



FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

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October 15, 2025

W. E. B. Du Bois Higher Education Award Committee
National Alliance of Black School Educators
4005 Wisconsin Ave. NW #5704
Washington, D.C. 20016-9997

Dear Members of the Award Committee,

It is my honor to nominate [Dr. Shantay N. Bolton](#) for the W. E. B. Du Bois Higher Education Award. I first met Dr. Bolton in 2011 at the [American Association of Blacks in Higher Education's Leadership Mentoring Institute](#). Even in that rigorous, selective, weeklong program, she stood out. LMI prepares mid-level administrators and tenure line faculty for senior leadership through full day seminars, intensive team projects, and a competitive admissions process. I remember her as reflective, passionate, and wise beyond her years, qualities that have only deepened with time.

Dr. Bolton now serves as the 11th president and chief executive officer of [Columbia College Chicago](#). She is the first woman in nearly ninety years and the first woman of color to lead the institution. She began her presidency on July 1, 2025.

Most recently, Dr. Bolton served as executive vice president for administration and finance and chief business officer at the Georgia Institute of Technology, where she managed a three point one-billion-dollar enterprise. She led the rollout of a hybrid budget model, oversaw activation of more than five hundred million dollars in capital projects, launched an Office of Equal Opportunity, Compliance and Conflict Management, and served as executive sponsor of the Freedom of Expression Work Group. These accomplishments demonstrate her ability to align resources, policy, and culture in service of students and institutional excellence.

Her earlier leadership at Washington University in St. Louis and Tulane University included founding two inaugural leadership institutes to develop faculty and staff. This work extends guidance and mentoring pathways that directly reflect the spirit of this award.

At Columbia, Dr. Bolton leads a community with a large share of first-generation students and Chicago Public Schools graduates. Institutional data show that ninety six percent of recent alumni are employed within a year, with another two percent pursuing further education, and top employers that include Disney, Apple, Warner Brothers, NBC, and CBS. These outcomes, coupled with her student-centered agenda, connect leadership decisions to real opportunity for students.

I have witnessed her steady rise in higher education and her unwavering commitment to equity and excellence. She meets scrutiny with clarity and grace. She mentors others, builds strong teams, and delivers results that endure. For these reasons, I am proud to nominate **Dr. Shantay N. Bolton** for the W. E. B. Du Bois Higher Education Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CH Davis', with a stylized, flowing script.

Cheron H. Davis, Ph.D.
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