

Influential Women Showcases Latasha Hales: Director Of Financial Aid At Southern University At New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS, LA, UNITED STATES, August 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Higher Education Leader, Financial Aid Professional, Certified Life Coach, and Licensed Minister Champions Access, Opportunity, and Purpose-Driven Growth

Latasha Hales is a higher education leader, financial aid professional, certified life coach, and licensed minister with nearly three decades of experience helping students and professionals navigate educational, personal, and career success. Based in New Orleans, Louisiana, she currently serves as Director of Financial Aid at Southern University at New Orleans, bringing her career full circle after first beginning as a student worker in the university's Office of Student Financial Aid.



Throughout her extensive career in higher education administration, Latasha has remained committed to helping individuals overcome barriers and recognize opportunities that can move them toward their goals. Her professional background includes leadership roles at Loyola University New Orleans, where she served as Interim Director of Student Financial Services and supported students as they navigated the often-complex financial aspects of higher education.

With a foundation in social work and advanced degrees in Marketing, Communications, Human Relations, and Organizational Behavior, Latasha brings together empathy, leadership, communication, and practical guidance. Her approach is grounded in the belief that people need more than information—they need someone who can help them understand their options, navigate challenges, and believe that a different future is possible.

Her passion for student advocacy and development has fueled a career dedicated to creating clear pathways toward educational achievement. In addition to her higher education leadership, Latasha is a certified life coach who supports individuals pursuing career transitions, degree completion, and personal growth. Through coaching, mentorship, and community outreach, she encourages people to move beyond roadblocks and confidently pursue their next chapter.

Beyond her professional responsibilities, Latasha is deeply committed to faith-based empowerment, ministry, and community impact. She is the author of the 14 Day Healing Prayer Journal and Devotional, which is designed to guide readers through healing and spiritual growth using biblical principles. She has also partnered with community organizations and media platforms to discuss leadership, faith, purpose, and personal development.

At the heart of Latasha's career is a personal desire to do better and be better. Neither of her parents completed college. Her mother began college but had her first baby during her first year and never returned, while her father did not attend college and instead took on the family business as a trucker in their trucking company. None of her siblings attended college either.

Latasha believes she simply wanted to be the difference. She wanted to be the change. That desire to break the cycle, create something different for herself, and demonstrate what is possible became the foundation of everything she has accomplished.

Her journey has given her a unique perspective on the importance of representation, mentorship, and opportunity. Latasha understands what it feels like to be a young person who is intelligent and capable but does not necessarily know what direction to take. Rather than allowing uncertainty to prevent progress, she has transformed those experiences into motivation to help others navigate similar moments.

The best advice Latasha has ever received is that there is nothing she cannot do and nothing she cannot have if she is willing to work for it. Her mother taught her and her siblings that there is never a reason to be jealous of anyone because there is nothing another person has that they cannot have themselves.

That perspective has remained with Latasha throughout her life. She does not find herself being jealous of others because she believes there is nothing they are doing that she cannot do and nothing they have accomplished that she could not accomplish if she were willing to put in the same effort and work. She believes she can have the same things.

This mindset has shaped the way Latasha approaches challenges and opportunities. Rather than comparing her journey to someone else's, she focuses on what she can learn, what she can accomplish, and how she can continue moving forward.

Latasha carries that same philosophy into her advice to young women entering her industry. She

believes there is always somebody who needs what they have to offer.

Regardless of what a person has, Latasha believes somebody needs it. Until young women can break out of their shells, someone may be waiting patiently for the knowledge, perspective, experience, or encouragement they have to provide.

She encourages women to recognize the value of having someone who has already traveled the road they are on. Latasha openly shares that she changed her major five times, experienced a difficult semester on her transcript, and had moments when she questioned whether her chosen path was right for her. She also acknowledges that she quit more times than she wants to admit and did not always know what she wanted to do.

For Latasha, however, those experiences became part of her ability to relate to others.

She believes people need someone willing to be open and honest—to say, “I’ve gone where you are. I’ve been where you are. It has not always been easy.” She believes there is a blessing on the other side of difficult seasons, and sometimes people simply have to get through the current challenge to discover what comes next.

Latasha understands that the mistakes she made were not simply about her. They became experiences that allow her to connect with someone else and help that person understand that uncertainty does not mean failure.

In higher education, Latasha identifies affordability and changes to the availability of financial aid as some of the most significant challenges facing students and families. College is becoming increasingly expensive and difficult to afford, and she believes communities must consider how they can create additional opportunities rather than relying entirely on governmental funding.

She is particularly passionate about encouraging scholarship programs and community-based solutions. Wherever she goes, Latasha talks about starting scholarship programs and asks companies and businesses what types of scholarships they offer.

Her commitment extends into her own community. Latasha worked with her church to establish a scholarship committee that provides scholarships to high school seniors within the congregation. She believes churches, businesses, families, and community organizations all have an opportunity to help make higher education more accessible.

She even encourages families to begin preparing for education expenses as early as possible. At baby showers, Latasha brings a piggy bank and asks attendees to put change into it. One month after the baby is born, she reminds parents to begin a 529 plan.

For Latasha, these actions reflect a larger message: families have to create a plan for themselves. She believes financial aid resources may become increasingly limited and that proactive planning

can give families greater control over their children's educational futures.

The values most important to Latasha are simple but deeply personal: be the change she wants to see and be who she needed at that age.

Latasha remembers having no clue what she wanted to do with her life. She was a smart girl, and everyone simply assumed she would figure it out. Internally, however, she did not feel that confident.

She needed somebody to tell her the truth. She needed someone to tell her that it was hard but that she would figure it out. She did not need someone to simply tell her, "You got it," when she did not feel like she had it.

Today, Latasha strives to be that person for others.

She believes young people deserve honesty about the challenges they may face. They need someone willing to tell them that it is hard, that they may want to quit, and that they will still be okay. For Latasha, encouragement does not mean pretending difficulties do not exist. It means helping people understand that difficult moments do not have to determine the outcome of their lives.

That philosophy influences her work as an educator, financial aid leader, coach, mentor, and minister. Whether she is mentoring graduating high school students, coaching adults returning to school, helping families think about educational financing, or leading financial aid initiatives, Latasha focuses on helping people discover clarity, confidence, and purpose.

Her personal journey has reinforced her belief that meaningful change often begins with one person. Latasha believes that if someone wants the world to be different, they have to make the world different. If they want the world to be better, they have to make the world better.

She recognizes that one person may not be able to change the entire world. However, she firmly believes that anyone can change the world for one person.

That conviction continues to define Latasha's approach to leadership and service. Through higher education, financial aid advocacy, coaching, ministry, mentorship, and community involvement, she remains committed to creating opportunities for others to move forward.

For Latasha, success is not simply measured by professional accomplishments. It is measured by the people who are able to see new possibilities because she was willing to help them. Her career reflects a commitment to breaking cycles, expanding access, telling the truth, and becoming the person she once needed.

By continuing to invest in students, professionals, families, and communities, Latasha Hales

demonstrates that lasting change can begin with one opportunity, one conversation, or one person willing to say, "It's hard, but you'll figure it out."

Learn More about Latasha Hales:

Through her Influential Women profile, <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/Latasha-Hales>, or through her profile on Southern University at New Orleans, <https://www.suno.edu/page/financial-aid-financial-aid-staff>

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