

Rachael DeLeon ([00:02](#)):

Welcome to Real Money Real Experts, a podcast where leading financial counseling and coaching experts share their stories, their challenges, and their advice for helping people manage money in the real world. I'm your host, Rachel De Leon, Executive Director of the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education for A-F-C-P-E.

Dr. Mary Bell Carlson ([00:24](#)):

And I'm your co-host, Dr. Mary Bell Carlson, an accredited financial counselor, or AFC, and the President of Financial Behavior Keynote Group. Every episode we're taking a deep dive in the topics that personal finance professionals care about, helping clients, building community, and your professional growth.

Rachael DeLeon ([00:44](#)):

The opinions of our podcast guests are their own, which means that their stories, views, or lived experiences may differ from yours or mine. However, the one thing you will always find on this show is a common thread. Our guests are passionate about helping people with their money to improve their lives, and they believe in upholding high standards for the clients and the communities that they serve. We encourage you to tune in to Real Money, Real Experts with open curiosity. Why? Because it's oftentimes in the conversations where viewpoints or stories differ from our own that we learn the most. Dr. Tiffany Murray is the managing director for the Society for Financial Education and Professional Development, or S-F-E-P-D. In this role, she assists with developing and executing SFDs business strategies, financial literacy program implementation, and overseeing administrative and operational processes. Tiffany joined S-F-E-P-D after working as the program director of Red to Black Peer Financial Coaching at Texas Tech University and has years of experience as an A-F-C-P-E accredited financial counselor. Welcome, Tiffany.

Tiffany Murray ([01:58](#)):

Thank you for having me,

Dr. Mary Bell Carlson ([01:59](#)):

Tiffany, It's so good to talk to you again. I remember last time we had you on, you were working with Red to Black at Texas Tech. Yes. And now you're with SFE PD with Ted Daniels here in Virginia. So catch us up.

Tiffany Murray ([02:12](#)):

Absolutely. Well, it's been a little while since we've gotten a chance to chat, but I've been so excited to get an opportunity to use the experience that I gained from Red to Black with my current role. And so just to share about, you know, Mr. Daniels with N-S-F-E-P-D, this is an organization that he formed in 1998 as a nonprofit to deliver financial education presentations to all types of individuals, but especially to underserved communities, and especially, you know, historically black colleges and universities. And so I was fortunate as I was nearing my graduation date, one of the, I, I participated in a research competition and, and won. And then my, my college put it on LinkedIn, and they also tag Red to Black. And so, interestingly enough, with the students that we work, work with, I always share it with them about, you know, professional development and making sure you're keeping your, you know, your resume up to date and LinkedIn up to date. So he happened to see that, and he reached out to me and asked if I'd be interested in just talking to him about, you know, my work with Red to Black and how he had formed a student ambassador program in 2017. And so, you know, I, we got a chance to chat and we talked about different ideas, and I threw, you know, so many different things that I had learned, uh, from my

experience at TTU at him. And he was like, oh, this, this would be great. Would you be willing to join us? And so I was ecstatic about the opportunity, like I mentioned, to really take everything and use it at S-F-E-P-D. And so I always share that with my job transition. I, I transitioned out of investment management into personal financial planning. I had gotten to a point where I was, it was just gotten stagnant in my career, and I just prayed about, you know, what should I do? And, you know, God just placed it in my spirit, financial planning. And I was like, that makes no sense. So I sat on that for a little while and then finally decided to take action. And so I went to UCLA, I got my graduate certificate in personal financial planning at the UCLA extension, then moved on to tech. And when I moved on to tech, because I was, you know, I had quit my job, basically, I just saw tech as an opportunity to really go full, full focus and treat it like a job. And so I was encouraged to do every single thing that I could do. Um, and so through that experience, like, like I mentioned, I was fortunate to meet Dr. Dotie Dervin, who was the founder of Red To Black, and she assisted with my, you know, joining Red to Black as a program director and then got a chance to do a financial literacy camp with Dr. Chris Browning. Got the opportunity to teach some classes just full on experience. And so one of the things that I shared with him is like, I'm really looking to take this on and like really understand like, what's the purpose of this camp and why do you do this? And, you know, how can we help students in the future? And so was definitely able to, you know, do that camp in person. And then of course we went through COVID and then had to do the camp virtually. And so through that experience, I was like, oh, I think this is something that we can add to S-F-E-P-D. And so over the past few years, we've actually just finished our S-F-E-P-D Academy, which is a financial literacy camp that we host for students all across the, the country. And so it's a virtual camp. And so we wanted to, you know, we want the students to have fun, right? But we also, you know, want them to get educated. And so we do very similar, you know, personal financial management skills and professional development. And so, again, just being, uh, afforded the opportunity at Texas Tech to learn from, you know, some of the greats there to continue in this work and to continue to do great things at S-F-E-P-D. So, again, excited about the opportunity to join with Mr. Daniels, who had a vision for teaching financial education to HBCU students. And, you know, we go to Faith-based institutions, workplace and businesses, and also in the community. And so just thrilled that our vision aligned with providing financial education. And so I've been here for almost three years and just. Oh, wow. Again, just excited about the opportunity to, to join with him and his vision and, you know, he's kind of like a giant in the, in the financial literacy space. And so it's just been excited, exciting to be able to work with him.

Rachael DeLeon ([06:46](#)):

I love the work that's being done at S-F-E-P-D, and we're really proud to partner with you all as an educational partner for your student ambassadors. But tell our listeners a little bit more about that work. What is a student ambassador? What some of that programming look like that you're working on?

Tiffany Murray ([07:01](#)):

So I will kind of put it in the realm of, of Red to Black, right? So these are students who are, who are interested in not only learning about financial education and, and learning about how to become financially literate, but also wanting to teach their peers. And so what we do is we provide them with financial education so that they can do that. And so in order for them to be financial, financially educated, when I first came in, I was like, oh, we wanna make sure we, you know, they have a great foundation. And so, again, thankful for our partnership and that our students were able to take the Money Management Essentials badge to make sure that they were, that they had the financial education to, you know, provide that, to learn and provide that knowledge to their peers. And so we are currently on approximately 40 HBCU campuses, so to kind of think about it as a, a red to black on 40 different campuses. So that's kind of the realm of what we do. And again, you know, we, we not only have them, you know, doing the financial education, but we also encourage them to, you know, help develop. We try to help them develop their, their professionalism and, you know, help 'em with their professional development as well. And so just an opportunity to work with students on their respective campuses to do

financial literacy on, on their campus throughout the year. And so, again, that was one of Mr. Daniel's vision. You know, he had the opportunity to have financial educators on, you know, the different campuses maybe once a year or maybe once or twice a, a year. But, you know, in his thinking about the student ambassador program, it was, how can we get financial literacy on this campus year round? And so our student ambassadors have been very successful thus far, and we hope to, you know, increase that number of students, but just excited about the opportunity for them to get the knowledge and then also to teach their peers. And we've also added a portion where we also encourage them to teach their family and their friends. And so that's a part of their, you know, assignment over the course of a semester. So again, just them being able to work and, and do what they, you know, end up learning that they actually enjoy learning about money, right? But then also being able to teach their peers and their, their family and their friends. Tiffany,

Rachael DeLeon ([09:27](#)):

Do a lot of the participants in the student Ambassador program, do they end up going on to work in personal finance, or are they students that work in all different areas?

Tiffany Murray ([09:36](#)):

So we, a lot of the programs that we work through are through the school of business, but we also have several institutions that we work with that we've got nursing majors, we've got, you know, art majors, um, you know, music majors. So we get a variety of students. And so that's why, you know, especially that that need for that financial education first before they go out there presenting is, is needed. But yes, we do have students who go on to, you know, take on roles in the financial services industry, but we, you know, we also have, you know, again, just a varied amount of students who, you know, go on to do different things. And, and you know, I will say that one of the works that we've been, you know, trying to encourage with the institutions that we work with is to get more of our students in the financial services industry. You know, we want to ensure that they see that pathway and see that that is an opportunity, but it's just, you know, kind of unfortunate that they don't get exposed to that at their particular institution. And so we, we are trying, you know, the best that we can to introduce them to, to these opportunities and to hopefully get them positions in the field. Tiffany,

Dr. Mary Bell Carlson ([10:44](#)):

I'm gonna back up just a little bit because you and I know Red to Black pretty well. There's a lot of our listeners that maybe don't know it, so we will definitely link that old episode in the show notes. But for those of you that don't know what Red To Black is, it is where students at Texas Tech or other universities, there's several other models, go out and teach educational sessions to various classes on campus. They also do one-on-ones. And so that's my follow-up question with you, Tiffany, is do you do the educational and the one-on-one or kind of explain those services a bit more?

Tiffany Murray ([11:17](#)):

Absolutely. And thank you for bringing that up, but absolutely You, and again, just an opportunity for, for me to take all of my tech experience into my current role. So absolutely what we've done is for students who finished the first semester, of course they've gotten the financial presentation banks and they've started on their presentation. So they, you know, have a bit of knowledge about the, about financial education. If they are interested, we then offer them the opportunity to become a financial coach. And so we do virtual financial coaching across all of our institutions. And so it's basically an inter campus financial coaching program. So for example, I could have A-F-A-M-U student who's a financial coach who, you know, has a, a SES a session with a Texas Southern University student. So, so it's very exciting to see those students who are interested in the financial coaching, but absolutely have been, you know, able to, you know, get them trained and ensure that they have all of the skills and all of the tools that they

need in order to, you know, successfully do those financial coaching sessions. And what I'll say is, you know, a difference between red to black and, you know, what we're doing now is, you know, with Red to Black, the students we're primarily financial planning students, right? So they come in with, you know, this knowledge already and they're just working to expand and build on the knowledge that they have. But, you know, with this instance of, you know, working with S-F-E-P-D, it's, you know, also ensuring, like I mentioned, you know, they come in from different backgrounds coming from different majors. So ensuring that they have the education, the financial education that's needed before they go out there and, and start sharing that information. Yeah,

Dr. Mary Bell Carlson ([12:56](#)):

That was actually gonna be my follow up question because you're doing so much amazing work. I mean, that's how you can get to 40 different universities is you've gotta have some of that virtual base and, and really an army of these ambassador students that are carrying it forward. Absolutely. But as we all know, being in university students graduate Oh, and life changes <laugh>. So I just can imagine there's this constant turnover in training for you. So talk to us more about how you keep everyone up to date. Plus, let's be honest, the financial world changes constantly too. True, true. So that just seems like a lot of change. Tell us how your specific role you keep on top of that training and take it out.

Tiffany Murray ([13:35](#)):

So one of the things that we are fortunate with our student ambassadors is that they get paid a stipend. And so, of course, in, in addition to being encouraged, being encouraged about receiving that education, they get paid for what they do. And so within our stipend, we have a a point system and basically we have things for them to accomplish over the course of the semester. And so we, we share with them, you know, when they start, whenever they start, that they can stick with us until they graduate. So if we have a second semester freshman or a first semester sophomore, they can stick with us until they graduate. So we have new student ambassadors. So these are new individuals that are coming to our program. And then we have returning student ambassadors. So after the new Stu student ambassadors do what they need to do, and we, we feel like they're confident and comfortable to step into a returning student ambassador's role. They have a, a specific stipend and things that they have to accomplish. And then the returning student ambassadors then also have a different type of stipend and a different payment system. But ultimately the way to keep them engaged, of course, is to ensure that they're getting paid for the, the knowledge that they're receiving. Now we also have continuing education training over the course of the semester. So every month we have a, a specialist to come in and maybe they'll talk about credit or maybe they'll talk about, you know, home ownership or investing. And so we're wanting to always ensure, just like you mentioned, you know, things are being updated, right? So we wanna make sure that we stay fresh and we stay updated, but also that we're having people in that space come and, you know, talk to our students about, you know, what whatever the, the educational content may be. And so again, we're just working towards, you know, ensuring that they get that, that training, that continuing education, um, and that they're encouraged to continue with us until they graduate. So, you know, nice, nice little stipend to, to put on there in addition to their other extracurricular activities. Well

Dr. Mary Bell Carlson ([15:44](#)):

That's such a good example too for their future coaching career as well, or any career that they go into that they should be paid for what they're doing. I really love that, that you're highlighting, you know, you're not just saying, okay, let us come teach you and you kind of get that work, but you're really paying them for that and they're giving back and you're giving to them. I love that that

Tiffany Murray ([16:03](#)):

Was a transition for me, uh, from Red to Black. Because Red to Black is fully volunteer, right? However, with the students with Red to Black, it's a little bit different because again, they're financial planning students, right? And so they are looking at, you know, that opportunity as a means to expand and, you know, get ready for the job market. So all of that is like helpful for them because it's preparation for what they will specifically be doing in their lives, right? So it's an easier sell to, to them when you say A a, a Vanguard or Fidelity or a Charles swab is looking at you because they understand the process that you've gone through with Red to Black because they know, you know, you know the caliber of the, the red to black students who come out of that program. And so just a little bit of a difference, but absolutely to your point, just being, you know, giving the students the opportunity to get paid for doing the things that they do is encouraging to them. Yeah.

Rachael DeLeon ([16:57](#)):

Not only are they getting paid, but they're also gaining such valuable knowledge and skills that they can, whether or not they go into a personal finance industry in the future, they can take with them into their own work and their own lives with their family, their friends and others. And they're really building a foundation that can be spread to their community. So it's really powerful.

Tiffany Murray ([17:18](#)):

Absolutely. And to your point, you know, we've had several student ambassadors who have graduated. One shared, she worked with Mr. Daniels and he had given a, he had done a financial education seminar and she got really encouraged and she was able to buy her first home at the age of 25. Wow. And I think it was in dc. So that was like exciting. We had, we've had, you know, plenty, plenty of great stories, right? But we had another student who was in Louisiana and shared with us that, you know, know because of the information that he learned about credit, he was able to share that with his mom. And when he shared that with his mom, his, his mom got her credit together and then they were able to, you know, she was able to eventually purchase a home. So just seeing, um, you know, the information that our student ambassadors are learning, you know, absolutely helps them and helps their family and their peers. So it's just like a, a full circle of, you know, just seeing how this information being provided can, can help individuals.

Dr. Mary Bell Carlson ([18:18](#)):

Tiffany, in your examples that you just gave, you're not just changing an individual, you're changing generations. I mean, I just hear that and think, oh, this is completely rerouting some of the backgrounds that various students come from and they don't have not only the opportunity to learn, but I'm also smiling. 'cause when Rachel said, yeah, they get to get paid and they get to use those skills. Well yeah. They get their own money to be able to manage it themselves too. Absolutely. And so I just love that this is a generational change, which kind of leads us to our next topic and that is the A-F-C-P-E Archives project.

Tiffany Murray ([18:53](#)):

Hmm.

Dr. Mary Bell Carlson ([18:54](#)):

So Tiffany, you have served as an interviewer for what we call the A-F-C-P-E Archives Project. For any of you that aren't aware of this project, it is taking our history and our generations of AFC members that helped start A-F-C-P-E and made a really big difference in both financial education and in financial counseling. And we're starting to archive some of that because we recognize that history. Unfortunately, several of our previous presidents and, and leaders are passing away. And so we've really wanted that opportunity to interview them and grasp those nuggets of wisdom along the way. Can you tell us about

some of the individuals you've had the opportunity to interview and what you've learned from that experience?

Tiffany Murray ([19:35](#)):

Absolutely. So I won't share everything 'cause we absolutely want people to listen to those interviews. But I got the opportunity to interview Dr. Flora Williams, who I think, you know, passed. It kind of shocked me a little bit 'cause I was like, wow. Like that was my first interview. And so after we had gotten done, she said, oh, you know, did I do okay? And I'm asking her, I'm like, did I do okay? I dunno. And she was like, oh, I thought you were professional. I was like, no ma'am, you're my first interview <laugh>. So it was just a great experience. Um, I also got the opportunity to interview Dr. Ray for Dr. Jean Yang, xo, Dr. Billy Hensley, Ms. Michelle Garey, just so many, I wanna say so many great giants in the space. It was just so encouraging. You know, I'm trying to interview them, but I'm also like, man, am I there a man corner? 'cause I'm just like shaking my head on everything that they're saying. I'm like, oh my gosh. Like, this is so exciting to kind of hear, you know, each of their different perspectives and you know, each of the, the, the different paths that they've taken, but how it all works to connect and how, you know, we're, they're, they're basically working, you know, they worked to help kind of change, change the world in my, in my opinion. And so, again, when you think about, you know, just those individuals and, you know, the path that they've made, it's just encouraging to, you know, makes me want to, you know, kind of wanna do the same thing. But I enjoyed each of those interviews and I'm, and I'm hopeful, like I said, I won't, I won't share everything, but I'm hopeful that everybody will go and listen to some of those interview interviews because they're just so, so many great different stories. And, you know, everybody's coming from a different background. I'm, and have that, you know, they're different opinions. But like I said, I'm just like, wow. Like I agree, I agree. I agree. Like, I don't know, it was just fantastic. I, I truly enjoyed it.

Rachael DeLeon ([21:29](#)):

Oh, I love to hear that. And I think it is so neat to, to speak with people who were literally pioneers of this field who started the A FC certification program and were the first to kind of identify these gaps that exist and the need to provide financial education to all people. I'm curious, kind of your story, you know, since we're on these archive stories, what led you to the AFC?

Tiffany Murray ([21:54](#)):

Thank you for asking that question. So, like I mentioned, when I, when I went to Texas Tech, I, I truly considered it a job. And so I wanted to do everything that was possible. Everything that was available to me. I, I tried it, I joined every single club that I could. I participated and, you know, everything that I, I, I possibly could. And, and one of those was the, to get the opportunity to go to the A-F-C-P-E symposium. And so my first one was in Norfolk, Virginia. Oh yeah. And so it was, it was exciting to me. 'cause you know, you hear everybody when, when we talk about the A-F-C-P-E, you hear everybody say, I found my people. Like I cannot tell you. Like, I found my people, like when I went to that symposium, like it was such a fantastic symposium. And so I was encouraged by the work that, you know, those individuals were sharing. And I was like, well, how can I do something along those lines? And, and like I mentioned, I got a chance to, you know, sit, send, sit under Dr. Dotty Durbin and she had her A FC and so just wanted to kind of like mold myself into, you know, kind of the things that she had done. And so it just encouraged me to look into the A FC and see, you know, what, what it was about. And you know, with the A FC and you know, having gotten that experience and, you know, pass the exam, it was very helpful in my, in my work with red to black as I mentioned. But again, it's still still helpful, right in the work that I'm doing now, working with students, trying to assist them in their financial coaching world and you know, even just providing financial education. So, you know, I've just been excited. I'm like a true fan and again, like

every time I see a A FC, I'm like, oh, there's another A FC. So I'm just encouraged by, you know, what I've done and, and hopeful that, you know, know others will join.

Rachael DeLeon ([23:46](#)):

I love it. And Tiffany, the A-F-C-P-E community, I think of it as one of mentorship and abundance and people just want to share. And I hear that in your voice as you, you know, collected the wisdom of the interviews and those who came before you. And I see that already starting in the work that you're doing as you're talking about this and paying it forward to the next generation. It's very inspiring.

Dr. Mary Bell Carlson ([24:10](#)):

I agree. In fact, I also see in you, Tiffany, you're a great example of a lifelong learner. And so I am just amazed at what you're always doing and learning and being able to train others with, and I really wanna pick your brain for a minute. I wanna know, what are your top go-to books or resources that you use to stay current on financial matters? Will you share your favorites? Hmm,

Tiffany Murray ([24:33](#)):

That's a great question. I won't necessarily say that there are books that I go to, but just always trying to stay up to date on, you know, just the, the webinars that are available. Start trying to stay updated on, you know, any type of financial education opportunity or like you mentioned. Um, any opportunity to enhance the, the work that I do. I'm always trying to do, I always, you know, try to get into those needy webinars and, you know, A-F-C-P-E, you guys offer fantastic webinars that, you know, I'm able to get a chance to listen to and kind of review. So, you know, not, not necessarily books. I would, I per se, financial books, like, not to say that I'm not reading, I'm reading books, but I don't necessarily read financial books. But I do absolutely try to stay up to date with all the news that comes out. And you know, like, like I said, all of the webinars and all of the, you know, the research that, you know, people are sharing and you know, all of the, the different, you know, views that people have regarding, you know, what's going on in the world today,

Rachael DeLeon ([25:36](#)):

Tiffany, at the end of every interview, we always ask our guests to share their 2 cents. If you had one piece of advice to leave with our listeners, what would

Tiffany Murray ([25:46](#)):

It be? There's an old saying that goes, you're born looking like your parents, but you'll die looking like your decisions. And so, you know, as we talk about, and as I've shared, you know, just having the opportunity to stand on the shoulders of giants in this space, you know, we can do great work if we'll make the decision to honor those who've gone before us and to also make our future selves proud, you know, by working to leave a mark.

Dr. Mary Bell Carlson ([26:12](#)):

That's beautiful. I love that thing. Well thank you so much Tiffany for joining us today. Would you tell our listeners where they can connect with you?

Tiffany Murray ([26:19](#)):

Awesome. I'm on LinkedIn. You can also reach me at tiffany.Murray@sfpd.org.

Dr. Mary Bell Carlson ([26:26](#)):

Thank you Tiffany. Awesome.

Tiffany Murray (26:27):

Thank you Rachel.

Dr. Mary Bell Carlson (26:28):

It's always fun to have guests back like Tiffany and I love to see the formation of her career. And you had mentioned earlier she just has come into her own in this position and it's true. You can hear that in her voice. All of her background and experience has led her to this point. And I just love seeing how she is flourishing and really what she mentioned at the beginning of Ted Daniels built this decades ago. Now I remember meeting him years and years ago and he has just made this such a flourishing and impressive society for individuals. And I love that they're giving back, right? This gift that keeps on giving and they're paying it forward and changing histories at not only HBCUs, but even within family dynamics and individual dynamics of how these changes. I really enjoyed the two stories specifically that she shared of the winds of students who are now coming back to them and saying, I was able to do this myself, or this is the step I took because of what I've learned. I feel like that's always something that every teacher loves to hear, right? Of how you've been able to shape that and see a change in someone else. So it's fun to hear from Tiffany and the great work that S-F-E-P-D is doing.

Rachael DeLeon (27:40):

Yeah, they really are doing great work, Mary, and we'll actually be at their conference in October and so we'll put that in the show notes too. That's a really great event based in Maryland. I think what I love most about this conversation is, and I, we see this a lot when we interview different AFCs, but I love seeing the through lines of where people go in their career and the steps that they take to get there. And you can tell Tiffany has found her calling, you know, she was built for this work and you can hear the energy and excitement about the impact that she's making. And one of the things that I love when she was talking about the archives project, and she was one of the first AFCs to willingly raise her hand to do these interviews, was just all that she's learned from the voices along the way. And I think, you know, you're talking to people who have been around for a long time and to take that wisdom and to see how it's changed and applied and to learn from the people before you and then to see that trajectory as she's becoming that next generation is really cool. I also love the call out about symposium and we all know that this is symposium season and so we're, we're talking about it and we're gearing up for a really great event here in Columbus, Ohio. But I would just encourage any of our listeners, if you can travel to Columbus, do it. You know, I think anyone that comes to a symposium really truly does find their people. And if you can't make it to Columbus, that's okay too. We have virtual options, but I'd also say join our membership community, whether you're an A FC, whether you're a professional that's new to this space and you know, hasn't considered getting an A FC, that's okay. The membership community is for you. We have great resources, webinars, and people like Tiffany to learn and grow from.