

**Sheara Jennings, Ph.D., M.S.W.**, is the dean of the Howard University School of Social Work. Before joining Howard, she was an associate professor in the Department of Health Systems and Population Sciences at the University of Houston Tilman J. Fertitta Family College of Medicine and the Graduate College of Social Work. She was also the Humana Endowed Chair in Social Determinants of Health at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work. As a trained social intervention researcher, Jennings has a successful record of partnering with well-established community-based organizations to deliver and evaluate programs that promote the overall wellbeing of Black and Hispanic children and families.

Her work has focused specifically in the areas of academic achievement/education, teen pregnancy prevention, and healthy relationships, whereby issues of health disparities and non-medical disparities of health are complexly embedded. Jennings' partnerships with a 5-year RCT project have been consistently funded for over a decade by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) via the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) and the Office of Population Affairs (OPA).

Through these projects she has been able to assist partners in capacity-building and sustainability, while maintaining successful university-community partnerships that support the community engagement mission of the College and University. Jennings has engaged students, parents/caregivers, community leaders, social services and education organizations, faculty scholars, university leadership, and executives; overseen the training and mentoring of doctoral students and tenure-earning faculty; and worked collaboratively with colleagues from various disciplines on community-based projects. Guided by a passion for leadership, her approach is collaborative, task-oriented, analytical and strategic.

Jennings' higher education career spans across a range of settings, including a top-10 business school and school of social work, an HBCU and an urban, tier-one university. She has held a host of positions, ranging from executive director to associate dean, during her 20+ years of leadership and administrative experience. Coupling these positions with her practical experience as a social worker, program evaluator, professional trainer, and consultant, she has developed a wide range of technical skills and the ability to work with diverse individuals and groups in various settings, with the ultimate goal of improving outcomes in the lives of youth.

She received her undergraduate degree in rehabilitation psychology from Southern University A&M at Baton Rouge. Jennings' master's degree in social work is from Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge, with her doctorate earned in social intervention research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is an accomplished researcher that has produced many publications and has presented at dozens of conferences across the nation. Jennings has received numerous awards and sits on various boards and committees, such as the Mayor's COVID-19 Health Equity Response Task Force for the Office of Mayor Sylvester Turner and the Good Life Outcomes Advocacy and Policy Program Community Engagement Advisory Board.