Dream It Forward Project: Strategy Overview & Planning Document

I. Purpose of This Document

This internal strategy document outlines the transition from the initial MEET BAMIT initiative to the expanded **Dream It Forward** project. It is intended to align team members, partners, and contributors with the project's larger vision and operational roadmap.

II. Background & Evolution

Origin: MEET BAMIT

- **Founder**: Ken Granderson, MIT Class of 1985

- **Core Idea**: Biweekly Zoom events that introduce youth in STEM programs to Black alumni of MIT.

- **Goal**: Combat the lack of representation and visibility of successful Black STEM professionals by directly connecting them to students.

Format:

- 75-minute sessions

    - 5 minutes for set-up and late arrivals

    - 3 Alumni Speakers, each with:

        - 5 mins on growing up

        - 5 mins on college experience

        - 5 mins on current work

        - 5 mins for Q&A

    - 10-minute open discussion

Strategic Insight:

- Uses **existing alumni networks** and **pre-existing STEM programs**

- Designed to require minimal staffing and funds

- Prioritizes rapid proof-of-concept over technical complexity

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III. Expansion: Dream It Forward

Concept:

- Dream It Forward is the next phase, expanding beyond MIT to include:

    o **Black alumni from other Boston-area colleges** (Harvard, Tufts, Northeastern, BU, BC)

    o **Black alumni from PWIs across the country**

    o **HBCU alumni**, who are likely to support cultural and educational outreach

Naming and Philosophy:

- Inspired by "Pay It Forward" and rooted in **dreams** and **vision casting**

- Alumni will be referred to as **Vision Casters**

- Messaging will emphasize honoring ancestors and inspiring future generations

    o "You are living lives that exceed your ancestors' wildest dreams."

- Symbolic, inclusive spiritual references (e.g., biblical phrase "without a vision the people perish") without aligning with any specific faith

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IV. Initial Website Plan (MeetBAMIT.org)

Hosted on WordPress

- **Homepage Content**:

    o Project overview

    o Simple layout for fast launch

    o Avoid technical complexity

Calls to Action:

1. **STEM Programs** – Link to sign-up form to join the interest list

2. **Alumni Participation** – Form for alumni to express interest (requires clear privacy policies)

3. **General Contact** – Basic contact form routed to email or stored in the WordPress DB

Timeline:

- **Proof of concept page ready by:** Monday evening (next meeting)

- Page to include key content and all three action buttons/forms

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V. Security and Development Guidelines

Data Privacy

- Personal contact information from high-profile alumni and program leaders will be collected

- Must ensure strict data protection

Proposed Best Practices:

- Use staging environment for all development

- Only **U.S.-based developers** will access the production site

- Secure WordPress installation with:

  - Regular backups

  - Role-based access control

  - Form submissions stored in database with access restrictions

  - SSL encryption and login security (2FA, strong passwords)

VI. Next Steps

1. **Design and Launch Initial Web Page** with CTA buttons and forms

2. **Define and Implement Security Protocols** for handling sensitive data

3. **Recruit First Round of Alumni Speakers** for MEET BAMIT Zoom sessions

4. **Coordinate With STEM Programs** already in contact to join pilot

5. **Document Communication Messaging** – for alumni outreach, program invitations, and public materials

6. **Map out Expansion Plan** – for next circles of alumni beyond MIT

VII. Long-Term Vision

- Position Dream It Forward as a **fundable, national-scale project** under the BlackFacts Educational Foundation

- Serve as a blueprint for **diaspora-wide collaboration** among Black alumni from all major institutions

- Foster youth inspiration and cultural pride by showing real-life examples of Black excellence