pursue STEM careers. We provide economic and social mobility to underserved groups, while providing a vetted pipeline of diverse talent to businesses to fill their workforce needs. In 2021, Los Angeles Business Journal honored STEM Advantage as Diversity, Inclusion + Equity Nonprofit of the Year.

100% of your tax-deductible gift supports STEM Advantage Scholars, who are mostly low-income, first-generation college students, attending California State University (CSU), the *largest and most ethnically diverse 4-year public university system in the nation*. Thank you for making an investment that is changing lives.

[DONATE NOW](#)

For more information, please contact Lee Ann at [leeann@stemadvantage.org](mailto:leeann@stemadvantage.org), visit our website <http://www.stemadvantage.org>, and follow us on social media.



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