

ELEVATE STILLMAN: Opportunity Zone Discussions

With great excitement and interest, more than 120 local, city, state, and national leaders; business and industry partners; and private developers from across the nation converged at the Cordell Wynn Humanities and Fine Arts Center on the Stillman College campus to participate in the Elevate Stillman Luncheon organized and hosted by the Stillman College Foundation. This July 18, 2019 event celebrated the unveiling of President Cynthia Warrick's vision to elevate Stillman College to be the most accessible, affordable, innovative, and excellent liberal arts college in the state of Alabama and the region.

Stillman College's designation as an Opportunity Zone timely complemented Stillman's strategic partnership in Elevate Tuscaloosa, the City's progressive initiative to elevate the City of Tuscaloosa to be the safest, most hospitable, and most prosperous city in the state of Alabama. "If Stillman thrives, the City of Tuscaloosa thrives," stated Dr. Warrick. "Our benefits are not mutually exclusive. In fact, the Opportunity Zone Alabama could be a great win-win situation for Stillman and West Alabama," she concluded.

To this end, Elevate Stillman presented an Opportunity Zone panel discussion that focused on solid planning, feasibility studies, and collaboration designed to align the College with the trajectory of the City of Tuscaloosa. The planned projects include building a major brand hotel on the Stillman campus and a mixed used facility that will include a "sit-down" restaurant, retail space, coffee shop, and second-floor apartments for junior faculty and other young professionals. These planned projects were unveiled, discussed and highlighted as catalysts to economic development.

Senator Bobby Singleton offered the community's response to the Elevate Stillman luncheon. In his remarks, Sen. Singleton lauded Dr. Warrick for her vision, steadfast leadership, and dedication to transforming Stillman College, the oldest Historically Black College in the city of Tuscaloosa, into an even stronger institution with a vibrant record of social mobility. "For the first time, this year, Stillman College was awarded state funding from the State of Alabama. I am excited about this," exclaimed Sen. Singleton.

The event concluded with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by representatives of the Opportunity Alabama, Inc, the Renaissance HBCU Opportunity Fund, Hotel Development and Management (HDG), and Stillman College.

PICTURES