

David W. Robinson-Morris, Ph.D.
Full Biography

David W. Robinson-Morris, Ph.D. is an internationally recognized author, scholar, public intellectual, speaker, and institutional leader whose work sits at the intersection of imagination, justice, and the flourishing of the human spirit.

Dr. Robinson-Morris is the Founder and Chief Reimaginelutionary of The REImaginelution, a strategic consulting and thought leadership enterprise that partners with leaders across higher education, philanthropy, healthcare, and the nonprofit sector to design strategies that move communities toward justice and collective flourishing. David has come to understand that more than knowledge, power, or money is the immense force of the imagination. He is committed to systemic transformation through (re)catalyzing the power of imagination, advancing equity, and cultivating what he describes as “muscular prophetic hope” in institutions and communities alike.

David, in March 2023, founded The Center for the Human Spirit and Radical Reimagining. The Center for the Human Spirit and Radical Reimagining serves as a dream-think tank and convener for individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, and systems across sectors interested in deepening their understanding of the issues impacting them and people of the global majority who are disparately suffering from the impact of inequitable policy and oppressive practices. More importantly, the Center is an agent of transformation—combining education, equity and justice-centered critical social analysis, the tenets of healing justice, and contemplative practice to activate the collective social imagination to disrupt and reweave institutions, systems, and communities for collective liberation and healing.

His career reflects a distinctive blend of scholarship, executive leadership, and visionary institution-building. At Xavier University of Louisiana, he founded the Center for Equity, Justice, and the Human Spirit, an interdisciplinary an interdisciplinary hub designed as both intellectual anchor and community catalyst that became a national model for integrating research, community engagement, and public scholarship. Under his leadership, the Center advanced research, public scholarship, and community engagement focused on PK–16 educational equity, criminal justice reform, and environmental justice. It rapidly evolved into a nationally recognized model, leveraging modest institutional resources into nearly \$2 million in funding while convening scholars, practitioners, and community members in pursuit of systemic change. His efforts created dynamic programs like the Gilead Scholars for Equity and Justice, the XULA Investigative Stories Project; and through the generosity of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The Black Male Teacher Pipeline Program aimed at increasing the number of Black male teachers in public education.

The Center also became a vital public resource during the COVID-19 pandemic, hosting large-scale forums that connected communities with leading experts and critical information, embodying Dr. Robinson-Morris’s commitment to translating scholarship into tangible public good.

Before and alongside this work, Dr. Robinson-Morris served Xavier University as Assistant Vice President of Development, where he played a key role in securing transformational philanthropic investments—including the institution’s then-largest individual gift—and as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Education and Counseling, shaping future leaders through doctoral education in leadership and research.

In 2024, Dr. Robinson-Morris was appointed the inaugural Executive Director of the Institute for Black Intellectual and Cultural Life at Dartmouth College. In this role, he is leading the development of a pioneering interdisciplinary institute dedicated to advancing the study and global impact of Black diasporic intellectual and cultural life. The Institute serves as a dynamic site of scholarly collaboration, artistic expression, and community engagement, bringing together faculty, students, artists, and public intellectuals to generate new knowledge and imagine liberated futures.

Earlier in his career, Dr. Robinson-Morris held senior leadership roles in healthcare and nonprofit organizations. At Ochsner Health, he led regional diversity and inclusion strategy, advancing initiatives focused on health equity, workforce development, and organizational culture. As the inaugural Regional Director of Diversity and Inclusion for the Bayou Region in the state of Louisiana, Dr. Robinson-Morris worked to develop a comprehensive and strategic diversity and inclusion framework that maps onto the System’s overarching efforts to improve health equity and health outcomes, increase patient satisfaction and employee engagement, and create an inclusive environment to aid in employee retention and belonging. In addition to leading and developing the Bayou regional diversity and inclusion strategy, he co-facilitated the System’s Quality and Nursing Diversity and Inclusion Work Groups, served on the System’s Health Equity Council and Steering Committee for the D&I High Potential Mentorship Program.

Additionally, he represented the System as member of the Vizient Vulnerable Patient Population Advisory Committee and the Region 3 Healthy Communities Coalition of the Louisiana Public Health Institute. David was also engaged in co-crafting the diversity and inclusion education curricular strategy and was a liaison to the Ochsner Xavier Institute for Health Equity and Research, and Ochsner’s Community and Public Affairs COVID vaccine outreach efforts.

As Executive Director at the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (CMind), he contributed to national efforts to integrate contemplative practices into education and civic life, supporting a more humane and reflective approach to leadership and learning. After nearly 30 years of service to society, the higher education sector and the contemplative studies movement, he made the difficult recommendation to the Board of Directors to sunset the organization due to longstanding financial instability yet successful fulfillment of its founding mission. CMind, the global community of contemplative practitioners and scholars whose goal is the ongoing development of racial, social, economic, and environmental justice and the advancement of human flourishing within society and higher education—ceased its operations on October 1, 2022.

At Loyola University New Orleans, he served as Associate Director of Alumni Relations and led efforts to increase alumni and volunteer engagement across the country, while managing alumni

association scholarships and developing alumni engagement events and initiatives. David began his career as Senior Publicist to the Mayor of the city of New Orleans following the city's devastation from Hurricane Katrina. He was responsible for spearheading communications efforts for the core departments critical to the city's recovery and rebuilding, and engaging local, national and international press.

Ever the educator, in 2021, Dr. Robinson-Morris concurrently served as an adjunct professor of Public Administration in the School of Professional Advancement at Tulane University, where he developed and taught *Reimagining and Leading Educational Systems for the Future*; and he continues to serve as an adjunct professor at the University of New Orleans teaching theory and research methodology courses to doctoral students in the education and counseling programs. Previously, he instructed higher education administration master's students at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

Dr. Robinson-Morris' career as an executive leader and upper-level administrator is grounded in his work as a social justice and human rights advocate and academic, whose engagements across several platforms including higher education institutions, government, human rights organizations, corporations, non-profit, religious, and philanthropic organizations seek to impact policy, change practice, and uplift the human spirit wherever it is diminished.

Influenced by his understanding of Ubuntu—a South African philosophical notion of communalism and shared humanity—Dr. Robinson-Morris' work promotes deep dialogical engagement as an approach to achieving racial, gender, and health equity when communities come to understand that our humanity is shared and is a quality we owe another.

He believes true equity and systemic transformation, in our communities and in our institutions, can only be realized when we come to understand difference as generative and the collective mandates systems to align policy and practice toward inclusion, which leads to a sense of belonging and mattering for every individual. His understanding of Ubuntu coupled with that of Eastern (Buddhist) philosophy informs his ongoing understanding of our shared, collective humanity.

As a scholar, David's primary research centers on a single question: What does it mean to be a human being? This question requires expansion of our (public and collective) imaginations and continuously informs his approaches to management, organizational leadership, teaching, and community involvement.

Dr. Robinson-Morris' scholarly activity includes published work in *Lion's Roar* magazine, peer reviewed articles in premier educational journals, book chapters on racial equity in higher education amid the pandemic, curriculum theory and higher education curriculum development and (de/) reform, and presentations at academic conferences. He is the author of a research monograph titled, *Ubuntu and Buddhism in Higher Education: An Ontological (Re)Thinking* published by Routledge and released in 2019. In 2016, his dissertation—now

monograph—was awarded 1st place in the 2016 American Association of Blacks in Higher Education (AABHE) Dissertation Award competition.

Dr. Robinson-Morris is co-editor of an edited volume titled, *Contemplative Practices and Acts of Resistance in Higher Education: Narratives Toward Wholeness* (Routledge, 2025). He consults across the globe and lectures frequently in his free time while continuing to serve on dissertation committees and advise students at Louisiana State University, Xavier University of Louisiana, and the University of New Orleans.

In keeping with his philosophy that we are all “multiplicities of one,” while on the Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans Board of Directors, Dr. Robinson-Morris was invited to serve as guest curator of the 2021-22 season opening annual Open Call exhibition titled, *Behind Every Beautiful Thing: Encountering Bodies, Wrestling the Human Condition*. The exhibition emerged following an unprecedented pandemic year, the heightened visibility of health inequity throughout the nation has elevated concerns about mental and physical well-being, the industrialization of medical practices, disease, illness, and (dis)/ability. It featured multimedia artworks from 36 Gulf South artists and offered a deeply personal portrayal of artists’ experiences with health and illness, and the reverberating impact on the life, body, and psyche of the individual and their community.

Dr. Robinson-Morris is an active member in several organizations including: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education (AABHE), the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the Association of Fundraising Professionals, (AFP), the African American Development Officers Network, the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), and the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education, to name a few.

Currently, David serves on the following boards of directors: New Orleans African American Museum, Center for Restorative Approaches, Teach for America—Greater New Orleans, Invest Louisiana (nee Louisiana Budget Project), The Historic New Orleans Collection Acquisition Committee, and The Plessy & Ferguson Initiative.

Dr. Robinson-Morris has served as a member of the historic city of New Orleans Street Renaming Commission’s Outreach and Research subcommittees, chair of the St. Charles Avenue Center for Faith + Action Board of Directors, Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy (EPIP) Louisiana Steering Committee, the Loyola University New Orleans Historic Naming Committee, the Overcoming Racism Committee for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, and was an appointed member of Governor John Bel Edwards’ Louisiana Climate Initiatives Task Force Equity Advisory Group. He is a founding member of the Charles Deslondes Branch of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. In 2021, David was appointed to the New Orleans Steering Committee of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), where he served as the Louisiana Political Action Committee.

David is a former Commissioner of the city of New Orleans Human Relations Commission where he was appointed co-chair of the Commission's Truth and Reconciliation subcommittee, a former member of the Academic Advisory Committee of E. Pluribus Unum Fund and served as the Higher Education Cluster Co-Leader for the Campaign for Equity New Orleans (CENO). He is the former vice president of the College Beyond Board of Directors, former vice chair of the Leona Tate Foundation for Change, past board chair for Emerging Philanthropists of New Orleans (EPNO), former member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) New Orleans Board of Directors, ADL South Central Region Board of Directors, the board of directors of the Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans, the One Book One New Orleans Board of Directors, the Historic New Orleans Collection's DEI Strategic Planning Advisory Council, Son of a Saint Foundation Advisory Board, Lycée Français de la Nouvelle-Orléans Board of Directors, the Loyola University New Orleans Alumni Association Board of Directors, and is a founding board member of Propeller (née Social Entrepreneurs of New Orleans).

In July 2021, David's commitment to education, equity, justice, and the flourishing of the human spirit within the New Orleans community was recognized by the New Orleans Young Leadership Council (YLC) as a 2021 YLC Role Model and by *Gambit Weekly* as a '40 Under 40' Class of 2021 honoree.

Dr. Robinson-Morris obtained his Bachelor of Arts in Communications – Public Relations from Loyola University New Orleans, Master of Public Administration (MPA) with concentrations in Non-Profit Leadership and Public Policy from the University of New Orleans, a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Research with a dual concentration in Higher Education Administration and Curriculum Theory and an Educational Specialist Certificate with a focus on applied research, measurement, and evaluation both from Louisiana State University.

He is a proud native of Galveston, Texas.