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EDUCATING BEYOND THE CAMPUS:

Philanthropy Fellows Attend PEAK2026 in St. Louis



Left to right: Nicole Mack, Dr. James Hyman, Nush Zweh, Dion Smith, Daniel Owens, Vishan Cooper, Jahlove Shakur, and Nijah Williams.

In addition to placing Fellows in work experiences in Foundations, the Philanthropy Fellows Program exposes them to national conferences where they can network with practitioners and learn about current issues effecting the field. One such conference, PEAK 2026, held March 24th – 27th, was particularly inspiring.

“Still in awe of my experience last week while attending the PEAK Grantmaking 2026 Conference. PEAK celebrated their 30th anniversary this year in St. Louis, Missouri, and I think that speaks to the impact and longevity of this organization,” said Nush Zweh. “Being in a room full of members, foundations, and philanthropic organizations was powerful. It reflected a shared commitment to collaboration and improving how resources are distributed. The sessions were insightful and interactive, creating space for real conversations around equity, systems, and impact.”

“My experience at PEAK2026 was impactful and affirming,” said Vishan Cooper. “Being in St. Louis was a unique part of the experience. It allowed me to step outside of my usual environment and fully immerse myself in the conference, both professionally and personally. It reminded me that impact is not just about giving, but about how we give, who we center, and the long-term outcomes we aim to create. It pushed me to think more critically about my role in this space and how I can contribute meaningfully.”

“One of the most impactful moments for me was hearing Jackie Joyner-Kersey speak about her journey and the development of her community center,” stated Daniel Owens. “Hearing how grants played a role in sustaining and growing her work was inspiring. It pushed me to think more seriously about turning my own initiative, Buckets & Bibles, into a nonprofit organization, and eventually opening a private gym that serves the community while leveraging grant opportunities.”

“The PEAK2026 Conference experience is another example of how we strive to provide off-campus opportunities for our Fellows to learn and grow,” said Dr. James B. Hyman, Founder of the Philanthropy Fellows Program. “This and future conferences are important complements to

the training they receive from their Fellowship placements. We are very happy to be able to provide them and even more pleased that they're being so well received.”