

Sarah Willie-LeBreton President, Smith College



Sarah Willie-LeBreton is the 12th president of Smith College. She earned a bachelor of arts degree from Haverford College in 1986, and an M.A. (1988) and Ph.D. (1995) from Northwestern University, all in sociology. After having taught at Colby College (1991–1995) and Bard College (1995–1997) in tenure-track appointments, she was tenured at Swarthmore, where she served as coordinator of the Black Studies Program and chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology for a total of 17 years. She was appointed as provost and dean of the faculty at Swarthmore in 2018 and served in that role until 2023.

An accomplished administrator, scholar, and sociologist who studies social inequality and race and ethnicity, Willie-LeBreton is known for her commitment to the liberal arts, strengthening community, and energizing the work of equity and inclusion. She is the author of several dozen articles, essays, reviews, and op-ed columns. Her first book, *Acting*

Black: College, Identity and the Performance of Race, examines how the experiences of Black college alumni of a predominantly white institution (PWI) were distinct from those who attended a comparative HBCU from the waning days of the Civil Rights Movement through the country's political turn to the right under the Reagan presidency. Her second book, *Transforming the Academy: Faculty Perspectives on Diversity and Pedagogy*, is a collection of essays to which she has contributed and which she edited. It focuses on the challenges faced by faculty who were previously underrepresented on campuses, including people of color, queer people, neurodivergent people, and people who immigrated to the United States. It explores their experiences as they become participants in dominant spaces within the American Academy.

Willie-LeBreton considers herself an applied sociologist, and she has worked with a broad range of groups and organizations to understand social dynamics and develop strategies to move toward organizational self-awareness, transformation, compassion, and inclusivity. She is a member of and has been active in the Eastern Sociological Society, Sociologists for Women in Society, the Association of Black Sociologists, and the American Sociological Association (ASA). For several years, she reviewed sociology and affiliated departments as a member of the ASA's Departmental Resources Group. Her board service has included the Executive Office and Budget of the ASA, Pendle Hill Quaker Center, Haverford College, Benchmark School, the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, and she sits on the advisory board of IIG (Integrated Impact Group) which offers consulting for the educational sector.

(Photo courtesy of Sarah Willie-LeBreton)