

**SPRING 2026**  
Volume XII Issue II



# *Voice* NSPAA's

*The newsletter of the National Sponsored Programs Administrators Alliance of HBCUs, Inc.*



NSPAA's Voice is published by NSPAA of HBCUs, Inc., a non-profit organization registered under section 501 (a) of the Internal Revenue Code, Federal ID No. 59-3219364



The National Sponsored Programs Administrators Alliance (NSPAA) of HBCUs, Inc. was founded in December 1993 to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of sponsored program administration at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

# About Us



**NSPAA** recognizes the vital role that research administrators play in helping their institutions secure external funding. Through its growing network of HBCU administrators, NSPAA has made significant strides in advancing the specialized interests of HBCUs and strengthening communication among these institutions. As NSPAA continues to expand, its partnerships with federal agencies and representatives have strengthened, fostering collaboration that empowers HBCUs to remain competitive in the research arena. These relationships are instrumental in helping institutions stay informed about emerging trends and developments in sponsored research.

**NSPAA** is a dedicated and forward-looking organization that acknowledges the crucial role research administrators play in helping their institutions secure external funding. Through its strong network of HBCU administrators, NSPAA has significantly advanced the specialized interests of HBCUs and strengthened communication and collaboration among these institutions.

Each year, **NSPAA** continues to refine its mission, enhance its visibility, and expand its membership within the HBCU sponsored research community. Membership is open to all individuals affiliated with HBCUs, and new members are always welcomed. In addition, NSPAA offers associate membership to supporters who are dedicated to advancing the active participation of HBCUs in sponsored program initiatives and research development efforts.



# Theodore Callier

Dear Colleagues:

I am deeply honored to serve as the new President of NSPAA, a community that continues to represent the heart of research administration across our institutions. As we embark on this year together, I want to express my sincere gratitude for your trust and support.

Our profession plays a vital role in advancing research, innovation, and discovery. We promote integrity, ensure compliance, and advance collaboration – ensuring that research not only happens but thrives. As President, I am committed to championing NSPAA’s values and serving with purpose and inclusivity.

In today’s rapidly evolving and often complex research landscape, our work is more critical than ever. Therefore, our focus will this year center on three key pillars: **empowerment, advocacy, and outreach.**

- **Empowerment:** We will pursue additional professional development, mentorship, and leadership opportunities to equip and advance our members with resources to grow and lead.
- **Advocacy:** We will amplify our collective voice to ensure that the critical work of research administration is recognized and supported at all levels.
- **Outreach:** We will strengthen connections across NSPAA institutions, regions, and communities –fostering collaboration, sharing best practices, and welcoming new voices into our field.

I invite you to engage, share, and help shape the future of our organization, by joining a committee, attending the annual conference, participating in webinars, and contributing in a number of other ways. Whether you are new to the profession or a seasoned expert, your contributions and engagement not only enrich our community, but also strengthen NSPAA and research as a whole.

Thank you for your dedication and for being part of this incredible community. I look forward to serving and working alongside you in the year ahead.

Warmest Regards,

Theodore Callier  
President

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**We promote integrity,  
ensure compliance, and  
advance collaboration -  
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**Theodore Callier**

# TYPES OF NSPAA Memberships

## INDIVIDUAL

A person employed at an HBCU in the area of sponsored programs administration at the time of admission to membership.

**\$175**

## INSTITUTIONAL

A group of individuals employed at an HBCU who are actively engaged in or seek to become involved in research and sponsored projects.

**\$375 - \$1275**

## ASSOCIATE

A non-voting affiliate that is an individual not directly employed at an HBCU but has an interest in sponsored programs administration.

**\$125**

*Dues are for a twelve-month period. NSPAA operates on a fixed membership year, which is effective **July 1<sup>st</sup>** and expires **June 30<sup>th</sup>**. Credit card (processing fee included) and check payments accepted.*





## ANNUAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WORKSHOP

*“30 Years of Technical Assistance in Research Administration:  
Legacy of Excellence, Vision for the Future”*

**JUNE 1-5, 2026**

**CAESARS NEW ORLEANS**

**REGISTER NOW**



# CRA BODY OF KNOWLEDGE REVIEW SESSION

The National Sponsored Programs Administrators Alliance (NSPAA) of HBCUs, Inc. has partnered with the **Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC)** to host a Body of Knowledge Review Session designed to strengthen professional development across the research administration community. The **Certified Research Administrator (CRA) Body of Knowledge** is organized into four domains—Information Management, Legal Requirements, Financial Management, and General Management—that define the essential competencies for effective research administration. These domains encompass the full lifecycle of sponsored programs, from proposal development and compliance monitoring to award negotiation, audit preparation, fiscal accountability, and institutional leadership.

By engaging participants in a structured review of these areas, the session helps candidates identify strengths and weaknesses, strategically prepare for the CRA exam, and build confidence in their professional practice. This collaboration underscores NSPAA's commitment to advancing excellence in research administration and supporting capacity-building efforts across HBCUs and beyond.

***This session is available exclusively to participants of NSPAA's 30th Annual T/A Workshop.***

Location: New Orleans, LA

Dates: June 1, 2026 (1:00 PM – 5:00 PM) and will resume on June 2, 2026 (9:00 AM – 1:00 PM)

Cost: \$299/person. The cost of this session is separate from NSPAA's T/A Workshop registration.

**For more information, visit [www.nspaa.com](http://www.nspaa.com)**



# 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL NSPAA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WORKSHOP

## Schedule At-A-Glance

Monday, June 1, 2026	
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM	Board and Workshop Planning Committee Meeting
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Pre-Conference Session 1 (CRA Body of Knowledge Review)
Tuesday, June 2, 2026	
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Exhibits Set-Up and Exhibits Open
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Pre-Conference Session 1 (CRA Body of Knowledge Review)
10:00 AM - 4:30 PM	Registration
1:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Break
1:30 PM - 3:30 PM	Pre-Conference Session 2 (TBA)
5:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Welcome Reception
Wednesday, June 3, 2026	
7:30 AM - 5:00 PM	Registration/Exhibits Open
7:30 AM - 8:45 AM	Continental Breakfast
8:45 AM - 9:00 AM	Welcome/Opening Remarks
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Plenary Session
10:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Break
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Plenary Session
11:30 AM - 1:30 PM	Lunch on your own
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	Plenary Session
2:30 PM - 3:00 PM	Break
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Plenary Session
	Dinner on your own
Thursday, June 4, 2026	
7:30 AM - 5:00 PM	Registration/Exhibits Open
7:30 AM - 8:45 AM	Continental Breakfast
8:45 AM - 8:55 AM	Opening Remarks
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Plenary Session
10:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Break
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Plenary Session
11:30 AM - 1:30 PM	Luncheon
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	Plenary Session
2:30 PM - 3:00 PM	Break
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Plenary Session
4:00 PM - 4:15 PM	Break
4:15 PM	NSPAA Business Meeting
	Dinner on your own
Friday, June 5, 2026	
7:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Exhibits Open
7:30 AM - 8:45 AM	Continental Breakfast
8:45 AM - 8:55 AM	Opening Remarks
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Plenary Session
10:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Break
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Plenary Session
	Board Meeting and Final Closeout

*Sessions and times are subject to change.*

2026 ANNUAL T/A WORKSHOP  
LUNCHEON SPEAKER

# Emily Dickens



**Emily M. Dickens, J.D.**, is a 2025 Top Lobbyist honoree recognized by the National Institute for Lobbying & Ethics for her leadership in shaping workplace and workforce policy. She serves as Chief Administrative Officer for SHRM—the world’s largest HR trade association and the fourth largest trade association globally. As a member of SHRM’s executive leadership team, she drives organizational effectiveness and impact across governance, global policy, legal, real estate, and philanthropy, while serving as a trusted advisor to the CEO and Board of Directors.

A sought-after thought leader on workplace trends, HR leadership, and business policy, Dickens is frequently featured in top media outlets including CNN, CBS News, NBC News, AP News, The Wall Street Journal, CNBC, Bloomberg Law, Crain’s, Marketplace, WTOP, and Yahoo Finance. She has testified before Congress and the EEOC on topics such as artificial intelligence, gender bias, and paid leave, bringing SHRM’s expertise directly to policymakers.

Dickens amplifies SHRM’s voice on key global, national, and local platforms by holding influential roles as Governance Committee Member of the United States Council for International Business (USCIB), Vice Chair of The Bryce Harlow Foundation, and Board Member of SkillUp Coalition and the National Foundation for Women Legislators.

Before joining SHRM in 2018, Dickens built a distinguished career in higher education and nonprofit leadership. Her prior roles include General Counsel and Head of Policy for the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, Vice President of Public Policy for the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities, and Assistant Vice President for Federal Affairs at the University of North Carolina System. She also held administrative and external affairs positions at Duke University and Fayetteville State University.

A three-time graduate of North Carolina Central University (B.A., M.A., and J.D.), Dickens is the Immediate Past Chair of the NCCU Board of Trustees. She is Co-Chair of the HR Committee for the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) Board of Directors and a life member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, where she has served as Chairman of the International HBCU Task Force and on the Education Advancement Foundation Board of Directors.

# 2025-2026

## POWER HOUR SESSION II

### “New Landscape for Higher Education and HBCUs”



January 21, 2026

Victor Santos is the Associate Vice President of Government Relations at the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf), where he has served since 2018. While at TMCf, Victor has helped TMCf lead the way in advocacy efforts to increase Title III funding by 64% since 2017, pass the HBCU PARTNERS Act which mandated cooperation between federal agencies with HBCUs, pass the FUTURE Act which secured \$2.55 billion in mandatory funding for HBCUs and MSIs and deliver over \$6 billion in Covid-19 relief funds for HBCUs in 2020 and 2021.

Prior to working at TMCf, Victor was the Director of Government Relations at Delaware State University overseeing the legislation that created the INSPIRE Scholarship program and securing record state capitol investment for the university - including \$10 million in funding to build the Optical Science Center for Applied Research (OSCAR) Building. Victor began his career working in the Office of US Senator Thomas R. Carper (D-DE) and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Delaware and a Master of Public Administration from the Biden School of Public Policy and Administration at the University of Delaware

Thank you to our presenter for such an engaging session.



Presenter

**Victor Santos**

Associate Vice President of Government Relations

# POWER HOUR SESSION III

## The REACH Network:

Research Evaluation, Analytics & Artificial Intelligence Online Programs and Annual Summit

**DR. ANDREA CHRISTELLE**



**Dr. Andrea Christelle** serves as the Research Project Manager for the REACH Network at the University of Kentucky, where she manages programs for research evaluation and analytics professionals. She leverages her background in program development, research capacity building, and ethical AI to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and data-informed decision-making.



**March 25, 2026**

11:00 AM CT



**GILLIAN SILVER**



**Gillian Silver** serves as the Director of the Office of Research Administration (ORA) at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland. She develops and implements strategic plans and special projects for the ORA; improves procedures and guidelines for grant administration, including award management and contracts, and closeout processes; supporting research development and training. She serves on the steering committee for the NSF-GRANTED-supported REACH Network.



NSPAA of HBCUs, Inc.

# MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Dr. Sharita Wallace joined Central State University in November 2023 as Senior Pre-Award Administrator, bringing with her more than 16 years of experience in the federal government, over 25 years in management. Since joining the University, she has played a key role in expanding and strengthening the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research. Her extensive knowledge, dedication, and collaborative approach have significantly enhanced pre-award support and services across the institution.

In recognition of her outstanding contributions, expertise, and leadership, Dr. Wallace has been promoted to Director of Pre-Award. In this role, she will continue to advance the university's research mission and support faculty and staff in securing external funding.

**Congratulations on your fantastic achievement from all of us at NSPAA!**



**CENTRAL  
STATE UNIVERSITY**

# INSTITUTIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff



**PI:** Dr. Qinglong Jiang, Interim Chair/Associate Professor  
Department of Chemistry and Physics  
[jiangq@uapb.edu](mailto:jiangq@uapb.edu) (email)  
(870) 575-8754 (phone)  
<https://sites.google.com/site/drqinglongjianghomepage/>

**Project Description:** Dr. Qinglong Jiang, Associate Professor at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, has developed an internationally competitive research program distinguished by strong scholarly productivity and success in securing major external funding. He has authored and co-authored more than 100 peer-reviewed journal publications, many appearing in top-tier journals in materials science, applied physics, and nanoengineering. He also published more than 5 books or book chapters. His research outputs have collectively received over 4,000 citations and over 50 invited talks, demonstrating broad international impact.

Dr. Jiang's research focuses on advanced functional materials, nanotechnology, and emerging quantum-enabled technologies. His work contributes to both fundamental scientific understanding and practical engineering applications, while significantly enhancing UAPB's research visibility and reputation.

In addition to his publication record, Dr. Jiang has secured two major competitive federal research grants totaling more than \$10 million. He serves as a PI on a \$5.3 million National Science Foundation (NSF) award supporting the Quantum Information Science and Engineering (QISE) program, a flagship initiative focused on interdisciplinary research, workforce development, and student training. He also serves as a Co-PI on a \$5 million DOE award. He has also received another large federally supported grant exceeding \$1 million to advance research infrastructure, laboratory capabilities, and collaborative research activities.

Through high-impact publications, major grant activity, and mentorship of undergraduate and graduate students, Dr. Jiang continues to strengthen UAPB's research enterprise and national standing in STEM research.



**DRAKE STATE**  
COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE

**PI:** Dr. Leslie Shotts  
[lesley.shotts@drakestate.edu](mailto:lesley.shotts@drakestate.edu) (email)

**Additional Contacts:** Dr. Myron Parks, FAME Program Director - [myron.parks@drakestate.edu](mailto:myron.parks@drakestate.edu) (email) and Dr. Diana Arroyo, FAME Data Coordinator - [diana.arroyo@drakestate.edu](mailto:diana.arroyo@drakestate.edu) (email)

**Agency:** Department of Labor

**Award Amount:** \$1,514,520

**Period of Performance:** February 1, 2025 - January 30, 2029

**Project Description:** The FAME Program at Drake State Community and Technical College, supported by the Strengthening Community College Training (SCC5) grant, is transforming access to high-quality manufacturing education and opening doors to in-demand careers across North Alabama. With a \$1.75 million investment over four years, the program is building a strong, inclusive talent pipeline with targeted outreach to women and underrepresented populations in advanced manufacturing.

Over the grant period, FAME aims to serve 100 students, preparing them for high-skill manufacturing roles through hands-on training and direct career pathways. Partnerships with industry employers in the region give students real-world experience, employer engagement, and clear connections to high-demand jobs.

Student success is a top priority. Dedicated personnel such as a FAME Instructor, Data Coordinator, and Program Manager provide personalized coaching, career navigation, and academic support, while wrap-around services such as stipends, emergency assistance, childcare, transportation, healthcare, and scholarships help remove barriers and keep students on track.

Training takes place in cutting-edge environments, supported by modern equipment and Drake State's new 50,000-square-foot Advanced Manufacturing Training Center, featuring advanced labs and simulated work settings. Together, these investments ensure graduates are workforce-ready and positioned for long-term success in today's advanced manufacturing industry.



**“The Genetics of Cannabinoid Signaling: An Organismal Analysis”**

**PI:** Dr. Sandra Marie Leal, Professor of Biology

**Agency:** NIH

**Award Amount:** \$455,988

**Period of Performance:** September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2029

**Project Description:** Harris-Stowe State University (HSSU) is proud to announce that Dr. Sandra Marie Leal, Professor of Biology, has been awarded a prestigious research grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for her groundbreaking project titled “The Genetics of Cannabinoid Signaling: An Organismal Analysis.” This highly competitive award underscores the scientific excellence and innovation driving research at HSSU and its collaborative institutions.

The NIH grant supports a transformative investigation into the molecular- genetic mechanisms of cannabidiol (CBD) signaling within the nervous system. With support from faculty members Dr. Scott Horrell and Dr. Mary Hutchins, the research team will utilize *Drosophila melanogaster* as a model organism to uncover conserved pathways and noncanonical gene families that regulate neural responses to CBD. These insights aim to inform the development of improved therapies and guidelines for human use.

In addition to advancing scientific knowledge, the project will provide hands-on training for undergraduate students at HSSU, in collaboration with academic and industry experts from neighboring institutions including Washington University in St. Louis (WashU). Students will practice state-of-the-art biomedical techniques, preparing them for competitive careers in medicine and science.

“This NIH award is a testament to the caliber of research and education at HSSU,” said Dr. Leal. “We are excited to contribute to the understanding of CBD’s therapeutic potential while empowering the next generation of scientists.”

Dr. Harvey R. Fields, Jr., Founding Dean of the College of STEM, shares: “This grant provides an opportunity for Dr. Sandra Leal to explore her scientific insights. It also recognizes Harris-Stowe’s intentionality, readiness, and steady progress in developing a robust College of STEM, while inviting other talented faculty to join our institutional efforts.”

With rising rates of antidepressant use and growing interest in alternative treatments like CBD, this study addresses a critical gap in understanding how CBD functions at the molecular level.

## Virginia Union University and University of Tennessee Collaborate on Hands-On Rocket Design and Launch Program

**Project Description:** During the fall semester, students in Virginia Union University's Department of Natural Sciences within the School of Arts and Sciences extended their learning beyond traditional classroom instruction by designing, fabricating, and successfully launching composite-material rockets. Twenty VUU students participated in this intensive, experiential learning initiative in partnership with the University of Tennessee, Knoxville – Tickle College of Engineering, employing professional-grade equipment and established engineering methodologies throughout the project lifecycle.

The collaboration was implemented through the America's Cutting Edge (ACE) Composites Bootcamp, hosted in Richmond and facilitated by faculty from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The bootcamp was offered under the Department of Defense-supported Institute for Advanced Composites Manufacturing Innovation (IACMI) workforce development initiative, which seeks to expand technical career pathways and strengthen the nation's advanced manufacturing capacity.

Grounded in applied, experiential pedagogy, the program provided comprehensive, hands-on instruction in composite materials and engineering applications. Students received training in materials selection; fiber and resin systems; design, fabrication, and manufacturing processes; bonding and assembly techniques; finishing methods; systems testing; and performance evaluation. The program culminated in a live rocket launch at Hovey Field on Virginia Union University's campus.

Through this integrative experience, students bridged theoretical knowledge and practical application while strengthening technical competencies, collaborative problem-solving abilities, and workforce-ready skills essential for careers in STEM disciplines. Upon successful completion, participants earned ACE Composites certificates—industry-recognized credentials that support continued academic advancement and professional development in advanced manufacturing and engineering fields.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

MAR  
25

**NSPAA of HBCUs, Inc. - Power Hour Session III**  
**The REACH Network: Research Evaluation, Analytics & Artificial Intelligence Online Programs and Annual Summit**

March 25, 2026



APR  
27

**Society of Research Administrators International**  
**Global Research Management Summit**

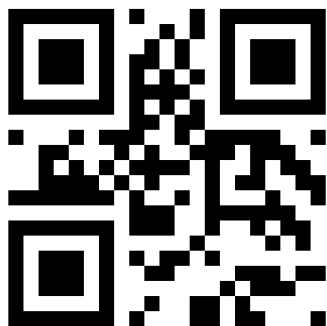
April 27-29, 2026, Dubai

SRAI's Global Research Management Summit is a premier gathering of research administrators, managers, and thought leaders. Reserve your place today and elevate your career and institution.

JUN  
1

**NSPAA of HBCUs, Inc.**  
**30<sup>th</sup> Annual NSPAA Technical Assistance Workshop**

June 1-5, 2026, New Orleans, LA



AUG  
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**National Council of University Research Administrators**  
**Annual Meeting of the Membership**

August 1-4, 2026, New York City, NY

This in-depth, targeted training and professional development includes offerings for those new to the profession to our most senior level members. [www.ncura.edu](http://www.ncura.edu)



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