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## **Greater Washington Partnership's Capital CoLAB Welcomes the University of the District of Columbia to Growing Community**

*As the University of the District of Columbia joins the community, Capital CoLAB gains an historic partner with a long-standing record for driving inclusivity and equity in higher education*

**Washington, D.C.** – Today, the Greater Washington Partnership announced the addition of the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) as the 21st higher education partner of the Capital CoLAB (Collaborative of Leaders in Academia and Business). UDC plays an integral role in the District of Columbia's education system – it is the city's only public university, it serves more DC high school students than any other institution, and it is ranked in the top 10 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the nation. UDC will begin offering the CoLAB's generalist Digital Tech Credential program in Fall 2021.

The Capital CoLAB is an action-oriented initiative at the Partnership that brings together leaders from the region's academic institutions and the region's largest employers to build the nation's most diverse digital tech talent ecosystem. CoLAB's programs span K-12 school districts, community colleges, universities, and large employers who are committed to ensuring that the Capital Region offers multiple pathways to digital tech employment while expanding and diversifying the learners who pursue it. The University of the District of Columbia, the only public university in the nation's capital and the only urban land-grant university in the United States, is committed to a broad mission of education, research, and community service. As such, UDC brings a unique and valued perspective to the CoLAB community.

“Throughout UDC's history, we have embraced our essence as a public, historically black, urban-focused land-grant university in the nation's capital. UDC is dedicated to serving the needs of the community of the District of Columbia and producing lifelong learners who are transformative leaders in the workforce, government, nonprofit sectors and beyond,” says **Ronald Mason, Jr., J.D., President of the University of the District of Columbia**. “We recognize that our learners need to be equipped with the digital tech skills needed to thrive in today's economy, and we are proud to partner with the Capital CoLAB to expand equitable and inclusive pathways to gaining these in-demand competencies. Furthermore, we look forward to collaborating with our peer institutions, exchanging ideas, and powering an inclusive digital tech ecosystem that positions learners in the District and the Capital Region for successful and fulfilling careers.”

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In 2019, the University of the District of Columbia launched [The Equity Imperative](#), a visionary strategic plan centering on the tenets of equitable access to lifelong learning and inclusion. The plan calls for investments to diversify the University’s slate of academic offerings, including

associate through doctoral degree programs, workforce development programs, and multiple credentials to meet and serve learners where they are along their educational journeys. As a leading HBCU in the Capital Region, UDC’s strategic plan and investments expand access to educational opportunities for historically underserved communities and equips learners with the skills and competencies they need to thrive in today’s increasingly digital economy.

The Capital CoLAB focuses on high-impact, scalable solutions to create educational and economic opportunities that are accessible to all residents. CoLAB’s recent analysis of the region’s workforce projects that more than 60,000 tech and tech adjacent jobs will go unfilled annually through 2025. The CoLAB is committed to engaging 45,000 students and adult learners in digital tech pathways, at least 50% of whom will be from underrepresented populations. With the addition of The University of the District of Columbia, the Capital CoLAB now has 29 higher education institutions, five K-12 jurisdictions, and 18 employer partners collaborating to ensure that all students – regardless of race, gender, or zip code – have the opportunity to thrive in our digital economy.

“We are pleased to welcome the University of the District of Columbia to the growing CoLAB university community that offers the Digital Tech Credential,” says **Dr. Jeanne Contardo, Vice President and Managing Director, Capital CoLAB, Greater Washington Partnership**. “UDC has a storied history serving residents of the District of Columbia and expanding equitable access to educational opportunities. While UDC has been a partner with CoLAB’s TalentReady pathways effort since its inception, UDC’s addition of the Digital Tech Credential program adds a unique perspective to CoLAB’s collaborative effort to meet the region’s workforce demands and build the most diverse digital tech workforce in the country. With our partners, we are ensuring this region is a place where everyone can live, work, build a business, and raise a family successfully.”

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#### ***About the Greater Washington Partnership***

The Greater Washington Partnership is a first-of-its-kind civic alliance of CEOs in the Region, drawing from the leading employers and entrepreneurs committed to making the Capital Region – from Baltimore to Richmond – one of the world’s best places to live, work and thrive. Working in collaboration with leaders across our communities, the Partnership connects and leverages the region’s extraordinary assets to advance inclusive, actionable solutions that strengthen the Capital Region as a leading global region and center for commerce and innovations.

#### ***About the University of the District of Columbia***

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