

Sponsorship / Partnership

HBCU ELI Willa B. Player Program continued its partnership with Virginia State University's Women's LeadHERship Institute for its second annual "A Day in LeadHERship" conference on March 27, 2025, at the Gateway Dining & Event Center. The event, recognizing Women's History Month, featured discussions to inspire and empower women at VSU, fostering collaboration and idea exchange to cultivate future leaders.



Anne Mullen Orrell
CHARITABLE TRUST



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Atlanta, GA 30314



HBCU Executive Leadership Institute



Willa B. Player Executive Leaders Program

Clark Atlanta University



2025-2026

Willa B. Player Executive Leaders



HBCU ELI Willa B. Player Executive Leaders Program at CAU

The HBCU Executive Leadership Institute (ELI) at CAU's Willa B. Player Executive Leaders Program (WBP) is an initiative crafted to fortify leadership in higher education.

Named in honor of Dr. Willa B. Player - the trailblazing president of Bennett College who led the institution to groundbreaking accreditation and championed human rights causes—the program offers immersive leadership, mentorship, and strategic development resources to new and experienced executive leaders shaping the future of education and community progress.

Built upon ELI's 13 leadership competencies and focusing on wellness practices, the program's robust curriculum undergirds participants capacity to lead with vision, resilience, and cultural stewardship with an emphasis on supporting Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Meet The Team



Phyllis Worthy Dawkins, PhD.
HBCU ELI Executive Director &
18th President, Bennett College



Juliette B. Bell, PhD.
HBCU ELI Willa B. Player Program Coordinator &
15th President, University of Maryland Eastern Shore



Ms. Tye Andrews
Program Manager
HBCU ELI Willa B. Player Program



Ms. Betelihem Beshir
Research & Data Clerk
HBCU ELI Willa B. Player Program

WBP Group Coaching

The WBP Program provides group coaching sessions with key content experts who focus on leadership and development, crisis awareness and mental, physical and emotional health among others.

▶ Wednesday, November 19, 2025

Strengthening Board Relations

Enhancing communication and collaboration between institutional leadership and the board to support strategic governance.



Dr. Shirley M. Malcom
Senior Advisor and Director SEA Change
at the American Association for the
Advancement of Science (AAAS)

▶ Wednesday, January 21, 2026

Developing Legislative /Policymaker Support

Engaging with local, state, and national policymakers to enhance their knowledge of your institution's value, strengths, and needs, and to promote its great work.



Dr. Colette Burnett
President Emerita
Huston - Tillotson University



Dr. Phyllis Worthy Dawkins
HBCU ELI Executive Director
18th President, Bennett College

▶ Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Cultivating Donors

Understanding the process and role of the president in working with Institutional Advancement to develop and cultivate private, corporate, and foundation donors.



Dr. Roslyn Clark Artis
14th President and CEO
Benedict College

▶ Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Building Trust

Developing an institutional foundation of trust among and between institutional leaders and their constituents.



Dr. Lester C. Newman
President Emeritus
Jarvis Christian University

▶ Wednesday, April 15, 2025

Effectively Engaging Alumni

Motivating and activating alumni engagement with and on behalf of their alma mater; encouraging contribution of the three T's (Time, Talent, and Treasure).



Dr. Michael Sorrell
President
Paul Quinn College

June Residency

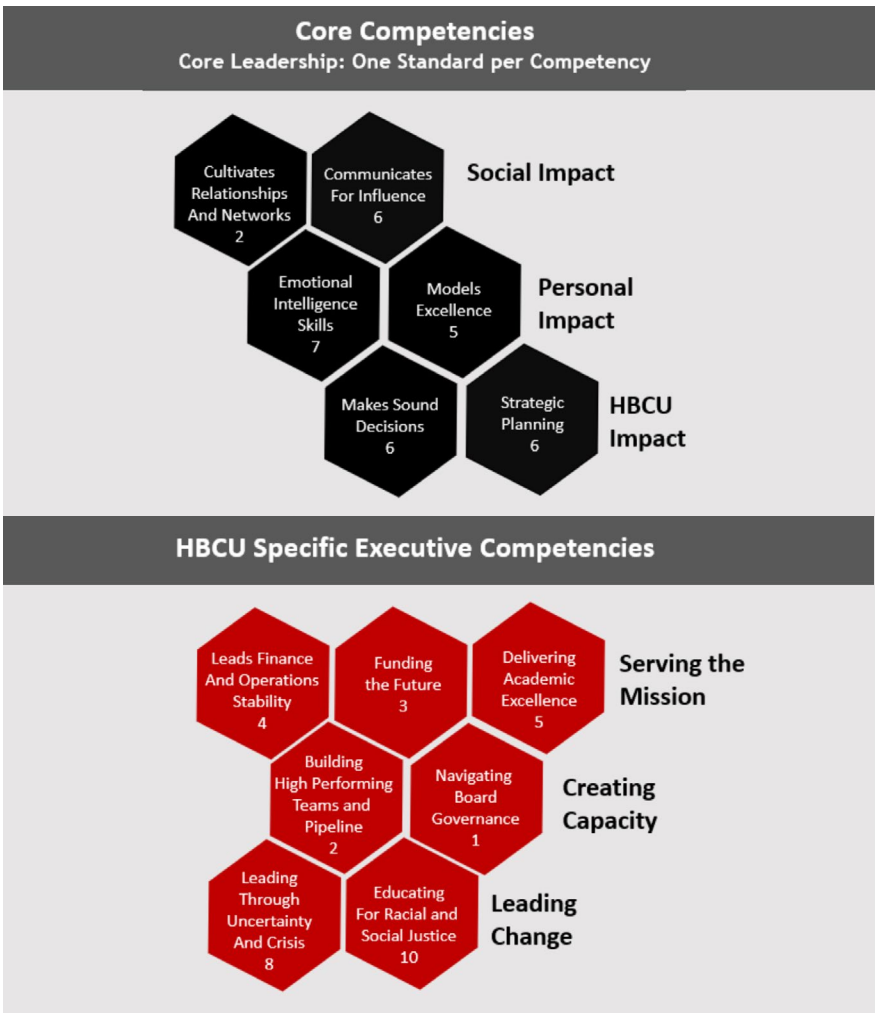
The June Residency will take place on Clark Atlanta University's Campus June 8, 2026 through June 10, 2026. The Residency will consist of professional development workshops and a restorative wellness retreat.



Introduction to the HBCU ELI Competency Framework



Dr. Phyllis Dawkins
Facilitator



Navigating Board Governance



Dr. Donald Comer
Interim President
Lane College

Former Chair,
(Board of Trustees)
Stillman College

Former Vice Chair
(Board of Trustees)
LeMoyne Owen College



Dr. Jeffrey Norfleet,
Ed.D
President
Shorter College

Navigating Board Governance

A collection of skills for cultivating positive partnership and alignment with HBCU board members and the chair. Leaders who exhibit this competency pay close attention with significant investments to clarifying roles and expectations, building and maintaining effective communication and trust. It also involves quickly identifying when issues occur for support, negotiation, remedy and restoration.

Navigating Board Governance Performance Standards

Creates Clarity and Alignment. Partners with Board to establish and maintain alignment with clear roles, expectations, and accountabilities for HBCU institution governance.

Manages Trusted Partnership with Board and HBCU Leadership. Collaborates with both Board and HBCU leaders to build trusted partnership, implement roles and responsibilities, evaluate effectiveness, and increase leadership capacity for HBCU governance.

Resolves Issues and Conflict. Communicates to identify any misalignment with Board, and to de-escalate and resolve issues for best interests of HBCU institution and restored partnership and alignment.



Leads Finance Operations & Stability



Mr. Gerald Hector
Senior VP for
Administration &
Finance

University of Central
Florida

Former Executive
Vice President & Chief
Business Officer
Morehouse College,
Johnson C. Smith University



Dr. Colette Burnett
President Emerita
Huston-Tillotson
University

Leads Finance Operations & Stability

Includes knowledge and skills for ensuring the HBCU maintains survival and sustainability through the flow of finances and operations. Leaders who exhibit this competency demonstrate financial acumen in understanding how money flows in and out of the institution and how to manage the budget with solid financial processes and controls. They also demonstrate understanding and skills for leading HBCU operations and maintaining accreditation requirements.

Leads Finance Operations & Stability Performance Standards

HBCU Financial Model Acumen. Demonstrates knowledge of the HBCU financial model with skills to use the financial information to ensure HBCU financial stability and success.

Budget Management and Fiscal Discipline. Ensures HBCU leadership upholds fiscal policies, effectively manages the budget, and practices fiscal discipline with sound processes, controls, and decisions.

Operations and Accreditation Leadership. Demonstrates knowledge and leadership skills for ensuring the HBCU maintains accreditation and operational excellence.



Leads Strategic Planning



Dr. Ronald A. Johnson
Former Interim President
Tennessee State University

Former Interim President
Kentucky State University
5th President
Clark Atlanta University



Dr. Kelli Rainey
Sr. Director, Grants Management
NACUBO

Former Chief Operating Officer & Vice President Academic & Student Support Services
Johnson C. Smith University

Leads Strategic Planning

Includes envisioning the future for the HBCU institution that adds value for constituents and addresses threats and opportunities, creating plans for implementing it and securing resources and support to ensure it is achieved. Leaders who demonstrate this competency understand the strengths, gaps and context of their HBCU and their own leadership strengths and gaps to best position the HBCU institution for future success.

Leads Strategic Planning Performance Standard

Envisioning the future for the HBCU institution that adds value for constituents and addresses threats and opportunities, creating plans for implementing it and securing resources and support to ensure it is achieved.



Funding the Future



**Dr. Marguerite
McClinton Stoglin**
Senior Vice President
& Philanthropic
Strategist
Bank of America



Dr. David K. Wilson
President
Morgan State University

Funding the HBCU Future

The ability to use a collection of skills with an entrepreneurial mindset to raise funds that will sustain the HBCU programming and mission well into the future. Leaders who exhibit this competency expand and use their networks to amplify the HBCU brand and needs, implement student recruitment strategies, advocate for government funding, identify new revenue streams, and gain funding support from alumni, foundations, and the business community.

Funding the HBCU Future Performance Standard

Amplifies the HBCU Institution's Brand. Illustrates the HBCU student experience with outcomes and what's unique, positive and differentiating about their HBCU institution.

Recruits and retains students. Plans, implements and improve strategies for attracting and enrolling new students and maintaining student enrollment.

Cultivates funding source relationships. Develops personal and HBCU connection with existing and potential HBCU funding sources, increasing awareness of HBCU funding needs and creating paths to funding support.

Leads successful funding strategies and campaigns. Leads HBCU team to define a compelling funding strategy or campaign approach with goals and plans and effectively implement the strategy or campaign achieving funding goals.

Identifies and secures new revenue stream. Pursues an entrepreneurial mindset to identify and capture new HBCU revenue sources by widening circles of contacts and exposing to broader thinking for revenue development ideas.



Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Building High-Performing Teams



Dr. Lester C. Newman
Former President
Jarvis Christian College

Former President
Mississippi Valley State
University



Dr. Dorothy Cowser Yancy
President Emerita
Shaw University

President Emerita
Johnson C. Smith
University

Building High-Performing Teams

The ability and practice of hiring, motivating, and retaining talented faculty and staff teams while building a leadership pipeline for future HBCU success. Leaders who exhibit this competency identify people, systems, and culture requirements, strengths, and gaps to enable HBCU excellence. It involves ensuring the right people are on HBCU staff and faculty teams with resourcing, support, technology capability, accountability, succession planning, and development for continuous improvement.

Delivering Academic Excellence Performance Standards

Strategically staffs HBCU teams. Hires qualified team members with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to lead assigned staff, while leading strategic workforce planning to recruit mission-focused and motivated talent for faculty, administration and functional teams.

Creates a high-performing team culture. Creates an HBCU environment that promotes clear expectations, accountability, inclusion, collaboration, and teamwork with personal excellence and growth for achieving big goals and serving the HBCU mission.

Develops leadership bench. Manages the HBCU leadership pipeline required for short and long-term HBCU high performance.



Wednesday, April 1, 2026

Leading Through Crisis and Uncertainty



Dr. Glenda Glover
President Emerita,
Tennessee State
University



Dr. Kevin James
President,
Morris Brown College

Leading Through Crisis & Uncertainty

Includes responding resourcefully, calmly and constructively to challenges, change and crisis that impact the HBCU institution. Leaders who exhibit this competency must navigate ambiguity and often new situations that no leader nor HBCU has yet faced without a ready playbook. It involves using data, experts, constituent input and intuition to create a path forward while continuing to learn and make adjustments that will benefit the HBCU institution.

Leading Through Crisis & Uncertainty Performance Standards

Navigates Ambiguity to Create a Playbook. Leads HBCU leadership to create a plan forward with clear goals and approach informed by experts and constituents.

Keeps Constituents Informed and Engaged. Ensures that the HBCU institution's constituents are involved and informed regarding critical challenges or crises the HBCU institution faces such that constituents gain clarity and confidence regarding plans and potential impact.

Leads the Team Forward with Learning and Adjustments. Oversees the implementation of plans with measures in place to monitor the impact and dynamic environment and detect when adjustments to plans are required for desired outcomes.



June Residency

Day One: Monday, June 8, 2026

11:30 A.M. – 5:30 P.M.

**Location: Signia by Hilton Atlanta
Georgia World Congress Center**

159 Northside Dr. NW Atlanta, Georgia, 30313

11:30 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Arrival—Signia Hotel

Please check with the concierge upon arrival regarding luggage storage, as guest room check-in is not available until 4:00 p.m.

12:00 P.M.

Registration and Lunch

Location: The Nest on Four, Signia Hotel, The 4th Floor

1:00 P.M.

Restoration Wellness Retreat

Location: Signia Spa, The 5th Floor

Welcome and Introductions



Dr. Juliette Bell
Moderator



Dr. Phyllis Dawkins
Facilitator



Dr. Tashion Macon
Wellness Facilitator



1:15 P.M.

Emotional Intelligence: Interactive Coaching Session



Dr. Marsha Schrage

2:00 – 3:30 P.M.

Group 1: Wellness Spa Treatment (Select 2 from Signia Express Massage, Express Facials, or Mani/Pedi)

Group 2: Interactive Coaching Session: ‘The Well Within: Reclaiming Our Inner Overflow’ (Dr. Macon)

3:30 – 5:00 P.M.

Group 1: Interactive Coaching Session: ‘The Well Within: Reclaiming Our Inner Overflow’ (Dr. Macon)

Group 2: Wellness Spa Treatment (Select 2 from Signia Express Massage, Express Facials, or Mani/Pedi)

5:00-5:30 P.M.

Wrap-Up – Moderator, Facilitator, and Dr. Macon

6:30 P.M.

Dinner

Capolinea, Signia Hotel , The 4th Floor

Day Two: Tuesday, June 9, 2026

8:30 A.M. – 2:30 P.M. AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library

6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. Presidents reception
CAU Museum of Arts

7:00 - 8:00 A.M.

Breakfast at Signia Hotel
(On your own)

8:30 A.M.

**Transport from the Signia Hotel to AUC
Robert W. Woodruff Library**

Registration and Lunch on Campus

- Program Sessions on CAU campus
 - Moderator: Dr. Juliette B. Bell, ELI Willa B. Player Executive Leaders Program Coordinator
 - Facilitator: Dr. Phyllis Worthy Dawkins, ELI Executive Director
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9:00 A.M - 9:15 A.M.

Welcome and Opening Remarks



Dr. Juliette Bell
Moderator



Dr. Phyllis Dawkins
Facilitator



9:15 A.M.

Empowering Women Leaders at HBCUs



Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum
President Emerita
Spelman College

10:00 A.M.

Professional Development for Women Leaders



Dr. Gloria D. Thomas
President
HERS Institute for Women

10:45 A.M.

Break

11:00 A.M.

Cultivating Donors & Funding the Future



Dr. Marguerite McClinton Stoglin
Senior VP & Philanthropic Strategist
Bank of America

11:45 AM.

Wrap-up and Closing Remarks



Day Two: Tuesday, June 9, 2026

12:30 – 2:00 P.M

Keynote Luncheon session

Robert W. Woodruff Library



Dr. Johnetta B. Cole
President Emerita
Spleman College

14th president
Bennett College

2:00 P.M.

Transportation to the Signia Hotel by Hilton Atlanta.

5:30 – 6:00 P.M.

Transportation to president's reception

President's Reception (optional)

Hosted by: President George T. French, Jr.

6:30 – 8:30 P.M

Location: Clark Atlanta University Art Museum

223 James P. Brawley Dr. SW. Atlanta, GA 30314

8:00 - 8:30 P.M.

Transportation back to Signia Hotel



Day Three: Wednesday, June 10, 2026

8:30 A.M.

Registration & Greetings

AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library

9:00 A.M.

Delivering Academic Excellence



Raymond Sass
Senior Vice
President, Education
Lightcast



Dr. Vann R. Newkirk, Sr.
President,
Wilberforce University

Former President,
Fisk University

10:45 A.M.

Delivering Academic Excellence; Shared Faculty Governance



Dr. Adena Williams Loston
President
St. Philip's College

**American Association
of University Professors**
Representative; TBD

12:00 P.M.

Lunch

AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library

1:00 P.M.

Leading Through These Challenging Times

AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library

2:00 P.M.

Transportation back to Signia Hotel



Introducing the 2026 HBCU ELI Willa B. Player Executive Leaders*



Dr. Gina S. Brown
President
Oakwood University



Dr. LaTania Collins Smith
President
Harris-Stowe State University



Dr. Melissa Frank-Alston
Interim President
Augusta Technical College



Dr. Teresa Hardee
Interim President
Bennett College



Dr. Ruth Jackson
President
Langston University

*Confirmed and/or Invited



Introducing the 2026 HBCU ELI Willa B. Player Executive Leaders*



Ms. Marva Johnson, J.D.
President
Florida A&M University



Dr. Denise Jones Gregory
Interim President
Jackson State University



Dr. Glenell M. Lee-Pruitt
President
Jarvis Christian University



Dr. Adena Williams Loston
President
St. Philip's College



Dr. Pamela Richardson Wilks
President
Clinton College

*Confirmed and/or Invited



