

## **Bio**

Kala Hudson is a Financial Planning Counselor at Converse University. After completing her undergraduate degree at North Greenville University in 2012, she moved to Buffalo, NY and began working in the Qualification Center and Financial Aid Offices at Bryant & Stratton College, where she fell in love with financial aid and working with students. After experiencing a few blizzards, she decided to migrate south, so she moved back to SC and worked as a Financial Aid Counselor at USC Upstate from 2016 to 2021, completing her MLIS degree at the University of South Carolina at the same time. In her current role as a Financial Planning Counselor, she monitors the work-study program and SC Tuition Grants, as well as federal, state, and institutional aid. Kala is currently enrolled in the Ed.D. in Professional Leadership program at Converse University, class of 2024.

Kala lives in Spartanburg with her two extra-large orange cats, Oscar and Halpert. She enjoys traveling, trying new restaurants in the area, and relaxing outdoors in a hammock or tubing on the river.

## **Have you seen changes in higher education as it relates to diversity? What gaps still remain?**

I believe that 2020 brought attention (yet again) to the issues that our country has surrounding diversity as a whole, racial diversity specifically. It's incredibly important for institutions to prioritize diversity in every aspect of life at the institution in order to provide an inclusive, well-rounded experience for its students, faculty and staff. While I have seen increased attention paid to diversity and inclusion on campuses in the Upstate of South Carolina where I'm located, I believe that there is much room to expand diversity, equity, and inclusion on campuses. Choosing instructors from different backgrounds, races, genders, abilities, etc., reviewing and updating curriculum to include broader representation of minority groups, and on-campus clubs and organizations could improve.

## **Who is your hero and why?**

My mom has always been my hero. She was a single mom until I was 12 years old and she worked so hard to make sure that my sister and I had everything we needed. Even though money was tight, she still found a way to give us opportunities that every other child had through sports, scouts, and beyond. My mother taught me that you have to work hard to make ends meet, and no matter your circumstances, you can succeed. She never gave up and I now know that I don't ever have to either. My mother gave of herself to make sure that I had the opportunity for a better life than she had. I'm so honored to continue her legacy, and the legacy of all the strong women in my family who came before her, by working hard to succeed.

## **What are some of your professional or personal life goals?**

I have been working as a financial aid counselor since 2014 and I love it! I've learned what it takes to process financial aid funds for students on a federal, state, and institutional level, at different kinds of institutions, including a private for-profit, private non-profit, and public institutions. I'm hoping to take what I've learned over the last 7 ½ years and transition into a leadership position within the financial aid

world, hopefully as an Assistant Director, then Director, and beyond. I have begun my doctorate of education in professional leadership this Fall and look forward to completing my dissertation on an aspect of leadership within higher education. Personal goals I have are mostly based in traveling. There are a million places I'd like to visit in the world, but I must visit Tokyo and the Grand Canyon at some point in my life.