

ONWARD

THE ONYX INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER

October 2024

THEY CAME. THEY MET. THEY MADE MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

More than **530** attendees, **2** days, **1** unforgettable experience! Although it's a wrap on our 5th Annual Virtual Black Professionals Career Fair, the positive vibes at the event and the optimistic outlook for the future, expressed by both our employer partners and scholars, are just two of the many reasons why our team is elated about the continued success of our signature event. It's also why we work tirelessly to elevate the experience each year, giving representatives from top-tier companies and hardworking, ambitious, and industrious Black talent, from across the country, the opportunity to meet and explore what each side has to offer.



THE 5TH ANNUAL VIRTUAL ONYX INITIATIVE BLACK PROFESSIONALS CAREER FAIR



From the September 7th Premier and Founding Partners Day, which included a panel discussion on the future of work from a skills and knowledge perspective and featured Rashida Geddes (Bell), Zamal Whyte (BMO), Tomiwa Oje (PwC), and our very own Onyx Scholar Ashley Benjamin, to the newly-created 1:1 meetings, which occurred on both September 7th and 10th, and provided a dedicated time and space for job seekers and employers to have more personalized conversations, there was no shortage of memorable moments and opportunities for invaluable information-sharing.

As always, our team is thrilled about the many significant interactions that happened at the career fair and we are eagerly awaiting the great news that is sure to come in the weeks and months to follow about scholars, who expressed interest in re-connecting with our partners, landing internships, co-ops and full-time roles!

Thank you to all of our partners who participated, we sincerely appreciate your time and dedication! We encourage everyone to schedule coffee chats with the scholars you met during the 1:1s and those who dropped into your booths. This will help you better gauge if they are a good fit for your teams and available positions.

If you have roles that you would like us to post on our curated Onyx Job Board, please contact: Andy Francis: andy.francis@onyxinitiative.org

To our partners who didn't attend the career fair this year, we are grateful for your ongoing commitment to our mission and vision. We missed you, and look forward to having you join us in 2025! And remember, our Outreach team is always available to meet and discuss your specific human resource needs.



SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Aishat Yakubu

Schulich School of Business -
Masters in Management
(2023 Graduate)

Tell us about your journey to Onyx, what inspired you to apply?

I joined the Onyx Initiative while I was still in school and I realized the challenges ahead in securing a full-time job opportunity. I was inspired to apply because of Onyx's reputation for providing support and professional development to students and recent graduates.

Which Onyx resources have helped you the most personally and professionally?

The 1:1 coaching sessions provided by Onyx were immensely beneficial to me. My coach, Reginald Oblitey, played a



EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT

An embarrassment of riches! It's the perfect way to describe the deep gratitude we feel for the wealth of forward-thinking, empathetic, and strategic employer partners who have joined us on this incredible journey to level the playing field for emerging Black professionals. So, when thinking about which partner to spotlight in our inaugural newsletter, the choice was not an easy one, especially given the boundless dedication of our many partners who have recruited and hired our scholars, and participated in Employer Discovery Sessions, Executive Fireside Chats, and our Onyx Cafe Mentorship Program. But, since this is the first of many employer spotlights to come, we thought it would be best to kick things off with the trifecta of tremendous support we have received from our three incredible pension partners - OPTrust, OTPP, and HOOPP. Here's just a few of the reasons why these fantastic

pivotal role in expanding my network by facilitating connections with prominent figures in the banking sector. Kiran Singh, my mentor, offered guidance and support during the ups and downs of the job search process. Finally, Lisa Lamoureux's assistance in refining my resume to make it more appealing to recruiters, and her advocacy on my behalf with hiring managers, played a crucial role in securing interviews, ultimately leading to my successful job offer.

Since becoming a part of the Onyx Initiative Scholars Program, which aspects of your life have been impacted?

The advice I received helped me maintain a positive mindset and stay motivated throughout the job search phase. There was a point where I became depressed and frustrated and was ready to go back home, but my coach kept on encouraging me to never give up.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

In five years, I envision myself having obtained my MBA and successfully passing the CFA exam. These achievements align with my long-term career goal of becoming a portfolio manager. Currently, I am working as a financial service representative, but I am dedicated to advancing my education and skills to pursue my aspirations in portfolio management.

What are your top 3 skills that would be of value to an employer?

Strong communication and analytical skills, adaptability and flexibility.

organizations are getting a well-deserved shout out!

Visible support of the relationship with the Onyx Initiative at the senior level.

Willingness to share knowledge and deliver professional development workshops to Onyx Scholars, both in-person and virtually.

Eager contributors to our safe space for scholars to practice interviewing and networking skills.

Spearheading a recruitment review process that involves Onyx Coaches, regularly reviewing resumes and including scholars at the interview stage.

Hiring Onyx Scholars - the ultimate win-win situation!

Consistently demonstrating what's possible to our scholars and exemplifying diverse environments by including Black hiring managers and ERGs at events.

Highlighting the success of scholar achievements and proactively helping them elevate their skills.

Regularly engaging the Onyx Outreach and Career Success teams to review what's working, what's not, and the way forward.

Supported Onyx Initiative's Inaugural Celebration Gala in February 2024.

THE ONYX MENTORSHIP CAFE IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Autumn leaves, cozy sweaters, pumpkin spiced latte, the list of fall favourites is endless, and at the top of our team's list every year is the start of a new cycle of our Onyx Cafe Mentorship Program.

The meetings are facilitated via The TenThousandCoffees platform, the commitment is just one hour per month,

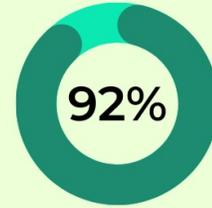
and the bonds that are formed provide both our experienced professionals and our aspiring future leaders with unique opportunities to learn and grow.

From technology tips and new generation insights to fresh perspectives and suggestions about ways to do things more efficiently, many of our mentors have noted that they get as much as they give during these invaluable interactions.



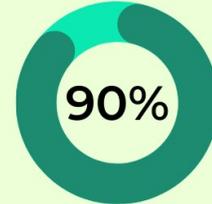
Career Preparedness

Scholars **feel better equipped to succeed** in their career as a result of this program



Meaningful Connections

Mentors would **consider hiring or referring** their mentee for a job opportunity



Ten
Thousand
Coffees

**New Mentorship Cycle:
November 2024 - May 2025**

**Mentors should apply by OCTOBER 30th.
Register [here](#)**

ONYX 2nd ANNUAL *Celebration* GALA

HONOURING THE PAST

NURTURING THE PRESENT

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

SAVE the DATE
SATURDAY | 22 | FEBRUARY
2025

VENUE: Ritz-Carlton Hotel
181 Wellington St W, Toronto,
ON M5V 3G7

CONTACT: Andrea Killingbeck
Andrea.killingbeck@onyxinitiative.org

SO NICE WE'RE DOING IT TWICE!

As many of you know, we hosted our Inaugural Gala on February 29, 2024, and while we wholeheartedly expected it to be a success, the incredible response to our sold-out event, which included more than 300 scholars, employer partners from some of the biggest brands in Canada, and distinguished guests from the academic, political, entertainment, and media worlds, far exceeded our expectations.

But never content to rest on our laurels, we are thrilled to announce that plans are well underway for our **Second Annual Celebration Gala on Saturday, February 22, 2025 at The Ritz-Carlton, Toronto**. The theme for this year's gala is *Honouring The Past, Nurturing The Present, and Investing In The Future*.

A few of our confirmed early highlights include:

- Zoey Williams, a First Officer on a Boeing 777 and the first Black female pilot at her airline who began flying at age 15 and received her first pilot's license at 16 years old.
- A showstopping performance by the incomparable, Juno Award-winning singer and actress Divine Brown, whose chart-topping singles include "Old Skool Love" and "Lay It On The Line."
- The presentation of Volunteer, Employer, Educational and Community awards.
- And last, but certainly not least - an impressive group of Onyx Scholars from across Canada will be in attendance.

For more information on sponsorship packages, purchasing tables and individual tickets, advertising in our Gala Souvenir Program, or donating items for our silent auction, please contact our Gala Administrator Andrea Killingbeck at:

andrea.killingbeck@onyxinitiative.org

Don't delay, several partners and companies have already expressed an interest in playing an integral role in this stellar, signature event!



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