

*Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Awards Celebration*

JANUARY 23, 2026

WELCOME

Amirah Morris

Interdisciplinary Studies, Spring '26

Alicia Greene

Business Analytics, Spring '26

INVOCATION

Isaiah Rogers

Assistant Director of Fraternity & Sorority Life Programs;
Youth Director, Pentecostal House of Prayer

BLACK NATIONAL ANTHEM

WCU Gospel Ministries

CELEBRATORY REMARKS

Dr. Laurie Bernotsky

President, West Chester University

MLK DAY PROCLAMATION

Dr. Tracey Ray Robinson

Vice President, Division for Access, Compliance and Engagement (ACE)

Tiffany E. Jones

President, The Society of WCU

DRUM MAJOR FOR JUSTICE AWARD

Dr. Lisa Montgomery

LARRY DOWDY COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Dr. Daniela Johannes

**THE SOCIETY OF WCU STUDENT LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY SERVICE
AND LEADERSHIP AWARD**

WCU Black Men United

WCU STUDENT RESPONSE VIDEO

The Divine Nine of WCU Honor the Legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP

Dr. Tiffany E. Jones

President, Chair of the Frederick Douglass Legacy Scholarship

Dr. Paris McPherson–Vice President

Thom Nixon–Vice President

OUTSTANDING STUDENT LEADER AWARDS

Alicia Greene, Amirah Morris, and Ronnell Williams

TRIBUTE TO REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

WCU Gospel Ministries, Ryan Williams, Kamayah Gillis, Elijah Brown,

Dr. Michael Burns, Adam Johnson

CLOSING REMARKS

Alicia Greene and Amirah Morris

Refreshments to follow awards program

Drum Major for Justice Award Recipient—Dr. Lisa M. Montgomery



Dr. Lisa M. Montgomery is a higher education leader with more than 33 years of professional experience, including 21 years in corporate America and 12 years in higher education at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. Her career reflects a strong commitment to student advocacy, operational excellence, and equitable access to resources that support student success.

A first-generation college student, Dr. Montgomery is a triple alumna of West Chester University and made institutional history as the first African American to earn the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Policy, Planning, and Administration at WCU. Her academic and professional journey exemplifies perseverance, leadership, and a deep dedication to advancing equity in higher education.

Dr. Montgomery currently serves as the Director of Student Advocacy and Resources at West Chester University, where she leads efforts to support students experiencing financial and other resource-related challenges. She collaborates with campus and community partners to connect students to emergency assistance, basic needs resources, and coordinated support services, ensuring barriers to persistence and success are addressed with care, equity, and advocacy at the center.

Dr. Montgomery's work is closely aligned with West Chester University's Moon Shot for Equity initiative, where she has served on various committees dedicated to advancing equity, access, and student persistence. She was honored as a Moon-Shot Maker in 2024 for her sustained contributions to this work.

Prior to transitioning to higher education, Dr. Montgomery spent over two decades at The Vanguard Group, holding multiple management positions and developing expertise in process improvement, stakeholder engagement, and organizational effectiveness. She holds a Six Sigma Black Belt, bringing a data-informed, continuous-improvement lens to her leadership in higher education.

In addition to her university role, Dr. Montgomery serves on the United Way Community Impact Team, contributing to funding decisions that support non-profit organizations and strengthen local communities. Her professional mission is grounded in ensuring access, dignity, and opportunity for students and families, particularly those navigating higher education as first-generation and historically underrepresented individuals.

Dr. Montgomery resides in Montgomery County with her husband of 22 years (Bernard), her 3 daughters (Brianna, Taylor, and Lauren), and her father (George).

Larry Dowdy Community Service Award Recipient— Dr. Daniela Johannes



Dr. Daniela Johannes is an Associate Professor of Latin American Studies and Spanish in the Department of Languages and Cultures. Her academic, creative, and service work is grounded in a sustained commitment to equity, cultural justice, and community-engaged public education.

For eight years, Dr. Johannes directed the Latinx Communities Conference, establishing it as a central interdisciplinary forum connecting students, faculty, artists, activists, and community organizations. She currently serves as Director of the Greater Philadelphia Latin American Studies Consortium (GPLASC), where she advances interinstitutional collaboration and expands access to academic and cultural resources across the region.

Within the College of Arts and Humanities, Dr. Johannes co-founded women-of-color–led initiatives including the Latinx Social Justice Collective and the Women of Color Caucus, creating sustained spaces for mentorship, advocacy, and institutional change. She also serves as Co-Chair of the EAIDI Grant Program (Equity, Access, Inclusion and Diversity Initiatives) where she played a central role in co-creating a set of principles that function as a model for equity guidelines across the College of Arts and Humanities.

Among her tangible contributions to West Chester, she organized the visit of renowned Chilean muralist Mono González to campus, where he collaborated with students and community members to create a collective mural now permanently installed in the Student Union as a site of recognition and celebration of Latinx identities. Dr. Johannes has also significantly diversified poetry and cultural programming on campus, bringing Latinx and Latin American cultural capital into sustained dialogue with students and the university community.

As a poet, Dr. Daniela Johannes is the author of *Afuerismos* (2025), the co-editor of the poetry anthology *Empoerá 2025* (Female Latin American Poets Living in the United States) and part of editorial projects that foreground contemporary Latin American voices. Her creative practice informs her service work, understanding poetry and culture as tools for and community building. She approaches community service as an ethical, relational practice that reimagines the public university as a space of access, care, and collective responsibility.

Student Organization Leadership & Community Service Award— Black Men United



Black Men United was founded in 2001 at West Chester University, strives to empower and enrich the West Chester University community both culturally and educationally through community service, involvement on campus, and education of issues concerning African American Men.

The primary goal of Black Men United is to keep Black men connected, consistent, and supported on campus with the assistance of other gender and racial affinity groups, which is done through the following initiatives:

1. Assisting in academic and professional development
2. Fostering leadership opportunities.
3. Community engagement and visibility
4. Establishing an environment that encourages wellness, support, and a safe space

Executive Board Members of Black Men United are:

Amari Jackson: President

Jason Walters: Vice President

Michael Burrell: Secretary

Michael Brooks: Treasurer

Ronnell Williams: Programs Coordinator

Ryan Williams: Public Relations Chair

Eric Budu: Historian

Elijah Louis-Benjamin:

SGA-MOAB Representative

Zyair Lofton-Jenkins: Brother
Ambassador

Tymir Jones: Community Service Chair

Lakai Terry: Sister Ambassador

Jeramie Hampton: General Executive
Board Member

Chad Browne:
General Executive Board Member

Nina Simone-Vaughn:
General Executive Board Member

Skyy Bassett:
General Executive Board Member

Johnathan Manyeka:
Freshman Representative

Makayla Webb:
Freshman Representative

Kamayah Gillis:
Freshman Representative



The Society of WCU extends gratitude to the following individuals and organizations for their dedication and support of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Awards Celebration:

MLK Awards Celebration Planning Committee: Tiffany E. Jones (Chair), Larry Dowdy, Alicia Greene, Jocelyn Manigo, Paris McPherson, Amirah Morris, Thom Nixon, Casey Schmitt, and Ronell Williams

MLK Awards Sub-Committee: Paris McPherson (Chair), Thom Nixon, Larry Dowdy, Elisa

Oliver, Casey Schmitt, Kalyani Kannan, Alicia Greene, and Ronnell Williams

MLK Entertainment Sub-Committee: Jocelyn Manigo (Chair), Raekwon Bates, Ronnell Williams

WCU Gospel Ministries

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New Street Catering

WCU Graphics & Printing

Crown Trophy

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Julie Dietrich

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