

Penny L. Elkins, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management
Mercer University



PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY

Across an almost 30-year career, Penny Elkins has served and led teams and organizations across many aspects of both P-12 and higher education. A noted keynote speaker, Dr. Elkins is a recognized expert on the topic of equipping leaders and developing effective teams to achieve success.

For the past two decades, Elkins has served Mercer University in numerous leadership roles across academics and administration. Since her appointment as Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management in 2011, she has led the University in achieving record-breaking freshman enrollment growth of 72-percent, coupled with an increase in academic credentials and the number of students retained through graduation. Similarly, the university has attained record overall enrollment over the last decade. In her current role, Elkins also often leads cross-functional and interdisciplinary initiatives, including the University's Center for Leadership and Ethics and the McDonald Center for the Advancement of Global Education. She holds the academic rank of Professor in Mercer's Tift College of Education, and in 2007, was appointed as the Fred L. Miles Endowed Chair of Educational Leadership.

Prior to her current role, Elkins served as Senior Vice Provost for Strategic Initiatives, Vice President for the Atlanta Campus, and Associate Dean and Department Chair for both Teacher Education and Educational Leadership in the Tift College of Education. She led the creation of the first doctoral program in the College of Education, the Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Higher Education Leadership. A lifelong educator, Elkins began her career as a third grade teacher and elementary school administrator.

Elkins holds two degrees from Mercer, a bachelor's degree *summa cum laude*, with majors in Christianity and education, and a master's degree in education. She also holds an education specialist degree in education, administration and supervision from Georgia College and State University and a Ph.D. in educational leadership from Georgia State University.

Currently serving as President of Georgia Women of Achievement, Elkins has also served as a consultant with schools, chambers of commerce, businesses and financial institutions in the areas of leadership development and curriculum planning. In 2009, Georgia's then-governor Sonny Perdue appointed her to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, the organization that oversees all educator certification for the state, as well as the approval of all professional education programs in Georgia. Elkins served as chair of the Commission for the last four years of her six-year term. Her areas of academic research interest include cognition theory in leadership, transformational leadership, birth-to-five education, women in leadership, and community partnership development.

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