



WEST VIRGINIA STATE
UNIVERSITY

It starts at STATE

Contact: Jack Bailey
Jbaile19@wvstateu.edu
(304) 766-4109

Sept. 21, 2020
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

West Virginia State University Dean to Participate in White House HBCU Panel Discussion

INSTITUTE, W.Va. -- The dean of the West Virginia State University (WVSU) College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics will be a featured panelist in the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) 2020 virtual conference.

Dr. Naveed Zaman will be featured on Tuesday, Sept. 22, during a panel discussion on HBCU's participating in a new program sponsored by IBM to develop in-demand skills called the Skills Academy Initiative.

"We are very excited about the University's collaboration with IBM because this will equip our faculty and students with cutting-edge technology," Zaman said. "This collaboration is very much in line with WVSU's mission of meeting the higher education and economic development needs of the state and region through innovative teaching and applied research. This partnership is also very timely as WVSU has recently started an undergraduate program in Data Science and a graduate program in Computer Science."

Zaman will be participating in the panel discussion with representatives from Grambling State University, the Southern University System, and Fayetteville State University, who are all taking part in the Skills Academy Initiative.

Through the Initiative, IBM is donating more than \$100 million in assets, including university guest lectures, curriculum content, digital badges, software and faculty training to select HBCUs by the end of 2020.

The IBM Skills Academy is a comprehensive, integrated program designed to create a foundation of diverse and high demand skill sets that directly correlate to what students will need in the workplace. The learning tracks address topics such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, blockchain, design thinking and quantum computing.

Zaman said that during the summer of 2020, three WVSU faculty members Dr. Sonya Armstrong, Dr. Sridhar Malkaram, and Dr. Heng Wu completed professional training with IBM in data science, cloud computing, and quantum computing and will be delivering the knowledge to over 200 WVSU students in the current semester.

“IBM has waived the course fee (per student) for WVSU students which means that our students are learning the latest in-demand skills and state-of-the-art technology free of any cost,” Zaman said, adding that WVSU alumna Valinda Kennedy, manager of IBM Global University Programs, has been very passionate about this collaboration.

“Her commitment to build a partnership between her alma mater and her current employer played a critical role in this success story,” Zaman said.

Zaman also acknowledged the leadership of Dr. Michael R. Anderson, chair of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, in establishing this important partnership.

IBM’s investment in HBCUs is part of the company’s efforts around social justice and racial equality by creating equitable, unique experiences for Black students to acquire the necessary skills to unlock economic opportunity and prosperity.



WEST VIRGINIA STATE
UNIVERSITY

It starts at STATE

The HBCUs who are part of the IBM Skills Academy and/or IBM Academic Initiative include: Clark Atlanta University, Fayetteville State University, Grambling State University, Hampton University, Howard University, Johnson C. Smith University, Norfolk State University, North Carolina A&T State University, North Carolina Central University, Southern University System, Stillman College, Virginia State University, and West Virginia State University. To learn more visit <https://www.ibm.com/employment/inclusion/>

Follow [West Virginia State University](#) on Facebook and Twitter [@WVStateU](#).

West Virginia State University is a public, land grant, historically black university, which has evolved into a fully accessible, racially integrated, and multi-generational institution, located in Institute, W.Va. As a “living laboratory of human relations,” the university is a community of students, staff, and faculty committed to academic growth, service, and preservation of the racial and cultural diversity of the institution. Its mission is to meet the higher education and economic development needs of the state and region through innovative teaching and applied research.

- WVSU -