

Dwayne Smith, Ph.D.

Bio



As the grandson of Mississippi sharecroppers, Dwayne Smith, Ph.D. is a firm believer in the transformative power of education and the importance of higher education in shaping the trajectory of individuals' socioeconomic lives.

With nearly 40 years of progressive leadership experience in higher education as an administrator and as faculty, Dr. Smith professional agenda is focused on student access and success, strategic planning, faculty and staff development, enrollment management, curriculum development, accreditation, increasing the STEM pipeline, procuring external funding, and equity in higher education. He has worked in diverse public and private institutional types: Research I, comprehensive, highly selective, independent, two-year, minority and religious serving, with student populations as high as 30,000 and as low as 1,700. Since 2008, he has secured more than \$16 million in external funding for a variety of institutional priorities.

Dr. Smith currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Housatonic Community College, a nationally recognized institution of excellence and an Achieving the Dream leader institution in Bridgeport, Connecticut. As CEO, he has established more than 20 institutional collaborations and partnerships with local and regional organizations and companies.

Under his leadership, external funding has increased significantly. Housatonic received its largest private gift—one million dollars to establish the Housatonic Community College Peter Werth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center, one of only two entrepreneurship centers at the community college level in Connecticut; The Equity Project was launched at Housatonic with a personal \$10,000 commitment from Dr. Smith to aid under-resourced scholars. Taking his lead, individuals, foundations, and companies are donors and the fund now exceeds \$400,000; The U.S. Department of Education awarded Housatonic one million dollars to expand its Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center.

Under his guidance, enrollment and retention has increased, specifically for underrepresented males. In addition, Housatonic was selected by the Department of Education as a Second Chance Pell Institution, partnering with Gardner Correctional Facility in Newtown, Connecticut to provide educational opportunities to incarcerated citizens. He serves on nine boards in the Connecticut region to support philanthropy, workforce development, mental health, economic and educational endeavors.

Prior to Housatonic, Dr. Smith served as the provost and interim President of Harris-Stowe State University (HSSU) in St. Louis, Missouri. He successfully led the institution through six major accreditations and secured a \$5 million NSF grant, the largest award in the institution's history. Under his leadership HSSU was designated by the Missouri Coordinating Board of Higher Education with a Statewide Mission in STEM for underrepresented students, the only HBCU in

the nation with this designation. The University increased its degree offerings by more than 75%, established undergraduate research opportunities, added STEM degrees, and increased its yearly degree production by more than 40%.

During his tenure, Harris-Stowe achieved multiple national college rankings including, U.S. News and World Report Best Regional Midwest Colleges, the Washington Monthly College Guide Ranking, the Economist College Ranking, Niche College Ranking, Diverse Issues Annual Degree Producers, and the National STEM HBCU of the Year Award by HBCU Digest.

Other higher education experiences include an Assistant Vice-President for Academic Affairs at Avila University, an Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management at Park University, a faculty member at the University of Missouri, Columbia, the state's flagship institution, and an Associate Dean in the area of multicultural affairs at Truman State University, where he created and launched the university's first diversity department. Dr. Smith is a sought-after speaker and workshop facilitator and has lectured nationally and globally on various educational issues.

He serves as a grant reviewer for the National Science Foundation and is a peer reviewer for the Higher Learning Commission, the largest regional accreditation body in the U.S. and a peer evaluator for the New England Commission of Higher Education.

Dr. Smith is a Fulbright Scholar, and throughout his career has served on numerous boards, committees and task forces. He currently serves on the boards of Habitat for Humanity of Coastal Fairfield County, The Workplace, the Bridgeport Regional Business Council, and Home and for the Braves, a veterans advocacy organization. Dr. Smith is one of the co-founders and a board member of Sawubona, a nonprofit which addresses the underserved mental health needs and supports the resiliency of youth and their families in the Bridgeport region. He was the previous Board Chair of the Higher Education Consortium, a higher education advocacy organization in the St. Louis region which represented 20 higher education and civic organizations and 98,000 enrolled students and served on the St. Louis Community Foundation Degrees With Less Debt Task Force.

He is a recipient of the Chair Academy International Exemplary Leadership Award, One Hundred Influential Men of Color in Connecticut, Deluxe Magazine St. Louis Power 100, and Truman State University Distinguished Service Alumni Award. Additional honors include Who's Who in the Midwest, Who's Who in American Education and a member Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity (Boule), Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., and the national honor societies, Phi Kappa Phi and Kappa Delta Pi.

Dr. Smith earned a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Missouri, Columbia, an M.A. in Education Administration, and a B.S. degree in Psychology from Truman State University. He completed the Management Development Program at Harvard University and the Executive Leadership Academy for emerging University Presidents sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and the American Academic Leadership Institute.