

OHIO STATE ORGANIZATION, COLUMBUS MARKETING AGENCY OFFER INTERNSHIPS FOR BLACK STUDENTS

🕒 August 4, 2020 👤 Bella Czajkowski (<https://www.thelantern.com/author/bella-czajkowski/>)

A new internship program for Ohio State students aims to increase Black representation in the marketing field.

Columbus-based marketing agency The Shipyard has committed to hiring two interns each summer from Ohio State's Black Advertising Strategic Communication Association, with the potential for additional internships during the school year, Osei Appiah, faculty adviser to BASCA, said.

Rick Milenthal, CEO of The Shipyard, said that a commitment to developing young talent could change the industry for years to come.

"Ad agencies are supposed to be helping consumers reach all audiences," Milenthal said. "Yet most ad agencies have a woefully unrepresentative number of professionals that are Black."

In 2019, 8.1 percent of employees in advertising, public relations and related services were Black, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. White employees made up 82.6 percent.

About ten years ago, Appiah, a professor in the School of Communication, started BASCA after a conversation with Milenthal about the underrepresentation of Black professionals in the marketing field. This summer, Appiah received a call from Milenthal, who wanted to use The Shipyard to improve Black students' access to marketing.

Wedly Cazy, a fourth-year in strategic communications, is one of two inaugural interns at The Shipyard. He said that the internship has allowed him to work across the agency's departments and gain skills he couldn't learn in the classroom. The position has also offered professional development and networking opportunities.

"I've been lucky to have supportive mentors who have been helping me and preparing me to be successful in the industry," Cazy said.



Micahiah Brown-Davis, a fourth-year in journalism, is one of two students interning with The Shipyard as part of a collaboration with the Black Advertising and Strategic Communication Association at Ohio State.

Networking, like internship experience, is critical for professional success, Appiah said. Without available mentors, it can be difficult to break into competitive fields like marketing and public relations, which rely heavily on networks.

"Oftentimes it's about not necessarily what you know, but who you know," Appiah said. What you know will allow you to keep the job, but who you know will allow you to gain access to jobs."

Micahiah Brown-Davis, a fourth-year in journalism, is the second intern from BASCA at The Shipyard this summer. She said she appreciates that Milenthal identified the lack of representation in the marketing industry and hopes that other ad agencies will follow his lead.

"It was great for me and Wedly, the other intern, for us to be a part of creating representation in a marketing agency and hopefully more agencies will do stuff like this," Brown-Davis said.

In addition to their commitment to hiring interns, The Shipyard will advocate for increased Black representation with other marketers, clients and agencies by communicating with them about the importance of their voice, Appiah said. He said he hopes that the relationship between BASCA and The Shipyard will lead to the formation of BASCA chapters at other universities to form partnerships with other agencies.

"This will give [Black students] the necessary professional experience needed to get an entry-level job in the field and ultimately create a pipeline for businesses across the country to reach out," Appiah said.

Cazy said that he has struggled to find other Black professionals in marketing and hopes he can encourage future generations to enter the traditionally white-dominated industry.

"I'm so happy that The Shipyard will continue to have this internship experience with BASCA members because that will be a great way for Black communication majors to test the waters and get a foot in the door," Cazy said. "I'm forever grateful for this internship."



(<https://www.thelantern.com/files/2020/08/RenderedImage-e1596578970930.jpeg>)

Wedly Cazy, a fourth-year in strategic communications, is the other Shipyard intern. Cazy said the access to mentors is something he wouldn't have had without the internship.