

Sonya T. Smith. Ph.D.  
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Dr. Sonya T. Smith joined the Howard University faculty in 1995 and is the first tenured female faculty member in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Dr. Smith obtained her Ph.D. in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering from The University of Virginia (UVA) in 1995 and was also the first African-American woman to do so. In 2010 she became the first woman promoted to the highest academic rank of Professor (full) in this department and the following year 2011 became the first woman appointed as Mechanical Engineering Department Chair at Howard University.

Dr. Smith has established an interdisciplinary theoretical and computational research laboratory entitled the Applied Fluids-Thermal Research Laboratory (@FTERLab). She has received support for her research from NSF, NIH, NASA, DOD and industry. In 2010 she was named an ORISE Fellow at the National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders (NIDCD). Her memberships in professional societies include the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA), the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), the Association for Research in Otolaryngology (ARO), the American Society of Engineering Education (ASEE), the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), and the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE).

Dr. Smith is Principal Investigator for the Howard University ADVANCE-IT (HU ADVANCE-IT) award. HU ADVANCE-IT is committed to solving the institutional and national problem of Advancement and Leadership of Women in STEM. This award, funded by the National Science Foundation will enable Howard University to develop an innovative and strategic model for institutional transformation that increases the number of female leaders in the STEM disciplines.

Her work for women's leadership in STEM is both a national and international initiative. Dr. Smith works with the South Africa Department of Science and Technology (DST) on several initiatives that include the Gender Summit 5 held in April 2015. She also organized the DST/HU ADVANCE-IT Women in STEM Conference held in Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa in October 2015. A second conference will be held in 2017.

Dr. Smith's personal goal is to be a mentor and resource to all students and young faculty/professionals, but especially to those underrepresented in STEM.