

MINORITIES ON CORPORATE BOARDS: GOOD FOR BUSINESS AND FOR CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

*By Archon David C. Evans, Alpha Delta Boulé
and Archon Charles A. Jones, Sigma Boulé*



Archon David C. Evans, Grammateus of Alpha Delta Boulé, and Archon Charles A. Jones of Sigma Boulé

Many companies are coming to realize that adding minorities to their boards is just good business. It adds a diversity of perspectives and experience and can lead to enhanced and even new markets for products and services,” says Archon Charles A. Jones, former Dayton Foundation board chairman.

National Issues of Corporate Governance

Organizations are getting on board with minorities and corporate governance. There is much coverage of the progress being made in this area, as well as the benefits to be found in using minorities’ intellectual capacity and business experience most efficiently to meet corporate needs, but there is also a strong argument to be made that companies are not fulfilling this obligation to their best advantage.

According to a January 2009 *BusinessWeek* article, white males hold 72 percent of corporate-board seats – and there was virtually no change in that percentage between 2004 and 2009. In a broader study by the Wisconsin Law Review, minorities held only 6.95 percent of 11,500 Fortune 1000 board seats. In addition, 25 percent of the companies had no minority representation on their boards, and whites held 90 percent of the board positions.

The number of minorities on corporate boards has reached a plateau without ever having reached a point of equilibrium with the evolving needs of the market. The 34th Annual Board of Directors study by the Korn/Ferry Institute, released in 2008, noted that during the 1980’s and 1990’s the glass barrier to corporate-board positions was beginning to be broken, but that initial success is showing signs of stalling in the 2000’s.

CORPORATE BOARDS WITH MINORITY MEMBERS

1973	1981	1988	1995	2001	2005	2007
11%	18%	31%	47%	68%	76%	78%

Source: Korn/Ferry

As civic and business leaders, we have a responsibility to keep the torch of progress directed forward. As with many business problems, this one involves both supply and demand.

On the demand side, corporate-board advocacy organizations and investment managers are making board diversity a high-profile issue. The 2009 study *Board Diversification Strategy: Realizing Competitive Advantage and Shareowner Value*, from public-pension fund CalPERS, highlighted both the social and economic benefits to companies that promote diversity in both ethnicity and gender: Doing so gave those in charge of corporate governance greater insight into the changing nature of their customers and created a better decision-making dynamic that improved the overall profitability of the companies studied. In a study on customer diversity,

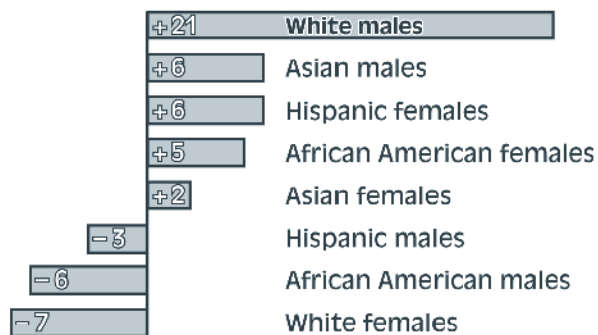
CalPERS researchers noted that minorities will soon make up 40 percent of customers for business goods and services. The demand-side characteristics that are driving the need for greater board diversification are not going away; on the contrary, they are steadily growing.

On the supply side, the challenges that impede growth in the number of minority board members are being addressed in a variety of ways. They are also a potential source of opportunities. These challenges affect not just minorities but also current board members. The need for more accountability from board members is a growing factor in some of the turnover in board positions. A number of studies have shown that the average number of board positions held by any one individual has decreased – in part because greater legal liability and time and training requirements make each position more demanding.

Some of the changes have been driven by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, which strengthened standards for all U.S. public-company boards and public accounting firms. The bill was enacted in response to a number of major corporate and accounting scandals, including those involving Enron, Tyco International and WorldCom. These scandals, which cost investors billions of dollars, were the result of board-level governance failures. Sarbanes-Oxley placed a high priority on greater board oversight, the independence of directors, and audit and internal-control reviews. Such focus created a threshold for requirements involving board service and qualifications and increased directors’ potential criminal liability.

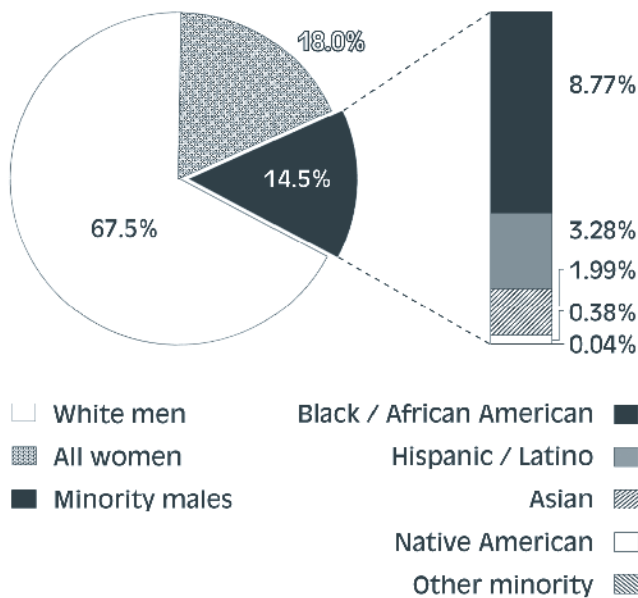
These changes have helped alter the makeup of a number of corporate boards and have been a source of opportunity for some African Americans. The number of African American board members in Fortune 100 companies increased from eighty in 2004 to ninety-one in 2006, even though the total number of board seats held by African Americans was reduced, according to the Alliance for Board Diversity.

Board Seats Gained or Lost By Ethnicity and Gender, 2004-06



Source: The Alliance for Board Diversity

Board Member Demographics



Source: Corporate Diversity Report, August 2010

U.S. Senator for New Jersey Robert Menendez did a diversity survey of Fortune 500 companies and released his findings in 2010; 219 companies from the Fortune 500 list and 71 companies from the Fortune 100 list took part in the survey. The report shows that African Americans represented 8.77 percent of the seats on corporate boards, and even less on executive teams, at 4.23 percent. Both figures are just a fraction of African American representation within society at large.

The true importance of these figures is reflected in the fact that those who hold such leadership positions within a corporation determine the policies and culture of that organization. The passion and drive that they direct at important issues such as diversity and full minority inclusion across the corporate enterprise have major economic significance for all African Americans.

In the same study, African American-owned firms represented only 2.58 percent of procurement spent. The number of goods-and-services contracts with minority-owned firms was three times higher among Fortune 500 companies and more than ten times higher among Fortune 100 companies, which had written supplier-diversity policies and goals. Menendez's study demonstrated a strong link connecting diversity at the policy-decision-maker level and on corporate boards and executive teams to the financial impact on African Americans. This is why we need to spur progress on both the supply and demand sides to improve diversity within corporate boards at all levels.

Leadership Guiding Regional Change

The governance dynamics that have been described for large business and public companies are also creating opportunities for African Americans at other firms and privately held businesses that have foresight. Archon Charles A. Jones is one of those who see the advantages of stronger boards and has empowered himself as a change agent to lead the Dayton region in this process.

The immediate past chairman of the Dayton Foundation governing board, Archon Jones is the current chair of the foundation's new Subcommittee on Minority Inclusion on Corporate Boards, whose mission is to help companies seeking to increase their board diversification by appointing highly qualified African Americans.

According to Archon Jones, "The subcommittee exists to help companies make a match between their need for the right candidate and our knowledge of well-educated, African American professionals with the credentials the companies seek. In this way, we can help raise the visibility of an underutilized resource of trained professionals who are minorities and who can help strengthen local companies. Over time, this not only will aid local companies in strengthening their corporate boards but also will help create a consciousness of inclusiveness that will have a profound and positive impact on our local economy."

Thomas G. Breitenbach, president and chief executive officer of Premier Health Partners and a subcommittee member, agrees: "Having a diverse board has made a tremendous difference to Premier and has assured that our workforce is reflective of the community we serve. The tone is set at the top and works its way throughout the organization." Other subcommittee members include William L. Gillispie, former Dayton deputy city manager; Matthew D. Shank, dean of the University of Dayton School of Business Administration; and Eric D. Loudon, a former officer with National City Bank.

So far the subcommittee has helped twenty-six non-profit boards seeking diversification. One of them is the Air Force Museum Foundation board of managers, for which George J. Mongon is chief development officer. "It's critically important that our board reflect our constituency," Mongon says, "which represents a vast array of diverse people from across America and throughout the world. The subcommittee's assistance in identifying a board candidate is a true success story."

That candidate was Alpha Delta Boulé Archon David C. Evans, a Harvard and MIT graduate. Archon Evans is president and chief executive officer of TESSEC, LLC, a Dayton-based minority-owned company in the aerospace-defense, medical and plastic-injection-molding industries. He also holds a commercial pilot's license and is air-show-qualified, which was important to the board. Says Mongon, "He is perfect for our needs and will be invaluable in helping us move in a very important direction."

Archon Evans, who also sits on the Air Force Museum Foundation's investment committee, has come up to speed very quickly. He has brought insight and experience to the board on a number of issues, from STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education to finances to technology infrastructure.

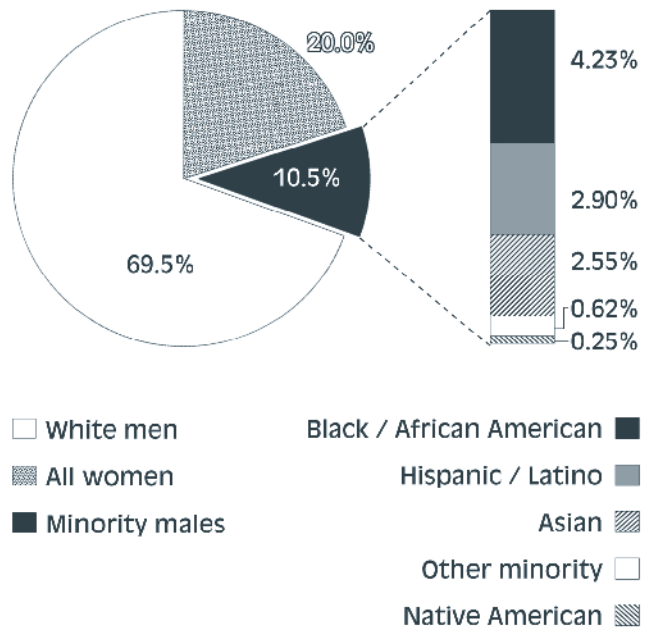
When asked how he prepared for his board assignment, Archon Evans said that he had started looking for opportunities several years earlier because he wanted to give back to his community in a meaningful way. He was appointed to an executive advisory position for a school board and also sought out a small international manufacturing company about becoming an advisory-board member. "Both of these experiences allowed me to use my experience to help these organizations grow, but also helped me hone my skills in corporate governance." Since then, Archon Evans has also been asked to join the board of directors and audit committee of a global company owned by a private-equity firm that values the diversity of his cultural and managerial experiences.

The Dayton Foundation subcommittee has developed a database of well-qualified African American professionals and offers a board-governance program to any members of the database who believe that they can benefit from it. Archon Jones has added the résumés of Alpha Delta Boulé Archons from Cincinnati to the database. "As Archon Evans' background and experience reveal, boulé members are a rich source of talent for corporate boards," Archon Jones says.

Dayton Foundation president Michael Parks comments, "By making it easy for local business owners and for nonprofits to increase the inclusiveness of their boards, the subcommittee provides an important service to those organizations and ultimately to our entire community and its economy."

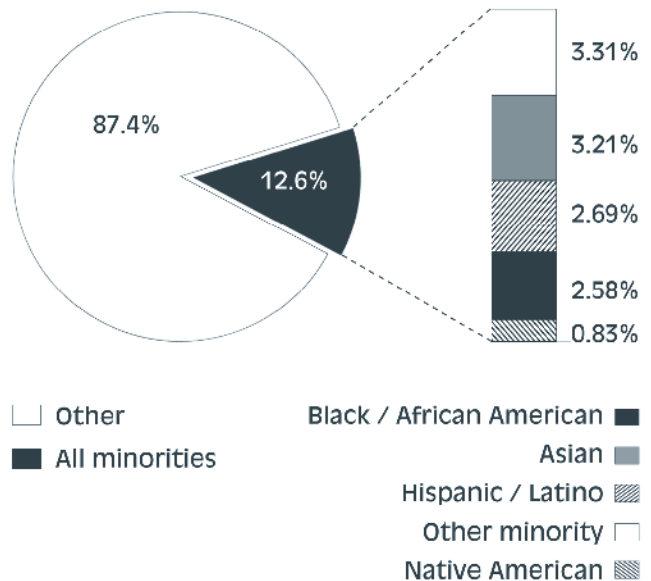
Subcommittee member and business-school dean Shank observes, "I have seen here at the University of Dayton how bringing in diverse faculty adds to the whole student experience. Likewise, I've seen that on both nonprofit and for-profit boards, diversity makes them stronger and better able to move the organizations forward. I am passionate in my belief that there are many diverse businesspeople in our community who can bring a lot to the table and make both the organizations and our region stronger."

Executive Team Demographics



Source: Corporate Diversity Report, August 2010

Supplier Diversity



Source: Corporate Diversity Report, August 2010

Diversity of Boards and Executive Teams by Industry

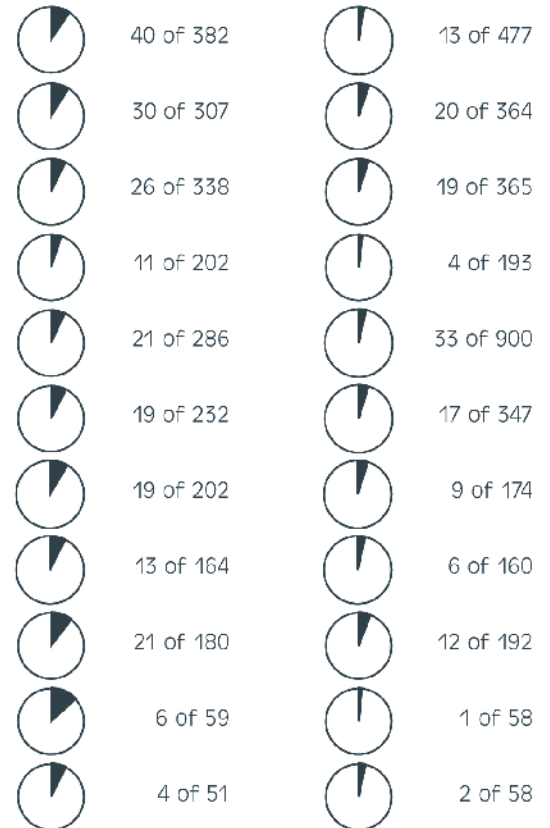
Industry (number of companies) / revenue (millions)

Financial services (29)	\$964,950
Energy (26)	\$931,814
Health / medical (29)	\$870,013
Retail (17)	\$822,516
Telecom / computer / business services (25)	\$665,718
Manufacturing / industrial products (21)	\$575,354
Insurance (16)	\$383,079
Aero / defense / transportation (15)	\$333,666
Food products / services (15)	\$263,642
Marketing / media (5)	\$100,607
Technology / science (5)	\$70,771

Blacks / African Americans as a proportion of totals

Corporate Boards

Executive Teams



Total



210 of 2,403



136 of 3,288

Source: Corporate Diversity Report, August 2010

Be Part of the Solution

Many companies are coming to realize that adding minorities to their boards is just good business. It adds a diversity of perspective and experience and can lead to enhanced and even new markets for products and services. We should all be involved in either promoting corporate-board diversity on the supply side – helping to create awareness of the need for more corporate-board seats for minorities – or, on the demand side, preparing

ourselves and those we mentor to take on these critical roles. Even with all the progress, we have reached a plateau, and there is still a long way to go. As SEC commissioner Luis A. Aguilar said in a speech in New York recently, “The truth remains that there is a persistent lack of diversity in corporate boardrooms across the country – women and minorities remain woefully under-represented.”

ANSWERS FROM THE NATION'S TOP TRADER: Q AND A WITH ARCHON RON KIRK, U.S. TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

By Grand Grappter Khephra Burns, Alpha Sigma Boulé



Archon Ron Kirk of Epsilon Boulé, Washington, D.C., is the U.S. Trade Representative and President Obama's point man on strategies and negotiations for opening up markets abroad to American businesses and products. Such strategies and negotiations are an integral part of the administration's overall plan to aid the recovery of the U.S. economy. And any recovery and economic growth in the short and long term will no doubt owe a debt to Archon Kirk. His is a Cabinet-level position within the Executive Office of the President and carries the title of ambassador, as he is charged primarily with negotiating agreements with his counterparts in other countries. As monumental a challenge as that might sometimes be, would that it were that simple.

Take the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, co-sponsored by two Democrats, which has been used for more than thirty-five years to selectively deny most-favored nation status to certain countries that restrict emigration, while giving others with equally appalling records of human rights violations a pass. Since trade restrictions benefit neither the country that imposes them nor those affected

by them, Jackson-Vanik has served solely as a political rather than economic tool. But a history of playing politics, on both sides of the aisle, seems to have complicated matters for all. Opening up foreign markets to U.S. products is of course something Republicans have traditionally pushed for. More business is the first commandment in the ark of their covenant.

Under George W. Bush they pushed through the South Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, which would eliminate 95 percent of each nation's tariffs on goods within five years and create new protections for multinational firms and financial services. While the agreement has yet to be ratified by Congress, it at least has sufficient bipartisan support to pass after successfully negotiated changes under President Obama. Archon Kirk is urging Congress to vote on it this spring, but now it seems House Republicans are willing to stall its ratification by insisting on tying it to an agreement with Columbia, where drug violence and armed insurrection have led to one of the worst records of repression of organized labor in the Western Hemisphere. Republicans, who have supported Colombia's conservative government, have pushed for implementation of the free-trade pact despite the history of anti-union violence there. (Jackson-Vanik, where art thou?) And what's good in Columbia is apparently good for Wisconsin. Further pressing the advantage, Republicans now see linking the South Korea and Colombia agreements as a way to make President Barack Obama's embrace of trade politically costly for him with his own party. Archon Kirk is holding out for a renegotiated deal with Columbia later this year that the U.S. can use as leverage to improve human rights in that country.

Politics is the art of negotiation, subtlety and compromise, skills utterly beyond the hope of the Grand Grappter but deftly wielded for the greater good by such as our esteemed Archon Ron Kirk, the United States Trade Representative. In the midst of his overscheduled life, and with the weight of all his responsibilities, Archon Kirk nevertheless graciously consented to sit still long enough to answer a few questions about U.S. trade policy for the edification of Grand Grappter Khephra Burns and readers of THE BOULÉ JOURNAL.



Archon Burns: Archon Kirk, how do specific trade policies impact the creation of jobs domestically?

Archon Kirk: United States trade policy is to open world markets and enforce U.S. trade rights under existing trade agreements. Securing market access and leveling the playing field for U.S. producers is critical to reaching President Obama's National Export Initiative goal to double exports by the end of 2014 in support of two million jobs. The more we export, the more we produce and the more people get hired. The Department of Commerce recently reported that the 16.6 percent increase in U.S. goods and services exports in 2010 has helped support hundreds of thousands of additional jobs.

The pending U.S.-Korea trade agreement offers a good example of how increased exports can support additional jobs. The agreement, which is estimated to support an additional 70,000 American jobs, offers U.S. automakers increased access to the Korean market. It also strengthens our ability to support and defend manufacturing jobs in the United States, increases export opportunities for American farmers and ranchers and further opens Korea's \$560 billion services market to American companies. It eliminates the high Korean average tariff on industrial products of 6.2 percent and its tariff on agriculture products of 54 percent, and it also removes many non-tariff barriers to trade.

Exporting supports high-quality American jobs that pay relatively high wages — roughly 13 percent to 18 percent higher for jobs supported by goods exports. Imports can also play a positive role, serving as inputs to value-added U.S. production and supporting well-paying jobs here in the United States.

AB: How does trade policy assist America's small- and medium-sized businesses?

AK: U.S. trade policy helps create new market opportunities around the globe for American businesses of all sizes — supporting additional exports and well-paying U.S. jobs. Studies show that American small businesses that export tend to grow faster, add jobs faster and pay higher wages than small businesses that serve purely domestic markets. That's why President Obama made increasing exports for small businesses a key focus of the National Export Initiative.

Small- and medium-sized businesses participate both directly and indirectly in the export economy. According to the U.S. International Trade Commission, SME [small- and medium-sized enterprises] direct exports of goods and services accounted for approximately 28 percent of total U.S. exports in 2007. Moreover, if the value of intermediate inputs that SMEs supplied to exporting firms is taken into account, SME's total contribution to exports would increase to 41 percent of the total value of U.S. exports of goods and services. These results suggest that direct and indirect exports of SMEs supported about four million U.S. jobs in 2007, roughly 40 percent of all export-supported jobs in the United States.

As part of the National Export Initiative, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), in cooperation with its interagency partners, is working to address the specific export challenges and priorities of small- and medium-sized businesses and their workers through U.S. trade policy and trade enforcement activities. We do this in at least two ways. First, we insist our trading partners play by the rules to which they have agreed, so that there is a level playing field for American workers and businesses of all sizes. Second, through the nego-

tiation and implementation of trade agreements with countries around the world we expand market access for American businesses by lowering tariff and non-tariff barriers to U.S. exports. In all of these efforts, we pay particular attention to challenges that American small- and medium-sized businesses sometimes face in foreign markets such as tariff barriers, burdensome customs procedures, discriminatory or arbitrary standards and lack of transparency regarding regulations.

AB: What's the estimated revenue loss to foreign counterfeit and pirated products? What's the loss to domestic counterfeit and pirated products?

AK: The U.S. Government does not keep estimated revenue loss statistics. However, U.S. Customs and Border Protection does maintain statistics on IPR [intellectual property rights]-infringing products seized at U.S. borders. The U.S. is also member of the OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development], which produced a study on counterfeiting and piracy of tangible products that was last updated in 2009.

AB: What deterrents or incentives can the U.S. offer to other countries to enforce against counterfeiting when counterfeiting is providing incomes to significant numbers of their populations that otherwise might contribute to social unrest as a result of the lack of opportunity for legitimate employment?

AK: The U.S. Government has a number of tools available to encourage progress. For example, over its more than twenty-year history the "Special 301" process for annually assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of IPR protection and enforcement by U.S. trading partners has helped to drive numerous IPR improvements. Other tools include, for example, dialogue with trading partners and enforcement of trade agreements. We and our trading partners are of course aware that counterfeiting and other illegal activities provide income. We also recognize, however, the desirability of promoting legitimate commerce and the rule of law as a means to more sustainable economic development.

Editor's Note: The OECD study concluded that international trade in counterfeit and pirated goods cost American businesses as much as \$200 billion in 2005. The updated estimates, based on the growth and changing composition of trade between 2005 and 2007, suggest that counterfeit and pirated goods in international trade grew steadily over the period 2000-2007 and amounted to approximately \$250 billion in 2007. These figures do not include domestically produced and consumed counterfeit products or non-tangible pirated digital products. http://www.oecd.org/document/23/0,3746,en_2649_34173_44088983_1_1_1_1,00.html

AB: The Special 301 Report notes that in 2009 as much as 79 percent of IPR-infringing products seized at the U.S. border were of Chinese origin. Clever offenders are even shipping counterfeit products separately from labels and packaging to evade enforcement efforts. How will ACTA aid the enforcement of intellectual property rights violations and the detection of counterfeit and pirated products before they enter our country?

AK: There are numerous specific ways that the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) will aid the enforcement of intellectual property rights violations and the detection of counterfeit and pirated products before they enter our country. The agreement will create a first-of-its-kind alliance of trading partners representing more than half of world trade to cooperate in the fight against piracy and counterfeiting, providing a platform for the Obama administration to work cooperatively with other governments to continue delivering on its commitment to protect aggressively the intellectual property that is essential to America's prosperity.

The ACTA will require that border enforcement authorities be empowered to act on their own initiative against both imports and exports of counterfeit and pirated goods, fixing a gap in existing standards that has sometimes meant customs officials are powerless to take action against fake goods. Application of this stronger standard will help protect U.S. consumers.

The ACTA also will require criminal remedies against importation or use of labels or packaging for counterfeit goods, so that counterfeiters cannot escape punishment by simply shipping labels or packaging separately from the products for which they are intended. The ACTA will require that criminal authorities be able to act on their own initiative ("ex officio") in piracy and counterfeiting cases, rather than waiting for a complaint; this fixes another gap, this time in the area of criminal law, that has sometimes left police and prosecutors powerless to take action against counterfeiters and pirates without a complaint from a right-holder.

The ACTA also will further clarify existing international requirements for the availability of criminal penalties when piracy or counterfeiting is carried out for commercial advantage so that companies that get a leg up from using pirated products, such as pirated U.S. software products, will be exposed to criminal penalties. This will help make it harder for foreign companies to steal U.S. intellectual

According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) of the Department of Homeland Security, 14,841 seizures of counterfeit and pirated goods with a total domestic value of \$260.7 million were intercepted at U.S. ports of entry in fiscal year 2009. http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/trade/priority_trade/ipr/pubs/seizure/

property and then use it to make themselves more competitive. The ACTA will also include new commitments on criminal seizure and destruction of fake goods, seizure of the equipment and materials used in their manufacture, and seizure of the criminal proceeds from piracy and counterfeiting offenses. This ensures that police and prosecutors will have state-of-the-art tools to crack down on counterfeiters and pirates, and to take away both ill-gotten gains and the tools of illicit trade.

AB: The Special 301 Report also notes that small retail shops selling pirated movies and music, and larger enterprises engaging in the theft of business software, mean not only lost revenues to the legitimate holders of intellectual property rights, but also lower business costs for offending businesses, giving them an advantage over their law-abiding competitors. So what argument would you offer for global cooperation and more effective international political institutions and agreements that is more persuasive than the lure of short-term profit taking or wealth acquisition by theft of intellectual property?

AK: Counterfeiting and piracy affect the profits of legitimate producers and impact consumers, whose lives and safety are at risk when they purchase fake goods. It also damages the economies of the countries in which it occurs by decreasing tax revenue and deterring investment. Counterfeiters and pirates generally pay no taxes or duties, and they often disregard basic standards for worker health and safety and product quality and performance.

AB: What is our strategy for dealing with the growing online sale of physical pirated and counterfeit products?

AK: We are raising this issue with relevant trading partners through all appropriate channels. For example, we are releasing the results of a Special 301 out-of-cycle review of notorious markets, including online marketplaces associated with trade in counterfeit and pirated goods.

AB: Describe the Korean deal and its significance for U.S. manufacturers. What is the Republican opposition to the deal? What is their strategy in pushing the administration to send up to Congress the Columbia and Panama deals before they vote on Korea?

AK: After extensive consultations with the business community, labor and Congress in December, the Obama administration concluded a U.S.-Korea trade agreement that is better for America's auto industry and better for America's auto workers. It holds the promise of billions of dollars in exports and tens of thousands of jobs in America, has widespread support among Republicans and Democrats and support in both the business and labor communities. At a congressional hearing in February, I shared with the House Ways and Means Committee the President's intention to submit the U.S.-Korea trade agreement to Congress and his call for its approval this spring. With regard to the Panama and Colombia agreements, as the President has directed, we have intensified our engagement with Colombia and Panama with the objective of addressing serious outstanding issues as soon as possible this year and bringing those agreements to Congress for consideration immediately thereafter. Some of these issues go to core U.S. values and interests, such as the protection of labor rights. Any timetable will be contingent on the successful resolution of these issues.

Archon Ronald Kirk draws upon more than 25 years of diverse legislative and economic experience on local, state and federal levels. As the first African American mayor of Dallas from 1995 to 2001, Archon Kirk expanded Dallas's reach to the world through a range of trade programs, including numerous trade missions. Prior to that, he served as Texas Secretary of State under Governor Ann Richards, as a legislative aide to U.S. Senator Lloyd Bentsen (D-Tex.) and as chair of the Texas General Service Commission. Archon Kirk also served as a City of Dallas assistant city attorney.



AN EDUCATOR SPEAKS OUT

By Archon James Carter, Phi Boulé



The superintendent of Selma City Schools for seventeen years, Archon James Carter of Phi Boulé, Montgomery-Tuskegee, Alabama, is widely known as a public-school educator and the first Alabaman to receive the Trailblazer Award, which recognizes innovative, creative and cutting-edge leadership style. He was invited to submit the following article to the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and putting into practice the conditions that foster student aspirations in schools and learning communities around the world.

After the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, are we engaging students any better in the teaching-learning process than previous generations have? As students begin to become keenly aware of their place in society, are we becoming more cognizant of the meaning of having an educated population in America?

The ability of our economy to “move to the head of the class” depends largely on how successful we as educators are in meeting the needs of all students.

Certainly educators must perform at higher standards than ever before to exceed expectations in all facets of education. It is imperative that leaders of each school community make sure that teachers are aware that they belong to a great and dynamic organization, one that fosters in students a feeling that they truly belong in their school community. Caring for each and every student is paramount so that each one will be able to work toward a goal, feel satisfaction in achieving success, and graduate with a high-school diploma.

Whether they accept it or not, administrators and teachers are looked upon as heroes to their students. But the most important heroes for our children should be the parents. All of us – school leaders, community leaders, political leaders, student leaders and parents – play a critical role in the reformation of education in this country.

We must all take ownership and be responsible to our students if they are to reach their fullest potential. Educators must be on the front line, fighting to enhance the curriculum in all schools. Thus far, solutions in education have not been guaranteed by the U.S. Department of Education, the state departments of education or even the local school boards. Education has also not experienced meaningful progress under the No Child Left Behind mandate. Even the Race to the Top mandates have not provided the motivation needed to encourage students to be more engaged and inspired in the classroom. Progress is still exceedingly lacking.

It is obvious that one of the key solutions to a quality education for students is effective teaching. Each student must have a creative and innovative teacher. This means that teachers cannot rely solely on materials in a classroom setting, but must come up with additional ways to provide a stimulating, comprehensive education.

Dropping out of school should never become the endgame. We simply must make learning fun and exciting for every student. This is one of Dr. Russell Quaglia’s “8 Conditions That Make a Difference” that has been underutilized. We must learn to enjoy ourselves in the classroom. This can happen if educators are passionate about teaching and if the joy of educating our children is embedded in our hearts.

We – the educators, the parents, the heroes – cannot let the students down. We must commit ourselves to meeting the needs of all students. It is critical that they understand that a quality education will provide boundless opportunities for them to become productive citizens in their communities – and that they can ultimately make a difference in the lives of others.

BAHAMIAN EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

By Archon Patrick Rahming, Delta Lambda Boulé



Over the past decade there has been a great debate concerning the failure of the education system to adequately prepare Bahamians for the world of business and commerce. This article discusses the meaning of education, the ways in which it is delivered and how our present approach must be altered if we are to produce better results.

The Meaning of Education

What is education? What do we mean when we say we have an education system? Well, the most commonly agreed upon answer, although broad, is that education is the process whereby society prepares its citizens for productive participation in the social, political and commercial life. That is, the product of the education system must be an individual capable of productive participation in the life of the society.

While there have been many books written about the delivery system, few have tried to define the criteria for successful participation. However, if we are to discuss the reform of the system, we must have a clear vision of the end product, and that requires defining what “productive participation” means.

We believe that there are four requirements for productive participation in the life of the society, and they form the basis for the first level of planning for reform. The first requirement is a commitment to a clear system of social values. This is essential for the development of trust, without which there can be no productive interchange. The second is a set of skills we call socializing skills, which are required for positive social activity: self-discipline; collaboration, or the ability to work with others toward a goal; and the ability to see an issue from more than one point of view. The third is a set of task skills that are roughly divided into two sets: those needed for accessing further education and those needed to function in some vocation or profession. The fourth is the development of a productive attitude. But what is it that creates a productive frame of mind? It is a healthy image of the self as a worthwhile and therefore productive individual. The education system must contribute to the development of a healthy and robust self-image.

This is a list that has been gleaned from almost three years of discussion with as many of the agents and participants in the education system as possible, as well as from personal research and consideration. These thoughts, we believe, represent the essential requirements of a process that would live up to the definition of education as preparation for productive participation in the social, political and commercial life of the community.

The Delivery System

One of the unfortunate beliefs perpetuated by the community is the belief that education is the responsibility of the school system. Consequently we have become accustomed to judging our success in delivering an education by the results posted by the school system. If in fact education’s goal is productive participation in the community’s affairs, then the measure of success must be against that criterion. It is, and it has been for some time, obvious that academic results and productive participation have had little to do with each other. The captains of industry are certainly not representative of the honor rolls of the most prestigious schools.

In fact, once there is a focus on the required results, it becomes obvious that, while the schooling process is the device around which the society builds its system of preparation, there is a network of institutional agents that combine to deliver that preparation. Further, the actual elements of that network are different at different stages of development. But at no time is the delivery limited to the schooling system.

The delivery system must be tailored to the stages of human development. And, if only for the sake of this exercise, there are four stages of preparation that must therefore be planned.

The first stage is the preschool stage, roughly covering the first six years, during which the initial discovery of the world is framed by what is known as cultural values. They are called cultural values because they underlie the peculiar ways in which the particular community sees the world and makes its decisions about how to interact with it. They include concepts of right and wrong, good and bad, fairness, what or who God is and so forth. At this stage the society expects the delivery system to be the family, reinforced by the church and close friends and, today, by surrogates called preschools.

The second stage is the foundation stage, when the skills needed to discover the world are acquired. These include literacy and numeracy skills, the development of productive habits such as reading and challenging the status quo, and communication skills, especially verbal and written. At this stage the delivery team includes the school, the family, the church and the network of youth organizations.

The third stage is the development of socializing skills, for which the community looks to the primary- and secondary-school system. They, supported by youth organizations and peer groups, produce programs that deliver self-discipline, collaboration and perspective skills.

The fourth stage is the stage for the development of life-enhancing skills and the acquisition of vocation-related information. That is, this is the stage at which we prepare for the tasks that we hope will give our life meaning in the long run. This is a different kind of stage, in that its character and length is indeterminate. The delivery system is drawn from a wide range of agencies, including secondary and tertiary schooling, technical and vocational institutions, the workplace and a variety of training facilities.

The society is accustomed to some form of certification as recognition of the successful completion of each stage of development. The most common forms of certification are produced by the school system, but unfortunately the other agents – the family, the youth groups, the church and the like – generally offer no certification and therefore get less of the society's respect in the education process. In fact, an educated person is thought to be one with the relevant credentials, as opposed to one who has developed the skills that facilitate successful, productive participation in the community's affairs.

So any discussion of the delivery system would be incomplete if it failed to establish that the process of educating the citizens of a society is a coordinated effort

involving the family, religious institutions, social and youth organizations, peer groups and the media, as well as the formal schooling system, and that the proof of a good education is productive participation in the affairs of the global community.

A Twenty-first Century Education

Having established what an education is and how it might be delivered, the final step is to address the application of these principles to the reforming of the education system in the Bahamas so that the young country will be able to meet its responsibility of preparing its citizens for their role in this new century.

As a basis for our discussion, we must first agree that the purpose of education does not change as the community's circumstances change or as technology advances. What changes are the delivery systems and the forms of certification. For example, fifty years ago the prime delivery agents were the school, youth and church organizations, radio and the newspaper. Today, fifty years later, the school system is challenged by TV and by the Internet, which now provides online universities, digital libraries, cyber social clubs, children's networks and instructional cartoons. Further, while in the past the delivery agents typically had restricted access, either by cost or location, today there are many delivery agents for which access is practically unlimited. In other words, the palette for the education planner has changed. It has been expanded. But the purpose of the effort is the same, and as a result, the job is still to use the delivery agents to deliver the relevant skills and knowledge, tailored to the four stages of development previously discussed.

For the first stage of development, during which cultural values are acquired, there have been a number of important changes over the years. The first is the use of day care. Until the beginning of the twentieth century it was a fair assumption that the child would spend most of the first six years of life under the direct influence of the family. In the Bahamas and many of the other communities in the Caribbean, that meant the extended family. Concepts of right and wrong, fairness, family relationships and other values important to the working of the society were inculcated through interaction with a cohesive group with shared value systems. A hundred years later, those concepts are delivered by a diverse group of agents and surrogates, including babysitters, preschool operators and sometimes social workers, each with his or her own agenda, independent of either the family's agenda or that of the educational administration.

The second major change in the delivery at this stage is the virtual demise of books. In a book entitled *How Americans Transmit Values* the author shows how American

values are typically transmitted through the storybooks and textbooks used in primary schools. Until about forty years ago, that would have been a major device for the propagation of values globally. However the use of the storybook in the classroom has become rare. Education planners must rethink their delivery of cultural values in the classroom, since they must now do it without the use of the paper book. They must learn how to use the current technology, not to support their effort, but as primary delivery agents. Their agenda must be clear. From families to preschool operators to providers of TV and Internet children's programs, the agenda must be the inculcation of the local community's values at the

This article is intended to establish only the broad principles that would guide the reform of the education system. Any in-depth discussion of such details as the curriculum would be beyond both this article and our expertise. However, to fully address the need for reform, a brief discussion of the principles that drive the curriculum must be undertaken. If the three stages above are to guide the process, the design of the curriculum must respect those same three stages. For example, at the preschool and primary stages, the curriculum must provide for the inculcation of the community's values. Selection of literature, games, projects and the like must be selected for their use in transmitting specific com-

They must learn how to use the current technology, not to support their effort, but as primary delivery agents.


preschool stage. Of course, to create such a focus, the community itself must address its shared values through introspection and public discussion.

The second stage of development must address the creation of a foundation for discovering the world. At this time, the foundation skills are still the habit of reading, a basic aptitude with numbers and the ability to communicate verbally and in writing. Yet to this has been added the ability to navigate cyberspace and to communicate in the language of the Internet. Finally, as the world shrinks, the ability to speak a number of national languages has become essential. Planners must therefore design systems that guarantee that each child develops these basic skills – systems that refuse to allow students to leave this stage of development without having developed them.

The third stage builds upon the strong value system and foundation skills and develops strong socializing skills. These include self-discipline, collaboration skills and the ability to navigate between different points of view. If reading and calculation are foundation skills for discovering the world, then socializing skills are the foundation skills for conquering the world. For most education planners today, programs based on a problem-solving or project-based approach are useful for the development of these skills. Programs based on the study of art have also proven to hone them.

munity values. Similarly, the primary-school curriculum must provide for the development of the foundation skills while reinforcing the cultural values. And so forth.

Of course, these aspects of curriculum design are not unusual and have been the norm for some time. But there is one aspect of the requirement that has been overlooked. We have not as a rule addressed the need to deliver a robust self-image. It can reasonably be argued that such social liabilities as excessive antisocial behavior, lack of civic pride and overdependence on external approval are all signs of self-image issues, expressed as low self-esteem. The curriculum has shown little concern for the building blocks of self-image – a sense of history, spiritual development and artistic expression – and as a result the society has grown more and more unstable. The curriculum must address the needs of a self-image agenda if it is to prepare Bahamians for productive participation in global affairs.

The fourth stage of development, the development of the tools for life enhancement, as noted early in this article, is a lifelong stage. We are convinced that once the first three stages have been addressed successfully, the fourth becomes the pursuit of the individual for the rest of his or her life. With the commencement of this stage, the society would have completed its commitment to the education of its citizens. 

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