

Board Profile: Matthew Wesley Williams



Introduction:

Matthew Wesley Williams, a visionary leader and trailblazer, most recently held the position of President at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), an esteemed historically Black ecumenical graduate theological school located in Atlanta, GA. With a distinguished background in theological education and strategic leadership, Williams brings a profound commitment to advancing institutional change, diversity, equity, inclusion, and the holistic development of emerging leaders. He has returned to his consulting practice, Liberating Leadership, LLC, which builds the capacity of cause-driven organizations (and their leaders) to enact alternatives to the status quo.

Professional Background:

After serving as Interim President from July 2019 to June 2020, Williams was appointed the 11th President of the ITC. Prior to this, he spent 15 years at the Forum for Theological Exploration (FTE), where he demonstrated exceptional leadership as Vice President of Strategic Initiatives. Over the course of his career, he also contributed significantly to the growth and impact of FTE's initiatives, especially those focused on grantmaking, institutional change, executive leadership development, and vocational exploration with emerging leaders and scholars of color.

Notable Achievements:

Williams is recognized for catalyzing the "ITC 2.0" institutional innovation process, aimed at transforming theological education to create a new generation of problem solvers. He played a pivotal role in reconstituting the Board of Trustees, driving organizational transformation, and fostering institutional partnerships. Notably, his efforts resulted in securing the largest, unrestricted, individual and institutional gifts in the recent history of the institution, setting a ten-year fundraising peak in his second fiscal year as president. Through his "Jubilee" initiative, ITC eliminated over \$1 million in student debt. During his tenure ITC also received a 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation from its primary accreditor, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). His co-authorship of the highly-lauded book "Another Way: Living and Leading Change on Purpose" underscores his commitment to leadership and change. He is a 2021 inductee into the Florida A&M University College of Arts and Sciences Gallery of Distinction. In 2023, Williams also received the UNCF Billye Suber Aaron Masked Award for his leadership as President at the ITC.

Education:

- Master of Divinity (M.Div.), Interdenominational Theological Center, 2004
- Bachelor of Science (double major in Psychology and Philosophy & Religion), Florida A&M University, 1998

Professional Affiliations:

- Ordained Ruling Elder, Presbyterian Church (USA)
- Associated facilitator with the Center for Courage and Renewal and Art of Hosting communities
- Affiliate Faculty, The Center for Leadership in Disability- Georgia State University
- Board Chair, Atlanta University Woodruff Library (2022-23)
- President, Board of Directors, Atlanta Theological Association (2022-23)
- City of Atlanta, Mayor's Anti-Violence Advisory Council (2021)

Philosophy and Vision:

Williams' leadership philosophy is rooted in the belief that true leadership is about nurturing leadership in others. He seeks to develop partnerships, foster key relationships, and expand the strategic visions of cause-driven organizations. His vision is to create a space where "prophetic problem solvers" are nurtured, equipping communities to co-create a better future.

Summary:

Matthew Wesley Williams, an accomplished leader in theological education, is dedicated to driving positive change in academia, leadership development, and institutional transformation. His strategic prowess, commitment to diversity and inclusion, and his passion for cultivating emerging leaders have left a profound mark on the Forum for Theological Exploration and the Interdenominational Theological Center. Williams' inspiring journey, notable achievements, and forward-thinking vision make him a vital asset to any organization seeking transformative leadership.