

Dr. Michelle D. Thomas, '05 Ph.D. Education
Board Chair Elect and Chair – Committee on Governance



Dr. Michelle D. Thomas is President of the James Franklin Group (JFG), LLC. JFG provides professional services focusing on coaching, mentoring and leadership. Dr. Thomas has a wealth of experience in business, education, and leadership. Dr. Thomas is a strong and inspirational leader who listens closely and asks probing questions to deeply understand others' perspectives. Dr. Thomas has a talent for building and supporting lifelong learning.

The focus of her work is on professionals who are early in their careers and interested in developing as leaders in their current settings or beyond. Professionals investigate an idea, passion, interest and design a plan of action – all around leadership. Highly motivated young professionals learn and grow from the individual attention provided.

Dr. Thomas has served in many roles in higher education including Faculty Member teaching undergraduates in the department of Teaching and Learning at **Capital University, Columbus, Ohio**; the Director of a Writing Institute at the **University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida**; Assistant Professor and Director of Programs for Advanced Studies in Education at **Ursuline College in Pepper Pike, Ohio**; and Adjunct Instructor at **Kent State University** where she redesigned and taught an undergraduate level course entitled Inquiry into Professional Practice.

Dr. Thomas' professional experiences in K-12 education include Elementary Principal of **Our Lady of the Elms in Akron, Ohio**; Director of Instruction and Professional Development, Leadership Team Member, Technology & Learning Center Coordinator for **Canfield Local Schools in Canfield, Ohio**; and Teacher of Reading and Language Arts Grade Seven at the **Heritage Middle School in Westerville, Ohio**.

Dr. Thomas is involved in several civic organizations in the Columbus area.

- **Buckeye Leadership Fellows, Columbus, Ohio, 2019-present**

Board Member

- To support, in partnership with alumni and community leaders, unique transformative experiences for undergraduate students so they can achieve a competitive advantage in their post-graduate pursuits and remain deeply connected to the university.
- To support program development and ensure programs align with the program values: relationship, curiosity, engagement, leadership, diversity, intentionality, and failure.

- **Ruling Our eXperiences (ROX)**, Columbus, Ohio, 2017-present
Former Member, Development Committee – Responsible for raising funds to support the goals of the program. Currently serve on Host Committees.
 - To equip girls with the knowledge and skills necessary to live healthy, independent, productive, and violence-free lives.
 - To create generations of confident girls who can control their own relationships, experiences, and decisions.
 - To provide innovative and evidence-based programming focused on the health, safety, education, and empowerment of girls.

- **WELD (Women for Economic and Leadership Development)**, Columbus, Ohio, 2015-present
Member and Co-Chair of the Impact Committee
 - To support brand awareness – economic impact, supporting others.
 - Represent WELD in the community – share the WELD story as well as my story.
 - To support the impact of women’s economic development.

- **The Women’s Fund of Central Ohio** Kent, Ohio, 2015-present – The mission of the Women’s Fund is to transform the lives of women and girls by mobilizing the collective power and passion of all women working together. *Grant Reader*
 - As a grant reader, I worked with a group of other readers to determine which applications support programs that promise real social change in our community– enhancing Economic Self-Sufficiency for women, Leadership for Women, and Life skills for Girls. Applications that support said programs were granted funding dollars.

Dr. Thomas received a Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction from **Kent State University**, a Master of Arts in Theory and Practice from **The Ohio State University**, and a Bachelor of Arts (Summa cum Laude) in Elementary Education with specialization in Reading and Language Arts from **Capital University**.

Dr. Thomas joined the Foundation Board on July 1, 2015.

Spouse: James D. Thomas, Esq.