



NEWS RELEASE

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ULI Charlotte, Project Destined Partner with Local Real Estate Firms to Launch Innovative Internship Program

Program includes Johnson C. Smith University's first real estate course

Charlotte, N.C., February 1, 2021 — The [Urban Land Institute \(ULI\) Charlotte](#) District Council and [Project Destined](#) are pleased to announce that they have partnered with Charlotte-based commercial real estate firms Beacon Partners, Crescent Communities, Faison and Asana Partners to offer local college students of diverse backgrounds a unique real estate internship opportunity. Students accepted into the Project Destined program will receive an unprecedented offering of opportunities — a paid internship stipend as well as hands-on, real-world commercial real estate experience. The internship will be virtual in Spring 2021.

Participating schools include Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU), UNC Charlotte and Central Piedmont Community College. For the first time, JCSU will offer an academic real estate course in Spring 2021, and will work closely with the real estate firms, ULI Charlotte, and Project Destined to ensure the internship program is made available to students of diverse backgrounds. The real estate course is designed to be consistent with the framework and requirements of the internship, and JCSU participants will have the cost of their real estate license covered by the firms.

“Project Destined aligns with our goal to provide ‘experiential’ learning experiences for all of our students,” said Clarence D. Armbrister, President of Johnson C. Smith University. “We are extremely excited and confident that we will be able to assist with building a diverse pipeline of scholars who, with the help of this program, can develop the requisite skills to be successful in commercial real estate development in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area and beyond.”

“Our partnership with ULI, Beacon, Asana, Crescent and Faison and Johnson C. Smith University builds a scalable wealth creation pathway for students and also establishes real estate as a viable and recognized career path,” said Cedric Bobo, Founder and President of Project Destined. “By providing students with the knowledge, a network, access, and a credential (license), this partnership provides a quantified opportunity for participants to build a professional skill set and access the sector. We believe this internship sets the standard

for educational opportunities that foster diversity and inclusion and contribute to more vibrant, unified communities.”

Interns will work in corporate-backed teams and will dedicate up to 40 hours to working within the commercial real estate industry, where they will participate in bi-weekly team-based competitions. Competitions will be developed around well-structured, practical projects that offer real-world scenarios. This spring competition will be led in part by Beacon Partners, Crescent Communities, Faison and Asana Partners, who will be an integral part of the internship. Students will collaborate with real estate professionals and work on projects alongside them as counterparts in real time. The program will culminate in a finale, in which each team of interns will present a live investment opportunity to industry leaders.

“We’re very excited to partner with Project Destined to help develop and mentor strong leaders within Charlotte’s commercial real estate space,” said Brendan Pierce, Senior Managing Director of Commercial Development at Crescent Communities. “It’s crucial that our industry is proactive about seeking out diverse perspectives and candidates. We are inspired by the accomplishments of Project Destined and look forward to bringing this impactful program to Charlotte. The partnership between Crescent Communities, ULI, Faison, Beacon Partners and Asana Partners will give students a wide array of perspectives on career paths and opportunities in the industry.”

“Faison is honored to partner with Project Destined on this initiative to make a difference in the future, particularly in terms of diversity and inclusion,” said Kris Fetter, President and Chief Operating Officer of Faison. “The opportunity for these students to participate in a real project in Charlotte will provide invaluable experience that they can bring into their future careers in real estate.”

Project Destined, a social impact education and investment organization that specializes in training underserved youth, is administering the curriculum for the internship program, which is available to local students enrolled in any university-level program. Project Destined has worked with over 1,000 students since its founding, and has operated internship programs in New York, Miami, Detroit, Memphis, London, Los Angeles, and Atlanta, as well as the Bronx and Baltimore. The Charlotte internship program marks its first launch in the greater Charlotte metro area and second launch in the Carolinas, following an internship program in Durham that included middle and high school students as well as university students. Project Destined was co-founded by Bobo, a former Carlyle executive and investment banker.

“We believe strongly in Project Destined's experiential training model and are excited to help expand the program's reach to Charlotte-area students," commented Brian Purcell, Managing Director of Asana Partners. "Ultimately, we see this as an important step in changing the real estate industry to be more reflective of the rich diversity that makes the communities where we invest so attractive."

“Beacon is excited for the opportunity to support the launch of Project Destined in the Charlotte market, while partnering with other real estate firms in the community,” said Doug Irmischer, Chief Operating Officer of Beacon Partners. “The internship program that Project Destined

created, which provides training in financial health, entrepreneurship and real estate in a live pitch competition format, is the perfect formula to attract, educate and develop future diverse real estate leaders in our community.”

ULI, long recognized as one of America’s most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development, is the organization coordinating and managing the partnership between Project Destined and the real estate firms. ULI will support Project Destined by promoting the program through its members and their organizations in the industry. Members hail from the Piedmont and Western North Carolina and form a spectrum of land use and development disciplines, including developers, builders, investors, designers, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, attorneys, engineers, lenders, academics and students. ULI is dedicated to being a leader in diversity and inclusion, partnering with and uniting companies and organizations committed to championing diversity and inclusion initiatives and looking to create a more inclusive, robust Charlotte business community.

About Project Destined

Project Destined is a leading social impact platform that provides training in financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and real estate. Project Destined partners with corporations, schools, and non-profits to deliver training using its proprietary e-learning platform and live courses. Project Destined leverages a work-based learning approach where students work with executives to evaluate live deals in their community and present them in a pitch competition to industry leaders. Scholars emerge with the skills, confidence, experiences and networks that prepare them to secure a strong first job and to become stakeholders in their community. For more information, please visit projectdestined.com.

About ULI Charlotte

The mission of [ULI Charlotte](http://uli-charlotte.org) is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI Charlotte carries forth that mission by serving the Charlotte, Piedmont and Western North Carolina’s public and private sectors with pragmatic land use expertise and education.

About Johnson C. Smith University

Founded in 1867, Johnson C. Smith University is an independent, close-knit urban university located in Charlotte, N.C. It has a growing national reputation for integrating the liberal arts with business, the sciences and technology in ways that empower tomorrow’s diverse entrepreneurial citizens and leaders. Offering 23 fields of study, including a master’s degree in social work, to more than 1,300 students from a variety of ethnic, socioeconomic and geographic backgrounds, the university’s excellent academic programs focus on servant leadership, civic engagement and global responsibility. For more information about JCSU, visit www.jcsu.edu or follow the university on social media sites [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/jcsu), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/jcsu), [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/jcsu), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/jcsu) and [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/jcsu).

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