

Tonya C. Thomas
Associate Program Officer
Long Island Community Foundation



Tonya is our team's newest member. As an associate program officer, she supports the Foundation's competitive grantmaking as well as our special initiatives. In her role, she is building on LICF's knowledge of our community's strengths, challenges, resources and needs.

Tonya Thomas, the former Director of Partnership Development and Programming, at SUNY Old Westbury's First-Year Community Engagement Program, worked in the Entertainment industry for over 13 years. Her first love being television, she spent the first few years of her career working for television shows like Entertainment Tonight in NY and Nighttalk With Jane Whitney at the NBC Affiliate in

Boston. Tonya also worked as a researcher and producer for various talk show hosts – Tom Bergeron, Rolonda Watts and Montel Williams.

While working in the film-programming department at HBO, Tonya was bitten by the film bug. It was at this juncture where she decided to move from New York to Los Angeles to pursue a career in the film business. It was not very long before she landed a position in the Film Marketing Department at Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, where she, as the Marketing Research Manager, worked on the film marketing research for all studio films released domestically. In 2006, Tonya, formed JoLa Films, Inc., a film marketing consulting firm, which assists independent filmmaker clients develop grass-roots marketing campaigns and effective distribution strategies. JoLa Films is currently seeking financing for a documentary about black fatherhood.

Tonya helped develop, launch and market the pilot of the First-Year Community Engagement Program, a uniquely collaborative, course-embedded, fully-mandated, community-based learning program. During her tenure, at SUNY Old Westbury, she developed community partnerships with over 50 non-profit organizations and government agencies on Long Island and the Metropolitan area, facilitated work/internship-readiness workshops and social justice awareness programs for the entire first-year class. It was also during Tonya's tenure that SUNY Old Westbury was named to the President's Community Service Honor Roll several years in a row.

Tonya has not only spent many years as an active member of the Nassau County Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., she is also a member of the Long Island Chapter of the Links, Inc., and serves on the Executive Board of the Rockville Centre Education Foundation.

Tonya has earned a Bachelor's of Science in Journalism from Boston University's College of Communications, completed a fellowship at UCLA's Anderson School of Business and is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Social Work at Fordham University.

Tonya, a native Long Islander, lives in Rockville Centre with her husband and two daughters.