

“ *As long as women are using class or race power to dominate other women, feminist sisterhood cannot be fully realized.* ”

bell hooks, *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*

Keynote Speakers



Aisha Francis-Samuels

President and CEO, Benjamin Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology



Dr. Aisha Francis-Samuels became the first female President in the more than 100-year history of Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology (BFIT) in July 2021. Previously the college's Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Francis-Samuels oversees the day-to-day operations of the college and plays a critical role in advancing its mission.

Dr. Francis-Samuels is an award-winning nonprofit leader and educator with broad experience in strategic planning, philanthropy, board relations, marketing, and communications. She believes in the ability of effective organizations and well-supported individuals to transform underserved communities for the better, which is her life's work. She enjoys serving as a strategist and implementing dynamic new programs at best-in-class organizations that improve access to and equity of educational and economic opportunities.



Leigh Patel

Professor, University of Pittsburgh



Dr. Leigh Patel is a writer, educator, and cultural worker. Her work is based in the knowledge that as long as oppression has existed so have freedom struggles. She is a community-based researcher as well as an eldercare provider. She is an elected member of the National Academy of Education. Prior to being employed as a professor, she was a middle school language arts teacher, a journalist, and a state-level policymaker. Dr. Patel is also a proud national board member of Education for Liberation, a nonprofit that focuses on supporting low-income people, particularly youth of color, to understand and challenge the injustices their communities face.

Her latest book, *There is No Study Without Struggle: Confronting Settler Colonialism in Higher Education*, from Beacon Press connects the distinct yet deeply connected forms of oppression, while also shedding light on the crucial nature of political education for social transformation. Her walk-on song is "Can I Kick It" by A Tribe Called Quest.

Deans' Panel



Carmen Sceppa

**Panel Moderator | Dean,
Bouvé College of Health
Sciences and Professor,
Northeastern University**



Dr. Carmen Sceppa is Dean of Bouvé College of Health Sciences and Professor at Northeastern University. As a physician and scientist, Dr. Sceppa's work advances and prolongs health for all. Her program of research is based on developing and testing lifestyle interventions to promote healthy aging and quality of life among underserved, vulnerable, and elderly populations with a specific focus on Latinx and African American populations. Dr. Sceppa received her medical degree from Francisco Marroquín University in Guatemala, where she was born and raised. She received her Ph.D. in Nutrition from The Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University in Boston, Massachusetts.



Wendi Williams

**Dean, School of Education,
Mills College**



Dr. Wendi Williams' work centers on the development, implementation, and evaluation of school and community-based health and educational interventions that promote health and well-being among youth, their families, and the educational and mental health practitioners who work with them. Through her scholarship and research activity, she has articulated an intersectional approach to psycho-social spiritual intervention for middle school girls. The foundations of this work have extended to reflective intervention to facilitate leadership development among diverse women and Black/African women, specifically. Forthcoming work includes her book, *Black women at work: On recovery and refusal* out Fall 2022.



Amy Z. Zeng

**Dean and Professor, Sawyer
Business School, Suffolk University**



Dr. Amy Zeng became the sixth Dean, as well as the first female Dean, of the Sawyer Business School at Suffolk University in August 2020. An accomplished educator and leader in experiential and project-based learning and a recognized scholar in the field of supply chain management, Dr. Zeng brings to the School a passion for experience-based learning, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and global engagement. Prior to her current position, Dr. Zeng was the Dean of the Barney School of Business at the University of Hartford in Connecticut. Prior to that, she spent 19 years at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, where she held numerous faculty and administrative positions.



Jean Zu

**Dean, Schaefer School
of Engineering and Science,
Stevens Institute of Technology**

Dr. Jean Zu has served as Dean of the School of Engineering and Science at Stevens Institute of Technology since May 2017. Dr. Zu's research focuses on mechanical vibrations and energy harvesting. She has successfully collaborated with many different companies on research projects with a focus on automotive applications. She has published 340 papers including 180 journal papers and has supervised over 60 graduate students including 36 doctoral students. She served as the President of Engineering Institute of Canada (EIC) in 2012-2014. In 2019, she was chosen as Notable Women in Technology by Crain's New York Business. Dr. Zu obtained her Ph.D. from the University of Manitoba.