

# LOUIS D. WHITESIDES, DBA, CRA

Chief Academic Officer | 1890 Land-Grant University Executive | Institutional Transformation Leader

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## EXECUTIVE PROFILE

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Louis D. Whitesides, DBA, is a senior higher education executive, Chief Academic Officer, and 1890 land-grant university leader with nearly three decades of progressively responsible leadership across academic affairs, research administration, Cooperative Extension, public service, institutional governance, fiscal stewardship, and external relations. He serves as Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at South Carolina State University, where he is the University's Chief Academic Officer and a direct report to the President.

What distinguishes his executive record is the breadth of his leadership across the full land-grant enterprise. His career has encompassed teaching and academic affairs, sponsored research and research administration, Cooperative Extension, public engagement, workforce development, and state and federal partnerships. This integrated perspective allows him to align academic quality, research productivity, student success, community impact, and economic development within a unified institutional strategy.

His executive record includes mobilizing more than \$150 million across competitive grants, state appropriations, partner resources, and capital investments; managing annual portfolios exceeding \$23 million with zero audit findings; increasing state appropriations by 80 percent across four budget cycles; directing major facilities development; and leading student-success initiatives through which a 150-student scholarship cohort achieved an 86 percent four-year graduation rate and 94 percent post-graduation placement.

## INTEGRATED 1890 LAND-GRANT LEADERSHIP

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### Teaching and Academic Affairs

Provides university-wide leadership for colleges, schools, curriculum, faculty affairs, accreditation, academic assessment, student success, and institutional planning as Chief Academic Officer.

### Research and Scholarship

Has led sponsored research, federal compliance, multidisciplinary scholarship, faculty research development, and institutional research-capacity building, contributing to South Carolina State University's advancement as an R2 institution.

### Extension and Public Engagement

Has directed statewide Cooperative Extension, public service, workforce development, community partnerships, rural economic development, and governmental relations across the 1890 land-grant mission.

Few higher education executives have held senior leadership responsibilities across all three dimensions of the 1890 land-grant mission before assuming the role of Chief Academic Officer. The 1890 Land-Grant University System comprises nineteen historically Black land-grant universities established under the Second Morrill Act of 1890, and research administration, Extension, and academic affairs are ordinarily distinct career tracks within them. Dr. Whitesides' career reflects that uncommon breadth.

## CURRENT EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENT

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**Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs — Chief Academic Officer**

*South Carolina State University | July 2026 – Present*

Serves as the University's Chief Academic Officer and direct report to the President. Provides academic strategic planning, administrative leadership, direction, and evaluation for all academic activities and faculty affairs while fostering intellectual growth, student learning, scholarly and creative activity, and multidisciplinary research.

- Directs colleges, schools, curriculum development, academic assessment, and program review.
- Oversees faculty recruitment, tenure, promotion, evaluation, workload policy, and professional development.
- Provides leadership for academic budgeting, institutional planning, resource allocation, and academic policy.
- Advances retention, academic support, accreditation, and student-success strategies.
- Oversees growth and development of the university research enterprise.

## **PRIOR EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP**

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**Vice President for Public Service and Agriculture and Executive Director, 1890 Research and Extension Program** | 2019 – July 2026

**Interim Vice President for Research** | 2023 – July 2026

## **SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

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### **Institutional Transformation**

- Led development of the College of Agriculture, Family and Consumer Sciences.
- Helped advance institutional research capacity supporting R2 classification.
- Integrated academic, research, compliance, finance, and public-service priorities.

### **Student Success**

- Led a 150-student scholarship and support model producing an 86 percent four-year graduation rate.
- Achieved 94 percent employment or graduate-school placement.
- Directed \$5.8 million in full scholarships, mentoring, and experiential learning.

### **Strategic Resource Development**

- Secured \$65 million or more in competitive external grants and contracts.
- Generated \$57 million or more in state and partner resources.
- Secured and directed \$30 million in capital investments.
- Obtained the institution's largest single award, valued at \$35 million.

### **Fiscal and Operational Leadership**

- Managed annual portfolios exceeding \$23 million with zero audit findings.
- Increased state appropriations by 80 percent over four budget cycles.
- Directed acquisition, construction, or renovation of 10 facilities totaling approximately 90,000 square feet.

### **Public and Community Leadership**

- Founded and led the Orangeburg Express Youth Basketball Organization for more than a decade, expanding to as many as 10 teams and serving more than 300 young people.
- Founded the 1904 Society, mentoring 21 Black male students from seventh grade through college, with all 21 entering postsecondary education.
- Provides board leadership across statewide research, agricultural, innovation, and public-service organizations.

## **RESOURCE LEADERSHIP**

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| Leadership Category                       | Documented Scale |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Competitive external grants and contracts | \$65M+           |
| State and partner resources               | \$57M+           |
| Capital and infrastructure investments    | \$30M            |
| Largest single institutional award        | \$35M            |
| Annual portfolio managed                  | \$23M+           |
| Total resource leadership portfolio       | \$150M+          |

*Categories reflect different forms of resource leadership and should not be interpreted as strictly additive unless supported by the underlying institutional records.*

## SCHOLARLY IMPACT AND RESEARCH LEADERSHIP

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Complementing his executive leadership, Dr. Whitesides maintains an active program of scholarship in agricultural economics, international trade, institutional governance, organizational trust, public higher education, and land-grant university leadership.

- Eight verified peer-reviewed journal articles
- Two publicly distributed SSRN collaborative working papers
- Additional policy, applied research, and working papers in development
- Google Scholar and ORCID profiles linked in the document header

### Publicly Distributed Working Papers (SSRN)

Whiteside, J. E., & Whitesides, L. D. (2026). *Beyond funding formulas: Institutional trust as strategic capacity in public land-grant HBCUs*. SSRN Working Paper. Abstract ID: 6969498.

Whiteside, J. E., & Whitesides, L. D. (2026). *Institutional trust as a strategic asset: Developing the Institutional Trust Index (ITI) for public and land-grant universities*. SSRN Working Paper. Abstract ID: 6942998.

*SSRN working papers are publicly distributed scholarly manuscripts intended to advance academic discussion prior to or alongside formal journal publication. They are distinct from peer-reviewed publications.*

## EDUCATION AND EXECUTIVE PREPARATION

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### Academic Degrees

**Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), International Business** — Argosy University

**Master of Science (MS), Management** — Southern Wesleyan University

**Bachelor of Science (BS), Computer Science, Minor in Mathematics** — South Carolina State University

### Executive and Leadership Preparation

*Non-degree executive education.*

- Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges — Institute for Leadership and Governance in Higher Education, Class of 2026–2027
- Harvard University — Executive Certificate in Higher Education Leadership
- Cornell University — Executive Leadership Certificate
- Temple University, Harrisburg — Certificate in Fundraising