



On Thursday, January 23, ALPFA Boston presented *Diversity in the Boardroom: Securing a Seat at the Table*, an event dedicated to the importance of diversity in corporate and non-profit boards and how individuals can participate on these boards. Hosted by Bingham McCutchen and sponsored by Eastern Bank, the event exposed attendees to a panel of successful women with extensive board experience. Bob Rivers, President & Chief Operating Officer at Eastern Bank, welcomed attendees by sharing the bank's commitment to diversity on its corporate board and how it helps the bank better reflect the communities it serves. He also introduced Carol Fulp, President and CEO of The Partnership, as the moderator for the evening.

Carol introduced the award-winning documentary *Insider Game I* by the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility (HACR); which captures a group of Hispanic leaders struggling with the lack of gains in corporate boardrooms over the last 30 years. Dr. Lisette Garcia, Director of the HACR Research Institute, explained how the video is "taking the conversation [of diversity] to the next level, ensuring our voices are heard. These conversation are now happening in public forums, where we are not only the topic of the discussion but an important part of them."

Panelists, Phyllis Barajas, Founder & Executive Director of Conexión; Dr. Garcia; Betty Francisco, EVP, Corporate Relations and General Counsel Millennium Partners Sports Club Management LLC; and Laila Abou-Rahme, Partner at Bingham; discussed their experience as members of corporate and non-profit boards and provided useful advice to attendees on how to join a board.

To start, individuals are nominated into a board based on their skills and the current needs of the board. Phyllis explained that "when advocating to be on a board you have to make sure your value proposition is clear and known. Why are you there? What do you bring to the board?" Making this clear can open the doors for such nominations.

In addition, board service takes time, "Your corporate board service journey builds as you give back overtime," stated Betty. "Network, do research, become familiar with the board options available and match those to your passion and abilities."

Laila encouraged attendees "to seek out organizations like Board Assist in New York to help you identify board opportunities that fit your interest and can use your skills." While also being aware of the "give get" which is what you commit to contribute and/or raise for the organization. "It's important to participate in an organization that has a "give get" you can afford and clear time commitment expectations."

Towards the end of the discussion the panelists offered the following words of wisdom:

1. There's no reason why you can't be on a non-profit board. They are looking for people like you! Find the right fit, especially since it's a stepping stone to getting into a corporate board.
2. Familiarize yourself with all types of corporate boards, such as venture capital or policy boards, appointed boards like the MBTA, boards on the government. These can be the gateway to one day

being on a Fortune 500 corporate board.

3. If someone asks you to be on a board that you are not interested in, make sure you refer someone else they can reach out to. Invest in each other's success.
4. You have to be an active participant in this process. Do your research. Find out what your options are. What services are available for you.

Radhames Nova, Executive Director of ALPFA Boston, and Chris Gabrieli from Empower Schools, concluded the event with current board opportunities within ALPFA Boston and a description of the *Empower Schools Pilot Board Service Fellowship*, a pilot program that will help place emerging Latino business leaders on boards of leading educational organizations in Greater Boston. To learn more about these opportunities email Radhames.nova@alpfanational.org and info@empowerschools.org respectively.

Click [here](#) to view pictures of the event!