Je'Nai L. Righter, EdD, Profiled By Influential Women, Shapes Higher Education Leadership Through Equity And Service



PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, September 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A 20-Year Career in Higher Education Focuses on Student Success, Organizational Strategy, Leadership Development, and Creating Environments Where People Can Grow With Dignity and Purpose

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – With more than two decades of experience in education and higher education leadership, Je'Nai Righter, EdD, has dedicated her career to advancing student success, strengthening organizational systems, developing leaders, and creating environments where people can thrive. As Assistant Provost at Thomas Jefferson University, she brings together strategic thinking, operational excellence, leadership development, and an equity-centered approach to help institutions and individuals move toward meaningful, sustainable impact.

Je'Nai's professional journey began in K–12 education, where she worked with children in an inner-city community as an aspiring English teacher. Her experiences in that environment helped her recognize that her desire to serve extended beyond the classroom. She wanted to contribute to broader systemic change and influence the leaders and educators who would shape future generations. That realization led her into higher education, where she has spent more than 20 years developing a career centered on leadership, service, and transformation.

Throughout her career, Dr. Righter has held leadership positions at Lincoln University, University of the Sciences, Immaculata University, Neumann University, and Thomas Jefferson University. In her current role, she focuses on strategic systems building, operational excellence, leadership

development, and initiatives designed to strengthen both institutional outcomes and student experiences.

Her responsibilities include aligning initiatives with institutional strategy, guiding teams, developing leadership opportunities for graduate and professional health science leaders, strengthening community partnerships, supporting accreditation efforts, and advancing sustainability initiatives. At the center of this work is her belief that operational decisions should ultimately contribute to institutional goals, while supporting the success and development of the people the institution serves.

Je'Nai is particularly passionate about psychologically safe environments. She believes leaders and teams perform at their best when they have room to learn, adapt, ask questions, and make mistakes without fear that doing so will diminish their value or sense of belonging. For her, effective leadership is not simply about achieving organizational objectives; it is also about creating conditions where individuals can develop with dignity and purpose.

Her academic preparation reflects her commitment to educational leadership. Dr. Je'Nai earned a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and a Master of Science in Educational Leadership and Administration from Saint Joseph's University, along with a Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature from Cheyney University of Pennsylvania. She is also QPR Certified in suicide prevention and holds a Trauma-Informed Leadership Certification, while pursuing a Restorative Justice Practice Certificate. Her professional affiliations include NASPA, The Delaware & Lehigh Valley Student Advancement Collaborative, and the National Society of Leadership Success.

Faith and resilience are fundamental to Je'Nai's approach to her work. She attributes her success to her faith in Jesus Christ and to the resilience she has developed through her own life experiences. She explains that her faith has helped her remain committed to work she is passionate about, even when confronting fear, bureaucracy, or limitations around access to knowledge that could help inform leaders and create future impact.

For Je'Nai, staying grounded requires intentionality. She recognizes the importance of being present for herself, allowing herself to be filled spiritually, and making space for God to lead and guide her. She believes that doing so enables her to fulfill the purpose she has been given while positively influencing the lives of those entrusted to her leadership.

One principle has remained especially important throughout her career: remembering her "why." Je'Nai describes this as the best career advice she has received and a guiding principle when navigating difficult circumstances. When the "what," "how," or "who" within an environment begins to challenge her presence or direction, she returns to the reason she is investing her talent, leadership, and presence. Her purpose helps her remain grounded rather than allowing turbulence around her to determine her direction.

She offers similarly direct advice to young women entering higher education: “Keep a standard, get a standard, and never lower your standards.” For Je’Nai, maintaining high standards for oneself and one’s work is essential as women navigate professional environments and pursue opportunities for leadership.

She also sees significant challenges and opportunities ahead for higher education. Technological advancement, particularly artificial intelligence, and the financial hardship associated with degree attainment are reshaping the landscape. Rather than viewing these developments solely as obstacles, Dr. Righter believes they create an opportunity for corporations and nonprofit organizations to provide greater support for emerging leaders who have potential but may need additional resources to develop.

She encourages higher education and its supporters to think differently about investment. In her view, donors can play a role beyond providing operational support by helping undergird the development of leaders who will shape the future. She emphasizes that higher education’s mission and legacy are ultimately carried forward by the people institutions educate and inspire.

Alongside her husband, Dr. Je’Nai is also the cofounder of Pure Living Enterprise, which is comprised of multiple organizations focused on the holistic development and restoration of leaders across generations and marketplace sectors. This work complements her professional commitment to cultivating people who can serve with purpose and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Across her professional and personal life, Je’Nai is guided by integrity, trust, diligence, authenticity, and compassion. As a wife, mother, mentor, higher education leader, and advocate for leadership development, she remains committed to caring for the whole person and helping individuals recognize their potential.

Her career reflects a consistent belief that leadership is ultimately about service. By strengthening systems, creating opportunities, supporting emerging leaders, and remaining anchored in purpose, Je’Nai continues to contribute to an educational landscape where people are prepared not only to succeed, but also to lead with intention, responsibility, and a lasting sense of purpose.

Learn More about Je’Nai Righter:

Through her Influential Women profile, https://influentialwomen.com/connect/jenai-righter-edd or through her website, https://www.positionednow.com/

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