

Legislation Text

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Honoring and recognizing Erika James as the first woman and person of color to become dean of The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

WHEREAS, On February 26, 2020, President Amy Gutmann and Provost Wendell Pritchett named Erika H. James the next dean of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, which will become effective on July 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Born in Bermuda, James grew up in Texas and completed her undergraduate psychology degree at Pomona College in Claremont, California. She later went on to receive her masters and Ph.D. in Organizational Psychology from the University of Michigan; and

WHEREAS, James discovered her interest in crisis leadership and workplace diversity while teaching as an assistant professor at Tulane University's Freeman School of Business and as a visiting professor at Harvard Business School. As a published researcher and award-winning educator, with a passion for consulting and speaking, James emphasizes how higher education can be of service to industry. Some of her published papers include: "How to Display Competence in Times of Crisis," and "Diversity Crises: How Firms Manage Discrimination Lawsuits"; and

WHEREAS, James has served on the board of the foremost accrediting body in business education, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. She has been awarded the Earl Hill, Jr., Faculty Achievement and Diversity Award from The Consortium, an organization committed to increasing diversity in business, starting with graduate school admissions. James has also been named one of the Top 10 Women of Power in Education by Black Enterprise and as one of the Power 100 by Ebony Magazine; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, James became the first African American woman to lead a top business school in the nation, when she was named dean of Emory University's Goizueta Business School. While at Goizueta, James grew the faculty size by 25% in her first term and led workshops on unconscious bias for students and professors. Because of James' leadership as dean, the business school now boasts one of the most gender-diverse faculties in the country, and is one of the top business schools in the nation with an upward trajectory in student career success, diversity, and faculty thought leadership; and

WHEREAS, The Wharton School, founded in 1881, has over 235 faculty members and 5,000 undergraduate and graduate students. James will now be the first woman and person of color to become dean of the Wharton School in its 139-year old history; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby recognizes, congratulates, and honors Erika James for becoming the first woman and person of color to become dean of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.