A. Hope Williams is president of North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU), the state office of the 36 private, nonprofit colleges and universities in North Carolina. She works closely with the State of North Carolina and the federal government, and with the North Carolina public K-12 and higher education sectors to address education and related public policy and funding issues. In addition, she oversees fundraising for scholarships and grants and the development of collaborative programs for the benefit of NCICU campuses. She joined NCICU in 1986 and has served as president since 1992.

Dr. Williams received her undergraduate degree from Duke University, an MPA from North Carolina State University and a Ph.D. in Education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is a member of the Governor’s Education Cabinet, received the 2023 Trailblazer Award from the NC ACE Womens Network and was named a 2017 CEO of the Year by the Triangle Business Journal. She is immediate past chair of the boards of MCNC, the North Carolina Aquarium Society and the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center and chairs the board of Dupont Circle Investments. She also serves on the boards of the National Student Clearinghouse, College Foundation, Inc., the National Advisory Board of the Institute for Emerging Issues, the NCWorks Commission, the myFutureNC Commission, Communities in Schools of North Carolina, the Coalition for College Cost Savings, and the North Carolina Governors School Foundation.