



DR. M.L. "CISSY" PETTY

Former students were once asked to describe Dr. Cissy Petty; abruptly one piped up and said, "She's a lightning bolt on two feet."

Petty has high energy, a drive to accomplish bold projects and a keen eye for details. She would describe herself as a change agent, comfortable with intuitively seeing the potential in people, places, and things. She is also described as a relentless advocate for learning. Learning opens up the possibilities to imagine and re-imagine what can happen at any given moment. Maya Angelou, one of her favorite authors, evokes this excellence in the following, "the horizon leans forward, offering you space to place new steps of change."

In August 2019, she was appointed to the George Washington University's leadership team as Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students. She provides leadership over areas including student conduct, student health and well-being, residential life and education, fraternity and sorority life, student organizations and leadership development, military and veteran student support, and on-campus student programming.

Prior to her arrival at GW, Petty served as Vice President for Student Affairs and Associate Provost at Loyola University New Orleans, arriving eight months after Katrina and the failure of the levees decimated New Orleans.

In previous roles, Petty had the privilege to serve St. Lawrence University as Vice President and Dean of Students for Co-Curricular Education and Programming; was selected for a post-doctoral fellowship as the Upsilon Nu Chi Distinguished Scholar in Counseling at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro; served as Dean for Student Development at Mississippi University for Women; and served as Director for Student Development at the University of North Carolina Asheville.

Recognized nationally as a thought leader in the field, Petty has taught courses on leadership development and counseling at the graduate and undergraduate levels and has presented extensively. She has held numerous leadership roles in professional organizations, including the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA). NASPA's Foundation awarded her the Pillar of the Profession award in 2014, their highest peer recognition for outstanding leadership in the profession.

She currently serves on the NASPA Foundation Board of Directors and on the editorial board of the Journal of Student Affairs and Research Practice. Her presentations are numerous on the national level regarding higher education administration and student development program implementation. She consults with a variety of non-profit leaders in education, business, and hospital administration.

Petty's undergraduate and graduate degrees are from Florida State University. She was also selected for a prestigious post-doctoral fellowship as the Distinguished Scholar in Counseling at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro; selected for Harvard University's Senior Institutional Management Program; completed her professional leadership coaching certification from Georgetown University; and completed a two-year certificate course in Spiritual Studies from St. Thomas University.