

SHANELL PHARR-WILLIAMS

TEDx Speaker | Leadership & Communication Strategist



Helping Colleges Improve Retention, Reduce Risk, and Strengthen Campus Performance

WHY UNIVERSITIES & COMMUNITY COLLEGES BOOK SHANELL



Student attrition, staff burnout, campus conflict, and reputational risk are not “soft issues” — they are financial, operational, and leadership challenges.

Shanell Pharr-Williams works with colleges and universities to address the human breakdowns that quietly cost institutions millions: disengaged students, overwhelmed staff, escalated conflicts, and moments that go viral for the wrong reasons.

Her work equips leaders, faculty, and staff with practical communication and de-escalation frameworks that improve outcomes without adding workload, politics, or complexity.

WHO SHE SERVES

Shanell works with:

- President & Provost Offices
- Student Affairs & Enrollment Management
- Academic Affairs & Faculty Development
- Campus Safety & Risk Management
- HR & Staff Professional Development
- First-Year Experience & Orientation Programs
- Advising, Financial Aid, Admissions, and Student Services



CORE EXPERTISE (HIGHER EDUCATION FOCUS)

- Student retention & engagement
- De-escalation and conflict prevention on campus
- Staff burnout and emotional labor reduction
- Leadership communication under pressure
- Campus climate and trust-building
- Risk and reputational exposure mitigation

SIGNATURE KEYNOTES & PROGRAMS

THE EMPATHY ADVANTAGE: THE ONE HUMAN SKILL AI CAN'T REPLACE

As institutions adopt more technology and automation, it is often human breakdowns — not academic failure — that drive disengagement and attrition. This keynote reframes empathy as a retention and performance strategy, not a soft skill.

Best For:

Campus-wide convocations • Faculty & staff development days • Leadership summits

Duration: 45–60 minutes

DE-ESCALATION ON CAMPUS: PREVENTING FLASHPOINTS BEFORE THEY GO VIRAL

Small misunderstandings between students, staff, and faculty can escalate into major incidents. This session delivers practical de-escalation tools to reduce conflict, protect campus safety, and prevent reputational damage.

Best For:

Student Affairs • Campus Safety • Residence Life • Conduct & Compliance Teams

Duration: 60–90 minutes

EMPACT™ LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Low trust, poor communication, and emotional overload quietly undermine performance across campuses. This program introduces the EMPACT™ Framework — a leadership system that aligns culture, communication, and accountability.

Best For:

President's Cabinet • Deans • Department Chairs • Leadership Retreats

Duration: 90 minutes to half-day

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CAMPUS STAFF

In addition to keynote programs, Shanell delivers targeted professional development for student-facing and operational staff, focused on stabilizing performance during high-stress interactions.

These sessions are designed for teams who are often under-resourced but highly exposed, including:

- Academic advising
- Financial aid & enrollment services
- Admissions & registrar offices
- Student services & housing
- Front-desk and support teams

STAFF DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

Participants gain:

- Practical de-escalation tools for difficult conversations
- Clear communication frameworks for emotionally charged situations
- Increased confidence handling student and parent concerns
- Reduced burnout and emotional fatigue
- Improved consistency across departments

These programs are especially effective during peak periods such as enrollment cycles, financial aid deadlines, and orientation.

AUDIENCE OUTCOMES (ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS)

Institutions that bring Shanell to campus gain tools to:

- Improve student retention and engagement by addressing emotional disconnect before it becomes attrition
- Reduce risk and reputational exposure by preventing conflicts from escalating into public incidents
- Strengthen staff and faculty performance through clearer communication, trust, and confidence under pressure

HER APPROACH

Shanell's work is:

- Practical, not theoretical
- Skill-based, not political
- Grounded in leadership under pressure
- Immediately applicable across roles

She brings:

- 30+ years of leadership experience
- Former U.S. Army Sergeant perspective
- Organizational and workforce consulting expertise
- TEDx-level thought leadership



ABOUT SHANELL PHARR-WILLIAMS

Shanell Pharr-Williams is a TEDx speaker, former U.S. Army Sergeant, and leadership strategist specializing in empathy-driven performance. She is the creator of the EMPACT™ Framework and the C.A.R.E. Method™, practical systems that help organizations reduce conflict, improve communication, and strengthen outcomes under pressure.

TEDx

Rise to
MILLIONS

NORTH
CITY
CHURCH
OF CHRIST



BOOKING & AVAILABILITY

Shanell is available for:

- University and community college keynotes
- Faculty & staff development days
- Leadership retreats
- Orientation & first-year experience programming
- Student leadership conferences

Formats:

In-person · Virtual · Hybrid

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