



**Business Leaders Linked to Encourage New Directions**  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Cornerstone University hosts BL²END professional development event**

*Young professionals of color impacting the greater Grand Rapids community*

**Grand Rapids, Michigan, October 21, 2009** – BL²END, *Business Leaders Linked to Encourage New Directions*, an emerging young professional of color organization presents a professional development event. **The event will take place on Monday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6 p.m. and will be hosted by Cornerstone University in the Gainey Conference Center, located at 1001 East Beltline Avenue NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525.**

BL²END's 2009 professional development initiative theme of "Global Leadership Experiences and Opportunities," will provide timely, insightful information in understanding the impact of the global economy in today's business environment and job market. **The third and final professional development event of the year will feature a candid dialogue with Dr. Sandra Upton, Dean of Business Programs within the Professional and Graduate Studies division at Cornerstone University.** Sandra will share insight and perspective, around her extensive global leadership experiences within higher education and business, and the opportunities available to young professionals today. The event will include an insightful dialogue between Sandra and event attendees. Sandra will also share information about her educational, professional and community leadership journey.

***About Sandra Upton, Ph.D.***

Sandra Upton, Ph.D., is the Dean of Business Programs with Cornerstone University's School of Graduate and Professional Studies (PGS) Division. Sandra serves as the lead administrator for undergraduate and graduate level business programs. In addition, she teaches research and organizational management and leadership courses in the MBA program. She has also written several curricula in the areas of organizational behavior and development. Sandra received her undergraduate degree from Michigan State University, a Master's degree from Western Michigan University, and earned her doctorate degree in Strategic Leadership Studies from Regent University. Sandra has a strong passion and interest in teaching and studying leadership around the globe. As part of her doctoral studies at Regent University and her work with Cornerstone's Global Business Experience (GBE) she conducted research regarding expatriate leadership in South Africa. Sandra also serves as President of Upton Consulting, a management consulting firm based in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She has over fifteen years of experience in Organization Development and has facilitated organizational learning in the following areas; Leadership Development, Organization Development and Program/Curriculum Evaluation and Development.

**The event is free and open to the public; however, an RSVP is required via email to [info@grblend.org](mailto:info@grblend.org) or phone to Maxine Gray, BL²END Professional Development Chair, at 616.520.7298. For more information regarding BL²END and upcoming monthly events, visit [www.grblend.org](http://www.grblend.org).**

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*The mission of BL²END is to foster an environment of growth and belonging, where young professionals of color can connect with each other, develop professionally, and contribute to the local community.*