The Ralph Lauren Corporate Foundation announced on Wednesday a $2-million commitment to support scholarships for Black, African and African American students, at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

These scholarships, which will support students at Morehouse College, Spelman College and 10 additional universities over a five-year period, through the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), build on Ralph Lauren’s commitments to address systemic racism and racial injustice by creating more pathways for equity.
“Students represent the best of the human spirit – passion, curiosity and boundless dreams,” said Ralph Lauren, executive chairman and chief creative officer of Ralph Lauren Corporation. “When all students have an equal chance to succeed, their dreams become realities and inspire us all.”

“Morehouse has a common cause with partners like the Ralph Lauren Corporate Foundation who believe that equity begins with education,” said David A. Thomas, Ph.D., Morehouse College president. “Through educational investments, which help elevate the creativity and professional competence of talented students of color, we today empower the innovators who will develop the fashions, products and services the world will demand tomorrow.”

Likewise, Spelman College president Mary Schmidt Campbell said the “new scholarship will allow high-achieving students in need of financial support to graduate with less debt, ready to step into their careers.”

On top of Morehouse College and Spelman College, the 10 additional HBCUs will be selected in collaboration with UNCF, using criteria including current unmet funding needs, enrollment rates, as well as proximity to Ralph Lauren Corporation’s U.S. operation centers and institutions that have disciplines and curricula that foster careers in the retail industry.

Ralph Lauren’s work with HBCUs also includes facilitating career pathways for Black talent through internship, recruitment, mentorship and development programs – efforts that are deepening as partnerships with educational institutions and external organizations evolve.

As part of its efforts to improve diversity and equity in the fashion industry, most recently, in November, the company launched the Ralph Lauren Pin of Solidarity to consumers in North America, which is intended to be a tangible, timeless symbol of allyship with Black, African and African American communities. One hundred percent of the profits from the sale of each pin are contributed to the company’s separate UNCF Ralph Lauren Scholarship Program.

By Jennifer Braun