



AFRICAN AMERICAN BOARD LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE™

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PATHWAYS TO CORPORATE BOARDS: AN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP SERIES

The African American Board Leadership Institute (AABLI) *Los Angeles, California*, September 21, 2015 – Avenues leading to corporate board membership can look like a maze to those without guidance from experienced mentors, so the African American Board Leadership Institute (AABLI) invited a premier panel of experts to illuminate a number of “Pathways to Corporate Boards” as part of its Educational Leadership Series, at a September 16 workshop in the California Community Foundation’s Joan Palevsky Center.

Sharing knowledge and best practices with a packed audience of professionals were Larry Taylor, Ph.D., chairman of the board, The Creighton Group (moderator); Anita DeFrantz, Esq., trustee, Western Asset Premier Bond Fund; Bonnie Hill, Ed.D., president, B. Hill Enterprises, LLC; and Robert Davidson, Jr., independent director, Jacobs Engineering Group.

The “Pathways to Corporate Boards” seminar was designed to help professionals determine which plans of action are appropriate and effective to connect with the boards of their choice, said Yvette Chappell-Ingram, AABLI’s president and CEO. It demonstrated how to begin a conversation with the decision makers, she said.

Leading the conversation style workshop, Taylor asked panel members to share their personal journeys to corporate board seats. Hill recalled that she read public documents to learn the company’s history and to get a feel for its trends. “It is important for you to know as much as you can about the company as it is for the company to vet you,” she stressed.

“Companies want board members who think like entrepreneurs and who are contemporary thinkers,” noted Davidson. He supported the panel’s position that it is a board member’s fiduciary responsibility to ask questions, even if it is feared those questions may be embarrassing.

DeFrantz underscored the importance of knowing how a company operates before joining its board. “Diversity,” she said, “is a business imperative.”

AABLI’s “Pathways to Corporate Boards” helped attendees learn how to navigate the ins and outs of the director selection process, said Ingram. “They learned how to develop and leverage their professional skills, to make sure interested companies find them.”

The mission of the African American Board Leadership Institute is to strengthen nonprofit, public and private organizations through recruiting, preparing and placing African Americans on a broad range of governing boards. For more information about AABLI, visit www.aabli.org

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