

Columbia Names Shantay Bolton as Its 11th President and Chief Executive Officer



Dr. Shantay N. Bolton has been named the 11th president and chief executive officer of Columbia College Chicago.

Dr. Shantay N. Bolton, who has most recently served as the executive vice president of administration and finance and chief business officer at Georgia Tech, will officially start her presidential tenure at Columbia on July 1.

Columbia College Chicago has appointed Dr. Shantay N. Bolton as the eleventh president and chief executive officer for the school for creatives.

Most recently, Bolton served as the executive vice president of administration and finance and chief business officer at the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech). Bolton, who will be the first woman in nearly 90 years and the first woman of color to lead the institution, will officially start her presidential tenure at Columbia on July 1.

“President-designate Bolton has been a transformational leader in higher education and has been recognized as an effective organizational strategist in every institution she has served,” said John M. Holmes, chair of the Columbia College Chicago board of trustees. “The board believes Dr. Bolton is the right leader to propel Columbia forward and to

enhance our status as a national and international leader in helping young creatives of all backgrounds launch their careers, and in fueling the creative economy.”

Bolton brings a distinguished academic background, holding a BS and MS in psychology from Alabama A&M University, an MBA from Florida International University, and a PhD in organizational psychology from Walden University. An adjunct professor of practice in Georgia Tech’s Scheller College of Business, she has taught in multiple settings.

“Columbia has been an educational and cultural anchor in Chicago for 135 years, and it is an honor to join Columbia’s expert community of faculty, staff and the talented young creatives who call Columbia home,” said Bolton. “I plan to build on Columbia’s unique creative culture and strengthen connections to industry and the civic community at a time when creativity is widely viewed by employers as one of the most sought-after skills.”

At Georgia Tech, Bolton managed a \$3.1-billion enterprise, and built and nurtured relationships with a host of internal constituencies as well as with the government and private sectors. She led the rollout of Georgia Tech’s new hybrid budget model, oversaw activation of \$500M+ in recent capital projects, launched an Office of Equal Opportunity, Compliance and Conflict Management and served as the executive sponsor of the Freedom of Expression Work Group. She served as a board member of the Georgia Tech Research Corporation, Georgia Advanced Technology Ventures, Inc., Midtown Alliance and the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO).

Bolton successfully fulfilled similar administrative duties in her prior positions at Washington University in St. Louis and Tulane University in New Orleans, where she helped advance the university’s workforce development efforts through the founding of two inaugural leadership institutes to support faculty and staff development.

She was named to Gambit’s “40 under 40” in New Orleans and among the “Titan 100” for both the St. Louis and Georgia regions, and she is a 2024 “Women we admire in Georgia” awardee.

“Columbia’s success always has been rooted in a relentless commitment to creative education, driven by the deep professional expertise and networks of its faculty,” said Bolton. “As a proud first-generation college student myself, I understand the fundamental transformational power of institutions like Columbia, where students of all backgrounds start their creative careers.”

More than half of the students at Columbia College Chicago are first-generation college-goers. One in five students is a Chicago Public Schools graduate.

The college's creative-focused programs are aligned with jobs-marketplace needs and skills expectations that position students for career success: 96 percent of Columbia alumni are employed within a year, 75 percent of them in creative careers – another 2 percent of recent alumni go on to further their education. Disney, Apple, Warner Brothers, NBC and CBS are the top five creative employers of Columbia graduates.