

Bio-Sketch for Dr. Lawrence T. Potter, Jr.

PhD and MA, University of Missouri-Columbia (English), with distinction
BA, Stillman College (English, Religion, and Philosophy), magna cum laude

The University of La Verne appointed **Dr. Lawrence T. Potter, Jr.** to the position of Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in August 2015. Dr. Potter brings more than twenty years' experience as an educator to La Verne, having served in a variety of faculty and administrative roles at private and public institutions throughout his career.

He most recently held the position of Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and was tenured professor of English at Jackson State University—an historically Black, urban research-intensive university—in Mississippi. Dr. Potter was responsible for 300 faculty and staff, along with approximately 2,200 undergraduate and graduate students. He led many faculty-focused initiatives such as recruitment, retention and development, while enhancing student learning outcomes and developing quality online learning opportunities.

Dr. Potter previously served as associate dean of the faculty and chief diversity officer at Allegheny College—a selective, private liberal arts college—in Meadville, Pennsylvania; and, rose through the faculty ranks as a scholar of English and African-American literature at the University of St. Thomas—a private Catholic, research university—in Minnesota and Western Michigan University—a large public, research-intensive university.

A champion of diversity and inclusivity initiatives, Dr. Potter developed the Center for Intercultural Advancement and Student Success, the Diversity Scholar-in-Residence, and the Council on Diversity and Equity, and supervised the Office of Spiritual and Religious Life, among other programs, at Allegheny.

Dean Potter is an academic visionary whose ideas related to diversity and student success go to the heart of the University of La Verne's core values. At Allegheny and Western Michigan, Dr. Potter developed several programs with components similar to the La Verne Experience. At Western Michigan, the "Get Connected Program" engaged first-year minority students in a common learning experience, leading to retention success between freshman-to-sophomore enrollment years. He created "ACCESS ALLegheny," a series of workshops on academic expectations, social acclimation, peer mentoring and academic support resources, along with "NAVI-GATORS," a first-year peer mentor program focusing on underrepresented populations and international students.

Over the course of his academic career, Dr. Potter has garnered both federal and private foundation grants totaling more than \$10 million. One of his greatest accomplishments was establishing and directing the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program at St. Thomas where more than one hundred first-generation, low-income students completed faculty-student research and mentoring. Eighty-seven percent of the program's participants have advanced degree programs (MA, MS, MSW, PhD/MD, MD, PharmD, JD).

In 2009-2010, Dr. Potter was named an American Council on Education Fellow. He spent a year at DePaul University in Chicago being mentored by President Fr. Dennis Holtschneider. The St. Paul Foundation awarded him the Facing Race Ambassador Award for his anti-racism work in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota in 2008.

Dean Potter has been recognized for his outstanding teaching and mentoring of students and faculty. For his teaching excellence and leadership, Dr. Potter was awarded the Lewis Walker Outstanding Faculty

Teaching Award at Western Michigan University and receiving William B. Malevich Faculty Leadership Award at the University of St. Thomas. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* did a three-part series recognizing Dr. Potter's transformative leadership on diversity, inclusion, and the impact of race in higher education. His work and diversity models have been used by many colleges and universities where he has consulted nationally. He has traveled extensively to Africa, Asia, and Europe as a lecturer and invited speaker.

A respected scholar-teacher, he has published a number of articles in the *Encyclopedia of African-American Literature* and other publications, including "Brother to Brother: Collected Writings by Black Gay Men," "Invisible Life" and "Literary Authenticity: Life, Reality and Experience as Reflected in Black Literature." His essay, "Still Invisible, Still Voiceless: Or, Still Too Taboo?" in *Ain't Nobody Worryin': Maleness and Masculinity in Black America* (2011) was recognized by the American Men's Studies Association (AMSA) as best scholarly contribution on black masculinity. Dean Potter is currently finishing a monograph on famed Harlem Renaissance author and critic Wallace Henry Thurman entitled, *Harlem's Forgotten Genius: The Life and Literary World of Wallace Henry Thurman*. Recently, he was asked to co-edit a volume for the series *Research and Ethnic Relations on race and ethnicity in 21st-century higher education*. Potter has presented more than 100 academic papers at national and international conferences. He has served as speaker and panelist for a number of national organizations including the American Association of Colleges & Universities and the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education. Dr. Potter currently serves on the American Conference of Academic Deans (ACAD) Board of Directors and San Bernardino Catholic Elementary Schools Board of Directors.

Dr. Potter graduated magna cum laude with a triple major in English, philosophy, and religion from Stillman College and earned his Master's and Ph.D. in English, with distinction, from the University of Missouri-Columbia.