

B. AFENI MCNEELY COBHAM, PH.D.

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Strategic and policy-driven higher education leader with extensive experience advancing student retention, access, and institutional change across diverse college settings. Proven track record in leading student affairs, cross-divisional collaboration, and curriculum development that fosters student engagement. Skilled in supervising multi-functional teams, aligning student services with academic priorities, and championing wide-ranging practices that support holistic student development. Recognized thought leader on equity in higher education with a strong record of scholarship, teaching, and national engagement.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Academic Support Services
 - Student Success & Retention
 - Curriculum Design
 - Co-curricular Projects
 - Professional & Paraprofessional Supervision
 - Grant Procurement
 - Student Conduct & Community Standards
 - Research & Assessment
 - Budget Planning & Management
 - Training & Development
 - Program Accreditation
 - Union Contracts & Negotiation
 - Crisis Resolution
 - Strategic Planning
 - Immigration & Visa Compliance
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EDUCATION

Indiana University Bloomington, Indiana

Doctor of Philosophy, Higher Education Administration

June 2003

Master of Arts, African American & African Diaspora Studies

December 2000

University of Georgia

Athens, Georgia

Master of Education, Student Personnel & Higher Education

June 1996

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, New York

Bachelor of Arts, Communication (Radio, TV & Film)

May 1992

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of North Carolina School of the Arts

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Associate Vice Chancellor and Vice Provost of Institutional Engagement

April 2023 - Present

- Lead strategic planning and direction for key student success and support units, including International Student Programs, Gender Violence Prevention and Survivor Advocacy, and Student Leadership and Engagement
- Serve as the Chancellor's principal advisor on enrollment management strategy, student retention, and personnel development
- Partner with the Provost to drive innovation in co-curricular and experiential learning initiatives that enhance student engagement and outcomes
- Develop and facilitate professional development programs for faculty and staff focused on supporting students with diverse identities and needs
- Direct the assessment and growth of the Posse Arts Scholarship Program, including data analysis and program evaluation
- Oversee divisional operating budgets and grant allocations; approve expenditures and provide staffing, equipment, and resource forecasting
- Supervise, train, and evaluate staff across the division to ensure performance excellence and alignment with institutional goals
- Serve as the institution's Primary Designated School Official (PDSO) for international student compliance and support
- Serve as Affiliate Faculty in the School of Filmmaking, with planned teaching responsibilities in Spring 2026

Grand Rapids Community College

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer

December 2018 - December 2022

- Led institution-wide equity and inclusion strategy, aligning initiatives with measurable goals and driving policy and procedural reform
- Developed targeted support services for historically excluded students, including undocumented and international populations
- Built strategic partnerships with external stakeholders to advance diversity, access, and student success
- Collaborated with HR and senior leadership to implement inclusive hiring practices and diversify the workforce
- Partnered with faculty to enhance equity and inclusion in curriculum design, pedagogical practices, and research initiatives
- Oversaw departmental operations, including budget management, grant administration, staff recruitment, training, supervision, and performance evaluation

Connecticut College

New London, Connecticut

Associate Dean

December 2015 - February 2018

- Led a comprehensive overhaul of institutional discrimination policies and procedures to enhance equity and compliance
- Designed and delivered faculty and staff development in inclusive pedagogy, curriculum design, supervision, Title VII compliance, and student advising
- Oversaw daily operations of cultural engagement centers, driving student belonging, retention, and enrollment outcomes
- Advanced institutional equity and access through strategic planning initiatives and high-impact committee leadership

Metropolitan State University of Denver

Denver, Colorado

Senior Lecturer / Program Lead

January 2011 - December 2015

- Strengthened curriculum and led instruction for core undergraduate and graduate courses, integrating social justice pedagogical frameworks
- Oversaw co-curricular programming, budget allocations, and grant-funded initiatives aligned with student engagement and success
- Provided academic advising, coaching, and career mentorship for diverse student populations
- Served on Faculty Senate and subcommittees focused on student affairs and institutional planning
- Led cross-functional collaborations for the Sankofa Lecture Series and Hip-Hop Cultural Literacy Conference
- Acted as a campus leader in inclusive teaching and community outreach, supporting student retention and campus climate initiatives

University of Denver

Denver, Colorado

Assistant Provost of Student Life

June 2007 - December 2010

- Unified and advanced the vision for a holistic, student-centered success unit that aligned academic and co-curricular support services
- Supervised, trained, and evaluated professional and student staff to ensure high-impact service delivery and operational excellence
- Served as Chief Diversity Officer, strengthening institutional partnerships and leading outreach efforts with internal and external stakeholders
- Acted as primary liaison to faculty and staff on complex student matters including degree progress, advising, registration, academic integrity, medical leave, and appeals
- Applied evidence-based practices to redesign administrative processes and improve student service outcomes

Brown University

Providence, Rhode Island

Assistant Dean

June 2004 - June 2006

- Optimized the recruitment, training, and performance evaluation processes for professional staff and Faculty Fellows
- Investigated and resolved academic and non-academic student conduct violations in alignment with university policies
- Acted as a key liaison between students and university departments to support diverse academic and personal matters
- Designed and implemented co-curricular initiatives to promote academic enrichment and student engagement
- Directed daily operations of undergraduate residential communities to foster safe and inclusive living environments
- Managed budgets, payroll, and allocation of financial resources to support department goals and compliance

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of North Carolina School of the Arts

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Affiliate Faculty, School of Filmmaking

Spring 2026

- Develop and teach “Droppin Science: Historicizing Stories Through the Art of Hip-Hop Culture,” an interdisciplinary course exploring the cultural, social, and historical narratives embedded in Hip-Hop
- Guide students in analyzing Hip-Hop as a storytelling medium that reflects and shapes community identities, politics, and artistic expression
- Incorporate multimedia projects and critical discussions to foster students’ skills in cultural analysis, creative production, and historical contextualization
- Facilitate connections between Hip-Hop’s roots and contemporary social movements, encouraging students to critically engage with the genre’s ongoing impact

Salem State University

Salem, Massachusetts

Visiting Associate Professor

January 2018 - January 2020

- Taught graduate courses for the Higher Education and Student Affairs program and advised MEd students
- Supported the mission of the School of Education by designing an interdisciplinary curriculum to prepare students to be scholar-practitioners
- Supported recruitment and orientation initiatives and provided scholarly service and community outreach

University of Denver

Denver, Colorado

Affiliate Faculty

June 2007 - December 2010

- Designed and implemented interdisciplinary curricula that integrated theory and practice, tailored to the academic interests of students in Gender and Women's Studies, Higher Education graduate programs, and The Women's College
- Provided academic advising and comprehensive support services for undergraduate and graduate students, with a focus on aligning academic pathways with individual goals and lived experiences

Community College of Rhode Island

Warwick, Rhode Island

Adjunct Assistant Professor

June 2006 - June 2007

- Provided mentoring, support services, and academic advising to students matriculating at CCRI as part of the Access Program
- Designed curriculum and co-curricular projects to increase the graduation or transfer rate of students
- Implemented enrollment support services in compliance with federal grant guidelines

CUNY Brooklyn College

Brooklyn, New York

Assistant Professor/Academic Advisor

2003 - 2004

- Developed curriculum designed to support the transition of historically underserved students into degree-seeking courses or workforce development certificate programs
- Guided the interface of unit curricula and academic requirements to support students with special accommodations

Indiana University

Bloomington, Indiana

Adjunct Faculty

July 1999 - June 2003

- Provided support services, academic advising, and designed an interdisciplinary curriculum for graduate and undergraduate students
- Collaborated on the development of a minor in organizational leadership

ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Indiana University

Bloomington, Indiana

Graduate Assistant, Student Involvement & Orientation

July 1999 - June 2003

- Designed and administered a study of first-year students that led to the development of a peer-mentoring program
- Conducted a study on mentoring graduate students; findings reshaped practices in Graduate Student Services
- Provided training on issues germane to student development for faculty and staff
- Developed and facilitated an interactive diversity education session for new student orientation

Assistant to the Executive Director, National Pan-Hellenic Council Incorporated

- Maintained financial records, provided logistics for regional and national conferences, and served as a liaison between the national office and NPHC elected officers and executive directors
- Designed and facilitated leadership workshops for National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inter-Fraternity Council, and National Panhellenic Conference Greek-lettered organizations
- Redesigned NPHC procedures and guidelines manual

Academic Tutor/Coordinator, Division of Athletics

- Monitored NCAA eligibility requirements and communicated with coaches about academic progress
- Served as a student-athlete liaison for orientation and retention initiatives

Western Connecticut State University

Danbury, Connecticut

Assistant Director of Housing

June 1996 - June 1999

- Recruited, trained, supervised, and evaluated professional staff and student employees to ensure effective residential operations
- Managed daily functions of residential communities, fostering safe and supportive living environments
- Coordinated quarterly health and safety inspections and managed budget allocations for timely facility repairs
- Addressed non-academic student conduct violations in alignment with institutional policies
- Acted as a first responder and liaison during crisis situations, providing critical support and communication between students and university officials
- Advised six student organizations, supporting leadership development and organizational success

University of Georgia

Athens, Georgia

Academic Tutor/Coordinator, Division of Athletics

June 1994 - June 1996

- Recruited, trained, supervised and evaluated professional and student employees
- Facilitated quarterly health and safety inspections and allocated fiscal resources for essential repairs
- Served as a first responder and liaison between students and the university in wide-ranging crisis situations
- Trained and advised the residential judicial board

Continuing the Legacy of African American Student Success Program Coordinator

- Recruited, trained, supervised and evaluated student employees
- Facilitated the planning and execution of co-curricular programming and academic support initiatives

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, New York

Resident Director

June 1992 - June 1994

- Advanced enrollment management goals by coordinating academic support services for the Upward Bound program and teaching college-level coursework at Greenhaven Correctional Facility
- Recruited, trained, supervised, and evaluated professional and student staff to ensure high-quality service delivery and student engagement
- Directed daily operations of residential communities, fostering inclusive, safe, and developmentally supportive living environments
- Led quarterly health and safety inspections and coordinated timely responses to facilities needs and essential repairs
- Addressed non-academic student conduct matters in accordance with institutional policies, promoting accountability and restorative practices
- Served as a first responder and liaison during crisis situations, ensuring effective communication and support between students and college leadership
- Managed department budgets, processed payroll, and strategically allocated financial resources to support operational priorities

CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Instructor, Civil Treatment for Leaders

Certified, ADA 504 Coordinator

Trained, Universal Design for Instruction

SELECTED HONORS & RECOGNITIONS

Honoree, Inner Circle , West Michigan's Most Accomplished and Admired Women	2021
Nominee, Presidential Staff Medal Award , Connecticut College	2017
Equity in Excellence Award , Metropolitan State University of Denver	2015
Outstanding Administrator Award , University of Denver	2008
C.O.M.U. Outstanding Graduate Student Award , Indiana University	2003
Minority Education Student Association Dissertation Award , Indiana University	2002
Greek Chapter Advisor of the Year Award , Indiana University	2001
Outstanding Graduate Student , ACPA Committee for Multicultural Affairs	1996

SELECTED INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE

Grand Rapids Community College, Grand Rapids, Michigan

- **Chairperson**, Latino Student Outreach Think Tank
- **Chairperson**, LGBTQIA+ Think Tank
- **Executive Council**, Strategic Leadership Team
- **Executive Council**, Center for Teaching Excellence
- **Member**, Policy Committee
- **Member**, Enrollment Management & Retention

Connecticut College, New London, Connecticut

- **Chairperson**, Bias Incident Review Team
- **Advisor**, Program in Community Action (PICA) Research Project

- **Member**, Integrative Pathways Curriculum Approval Committee
- **Member**, Committee for Academic Standards

Metropolitan State University of Denver, Denver, Colorado

- **Curator**, Sankofa Lecture Series & Hip Hop Cultural Literacy Conference
- **Member**, Children of Uganda Cultural Exchange Program
- **Member**, Faculty Senate, 2010 - 2012
- **Member**, Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee, 2010 - 2012

University of Denver, Denver, Colorado

- **Chairperson**, High-Risk Prevention Advisory Council
- **Co-Chair**, Gender Violence Taskforce
- **Co-Chair**, Mental Health Advisory Council & Behavioral Intervention Team
- **Co-Chair**, Bias Incident Response Team
- **Member**, Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Accreditation Committee (Student Life & Academic Resources)
- **Member**, NCAA Governance and Rules Compliance (Recertification Subcommittee)
- **Member**, Board of Trustees, Student & Alumni Affairs Committee
- **Member**, Honor Code Taskforce
- **Member**, Orientation Committee
- **Member**, Institutional Transition and Retention Committee

Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island

- **Member**, Transgender and gender-neutral housing Taskforce
- **Member**, Orientation/Welcome Week Committee

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

- **Member**, Subcommittee on the Status of Women, HLC Accreditation Committee
- **Member**, New Student Orientation Committee
- **Member**, NCAA Academic Compliance Committee
- **Member**, National Pan-Hellenic Conference Regional Conference

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- American College Personnel Association (ACPA)
- National Association of Student Personnel Administration (NASPA)
- American Educational Research Association (AERA)
- Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated
- Order of the Eastern Star

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION INVOLVEMENT

Reviewer , NASPA Journal about Women in Higher Education	2011 - 2014
Reviewer , The Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice	2007 - 2013
Board , National Wheelchair Basketball Association Intercollegiate Division	2010 - 2011
Reviewer , Association for the Study of Higher Education Annual Conference	2011
Reviewer , American Educational Research Association Annual Conference	2010
Member , American College Personnel Association Assessment Commission	2004 - 2006

AWARDED GRANTS

Pathway to the Professoriate, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation	\$59,000	2017
Colloquium Grant, Office of the Provost	\$2,000	2015
Community Engagement Grant, Denver Foundation	\$2,500	2015
Inclusive Excellence Grant, Office of Institutional Diversity	\$5,000	2015
Student Engagement Grant, Office of First Year Success	\$1,500	2015
Service Learning Grant, Center for Applied Learning	\$1,000	2015
Community Engagement Grant, Denver Foundation	\$2,500	2014
Colloquium Grant, College of Arts & Science	\$1,500	2014
Inclusive Excellence Grant, Office of Institutional Diversity	\$6,000	2014
Colorado Creates Grant, Colorado Creative Industries	\$4,000	2014
Community Partnership Grant, Coca-Cola, Inc.	\$2,500	2014
Cultural Partner Program Grant, Denver Arts & Venues	\$3,000	2012
Colloquium Grant, College of Arts & Science	\$1,500	2012
Inclusive Excellence Grant, Office of Institutional Diversity	\$6,000	2011
Colorado Creates Grant, Colorado Creative Industries	\$4,000	2013
Community Partnership Grant, Coca-Cola, Inc.	\$2,500	2013
Colloquium Grant, College of Arts & Science	\$1,500	2013
Inclusive Excellence Grant, Office of Institutional Diversity	\$6,500	2013
Inclusive Excellence Grant, Office of Institutional Diversity	\$5,000	2013

MEDIA APPEARANCES & INTERVIEWS

Beyond the Beats: feature on Hip-Hop course, MSU Denver Magazine	2014
Hip-Hop Pedagogy and the Sankofa Lecture Series, KS 1075 Radio Morning Show	2013
Hip-Hop Pedagogy and the Sankofa Lecture Series, KS 1075 Radio Morning Show	2012
Impact of Hip-Hop culture in academia, KS 1075 Radio Morning Show	2012
Black women in the military, KS 1075 Radio Morning Show	2012
The New Black Feminist, Madame Noire	2011
History of Hip-Hop culture, PBS/Colorado Public Television	2011
The importance of Black History Month, KS 1075 Radio Morning Show	2011

PUBLICATIONS

REFEREED ARTICLES

McNeely Cobham, B. A. (2016) Sisters Rap the Blues: Examining the Perceived Impact of Rap Music on Black Women College Students. *Ada: A Journal of Gender, New Media, and Technology*, No. 10.

McNeely Cobham, B.A. and Patton, L.D. (2015). Self-Will, Power, and Determination: A Qualitative Study of Black Women Faculty and the Role of Self-Efficacy. *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education*, 8(1), 29-46.

BOOK/MONOGRAPH CONTRIBUTOR

White, W. (2021). *Diversity & Inclusion: Five Essential Leadership Competencies of an Effective D&I Practitioner*.

BOOKS, MONOGRAPHS, & CHAPTERS

Grady-Willis, W., McNeely Cobham, B. A., Velarde, D. (2015). *The struggle continues: Historical and contemporary issues in Africana Studies*. Digital Textbook. Great River Technologies, LLC.

- McNeely Cobham, B. A. (2015). The Hip-Hop Generation. In W. Grady-Willis, B. A. McNeely Cobham & D. Velarde (Eds.), *The struggle continues: Historical and contemporary issues in Africana Studies*. Digital Textbook. Great River Technologies, LLC.
- McNeely Cobham, B. A. (2011). White College Students. In M. J. Cuyjet, M. F. Howard-Hamilton, & D. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Multiculturalism on campus: Theory, models, and practices for understanding diversity and creating inclusion* (first edition). Stylus Publishing.
- Cobham, B.A. and Parker, T. L. (2007). Resituating race into the movement toward multiculturalism and social justice. In S. R. Harper & L.D. Patton (Eds.), *Responding to the realities of race on campus* (pp. 88-93). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.