



# DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

TWENTY FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE TO AMERICA'S DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

## DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY: PROGRAMS PROJECTED FOR CENTURY XXI

Evening celebration of 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year.

Programing focus on questions of education STEM

For Dialogue on Diversity, founded in 1990, this year is a very special one, as we celebrate the organization's twenty fifth anniversary. In observing this anniversary we are planning an appropriate evening celebration, with the title: Dialogue at the Quarter Century Mark, to be held September 21, 2015 in Washington, at the Microsoft Innovation and Policy Center at 901 K , N.W. This program will be presented as an early evening program, coupled with the annual Entrepreneurship – Information Technology Conference scheduled for the afternoon.

The Anniversary portion of the program includes a commentary, a view of the future, projecting the evolving course of Dialogue on Diversity over the several years following the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary milestone. We propose, as perhaps our chief initiative in this period, to heighten the attention given over to education themes (which already have formed a significant element in our presentations), directing for analysis, advocacy, and, as contemplated, practical initiatives to be launched as the organization's course develops. We have determined that an enhanced focus ought to be brought to the overwhelmingly important matters of education, from pre-K initiatives to testing regimes in elementary schooling, to struggles in many quarters to dissuade young people from dropping out, and, again to address our best efforts to the STEM problematic – what values are at stake in the allocation of academic attention as between “Humanities” and what might be termed the “hard” sciences (doubtless in two senses -- both scientific rigor and hard work). Again, is the apparent gravitation of girls more to the humanities and away from the STEM studies, which are then remitted to the labors of the boys, an objectionable tendency? And, if so, what strategies might remedy the imbalance?. And what of the similar issues in ethnic differences (Latino, African American under-representation in these studies, while Asian-heritage scholars are running away with the prize?

We are looking for four or five high-school students enrolled in the Virginia schools who are involved in their studies in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, exhibiting diligence and perseverance in staying in school.

We hope they may join us as delegates to the conference on Sept. 21, remaining for the program, to be recognized as examples, or role models, for their hard work and a praiseworthy dedication to the serious tasks of their own education.

In short, we view education as a field in need of cultivation, and we judge that our Dialogue is well situated to explore this range of questions. I should mention that we have formed very productive and close links with the American Federation of Teachers and with several executives at Educational Testing Service – both organizations have powerful research offices and have been a source of ideas for our benefit (and, we note, have participated by way of speakers at our symposia).