



**Antoinette Smith**  
Associate Professor  
School of Accounting  
College of Business

# GOING FOR IT

As a professor, you bring to the table something other than your ability to do research and to teach. You bring **a personal aspect**. Even as a little girl starting out in low-income housing, I had the biggest ability to dream and always believed that, despite obstacles, staying positive would allow me to **achieve** more. As a **nontraditional student** with two small children and a job as a secretary, I completed my undergraduate degree at night. While working toward a master's degree, I heard about an organization that **encourages minorities** to pursue a Ph.D. in business. I attended a conference on the subject, called the Ph.D. Project, and soon after applied and was accepted to several schools. Getting a Ph.D. allowed me to fully understand that the world is **an ocean of knowledge** into which I should continuously cast my fishing line to discover more. Today I facilitate seminars for FIU's College of Business under a new program for undergraduates called the **Ph.D. Pipeline**. In any organization you want diversity, and currently minorities are severely underrepresented on the faculty of business schools across the country. Our primary message is that getting a Ph.D. is **challenging but also rewarding**. I believe that if you are self-disciplined and self-motivated and can persevere, you have the needed foundation. Everything else can be learned. I don't go into class talking about my background or race. I teach the same material as everyone else, but I think **seeing me gives all of my students another image** of what a professor can look like and perhaps a vision of what they might achieve.