

Charlita L. Shelton, Ph.D.

Proven Leader as a Higher Education Executive

Recognized leader with broad background in post-secondary academic administration; served as a university president & CEO, executive director, equity & belonging practitioner and scholar and as a chief of staff special consultant to two university presidents.

- Exemplary president of two graduate universities.
- Accomplished research scholar: led research efforts to determine how best to retain African American and Hispanic students and designed equity & belonging initiatives for world's largest private educational institution for working adults.
- Published author on diversity and inclusion and student access, retention, and persistence.
- Co-authored a Mission Centered hiring plan to recruit Historically Underrepresented college faculty.
- Created 5-year institutional effectiveness and strategic plan that was recognized as exemplary by the Higher Learning Commission, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.
- As former college vice president oversaw all academic compliance initiatives.
- International lecturer on organizational diversity/equity and women in leadership roles.
- Serving in a six-year institutional interim capacity under the direction of *The Registry for College University Presidents*.

Professional Experience

Central Washington University, Ellensburg, WA

Special Consultant to the President (Consultant Role)

2025-2026

- Provided strategic advisory support to the university president, enhancing decision making processes.
- Conducted executive coaching for senior leadership, fostering improved team dynamics and performance.
- Leading research initiatives for human resources and university advancement, driving data Informed strategies.

Interim Vice President of Equity & Belonging (Consultant Role)

2024-2025

- Led equity, inclusion and belonging initiatives university wide.
- Provided development & training efforts for all employees.
- Launched Diversity Speaker Series bringing equity and belonging nationally known speakers from across the United States to Central Washington University.
- Former member of the Diversity Officers Council of Presidents for the state of Washington.

Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA (Consultant Role)

Chief of Staff to the President

2021 - 2024

- Served Gonzaga University and the Office of the President as an innovative, collaborative, and dynamic leader committed to promoting and advancing the Gonzaga University Mission Statement.
- As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, serves as member of an advisory board to the President on matters of strategic importance, and shares information with the President on key projects and initiatives taking place across the University.
- Served as the internal liaison between the Office of the President and all of the President's direct reports and other university leaders.
- Responsible for protecting, promoting, and advancing the interests of the University by supporting the vision and goals of the president.
- Moderator of the university's executive leadership team.

Interim COVID 19 Compliance Officer

2020 – 2022

- Assigned to work directly with the president to create plans for the protection and safety of all returning students, staff and faculty, fall of 2020
- Coordinated and managed over one hundred employees tasked with operationalizing each COVID 19 plan
- Maintained compliance with all COVID 19 protocols throughout the 2020 and 2021 school year.

Interim Associate Chief Diversity Officer

2019-2020

- Provided Gonzaga University with support and expertise in the delivery of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.
- Developed an initial diversity strategic plan, aligned with the academic strategic plan identifying initiatives linked to measurable outcomes to drive diversity, equity, and inclusion across the university.
- Created and supported the delivery of workforce development in the areas of implicit bias, microaggression and productive classroom discomfort for faculty and staff members.
- Faculty recruitment and retention plan to improve the staying power of newly hired historically underrepresented personnel.

Argosy University, Atlanta, GA

Campus President/Chief Academic Officer

2018-2019

- Led program deans, program chairs and faculty for the entire Argosy University system.
- Management of over 400 campus staff and faculty members and 20 doctoral, master, and undergraduate programs.
- Responsible for academic oversight, enrollment, student affairs and financial aid.
- Managed an overall operating budget of 30 million dollars.
- Obtained CCNE (Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education) programmatic accreditation for the campuses' RN/BSN program.
- Served as interim Chief Academic Officer supporting the transition of 10,000 students to regionally accredited institutions.

Dallas Nursing Institute, Richardson, TX

Executive Director (Interim Role)

2016-2018

- Led the operations of a nursing institute which provides VN, ADN, RN – ADN and RN – BSN programs.
- Responsible for academic oversight, enrollment, student affairs and financial aid.
- Current NCLEX (Nursing National Exam) Rate higher than the State of Texas and national average.
- Secured 7 years of continued accreditation with ABHES (Accrediting Bureau for Health Education Schools).
- Obtained approval to enroll non-immigrant students through the Student Exchange Visitors Program.
- Met and exceeded 2nd Quarter FY18 enrollment budgeted goals. Goals that had not been met in two years.

University of Arizona Global Campus (formerly University of the Rockies, Denver, CO)

President

2008–2015

- Led and directed graduate institution serving both ground based and online students.
- Oversaw all facets of the organization’s quality, academic operations, and growth initiatives for two campuses comprising more than 185 employees.
- Gained 10 continued years of regional accreditation with HLC (Higher Learning Commission of Colleges and Schools) with zero Monitoring Reports.
- Received national and international accolades for implementing innovations in the realm of diversity in higher education.
- Founder of the *Journal of Psychological Issues in Organizational Culture*, a refereed peer review journal focusing in the areas of psychology, organizational leadership, and diversity and served on its editorial board.

Apollo Group, Inc, Phoenix, AZ

Organizational Diversity Officer

2001-2008

Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs

- Created and managed organizational diversity initiatives and recruitment strategies.
- Implemented Web-based diversity tutorials and instructor-led diversity training workshops for more than 15,000 faculty and staff.
- Directed diversity workshops for local business and community leaders through the Phoenix Diversity Alliance
- Provided guidance to campuses on the university’s academic quality assurance review process.
- Supported Regional Directors of Academic Affairs in their training and development of directors within their regions.
- Created and manage diversity initiatives for the institution.

Regional Executive Director and Director of Academic Affairs, Midwest Region

Director of Academic Affairs, Detroit Campus Vice President

1999–2001

- Provided leadership, management, and support to Directors of Academic Affairs in the Midwest Region. Campuses included Detroit, Grand Rapids, Chicago, Cleveland, St. Louis, and Milwaukee.
- Oversaw campus academic operations for the region.
- Managed and directed a faculty body of 500 facilitators.
- Responsible for academic quality and integrity for campus of more than 3,000 students.

Director of Academic Affairs, San Diego Campus

1998–1999

- Progressed through positions of increasing responsibility; served as Academic Counselor, Learning Center Manager, and Director of Academic Affairs.
- Oversaw operational management of two university sites.
- Supervised staff in admissions, student services, testing, and facilities.
- Responsible for academic quality and integrity for campus of more than 3,000 students.
- Responsible for campus academic operations.
- Managed and directed a faculty body of 500 facilitators.
- Thorough knowledge of all academic programs; advised students on the academic process from enrollment through degree completion and on career opportunities.
- Approved to teach introductory general studies and master’s level courses.

Education, Credentials & Service

Fielding Graduate University
Santa Barbara, CA

Ph.D. in Human Development

Fielding Graduate University
Santa Barbara, CA

Master of Science, Human Development

National University
San Diego, CA

Master of Science, Educational Administration

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI

Bachelor of Science, Communications

United States Marine Corps Veteran

Communications Center Supervisor

Distinguished Appointments

William Howard Taft University
Member, Board of Advisors

2023-Present

Gonzaga University Strategic Leadership Group

Provide input and guidance to the SLG on matters of institutional strategy.

2022-2024

Gonzaga University Executive Leadership Team

Convener and facilitator of monthly meetings with Gonzaga's departmental operational leadership team.

2021-2024

The Colleges of Law, Santa Barbara/Ventura
Appointed to the Law School's Board of Trustees
Serving on the Academic Committee of the Board

2020-2024

Gonzaga University School of Business and Administration Diversity Taskforce

Charged with examining the climate for diversity, inclusion and belongingness among business students and report recommendations to the Dean for improving student campus climate.

2019-2024

Genovate Institutional Advisory Board, West Yorkshire, UK

Action-research project that addresses the issue of gender inequality. The project is based on implementation of Gender Equality Action Plans in six European universities and brings together a consortium with diverse experience in gender mainstreaming approaches.

2013-2017

Visiting Scholar, University of Bradford, England
Ankara University, Turkey

Delivered lectures at both universities on the topic of organizational diversity and women in leadership roles.

2014

Commandant's Marine Corps Executive Forum

One of the Commandant of the Marine Corps' key strategic communication and outreach initiatives designed to introduce senior business executives and influential business and community leaders to the U.S. Marine Corps.

2013

Board of Directors, LGBTQ Presidents of Higher Education **2010-2022**

LGBTQ Presidents in Higher Education advances effective leadership in the realm of post Secondary education, supports professional development of LGBTQ leaders in that sector and provides education and advocacy regarding LGBTQ issues within the global academy.

Board Member, Downtown Denver Partnership, Denver, CO **2012-2015**

The Downtown Denver Partnership creatively plans, manages, and develops Downtown Denver as the unique, diverse, vibrant, and economically healthy urban core of the Rocky Mountain Region, which is recognized for being prosperous, walkable, diverse, distinctive, and green.

Vice President, University of Phoenix Foundation, Phoenix, AZ **2006-2008**

The Foundation benefits key economic development areas such as education, healthcare, technology, environmental issues, community development, and social services initiatives such as diversity and community activism. Its work is performed through a variety of programs, grants, sponsorships, and scholarships that support youth and those traditionally left out of higher education.

Board Member, Arizona Community Foundation Tapestry Fund, Phoenix, AZ **2006-2007**

The fund is committed to building diversity and promoting dignity through grant opportunities responsive to the needs of the LGBT community.

Committee Appointments

Out @ GU, Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA **2022 - 2024**

University Space Planning, Gonzaga University, Spokane WA **2022 - 2024**

Housing and Residence Life Initiative, Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA **2022 - 2024**

Executive Leadership Team, Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA **2021 - 2024**

Richardson Chamber of Commerce, Education & Workforce, Richardson, TX **2017 - 2018**

Richardson Chamber of Commerce, Women in Leadership, Richardson, TX **2017 - 2018**

Awards

2025 LGBTQ Leaders in Higher Education, Founders Award

2015 Finalist, Athena Award for Women Leaders

2014 Innovations in Diversity Award, Profile in Diversity Journal

2013 Innovations in Diversity Award, Profile in Diversity Journal

2013 Diversity's Higher Education Excellence in Diversity, Insight

2012 Diversity’s Higher Education Excellence in Diversity, Insight

2011 Women Worth Watching Award, *Profiles in Diversity Journal*

2011 Diversity Leader Award, *Profiles in Diversity Journal*

2010 International Innovation in Diversity Award, *Profiles in Diversity Journal*

2010 Champion of Diversity Award, *Diversity Business*

2007 Diversity Champion Award, Arizona Society of Human Resources

Selected Presentations

Shelton, C. (2026, April). The History of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the United States. Tempe Community Council Diversity Commission, Tempe, AZ.

Shelton, C. (2025, October). Introducing the Shared Equity Leadership Model. Central Washington University, Ellensburg, WA.

Shelton, C. (2024, June). Intersectionality Matters. Central Washington University, Ellensburg, WA.

Shelton, C., & Netzhammer, M. (2024, October). Leading University Issues During Challenging Times. LGBTQ Leaders in Higher Education Conference. Seattle, WA.

Shelton, C., Anding, J., Kahn, A., (2023, January). Intersectionality Matters. The Journey of three Fielding Graduates. Fielding Graduate University, Santa Barbara, CA.

Shelton, C. (2022, November). Lessons Learned from a Woman United States Marine. Gonzaga Veteran’s Luncheon.

Shelton, C. (2022, September). Intersectionality Matters. Gonzaga University Colleagues of Color

Shelton, C. (2020, June). Systemic Racism in Higher Education. The Colleges of Law Open Forum, Zoom Delivery.

Shelton, C. (2020, March). From the Ghetto to the Presidency: An Intersectionality Journey through Time. National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education, San Diego, CA.

Reyes, R., & Shelton, C. (2019, November). Diversity and Human Resources. New Directions for the future. The Registry Annual Seminar, Phoenix, AZ

Shelton, C. (2018, August). The Professionals Interview for Success. College Acceleration Summit, Online.

Shelton, C. (2017, August). From the Ghetto to the Presidency: A Reflection of Resiliency and Persistence. College Acceleration Summit, Online.

Shelton, C., Barcelo, R, Endrijonas, E., Whitney, K., (2017, June). *A Woman’s Way of Leading*. LGBTQ Leaders in Higher Education Institute, Seattle, WA

- Shelton, C. (2014, June). Gender Equality in Academic Leadership and Management Issues. Lecture conducted at Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey.
- Shelton, C. (2014, June). From the Ghetto to the College Presidency. Fourth Annual Diversity Conference, Making Diversity Interventions Count. University of Bradford, Bradford, England.
- Shelton, C. (2014, June). Intersections of Diversity. Keynote address. Fourth Annual Diversity Conference, Making Diversity Interventions Count. University of Bradford, Bradford, England.
- Kahn, A., & Shelton, C. (2014, April). From Data to Action: A Presidential Perspective on the Importance of Institutional Climate. Symposium conducted at the Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.
- Kahn, A., & Shelton, C. (2012, November). Enhancing a Climate of Engagement for the Diverse Learner: From President's Diversity Council to Taskforce to Community, A Process for Continuous Improvement. Symposium conducted at the Association of Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) Annual Conference, Las Vegas, NV.
- Kahn, A. & Shelton, C. (2012, April). Mission-Driven Diversity: Enhancing a Climate of Inclusion from President's Diversity Council to Taskforce to Community. Symposium conducted at the Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.
- Shelton, C., Crossman, R., & McCabe, L. (2011, March). Developing Leadership Opportunities for LGBT Individuals. *Inclusiveness in the Academy*. Symposium conducted at American Council on Education Annual Conference, Washington, DC.

Publications

- Shelton, C. (2015). I do not care who threw the first brick. Stonewall, directed by Roland Emmerich. *Journal of Psychological Issues in Organizational Culture*, 6(3), 77-81.
- Shelton, C. (2014, July 16). College completion matters, too. Op Ed, *Detroit News*.
- Gander, J., Henking, S., Hoyle, M., Ragsdale, K., Shelton, C., & Whitney, K. (2014). Reflections from prestigious LGBTQ leaders in higher education. *Journal of Psychological Issues in Organizational Culture*, 5(1), 60-66. doi: 10.1002/jpoc.21139
- Shelton, C. (2011). Social justice: Creating an inclusive university culture. *The Presidency: The American Council on Education's Magazine for Higher Education Leaders*, 14(1), 29-30, 32.
- Shelton, C. (2011). Helping first-generation college students succeed. *Journal of Psychological Issues in Organizational Culture*, 1(4), 63-75. doi: 10.1002/jpoc.20041
- Shelton, C. (2010, September/October). Women worth watching in 2011. *Profiles in Diversity Journal*, 12(5), 167.
- Hutson, B. (2010, April). Special report: Higher learning research presents several factors that can lead to increased graduation rates of Black men (cites C. Shelton research). *Black Enterprise*, 40(9), 52.
- Shelton, C. (2010, March/April). Building trust across diversity. *Profiles in Diversity Journal*, 12(2), 60.

Shelton, C. (2009, October). Influences that lead to higher graduation rates of African American males who receive their undergraduate degree. *Adult Higher Education*. Symposium conducted at the Adult Higher Education Alliance Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.

Shelton, C. (2008). *The perceived influences which cause a higher persistence to graduation rate of African American male students who receive their bachelor's degree from University of Ages*. Doctoral dissertation, Fielding Graduate University.

Shelton, C. (2007). The business case for diversity. *HR Apollo Group, Inc. Innovative Insider*.

References Provided by Request