
LYNNETTE ADAMS, PH.D.

Atlanta, GA | (313) 574-2141 | lynnadams325@gmail.com

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/lynnetteadams](https://www.linkedin.com/in/lynnetteadams)

Education

Pepperdine University – Graduate School of Education and Psychology	2025
Ph.D., Global Leadership and Change	
Dissertation: Black Women Leaders in STEM: A Phenomenological Study of Their Perceived Role of Joy-Centered Practices in Mitigating Racially-Based Traumatic Stress	
University of Phoenix	2009
M.B.A., Marketing	
Wayne State University	2006
M.F.A., Public Relations & Organizational Communication	
Eastern Michigan University	2000
B.A., Journalism	

Teaching Appointments

Adjunct Professor, Nonprofit Leadership Program	Denver, CO
University of Denver	2018 to Present
- Delivered 20+ graduate-level courses on nonprofit leadership, strategic fundraising, and community empowerment, achieving a 95% positive student evaluation rate. - Crafted innovative curricula blending real-world case studies, experiential learning modules, and equity-driven leadership frameworks, increasing student engagement by 40%. - Orchestrated collaborative projects with local nonprofits, enabling students to apply classroom theory to real-world organizational challenges. - Mentored 50+ graduate students, guiding academic research and leadership development initiatives that led to successful career placements. - Garnered recognition for dynamic teaching methods and inclusive learning environments, resulting in consistently low course drop rates and strong student retention.	

Courses Taught

Course Development – 4105 Applied Fundraising Practices (University of Denver)

Collaborated on the design and development of the graduate-level course *Applied Fundraising Practices*, creating a curriculum that bridges theory with real-world application. Developed learning objectives, assignments, and case studies focused on strategic fundraising, donor engagement, and ethical fundraising practices. Integrated interactive activities, practical tools, and current industry trends to prepare students for effective nonprofit development leadership

NFP 4105 Applied Fundraising Practices (4 Credits)

Curriculum bridges theory with real-world application. Developed learning objectives, assignments, and case studies focused on strategic fundraising, donor engagement, and ethical fundraising practices. Includes interactive activities, practical tools, and current industry trends to prepare students for nonprofit development leadership.

NFP 4100 Philanthropy Principles and Roles in Nonprofit Organizations (4 Credits)

Provides a comprehensive look at nonprofit development and fundraising, emphasizing integration

of strategic planning with effective fundraising methods. Covers individual solicitation, grants, events, and online initiatives.

NFP 4310 Community Organizing, Voice and Empowerment (4 Credits)
Focuses on leadership in community change, storytelling, social media, and engagement. Students analyze power, privilege, and oppression to develop equity-centered strategies.

NFP 4010 Leading Nonprofit/Nongovernmental Organizations (4 Credits)
Examines core leadership behaviors, communication strategies, and organizational structures that advance nonprofit missions and fundraising goals.

Teaching Philosophy

I believe education should inspire change-makers who can bridge theory and practice to create meaningful impact. My teaching philosophy emphasizes transformative, experiential learning that merges academic rigor with practical application. I cultivate inclusive learning environments that foster critical thinking, collaboration, and intellectual curiosity. Drawing on over 15 years of nonprofit leadership experience, I equip students with both technical expertise and the emotional intelligence essential for becoming joy-centered, impactful leaders.

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- Research & Publications**
- Adams, L. A., & Moore, T. N. (2024). The Joy Factor: Redefining Leadership Excellence at Black in Marine Science through Joy-Centered Leadership Practice. Integrative and Comparative Biology.
 - Moore, T., Adams, L., et al. (2024). The Black in Marine Science Blueprint. Integrative and Comparative Biology, 64(4), 1055–1063.
 - Adams, L. (2021). Advancing Philanthropy: Engagement Targeted Connections.

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- Conference Presentations**
- Adams, L. (2025, May). Lessons from the Ocean: A Six-Point Model for Advancing Justice-Centered Partnerships in STEM. NCORE Conference, Honolulu, HI.
 - Adams, L. (2025, June). The Formula for Joy. STEM Noire Conference, Washington, DC.
 - Adams, L. (2024, Dec). The Formula for Joy: 3-Day Leadership Intensive. BIMS Week, San Diego, CA.

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- Experience**
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| Director of Development
Black in Marine Science | Spokane, WA
08/2023 to 05/2025 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engineered fundraising strategies that drove a 40% increase in annual revenue, aligning all efforts with long-term organizational goals.• Cultivated relationships with donors, corporate partners, and foundations, enhancing donor retention by 25%.• Secured gifts by collaborating with the executive team and board to target high-value donors.• Authored and managed competitive grant proposals, ensuring compliance and successful acquisition of multi-year funding.• Orchestrated large-scale donor events and digital campaigns, significantly boosting community engagement. | |

- Administered the development department budget, providing detailed financial and performance reports to executives and board members.
- Partnered with program managers to synchronize funding priorities with organizational initiatives, strengthening cross-department collaboration.
- Researched emerging donor prospects, leveraging data and analytics to refine fundraising strategies.
- Maintained and optimized donor database systems, guaranteeing accuracy and transparency in donor records.
- Championed innovative donor stewardship initiatives, reinforcing long-term relationships and organizational credibility.

Senior Manager of Major Gifts

Washington, D.C.

URGE

2021 to 2023

- Pioneered URGE's Major Donor Program, securing significant contributions from high-net-worth individuals and philanthropic organizations.
- Exceeded an annual fundraising goal by raising \$265K and securing an additional \$20K within one quarter, showcasing exceptional results.
- Identified and qualified prospective major donors through advanced research techniques and thorough due diligence to align with organizational priorities.
- Communicated organizational impact through persuasive storytelling and relationship-building strategies, cultivating lasting philanthropic commitment.
- Grew annual fundraising revenue from \$359,000 to \$698,047 within four years by executing targeted development initiatives and donor engagement campaigns.
- Designed and implemented comprehensive marketing plans that strengthened brand visibility and supported donor acquisition and retention.
- Cultivated and maintained key donor relationships while managing major gift campaigns that advanced both URGE's and CCA Foundation's missions.

Director of Development

Aurora, CO

Community College of Aurora Foundation

2017 to 2021

- Led the identification, cultivation, and solicitation of major gifts through strategic relationship-building and personalized donor engagement efforts.
- Developed and executed targeted action plans for major gifts, planned giving prospects, corporate sponsorships, and foundation partnerships.
- Conducted detailed donor research and prospect analysis to support effective cultivation strategies and proposal development.
- Managed and mentored a development associate while collaborating with board committees to strengthen fundraising initiatives.
- Oversaw donor stewardship, appreciation programs, and cultivation events to create meaningful and lasting donor connections.
- Partnered with executive leadership to design and implement initiatives aligned with major gift objectives and institutional growth.
- Optimized internal systems and workflows to enhance coordination across campaigns and donor stewardship programs.

Director of Development

Castle Rock, CO

The Crisis Center

2012 to 2017

- Spearheaded community outreach initiatives, serving as a spokesperson to promote the organization's mission and strengthen stakeholder engagement.
- Built and nurtured relationships with donors and partners to secure major gifts and vital resources for critical programs and services.
- Designed and facilitated impactful workshops on healthy relationships and Teen Dating Violence programs across Douglas County schools.

- Managed the organization's \$1.4 million operational budget, ensuring responsible allocation of funds and long-term financial sustainability.
- Partnered with leadership and program teams to align fundraising strategies with the organization's mission and community priorities.
- Oversaw the planning and execution of events and campaigns to raise awareness and increase community involvement.
- Enhanced organizational visibility through targeted outreach efforts, advocacy initiatives, and collaborative partnerships.

Honors & Grants

- **NSF-KADF Ocean Decade Champion (August 2024)** – Recognized for research excellence and societal impact.
- **Planet 100 Women Pathway (2024)** – Selected to increase diverse women leaders in environmental movements.
- **Bringing the Ocean to the Streets Grant (2024)** – \$200,000 to support joy-centered research and mentorship through BIMS.
- **GSEP Ph.D. Research Grant** – \$2,500 for dissertation research on Black Women Leaders in STEM.

Service & Leadership

- **Owner** — The Joy Architect (2024–Present)
- **Founder & Executive Director** — The Joy Lab Inc. 501c3 (2024–Present)
- **Board Member** — Big Sisters in Nursing
- **Board Member** — Illuminate STEM
- **Community Advocate** — Facilitator and Grant writer of BIMS Swims, a free youth swim camp in Belize fostering ocean literacy.

Core Skills

- Curriculum Design & Graduate Instruction
- Organizational Change & Leadership Development
- Grant Writing & Fundraising Strategy
- Qualitative & Quantitative Research Methods
- Equity-Centered Pedagogy & Student Mentorship
- Academic Research & Scholarly Publications
- Conference Presentations & Public Speaking
- Program Development & Nonprofit Management
- Strategic Fundraising & Major Donor Cultivation
- Community Engagement & Stakeholder Collaboration