



**Antonio D. Tillis, Ph.D.**

Dr. Antonio D. Tillis has served as chancellor of Rutgers University in Camden since July 2021. Chancellor Tillis is an internationally known scholar who has presented his work at universities and academic conferences around the world. A visionary leader, Chancellor Tillis has decades of higher-education experience that guide his commitment to elevating research output, student success, and civic engagement across Rutgers University in Camden.

In Tillis' first year, Rutgers–Camden achieved status as a Minority Serving Institution. The Department of Education designation—given to institutions where 50 percent of undergraduates are minority students—ensures increased access to higher education for low-income and minority students. Since this many additional recognitions continue to occur. Tillis launched the Chancellor's Strategic Initiatives: "15 in 5" which represents a commitment to 15 transformative initiatives over the next five years. These initiatives are designed to propel our institution forward across various domains from academic excellence and research innovation to fostering an inclusive campus environment and community engagement. All of the 15 strategic initiatives will shape the future of Rutgers–Camden for the next generation and beyond. In 2023 Rutgers–Camden was recognized as an Asian American (AA) and Native American Pacific Islander (NAPI)-Serving Institution (AANAPISI), with about 12.9 percent of its students identifying as AA or NAPI.

In addition to the growth in research activity as a strongly performing R2 institution, Tillis launched a new vision for the future of Rutgers-Camden in 2023. A new Strategic Plan for 2023 through 2028, titled "A Century and Beyond of Excellence, Commitment, and Elevation." The plan was developed through an inclusive campus-wide process with input from students, faculty, staff, board members, and key community stakeholders. The plan establishes the foundation for a strong future of academic and experiential learning.

Under Tillis' leadership, Rutgers-Camden rose in the U.S. News and World Best Colleges ranking in 2023 to #49 in top public schools and #98 in national universities. The university named in 2016 as New Jersey's first Purple Heart University came in at #65 on the Best Colleges for Veterans list, up almost 20 places from last rankings.

Before joining Rutgers University–Camden, Tillis served as interim president of the University of Houston–Downtown, a comprehensive urban institution offering more than 50 degree-granting programs and serving more than 15,000 students. In this capacity, he worked collaboratively to promote student and faculty development, engage the community, and advance the strategic vision for the second-largest campus in the University of Houston system. Also, at the University of Houston, he served as dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, the largest of the 15 academic and professional colleges at the university. Under his leadership, the reputation and resources of that school grew significantly.

Tillis, who is fluent in Spanish and Portuguese, is a noted scholar in the field of Afro-Hispanic studies. He was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to Brazil in 2009, and he has presented his scholarship at lectures and conferences across the United States and around the world. He is the coeditor of several books, including *The Trayvon Martin in 'US': An American Tragedy* (Peter Lang, 2015), *The Afro-Hispanic Reader and Anthology* (Randal Publishing, 2018), and *Critical Perspectives on Afro-Latin American Literature* (Routledge, 2012). He has served as editor of the journal *Publication of the Afro-Latin/American Research Association*, as coeditor of the *Afro-Hispanic Review*, and as associate editor of the *International Journal of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies*.

Prior to the University of Houston, Tillis served as dean of the School of Languages, Culture, and World Affairs at the College of Charleston in South Carolina, where he instituted numerous initiatives, including the Wells Fargo International Scholarship for Study Abroad for low-income, in-state students; the Dean's Collaborative Interdisciplinary Summer Research Award for International Engagement; and the Summer International Internships for students in India, Brazil, and Ghana.

Previously, Tillis chaired the Department of African and African American Studies at Dartmouth College and served as the inaugural director of the Latin American and Latino Studies Program at Purdue University, where he received the 2007 Faculty Scholar Award.

In 2018, Tillis was selected as one of 30 national participants for the Joint Civilian Orientation Conference hosted by the U.S. Secretary of Defense. He also has served on numerous boards, including Houston Habitat for Humanity, the Houston Arts Alliance, the International African American Museum in Charleston, and the Hemispheric Institute for Performance Studies. He is a founding board member of the International Institute of Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Leadership. Tillis serves on several boards as others recognize his unique perspective and experiential value some of these include: the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU), African American Museum in Philadelphia (AAMP), the Coriell Institute for Medical Research Board, the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce CEO's Circle, and the Camden Community Partnership (CCP) to name but a few.

A first-generation college student, Tillis holds a bachelor's degree in Spanish from Vanderbilt University and a master's degree in Spanish literature from Howard University. He earned his Ph.D. in Latin American literature (with an Afro-Hispanic emphasis) from the University of Missouri at Columbia.

He enjoys performing as a lyric baritone and collecting contemporary art from West Africa, Cuba, Brazil, and the United States.