

Dr. Rafael Class II, Ed.D., MSRE, MBA
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Professional Summary

Distinguished multidisciplinary scholar and practitioner, my work is informed by a doctorate in organizational leadership and advanced degrees in business and real estate. My scholarly and professional practice is centered on the **Cultural Synergy Framework™**, a proprietary, data-driven methodology I developed to enhance institutional effectiveness, advance student success, and foster equitable community development. Informed by a transformative personal journey as a first-generation scholar who completed a baccalaureate degree while incarcerated, my research and leadership are dedicated to the deconstruction of systemic barriers and the creation of substantive pathways to success for underserved populations. This approach synthesizes **Lean Six Sigma** methodologies with principles of **trauma-informed leadership**, creating a novel framework for organizational transformation one that repositions diversity from a demographic metric to a core strategic asset essential for sustainable growth and innovation.

Education

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) – Higher Education Administration: Organizational Leadership (2025)

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA | GPA: 3.29

Dissertation: "Recommendations to Improve Student Support for Students in the FirstGen Presidential Fellows Program at Bentley University in Massachusetts"

Master of Science in Real Estate (MSRE) (2025)

Fordham University, New York, NY | GPA: 3.49

Master of Legal Studies (MLS) – Higher Education & NCAA Compliance and Sports Law (2026)

Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA

Master of Business Administration (MBA) – Strategic Leadership (2021)

University of the Southwest, Hobbs, NM | GPA: 3.83

Bachelor of Science (B.S.) – Organizational Management (2018)

Alliance University (formerly Nyack College), New York, NY | GPA: 3.22

Completed while incarcerated through the university's prison education program

Professional Experience

Self3mpowerment / Cultural Synergy, Peoria, IL

President & CEO (May 2024 – Present)

- Founded and direct a nonprofit consulting firm focused on implementing the **Cultural Synergy Framework™** to drive educational access and organizational transformation for underserved populations.
- Designed and implemented scalable college preparation and transition support programs for first-generation college students, domestic violence survivors, and formerly incarcerated individuals.
- Secured **\$250,000 in grant funding** through strategic proposal writing and stakeholder engagement.
- Established strategic partnerships with **over 8 community organizations** to create pathways to higher education and optimize resource distribution.

The Pulse Group at Keller Williams Hudson Valley, New City, NY

Founder & Principal | Commercial, Residential & Luxury Real Estate (February 2025 – Present)

- Founded and lead **The Pulse Group**, a specialized real estate team within Keller Williams, directing strategy and operations across the commercial, residential, and luxury market sectors.
- Leverage advanced market analysis, valuation, and finance methodologies from an MS in Real Estate to guide a diverse clientele through complex property acquisitions and dispositions.
- Spearhead full-cycle transaction management for the group's portfolio, achieving a **99% completion rate** and maintaining a **95% client satisfaction rating** through expert negotiation and stakeholder engagement.
- Direct collaboration with a network of lenders, attorneys, contractors, and institutional partners to ensure seamless execution on high-value and multifaceted real estate deals.

National University, San Diego, CA

Enrollment Advisor & Recruitment Specialist (April 2024 – September 2024)

- Orchestrated comprehensive enrollment journeys for **150+ prospective students**, implementing targeted communication strategies that **increased application completion rates by 27%**.
- Championed equitable access initiatives that contributed to a **27% increase in enrollment diversity** within a six-month period.
- Served as institutional ambassador at 12 virtual recruitment events, delivering presentations rated **4.8/5 for effectiveness**.

Morris Brown College, Atlanta, GA

Adjunct Professor (January 2021 – August 2024)

- Designed and delivered dynamic undergraduate and graduate curriculum in business, leadership, and real estate, incorporating diverse instructional strategies to support first-generation, low-income, and marginalized students.
- Mentored over 50 diverse students in academic and professional development, resulting in a **22% improvement in campus climate survey scores** and an 85% self-reported improvement in academic outcomes.
- Cultivated inclusive classroom environments and safe spaces for students to share their stories, addressing systemic barriers to promote educational equity.
- Evaluated student progress through comprehensive assessments, providing detailed feedback and academic support to enhance learning and career readiness.
- Collaborated with faculty and academic leadership to refine curricula and participate in program assessment efforts aligned with accreditation standards.

Turner Job Corps, Albany, GA

Academic Supervisor (June 2023 – October 2023)

- Led the management of academic programs and supervised faculty, ensuring curriculum alignment with institutional goals and student performance across multiple disciplines.
- Implemented data-driven interventions and inclusive teaching practices that resulted in an **18% improvement in student retention**.
- Provided mentorship and professional development to **over 25 educators** on innovative and culturally responsive teaching strategies for diverse learners.
- Developed robust student assessment frameworks to identify at-risk students, address learning challenges, and improve retention.
- Utilized data-driven methodologies to assess academic performance and implement strategic interventions.
- Introduced restorative justice practices to resolve student conflicts and strengthen the community.

McAllister's Deli, Hobbs, NM

General Manager (September 2019 – October 2021)

- Directed all daily operations, holding full P&L responsibility and leading performance management for a team of **over 50 professionals**.
- Implemented data-driven change management strategies that optimized operational efficiency, **reduced overall costs by 12%**, and measurably improved employee retention.
- Drove a **20% increase in customer loyalty** and elevated the brand's local reputation by designing and executing new service excellence protocols.
- Conducted continuous market and competitor analysis to inform strategic business positioning, driving sustained revenue growth and market share.

Fishkill Correctional Facility, Beacon, NY

Inmate Grievance Representative (June 2016 – February 2019)

Processed **15+ formal grievances monthly**, conducting impartial investigations and mediating disputes to ensure 100% compliance with NYS DOCCS directives. Applied conflict resolution techniques to de-escalate sensitive situations.

Publications

Class, R. (Expected 2025). *Reconstructing Student Affairs with The Cultural Synergy Framework.* (In Progress)

Class, R. (2025). *Establishing Effective First-Generation College Student Support Programs: A Framework for Institutional Implementation.*

Class, R. (2025). *The Hidden Burdens of Doctoral Achievement: A Critical Examination of First-Generation Scholar Experiences.*

Class, R. (2025). *From Prison to Scholar: The Transformative Journey of Dr. Rafael Class II.*

Class, R. (2023). *Cultivating Understanding: Nurturing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Higher Education.*

Class, R. (2022). *Philosophy on Inclusive Diversification Leading Equality.*

Certifications & Professional Licenses

Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belt, Management & Strategy Institute (2024)

Change Management Specialist (CMS), Management & Strategy Institute (2024)

Leader of DEI in Higher Education, University of Michigan (2022)

Organizational Leader of DEI, Rice University (2022)

Licensed Human Rights Specialist, US Institute of Diplomacy and Human Rights (2022)

New York State Real Estate License

Rhode Island & Massachusetts General/Residential Contractor Licenses

Teaching Competencies & Research Interests

Teaching: Higher Education Administration; Strategic Leadership; Organizational Behavior; DEI in Organizations; Multicultural Leadership; Student Success & Retention Strategies; Real Estate Finance.

Research: Institutional Effectiveness & Accreditation; Support Systems for First-Generation College Students; Educational Policy & Organizational Leadership; Transformative Education for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals.

Professional Affiliations

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)

American Council on Education (ACE)

National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE)

National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)

National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)

Urban Land Institute (ULI)

References

Dr. LaBrent Chrite: President, Bentley University | LChrite@Bentley.edu | (520) 955-1343

Dr. Cedric Gathings: VP of Student Affairs, MeridianCC | Cedric.Gathings@MeridianCC.edu | (662) 889-5201

Dr. La'Trice Fentress: SoE Doctoral Chair, Liberty University | LSFentress@Liberty.edu | (757) 737-0114

Dr. Cory Potter: Director, HR Info. Systems & Data Analytics, Elon University | CPotter9@Elon.edu | (407)416-7630

All references have been informed of their inclusion and have agreed to provide professional recommendations regarding qualifications, character, and potential for leadership roles in higher education administration All references have been informed of their inclusion and have agreed to provide professional recommendations regarding qualifications, character, and potential for leadership roles in higher education administration