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Tuck MBE Programs e-Newsletter



November 22, 2016

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MBE Feature – CAI Kusum Kavia

What goods and services does your company offer?

Combustion Associates, Inc. (CAI) is an engineering and manufacturing company that specializes in electric power generation systems, modular process systems, and renewable energy solutions. Our signature product is an in-house developed “Spirit” line of gas turbine power generation systems that come in 1 MW, 2MW, 4MW and 10MW packages. For instance, our Spirit 1 MW can power 1,000 homes. These systems are used by other businesses that want independent power, municipalities, and governments in the US and around the world.



When did you attend Tuck MBE Programs and which program(s) did you attend?

In 2006, I attended “Building a High Performing Minority Business” program at Tuck.

What changes did you make in your business after attending Tuck?

We developed a focused business strategy to market our products and services in Sub Saharan Africa. We made our supply-chain decisions based on relationships rather than on low- cost provider. More importantly, I met other minority entrepreneurs within the MBE Program at Tuck whom we have utilized in our supply-chain and this has turned into win-win relationships.

What significant milestones, awards, contracts have you won since attending Tuck?

Contracts/Milestones:

1. In 2007, CAI was awarded an 80 MW power plant project in the Republic of Benin, West Africa.

2. CAI recently signed an EPC contract for a 42 MW Captive Power Plant In Nigeria

Awards/Citations:

2014 – President Obama Praised CAI at the U.S. Africa Business Forum in Washington D.C.
[See Video.](#)

2016 – President’s “E” Star Award for Excellence in Exporting | Presented by: U.S. Secretary of Commerce | Department of Commerce

2016 – Export Achievement Award | Presented by: The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, World Trade Week

2011 – Presidential “E” Award for Excellence in Exporting | Presented by: U.S. Department of Commerce

2009 – Spirit of the Entrepreneur Award for Technology | Presented by: Center for Entrepreneurship, California State University, San Bernardino, CA

2009 – Exporter of the Year Award for Sub-Saharan Africa | Presented by: U.S. Export Import Bank

What do you remember most about your Tuck experience?

The Tuck MBE faculty was very impressive – especially Director Leonard Greenhalgh and Ponam Keller. Every one of our educators were energetic, insightful and full of great ideas that we could take back to our businesses and apply right away. Participating in the program was a great opportunity to meet with other like-minded minority businesses, share our problems and generate ideas for success.

Growing the Minority Business to Scale Program – December 4-9

The Growing the Minority Business to Scale class will take place in Hanover, NH from December 4-9. The Growing class is all about expansion and rapid growth for MBEs. In addition to our outstanding faculty, the class will feature two outstanding graduates of our program who grew their businesses to nine figures, Frank Venegas of the Ideal Group and Carlton Highsmith of Specialized Packaging Group.



Frank Venegas of the Ideal Group is a multi-product proprietary manufacturer of products in the automotive industry. Mr. Venegas will speak on organic growth strategies he has used to grow his business into one of the largest minority manufacturers in the country.

Carlton Highsmith, the founder of Specialized Packaging Group International developed his company using an acquisition strategy. SPG International was the largest manufacturer of Tide and Colgate toothpaste boxes in the North America. By the time Mr. Highsmith exited the business with a sale to a large private equity company, he had grown sales to well over nine figures.



To register for this outstanding one-week class, please contact Jade Melvin at 603-646-8214 or at Jade.A.Melvin@Tuck.Dartmouth.edu.

Thank you and Congratulations to the November Building a High Performing Minority Business Participants

**Photo Credit: Rob Strong*

**Missing from photo: Dr.
Fred McKinney*



Name	Company
Eva Bighorse	Ongweoweh Corp
Derrick Briddell	Pro Cutters Lawnsapes, Inc.
Dennis Brooks	Trio Group
Terri Chapman	MNP Corporation
Karen Cole	Assura, Inc.
Sharon Coleman	Coleman Construction, Inc
Derrick Davis	Informatic Concepts
Eddy Duong	Sun Engineering Services, Inc.
Nailah Ellis-Brown	Ellis Island Tea
Michelle Flagg	Redacre Solutions Inc.
Debny Greenlee	Impact Strategies Consultants, LLC
Caleb Hernandez	Italent Corporation
Rahul Kanwar	PL Medical
Floyd Kaylor	The Cheshire Duo, LLC
Shalini Madaras	Silver Pine Real Estate
Keith Murray	PCV/Murcor Real Estate Services
John Palmer	Servexo
Robert Parson	Parson & Associates LLC
Nhung Phan	Strategic Benefit Solutions
Michael Russell	Vulcan Products Inc.
Raymond Sanchez	Think Ink
Syed Shah	Structured Cabling Solutions
Cassandra Simms	Universal Solutions Management
Varuna Singh	VIVA USA INC.
Joshua Sisco	ELYON International
Jonathan Sprinkles	Sprinklisms, Inc
Scott Stevens	NCS Global
Iris Vincent	Prime Air Corp
Khristian Viray	Alaska MBDA Center
Taliah Waajid	Braids, Weaves & Things, Inc.
Amy Williams	AB Unlimited Worldwide

Colette Williams	Net PAC International LLC
Tiffany Williams	Twice Media Productions, LLC
James Wright	Evans Incorporated
Bradley Young	Ongweoweh Corp.

Dartmouth Professional Affinity Network Launched

Last week, Dartmouth College in collaboration with the Tuck School of Business and the Tuck Minority Business Program launched the Professional Affinity Network (PAN). PAN is designed to assist Dartmouth undergraduates find internships, summer employment and full-time employment with Tuck MBE Program alumni firms.

There was a great deal of excitement at the kickoff that included presentations from Jonathan Sprinkles and Taliah Waajid.

This program is free for MBE Program alumni. We are in the process of collecting information on Dartmouth undergraduates, particularly minority undergraduates, who might be interested in working for you, either as an intern or a full-time employee.

All we need to know right now is whether you are interested. Because of glitch in our email system last week, I would ask those that responded that they are interested to please respond again directly to me at Frederick.W.McKinney@Tuck.Dartmouth.edu. Put in the subject line – “Count Me In.”

In the book Good to Great by Jim Collins, one of the distinguishing characteristics of great companies is having the right people on the bus. This program allows MBEs to tap into some great talent. I look forward to continue providing valuable services to our alumni.

And Finally, Thanksgiving

There is nothing like speaking with the entrepreneurs who attend the Tuck Minority Business programs if you need a psychological lift. Almost to a person, the participants in the recently concluded Building a High Performing Minority Business had a most positive outlook on their businesses and the future of this country. Several of the participants were immigrants to this country. It sometimes takes the perspective of immigrants to appreciate what we often take for granted. Immigrant entrepreneurs know how much opportunity there is for advancement in the United States. They acknowledge that is not easy to be successful in business, but it is possible.

This sanguine view of things helps us to be thankful. So, like many of you this weekend, I will be spending time with my far-flung family. We will talk politics, but we will also talk about our health, our business and professional lives, our children and extended family who will not be with us because of other commitments, and those family members who have made the transition. No matter how difficult the times are, our family like many of yours will find abundant reasons to be thankful. I am thankful for my family and my close friends, and I am also thankful for the Tuck MBE program alumni, the Tuck Executive Education team (past and present), Jade Melvin, Len Greenhalgh, Paula Graves Jonathan Hurst, Michael Turner, Stephen Goss, Ross Dutile, Nariah Broadus, Donna Lawless, Nancy Garrett, Punam Keller. Ella Bell, Kathleen McGahran, Adrianna Samaniego, Alva Taylor, Joe Hall, Gail Taylor, Joset Wright-Lacy, Pam Prince-Eason, Reggie Humphrey, Reggie Layton, Michael Robinson, Frank Venegas, Bridget Akinc, Benita Fortner, the entire HSDA team, all of our corporate supporters, and countless others who spend their lives working hard to make this a better world for all. Enjoy your Thanksgiving.



In your service,

Dr. Fred

Tuck MBE Program 2016 Calendar

<i>Growing the Minority Business to Scale</i>	December 4-9, 2016	Hanover, NH
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For other Tuck Executive Education programs, please visit [the website](#).

The logo for the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth, featuring a stylized building icon and the text "Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth".

Do you know - 46 percent of NMSDC Corporate Plus MBEs are Tuck MBE Program graduates?

Support an MBE in your supply chain. It will make a world of difference.

A photograph showing a group of diverse people in a meeting or classroom setting, engaged in discussion.



- 
SETTING UP YOUR BUSINESS FOR SUCCESS - PART 1 & 2
This full day session will help you build a strategy that will impact all facets of your business. Led by Dr. Fred McManis, a past Executive Education at Deloitte.
- 
SHOW ME THE MONEY!
Learn how to fund your business or raise profit with other people's money.
- 
CAN YOU SWIM WITH THE SHARKS? DO YOU REALLY WANT TO?
Get tips about navigating the waters of investment funding.
- 
PUTTING YOUR BUSINESS ON BLAST! #SHARE #BUILD #GROW
Discover how to use social media to grow your brand and business.
- 
IS THERE AN APP FOR THAT?
Learn how to monetize your idea for a mobile app.
- 
ENTREPRENEURIAL DISRUPTORS
Get a front row seat and hear from a panel of entrepreneurs who broke the mold of doing business the traditional way.

REGISTER NOW! WWW.NBMBAACONFERENCE.COM
Here in 2016, Full Conference Registrants will have Access to the Entrepreneurial Institute!

Other Resources for Minority Business Entrepreneurs



Video: Prof. Alva Taylor

On the benefits and value of attending the Digital Excellence Program.

» [Watch video](#)



Digital Presence is Key for Minority Businesses

Recent article in the *Bay State Banner* about the new Digital Excellence Program

» [Read article](#)



Resources and Content for Minority Business Leaders

Some of the resources we've gathered throughout the 35 years of working with diverse entrepreneurs.

» [Learn more](#)



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Contact Jade Melvin at 603-646-3740 or Jade.A.Melvin@tuck.dartmouth.edu to opt-out of future emails. Or update your contact preferences here: [Contact Preferences](#)

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