

# FORTUNE

## Emory hires first African-American woman to lead top business school

By Caroline Fairchild  
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Emory University recently announced Erika Hayes James will lead the Goizueta Business School as the next dean.



COURTESY: EMORY UNIVERSITY

FORTUNE -- A female, African-American Ph.D. will become Emory's Goizueta Business School next dean -- a first in school history and a first among top business school programs.

[Erika Hayes James](#), a former senior associate dean for executive education at the Darden Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of Virginia, will assume her new role at Emory on July 15. James earned her Ph.D. in organizational psychology from the University of Michigan and built a career by connecting her knowledge of organizational psychology with executive leadership. She also has served as a consultant to several [Fortune 500](#) companies, according to the Emory announcement.

While three minority women are currently deans at American colleges of business, James will be the first to lead a full-time MBA program at a top-25 business school, according to the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. The full-time MBA program at Goizueta is ranked No. 1 by *Bloomberg BusinessWeek* for job placement. Four of the school's degree programs rank in the top 25.

Claire Sterk, the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at Emory, made it clear that James' race and gender were not driving factors in the school's hiring decision. Breaking a glass ceiling of sorts by bringing her into the top business school role is just a bonus, she said.

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As James takes the helm at Goizueta, diversity among faculty at business schools far and wide remains lacking. In 2013, a mere 3.8% of full-time business school faculty identified as black in an AACSB survey. Bernie Milano is a president at The PhD Project, a non-profit that helps minorities earn their doctorates and become business professors. When the organization began its work in 1994, there were fewer than 300 business school professors of color in the U.S., according to Milano. That number has grown to roughly 1,237, but Milano says there is still much more work to be done. "It is a sad state," he adds.

James is also just one among a few women leading American business school programs.: [22% of American business schools have female](#) deans, according to a report by the AACSB. Although female business school deans have slowly been increasing in number, a recent AACSB [study](#) indicates that this has not led to significantly more women getting MBAs. In 2013, female enrollment at MBA programs at schools with female deans was 38.6%, vs. 35.3% at business schools run by men.

John Fernandes, the president and CEO at AACSB, calls James' ascent to the dean role a "beacon of light" and a big day in history. Immediately, James will become "the shooting star" for minorities and women in business school, he added in an interview with *Fortune*.

Emory's hiring decision comes soon after Harvard Business School -- the No. 2 full-time MBA program in the U.S., according to *BusinessWeek* -- made headlines for its reputedly unsupportive culture for women. In January, HBS Dean Nitin Nohria publicly apologized that the program has a history of treating its own female students and professors in an offensive manner. Nohria was reacting, in part, to an investigation conducted by the *New York Times* that revealed a [tangible achievement gap](#) between female and male members of the HBS community. The dean noted that a record 41% of Harvard's entering class of MBAs were women, up from 35% 10 years ago and 25% in 1985.