2023 Education Power 50

No. 9: Dale Caldwell

After being unanimously appointed as Centenary University's 15th president earlier this year, Dale Caldwell made history July 1 by officially becoming the first African American to lead the Hackettstown-based institution.

In announcing the successor of retiring president Bruce Murphy, Centenary's board of trustees cited Caldwell's extensive leadership in higher education, business and government, as well as a commitment to fostering innovation and diversity.

Before joining Centenary, Caldwell was executive director of the Rothman Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Fairleigh Dickinson University. During his four years there, Caldwell was credited with transforming the organization into one of New Jersey's most influential entrepreneurial institutes serving family businesses, veteran entrepreneurs and urban enterprises.

As president of the board of the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey, Caldwell steered the development of a strategic vision, recommending operational initiatives that resulted in a $132 million revenue increase during his 22-year tenure.

Additionally, Caldwell's background features positions in the public, private and nonprofit sectors, including as senior manager at Deloitte Consulting, founding executive director of the Newark Alliance and deputy commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. He's also served on the New Brunswick Board of Education, written a book ("Intelligent Influence: The 4 Steps of Highly Successful Leaders and Organizations") and serves as a licensed pastor.

In taking the helm of Centenary, Caldwell said he anticipates using his "business experience, contacts and insights to engage government, business, philanthropic, academic and other leaders to secure critical partnerships and financial support" for the Hackettstown-based private liberal arts university.

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