



## JOHN I. WILLIAMS, JR.

### Co-Founder and President of the Celeritas Center for Intercultural Equity

Williams is a seasoned executive and organizational leader with extensive, wide-ranging experience in several sectors, including higher education and nonprofit strategy consulting, brand development/ repositioning, leadership/ team development, enrollment management, and fundraising.

**The Secret To Writing, LLC**  
**Expanding College**  
**Opportunity Speaker Series**

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From 2015-2019, he served as President of Muhlenberg College, a selective, private, four-year liberal arts college located in Allentown, PA. He led the creation and adoption of a new strategic plan. He led a re-branding initiative that re-positioned Muhlenberg, emphasizing its academic excellence. He then led a transformation of the college's sustaining value by bolstering pathways for students to achieve powerful outcomes. Specifically, he led a doubling of partnerships with graduate and professional schools (including Boston University's Medical School, School of Public Health, and Questrom School of Business; American University's Kogod School of Business; and Villanova Law School, among others), substantially upgraded the Office of Career Services and established a global, online community for students, faculty, staff, alumni and parents to facilitate career mentoring ("The Muhlenberg Network"). Finally, John led a successful initial "quiet phase" of a new capital campaign, resulting in over \$23 million in campaign gifts.

John began his career as a strategy consultant at Bain & Company, where he was the first person of color ever hired. During his years at Bain, he worked with CEO's and other senior leaders at a number of Fortune 500 clients. He went on to a successful career at American Express, where he led a transformational re-positioning of the U.S. Platinum Card and a major reorganization of the U.S. Consumer Travel Network that led to a quadrupling of net income.

John left American Express in the mid-1990s to become a dot-com entrepreneur, as CEO of venture capital-financed Biztravel.com. After building that company and brand, and after leading a successful sale of the business, John moved to Boston to become CEO of Sentient Jet. He led the company from \$8 million in annual revenue to \$54 million over just three years, prior to a successful sale to a private equity firm.



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John then shifted his focus to higher education. He led consulting services for Eduventures and, later, served as a partner in the higher education practice at The Bridgespan Group, a non-profit spinoff of Bain & Company. Between 2010-2015, John served as an Expert-in-Residence at Harvard Innovation Labs.

John graduated from Amherst College in 1975 with a BA, *magna cum laude*, in economics. He then earned both a JD from Harvard Law School and MBA from Harvard Business School in 1979. He is a retired member of the bar in both New York and Massachusetts.

John has served continuously on the board of trustees of his *alma mater*, Amherst College, since 1984 (since 1996, as a Life Trustee). John also serves as a trustee of Kent School in Kent, CT and Walnut Hill School for the Arts in Natick, MA. He is a former trustee of Prep for Prep in New York City and of Boston's Museum of African American History.

In addition to his academic and professional accomplishments, John is a musician, a pilot, and a lifelong learner. He was the original drummer and a lead singer in the Bain Band. He sings and tours internationally with a men's chorus called the Mastersingers. John has been a private pilot since 1983, is certified as an Airline Transport Pilot and has amassed over 2,700 flight hours. He has traveled extensively throughout the U.S., Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.