

SONJA M. BROWN, Ph.D.

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Highly accomplished higher education executive with over 20 years of progressive administrative leadership across complex public state systems, private independent universities, and international institutions. Proven track record as a cabinet-level thought partner specializing in academic affairs, strategic planning, fiscal management, and operational execution. Adept at managing executive workflows, guiding shared governance, leading cross-functional teams, and transforming institutional strategy into high-impact operational results.

EDUCATION

M.Ed. in Higher Education Administration

Texas Tech University Online, Lubbock, Texas | Anticipated Completion: Fall 2027

Ph.D. in Interpersonal Communication & Media Studies

The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia | 2001

M.A. in Speech Communication

California State University, Fresno, Fresno, California | 1998

B.A. in Speech Communication

California State University, Fresno, Fresno, California | 1996

ACADEMIC & ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

Fayetteville State University (Fayetteville, NC) — 2026

Interim Provost & Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

- Served as the chief academic officer overseeing broad academic operations, faculty affairs, policy development, strategic planning, institutional effectiveness, and regional/programmatic accreditation.
- Led data-informed academic portfolio reviews, program sustainability/viability studies, and workforce alignment strategies to optimize enrollment, retention, and regional market impact.
- Partnered with deans, department chairs, and faculty governance to execute workload accountability frameworks, faculty development, and transparent promotion and tenure processes.

Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic & Faculty Affairs 2024-present

- Act as the primary administrative designee to the Senior Vice Chancellor & Provost on critical institutional priorities.
- Provide operational oversight for the Office of Faculty Development & Online Education, ensuring high-quality academic delivery models.
- Lead university policy development, streamline cross-functional workflows, and exercise high-level independent judgment in managing student/faculty grievances and personnel actions.

American University in the Emirates (Dubai, UAE) — 2021 – 2023

Dean & Associate Professor – College of Media and Mass Communication

- Managed full daily operations, strategic plans, and fiscal models for undergraduate and graduate communication programs.
- Chaired international and regional accreditation cycles, ensuring rigorous continuous improvement and absolute compliance with dual-governing bodies.
- Supervised multi-disciplinary faculty and staff, driving student advisement models and continuous curriculum innovation.

Ashland University (Ashland, OH) — 2019 – 2021

Adjunct Professor of Communication – College of Adult and Online Education

- Delivered high-quality online instruction across foundational and organizational communication curricula.

Great Basin College (Elko, NV) — 2018 – 2019

Vice President for Academic Affairs

- Held primary executive responsibility for the strategic direction, operational budget, and execution of all fully online and campus-based baccalaureate, associate, and certificate programs.
- Maintained strategic portfolio oversight to ensure educational access, compliance, and alignment with statewide workforce demands.

Palo Verde College (Blythe, CA) — 2016 – 2018

Dean of Instruction and Student Services / Dean of Career & Technical Education

- Provided overarching strategic leadership for academic instruction and student services portfolios.
- Directed the administration, faculty, and workflows of the specialized Corrections Education Program delivered via online and correspondence modalities.

Medaille University (Buffalo, NY) — 2014 – 2016

Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs & Chief Retention Officer

- Spearheaded institutional retention operations and provided comprehensive administrative leadership over post-traditional, graduate, and online degree programs.
- Integrated efforts across academic and student support divisions to elevate student persistence and tracking systems.

SUNY Empire State College (Saratoga Springs, NY) — 2011 – 2014

Associate Professor of Communication and Regional Associate Dean

- Managed retention, academic support services, and community partnership development for 900+ undergraduate students across 5 Western NY regional learning centers.
- Supervised 22 full- and part-time faculty alongside 12 professional support staff; oversaw recruitment, onboarding, and performance evaluations.
- Served as entity administrator for strategic planning, managed regional operational systems, and represented the Dean at external civic and institutional events.

University of Alabama in Huntsville (Huntsville, AL) — 2001 – 2011

Department Chair & Tenured Associate Professor of Communication (2007–2011)

Assistant Professor of Communication (2001–2007)

- Provided leadership for two academic departments comprising 13 full-time faculty, 12 part-time faculty, and professional staff.
- Exercised full fiscal accountability for combined operating budgets exceeding \$500,000, two foundation accounts, and three high-value endowment funds.
- Oversaw personnel processes including hiring, tenure/promotion reviews, and merit allocation while driving programmatic data collections for major institutional accreditation reviews (SACSCOC/NCATE).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CERTIFICATIONS

- University of North Carolina Executive Leadership Institute | Cohort 5 (2024–25)
- Certified Corporate Communications Professional (CCP) | Cornell University (2023)
- Prompt Engineering for ChatGPT Certification | Vanderbilt University (2023)
- Strategic Communication Certification Program | Public Relations Society of America (2023)
- Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) / Online Teaching Advanced Certificate | International TEFL Academy (2019)
- Admin 101 Leadership Academy | Association of California Community College Administrators / Brandman University (2017)
- Leading from the Middle Academy | RP Group / Cal Poly Pomona (2017)
- Women's Leadership Institute | Western New York Higher Education Consortium (2012)
- Administrative Leadership Institute | Higher Education Resource Services (HERS), Bryn Mawr, PA (2010)
- National Incident Management System (NIMS) Training | FEMA Emergency Management Institute (2010)
- Department Leadership Academy for Chairs | American Council on Education (ACE) (2010)

PUBLICATIONS

Books & Edited Volumes

Tassie, K. E., & Brown Givens, S. M. (Eds.). (2016). *Critical Examinations by Women of Color Navigating Mentoring Relationships*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Tassie, K. E., & Brown Givens, S. M. (Eds.). (2015). *Women of Color and Social Media Multitasking*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Brown Givens, S. M., & Tassie, K. E. (Eds.). (2014). *Underserved women of color, voice, and resistance: Claiming a seat at the table*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Jackson, R. L. II, & Brown Givens, S. M. (2006). *Black Pioneers in Communication Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Book Chapters & Peer-Reviewed Articles

Camara, S. K., & Brown Givens, S. M. (2014). Investigating a Secondary Appraisal Strategy: Self-Interrogation in Perceived Discriminatory Encounters. In T. Draper (Ed.), *Psychology of Prejudice: New Research*. NY: Nova Science Publishers.

Tassie, K. E., & Brown Givens, S. M. (2013). The "Double Outsider's" Challenges to Professional Success: Implications for Black Women's Leadership. In D. Davis & C. Chaney (Eds.), *Black Women in Leadership*. NY: Peter Lang.

Jackson, R. L., & Brown Givens, S. M. (2010). Molefi Kete Asante: Father of Afrocentricity. In A. Mazama (Ed.), *Essays in honor of an intellectual warrior, Molefi Kete Asante*. Paris, France: Menaibuc.

Monahan, J. L., Shtruliss, I., & Brown Givens, S. M. (2005). Priming welfare queens and other stereotypes: The transference of media images into interpersonal contexts. *Communication Research Reports*, 22(3), 199-205.

Brown Givens, S. M., & Monahan, J. L. (2005). Mammies, jezebels and other controlling images: An examination of the influence of mediated stereotypes on perceptions of an African American woman. *Media Psychology*, 7(1), 87-106.

Condit, C. M., Condit, D., Sefcovic, E., Acosta-Alzuru, C., Brown Givens, S., Dietz, C. L., & Parrott, R. (2002). Lay understandings of sex/gender and genetics: A methodology preserving polyvocal coder input. *Sex Roles*, 49(12), 557-570.

Condit, C., Bates, B., Galloway, R., Brown Givens, S., Haynie, C., Jordan, J., Stables, et al. (2002). Recipes or blueprints for our genes? How contexts selectively activate the multiple meanings of metaphors. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 88(3), 303-325.

HONORS & DISTINCTIONS

- Explorations in Diversity and Academic Excellence Award | SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (2012)
- Vanguard Award | Black Alumni Association, University of Alabama in Huntsville (2010)
- Excellence in Teaching Award | UAH Office of the Provost (2009)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Award | Minority Graduate Student Association, UAH (2007)
- Outstanding Book Award | National Communication Association (2006)
- Excellence in Advising Award | Black Student Association, UAH (2004)
- Outstanding Dissertation Award | National Communication Association (2002)