



Jaffus Hardrick

Vice President for HR & Vice Provost for Student Access & Success
Florida International University

Growing up in a small town in Alabama, I never saw highly successful people. They certainly were not in my family. Unfortunately, I did not have role models to emulate. I am the first in my family to attend and graduate from college. My folks were too poor to support me while in college. In fact, I sent money home to help my mother support my other eight siblings. During my college years, I worked 40 hours per week and took 18-21 credit hours each semester. Many a times I wanted to quit, but I realized that a quality education was a key factor to a brighter future.

I always had big dreams of being successful, but did not have mentors in my life to give me the right guidance. Like most college graduates, we work in several areas before finding the right job that aligns with our purpose and passion. Interestingly, in most of my jobs, I was the first black professional ever hired. It was during my roles as a lending officer at Educators Credit Union in Waco, Texas, that led to landing my first job in higher education. My career in higher education began at Baylor University as the Assistant Director of Human Resources. It was Mr. Claude Ervin, Director of Human Resources, who took me under his tutelage and helped me develop me into the leader I am today.

It is from such humble beginnings that I have been fortunate to be in key leadership roles today. I am grateful to Mr. Ervin for his love and personal investment in me. Because of my gratitude, I have never stopped paying it forward.