



Kayla Bell-Davis, Future of Chemistry Scholarship Recipient 2019, Howard University. She is pictured with from left: Mark Vergnano, Susan Kelleber, and Mike Purzycki.

Driving Value Beyond the Bottom Line

How Chemours is Embracing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to Enable a Sustainable Future

BY MARK NEWMAN

FIVE YEARS AGO, Chemours became an independent company, which we envisioned as a different kind of chemistry company. Today, we're living that vision by questioning industry norms and moving beyond words to actions that are good for people, our communities, and our planet. In 2018, we formalized our efforts with the release of our Corporate Responsibility Commitments expressed through ten ambitious goals we're intent on achieving by 2030.

One of those goals is to create a more diverse and inclusive workforce. For those of us in business today, it's no secret that a more inclusive and diverse workforce produces better results. Numerous studies highlight how companies with greater diversity benefit from higher revenues, higher stock prices, and are more attractive to top talent. At the same time, our country is witnessing a unique moment in time where in less than 10 years there will be more than 800,000 STEM jobs created—positions that cannot be

filled without attracting more talent from more populations to STEM.

For companies like Chemours, it is not lost on us that attracting, developing, and retaining a diverse talent pipeline not only improves performance, it's a competitive advantage. We also know that achieving meaningful diversity is a journey—it must be acted on now and continually invested in as a priority of the business to have an authentic impact—and it takes collaboration within and across industries. When we think about the future of our business and our industry, we must think about the people who fuel our potential. We must think about how we're cultivating future talent to ensure we are bringing diverse and innovative thinking to the forefront.

At Chemours, we believe affecting change begins with education, and as part of that, creating inroads for more students to pursue hands-on STEM education, particularly students from underrepresented groups. Since 2017, our company has worked to remove barriers for young men and women



Chemours executives with Mayor Mike Purzycki and the 2019 FOC Recipients

to pursue a career in the STEM field through our Future of Chemistry Scholarship (FOCS) program, which offers scholarships to students from under-represented groups within the STEM field, including women, first generation college attendees, and Black and brown students.

And while we as a company are committed to leading change, we are not doing this work alone. To be successful in achieving continued growth, we must evolve the entire industry to reflect the world we serve. Just this November, Chemours launched the first ever chemical industry collaboration on diversity, equity, and inclusion—the Future of STEM Scholars Initiative (FOSSI), in partnership with American Institute of Chemical

Engineers (AIChE), the American Chemistry Council (ACC) and HBCU Week Foundation.

FOSSI is a college scholarship program directed at students who aspire to pursue STEM degrees at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), of

which Chemours is the founding corporate partner. Participating companies like ours then open our doors to these students to provide mentoring, professional development, and internships to launch their careers. FOSSI has the prospect of one day transforming our industry by ensuring a robust talent pipeline that brings not just diversity of race and ethnicity, but diversity of thought and perspective as well.

Here's the bottom line as I see it. Companies like ours can play a substantial role in shaping the STEM workforce of today and tomorrow in ways that substantially benefit our communities as well. The good news is that investing

in people isn't just good for business, it's the right thing to do. We can do well by being a force for good. Who wouldn't want to operate like that? ■



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