



Peggy R. Williams

President Emerita, Ithaca College (NY)
1998-99, 2004-05, and 2008-09 Nominator

Peggy R. Williams earned a bachelor's degree from the University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto (Canada). She also holds a master of education degree from the University of Vermont and a doctorate in administration, planning, and social policy from Harvard University (MA). She is a citizen of both the United States and Canada, having lived in the United States since 1968.

Before entering the field of education, Williams was a social worker for the Medical Center Hospital of Vermont and the Monroe County Department of Social Services in New York. She went on to hold various positions within the Vermont State Colleges system and later joined Trinity College of Vermont, in Burlington, as an associate professor, ultimately becoming chair of the business and economics department and associate academic dean. Prior to being named the seventh—and first female—president of Ithaca College in 1997, she was president of Lyndon State College in Lyndonville, Vermont, for eight years.

Williams has been a leading proponent of sustainability, having signed the American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment, and she has set an example with regard to community service, having instituted the annual Celebration of Service while at Ithaca. Additionally, she frequently presented a workshop on humor in the workplace for Ithaca College's Leadership Scholars program, and the college instituted the Peggy R. Williams Award for Academic and Community Leadership in her honor.

At Ithaca College, she served as a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III Presidents Council and as a member of its subcommittee on gender and diversity issues. She also served on the boards of directors of the Foundation for Educational Exchange between Canada and the United States of America (Fulbright Canada) and the American Council on Education, for which she chaired the Commission on Women in 2009 and received the ACE Donna Shavlik Award in recognition of her lifelong commitment to advancing women's issues in higher education. She also has participated in Women Swimmin' for Hospicare, a swim across Cayuga Lake to benefit Hospicare and Palliative Care Services of Tompkins County, and the AIDS Ride for Life.

When Williams retired from Ithaca College, the board of trustees presented her with an honorary degree and endowed a new discussion symposium in her honor: the Peggy R. Williams Difficult Dialogues Symposium. Williams's current activities include: vice chair of the board of the American Association of University Women (AAUW); chair of the board of Vermont Public Radio; and member of the International Women's Forum. Williams lives in Johnson, Vermont, and Fernie, British Columbia.