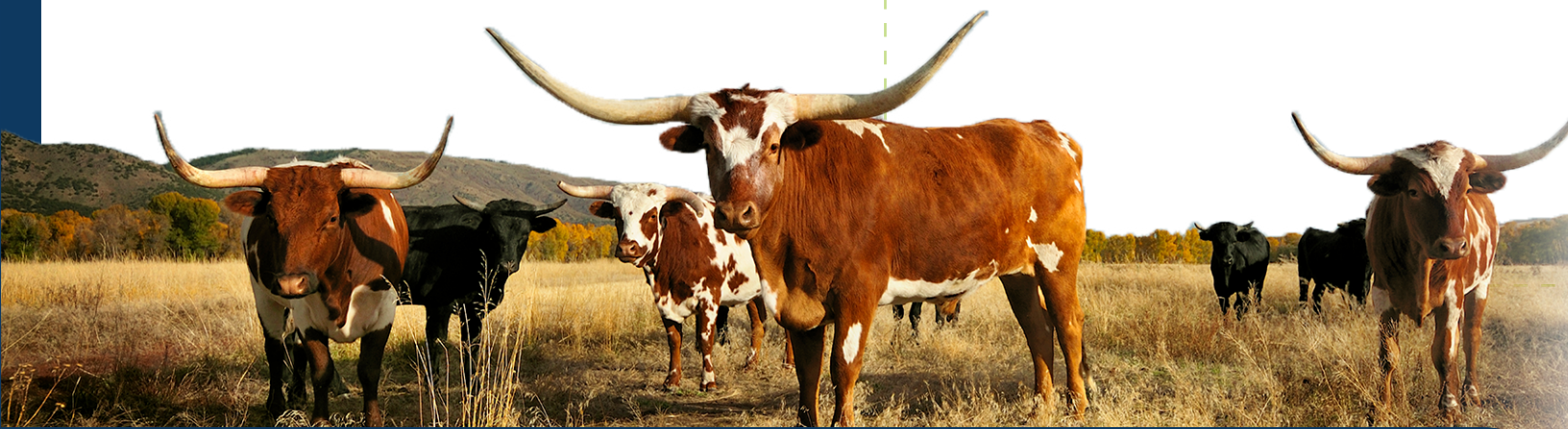


TALENT STRONG TEXAS PATHWAYS #4

“Steering” Students to Success: Keeping Students on Their Right Pathway

NOVEMBER 13-15 | FORT WORTH TEXAS



Texas Success Center



Talent Strong
Texas Pathways

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 **WIFI**

Network: Texas Community College

Password: pathways2024

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Get social by tagging us and using our event

hashtags! **#TSTPI4**, **#TexasSuccess**, or

#TexasPathways

Introduction & Purposes

Keeping Students on Their Pathway

In every community college across our state, the Talent Strong Texas Pathways strategy is being scaled and institutionalized to increase the number of students who reach their end goal of a good career with living wages. Key to our success in this endeavor is integrating new essential practices that enables the transformation of each college so that it becomes “student ready” by providing systematic, proactive, and unavoidable supports throughout the pathway journey that effectively steer a student to completing their desired learning journey, ensuring efficient program pathways that minimize the time it takes a student to complete their intended credential and transition to further education and/or high-value careers. This institute will pay particular attention to mandatory and systemized advising practices, including the use of data for continuous improvement and decision making, as well as strategic investments in advising and support services for achieving the college’s student success goals.

“Steering” Students to Success: Strategies for Keeping Students on Their Right Pathway builds on the past successes of Texas colleges which have been working to better serve all types of students (e.g., first generation, incumbent workers seeking to reskill/upskill, continuing

education, parenting, dual credit, part-time, multilingual learners of English, adult basic education, etc.), in achieving their aspirations for a better future by ensuring that they advance effectively and efficiently along their program pathway. This institute highlights the innovation and evidence-based strategies occurring throughout the state to scale essential practices that support students beyond the first year through credential completion, putting the onus on the college to ensure each student engages in proactive advising at pre-determined program milestones and also receives regular and systematic communications related to their program, student life, and holistic supports. Harnessing untapped resources in the community that can be braided together and scaled to provide planned interventions and experiences throughout each student’s pathway to promote their sense of belonging will require new types of strategic partnerships that builds agency in the community to strengthen and scale support systems that will grow a culture of student success. Programming is aligned with the successful implementation of House Bill 8 and performance-based funding and supporting the paradigm shift toward understanding the return on investment for, and the value of, the provision of student supports.

The Talent Strong Texas Pathways strategy provides support for community college leaders’ efforts in implementing and scaling essential pathways practices for improving the inclusive flow of talented workers to good careers by:

1. **supporting students reaching their end goal of good careers** by scaling inclusive access to and success in talent pathways at every community college;
2. **actively engaging education and workforce partnerships** building employer-led and labor market-responsive short-term credentials aligned within longer-term workforce and transfer program talent pathways to high-wage, in-demand, and valued careers; and
3. **expanding comprehensive student supports**, including basic needs and mental health supports and a college culture that both nurtures students’ sense of belonging and aids all students’ academic achievement.

College leadership teams participating in this event will consider their role and responsibility for accelerating progress toward these three stated objectives.

Introduction & Purposes

Institute Purposes

As a result of actively engaging in this institute, “*Steering*” *Students to Success: Strategies for Keeping Students on Their Right Pathway*, college leadership teams will:

- 1 Consider findings and reflections from national experts and successful Texas colleges to inform and accelerate whole-college redesign efforts, focused on the learner’s persistence and efficient completion of their intended credential of value.
- 2 Engage with fellow Texas community college leaders in a peer learning network designed to implement the essential practices of Pillar 3 of Talent Strong Texas Pathways, associated with Keeping Student on Their Pathway.
- 3 Analyze data to gain insights into the student experience by analyzing fall-to-spring persistence rates and trends in persistence rates over time.
- 4 Develop detailed action plans for scaling the Talent Strong Texas Pathways strategy to promote improved student outcomes.

Upcoming Texas Success Center Events

- Talent Strong Texas Pathways Institute, April 2-4, 2025, Hyatt Regency Downtown, Houston
- Board of Trustees Institute, February 27-28, 2025, Westin Domain, Austin
- Talent Strong Texas Pathways Institute, November 12-14, 2025, Kalahari Resort, Round Rock



We Value Your Feedback!

On Friday morning, our event evaluation survey opens. Please complete this brief anonymous survey before you leave! We use your feedback to improve our future professional development opportunities.

Scan this QR code or take the survey at this link:
bit.ly/Fall24_Institute



Program Agenda

Wednesday, November 13, 2024

8:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Texas Ballroom Foyer

Registration

10:00 AM – 1:30 PM

Pre-Institute Workshops

Fort Worth Ballroom 1-3

Unlocking Insights: Maximizing the Texas Higher Ed Secure Data Portal for Strategic Decision Making

(Lunch provided for pre-institute attendees: Fort Worth ballroom foyer)

Texas community colleges have made significant strides in closing achievement gaps in Early Momentum Metrics for Black, Hispanic, Pell-eligible, and part-time students. However, challenges persist in improving long-term outcomes such as persistence and transfer rates. To truly move the needle, college leaders must leverage data beyond the first year, enabling informed decisions that support student success throughout their academic journey.

This session is tailored for senior college leaders who are committed to driving data-informed strategies to delve into the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's new Texas Higher Ed Secure Data Portal—a powerful tool designed to provide actionable insights into metrics of student success.

In this interactive session, participants will: (a) gain a comprehensive understanding of the data elements and functionalities of the Secure Data Portal, (b) explore your institution's unique data, focusing on disaggregated data for 2-year persistence rates, and (c) collaborate with peers to discuss how these insights can inform strategic decisions and initiatives on your campus. Participants will leave equipped not only to navigate the dashboard with confidence but also to lead data-driven conversations back at their colleges, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Don't miss this opportunity to harness the power of data for strategic leadership.

Brian Cordeau

Deputy Assistant
Commissioner for Strategy
and Analysis, Texas Higher
Education Coordinating Board

Dr. Melissa Humphries

Assistant Commissioner
of Data Management and
Research, Texas Higher
Education Coordinating Board

Bobby Kandula

Director of Data Provisioning,
Texas Higher Education
Coordinating Board

Dr. Hamid Taimoory

Data Analyst, Texas Higher
Education Coordinating Board

Dr. David Troutman

Deputy Commissioner
for Academic Affairs and
Innovation, Texas Higher
Education Coordinating Board

Guiding Student Success: Leadership Strategies for Strengthening Institutional Infrastructure

(Lunch provided for pre-institute attendees: Fort Worth ballroom foyer)

College leaders across Texas are facing a critical challenge: how to guide students effectively through their educational journey, ensuring they earn high-value credentials and transition into the workforce in a timely manner. Achieving this goal requires a deep and critical examination of institutional infrastructure, ensuring it is designed to meet the diverse and evolving needs of today's students.

This session is specifically designed for senior college leaders pivotal in shaping the strategic direction of their institutions and in aligning resources to support student success. In this session, the leadership team from Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) will share their comprehensive approach to reconstructing and strengthening their institutional infrastructure. HACC's efforts encompassed an integrated evaluation of both academic credit programs and workforce development, creating seamless pathways that facilitate smooth transitions for students from entry to completion. The team also tackled the academic, social, financial, and personal challenges that often hinder student progress, resulting in a cohesive system that effectively "steers" students toward their goals.

Key takeaways from this interactive session include: (a) strategies for evaluating and re-engineering institutional infrastructure to support diverse student pathways, (b) insights into integrating academic and workforce development programs to create a unified student experience, and (c) practical approaches for addressing the multifaceted challenges students face, ensuring they remain on track from entry to completion. Participants will leave with actionable strategies to assess and enhance their own institution's infrastructure, enabling them to lead efforts that promote student persistence, completion, and post-completion success.

Dr. Chrissy Davis Jones

Vice President of Student
Success and Enrollment
Management, Harrisburg
Area Community College

Dr. Alfred Griswold

Vice President of Academic
Affairs and Workforce
Development/Provost,
Harrisburg Area Community
College

Minding College Minds: Embedding Mental Health Supports into Your Pathways Strategy (by invitation only)

(Lunch provided for pre-institute attendees: Fort Worth ballroom foyer)

This dynamic working session provides technical assistance to 13 Texas colleges in Cohort 1 implementing the *Minding College Minds Postsecondary Mental Health Framework*. The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute team will bring together two critical roles—Talent Strong Texas Pathways Leads and Learning Community Implementation Team Leads—for focused collaboration to embed mental health strategies within their broader institutional Pathways planning.

This session will provide a unique opportunity for leaders to engage in meaningful dialogue, exchange ideas, and create concrete plans for fostering student success through holistic support systems. Attendees will leave with enhanced strategies and coordinated efforts to strengthen the intersection of mental health and academic success at their institutions.

Objectives of this session include: (a) connecting with peers across the state to share experiences and lessons in implementation of the framework, (b) discussing the mechanisms for integrating mental health supports into their broader Talent Strong Texas Pathways strategy, (c) developing actionable next steps for enhancing institutional commitment to supporting students' mental health, and (d) exploring best practices for aligning mental health initiatives with overarching institutional goals and mission.

Dr. Kristina Flores

Senior Director of
Research and Evaluation,
Texas Success Center

Tegan Henke

Vice President of Community
Systems Innovation,
Meadows Mental Health
Policy Institute

Leilani Lamb

Assistant Director of Cross
Systems Policy and Practice,
Meadows Mental Health
Policy Institute

Jenna Parro

Assistant Director of Cross
Systems Strategy and
Practice, Meadows Mental
Health Policy Institute

2:00 PM – 3:15 PM

Opening Plenary

Texas Ballroom E-F

Welcome Address

Dr. Elva LeBlanc

Chancellor and CEO, Tarrant County College

Dr. Kimberly Lowry

Executive Director, Texas Success Center; and Vice President, Texas Association of Community Colleges

Cultivating a Culture of Authentic Relationships to Guide Students to Success

Statewide, over the past 10 years, student persistence rates (measured as term 1 to term 2) remain stubbornly at 75%, with one in four students stopping out after their first semester at a Texas community college. Likewise, just over half (56%) of enrollees return to their same institution the following fall (THECB, July 2024). Unfortunately, students continue to experience complex and disconnected programs, policies, and processes, despite years of intentional scaling of guided pathways among Texas community colleges. With growing momentum building for scaling student supports and services, particularly those that promote student wellness and belonging, and HB 8’s imperative to prepare students to reach their post-completion goal of a good career with living wages. This session unpacks how building authentic and empowering relationships can shift the culture of your institution to ensure students achieve their goals.

Dr. Chrissy Davis Jones

Vice President of Student Success and Enrollment Management, Harrisburg Area Community College

Speaker Introduction:

Dr. Christine Bailie

Senior Director of Institutional Strategy, Texas Success Center

3:30 PM – 4:45 PM

Team Strategy Time 1

Please refer to your Team Strategy Time Room Assignments.

Student Touchpoints Exploration for Continuous Improvement

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Reception

Texas Ballroom Foyer

Join us for a cashless bar and light bites, featuring a musical performance by the Weatherford College Student Jazz Chamber Ensemble, led by Fredrick Sanders.

Latavia Brown - Bass

Dakota Kreh - Drums

Raegin Davis - Flute

Fredrick Sanders - Piano

Ethan Hash - Trumpet

7:00 AM – 8:50 AM

Texas Ballroom Foyer

Breakfast

Buffet in Texas Ballroom Foyer; Dine in Texas Ballroom E-F. Individuals may network with peers, or College Leadership Teams may meet with their Pathways Coach.

9:00 AM – 12:45 PM

CEO Roundtable (CEOs only)

Stockyards 2

“Steering” to Success: Scaled Priorities to Help Students Persist on High-Value Pathways

CEOs will engage with Josh Wyner, founder and executive director of The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, to discuss effective persistence levers that encourage and support students to stay on high-value pathways aligned with post-graduation success. The session will move CEOs towards identifying a limited set of scaled reform priorities to improve persistence, tying those priority reforms to post-graduation outcomes. This session will include presentations, conversations, and take-home resources for CEOs.

Josh Wyner, J.D.

Vice President, the Aspen Institute; and Founder and Executive Director of the Aspen College Excellence Program

Introduction:






Dr. Martha Ellis

Senior Pathways Lead, Texas Success Center

A networking lunch for the CEOs will be hosted in Stockyards 2.

Concurrent Session Legend

Please refer to the following legend key to find the concurrent sessions most relevant to your role in fulfilling the student success goals of your college.

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Effective Caseload Advising |
|  | Advising for Milestone Momentum |
|  | Student-Focused Schedules and Program Structure |
|  | Student Wellness and Belonging |
|  | Other Innovations Relating to Pillar 3 |

Fort Worth Ballroom 4



How to Leverage Data to Reach Parenting Students and Promote Academic Success

Building upon this summer’s learning series, *Data-to-Action (D2A) for Student Parents in Texas*, The Urban Institute will facilitate a panel discussion of recent changes to parenting student data collection in Texas and what has been learned about how colleges could (or already plan to) use that data to reach students to foster a sense of belonging, connect them to existing supports, change advising practices, or build new supports. The session will be interactive, with attendees analyzing which ideas could apply to and be replicated at their campus and how they could use data to improve student support access, advising, and academic or work outcomes.

Dr. Rodell Asher

Director of District-Wide Student Engagement and Leadership, Alamo Colleges

Ebony Dennis

Dean, Support Services and Retention, Kilgore College

Dr. Tracy Lowe

Dean of Student Success Research, Dallas College

Joanna Zimmerman

Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Success, San Jacinto College

Moderator:

Nathan Sick

Senior Research Associate, Urban Institute

Sundance 3



Implementing College Connect and Navigating the Future of Dual Credit

College Connect and FAST have drastically changed dual credit instruction in Texas. Title 19 effectively removed previous barriers for potential dual credit students. Thus, dual credit instruction is the wild west of the educational frontier. Developing successful College Connect programs is the next step in inclusive dual credit expansion. This session examines how to create a College Connect program, how to on-board participating high schools, how to train faculty, and how to effectively roll out the program.

Carey Gable

Program Coordinator of English and Developmental Writing, Paris Junior College

Fort Worth Ballroom 1-2



Collaborative Success: Engaging Students with Personalized Coaching

This session explores various academic advising models that foster collaborative success in engaging students through Dual Credit, College Life Coaching, and Academic Advising. Participants will learn how developmental, proactive, and strengths-based models tailor support to meet diverse student needs. The session highlights how personalized coaching can empower students, enhance college readiness, and promote holistic growth.

Daisy Heaberlin

Lead College Connection
Coach, Odessa College

Destiny Singh

Lead Academic Success Coach
for School of Business and
Industry, Odessa College

Brianna Urias

Director of College Life
Coaching, Odessa College

Sundance 2



Proactive Advising: Leveraging Dashboards for Early Student Support

As part of Grayson College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), the planning team worked with a data analytics platform already used by the college to create customized student success dashboards. The team identified key alerts relevant to each week in the term (LMS login activity, attendance, and grades). By sending weekly nudges, students are notified early and directed to resources before problems arise. Grayson College has expanded and tailored these dashboards to other departments interested in utilizing data to promote the college's mission of student success. Come and explore how to scale proactive advising strategies at your campus.

Nancy Luthe

Director of Success Coaches,
Grayson College

Dr. Logan Maxwell

Vice President of Student
Services, Grayson College

Sundance 4



S.O.A.R. Success Outcomes Active Relationships: Bridging Educational Silos to Foster Student Success Through a Culture of Care

The modern educational environment emphasizes not just knowledge transmission, but the development of holistic, adaptive learners. However, the current institutional prevalence of silos creates a disconnect in implementing culturally relevant and engaging practices and establishing a culture of care. Three colleges will share how they are embarking on transformational change by implementing a seamless culture of care through professional development for faculty and advisors. Come and learn how Cisco College, Coastal Bend College, and Kilgore College will achieve their goal to improve student outcomes by creating an environment that nurtures students' academic, personal, and professional growth.

Beth Jackson

Dean of Instruction, Cisco
College

Christi Morgan

Dean of Academic Support,
Coastal Bend College

Dr. Aurelia Rocha

Executive Director of
Innovation and Learning,
Coastal Bend College

Kristen Stovall

Dean, Business and STEM,
Kilgore College

Stockyards 1



Alamo Colleges Advocacy Network: Building Belonging Through Care and Connection

Explore the groundbreaking Alamo Colleges Advocacy Network, a model in higher education for its comprehensive approach to student well-being. From food pantries, clothing closets, and emergency aid to mental health counseling, housing assistance, and affordable healthcare, this network addresses every facet of student need. By integrating essential resources with case management, our unique, holistic model has transformed student success. Join us to learn how this innovative network fosters belonging, reduces barriers, and empowers students to thrive academically and personally.

Leticia Duncan-Brosnan

Director District-Wide
Student Advocacy Network,
Alamo Colleges

Deborah Gaitan

Interim Vice Chancellor for
Student Success, Alamo
Colleges

Texas Ballroom B



Keys to Staying on Track: Career Edification and Self-Efficacy

Through a fully-scaled, institutional required First-Year Seminar course, students identify their aptitudes toward career interests to solidify their program pathway and establish educational, personal and career plans and goals. By focusing more on career goals instead of college study skills, students who complete the First-Year Seminar course maintain pathway fidelity and have a higher retention rate. Join us to learn how career edification and self-efficacy enable students to achieve their goals.

Amy Pifer

Director of First-Year
Experience, Amarillo College

Collin Witherspoon

Executive Director of
Institutional Research,
Amarillo College

Texas Ballroom H



Student-Centered Model: Academic and Student Affairs “Corralling” Together

Vernon College is entering year four using a student success model that focuses on communication and collaboration. This structured approach promotes communication and support across departments to ensure the success of our students. Our holistic, caseload advising model allows for individualized opportunities for any student population (e.g., parenting, first generation, CTE). We are excited to share details regarding the impact of this approach in the following areas: success milestones, student wellness, program structure, course sequencing, stackable/micro credentials, communication, faculty/staff support, and House Bill 8 metrics. Yee-haw!

Dr. Criquett Chapman

Vice President of Student
Services, Vernon College

Shana Drury

Vice President of
Instructional Services,
Vernon College

Kelly Miller

Director of Student Success,
Vernon College

Texas Ballroom I



Minding College Minds as a Strategy for “Steering” Students to Success

Supporting mental health is a strategy for supporting academic success. In recognition of this, many colleges are actively developing mental health systems and supports that meet the unique needs of their student populations. In this session, panelists from colleges who have joined the statewide Minding College Minds Learning Community will share mental health-focused strategies that they have used to support students, keeping them on their right pathway. Attendees will gain valuable insights and lessons learned and identify opportunities to operationalize similar approaches to improve college practices, processes, and policies on their own campuses.

Tanesha Antoine

Dean, Student Support Services, San Jacinto College

Dr. Melinda Berry

Associate VP, Student Advocacy, Trinity Valley Community College

Corey Leird

Grayson Cares Coordinator, Grayson College

Moderator:

Tegan Henke

Senior Vice President for Education and Workforce Development, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

Texas Ballroom C



Invited to Share and Connected to CARE

Findings based on incoming students’ self-reported needs enabled Del Mar College (DMC) to implement a strategy led by the DMC CARE Team to address early student-identified barriers and prevented the need for crisis intervention later. Since the initial launch, DMC has refined the initiative, modifying the student needs assessment and practices to ensure ALL students can self-report needs, engage with the CARE Team and secure supports ahead of facing crisis. Learn how you too can creatively implement a shared goal of student wellness and belonging, without additional resources, and the impact that it can have on student success.

Rita Hernandez

Dean of Student Engagement and Retention, Del Mar College

Dr. Sara King

Director of Student Engagement and Retention, Del Mar College

Cheryl Sanders

Associate Vice President of Student Affairs, Del Mar College

Fort Worth Ballroom 6



Caseload Connections to Pathway Success

In Spring 2014, the Lee College Advising Team decentralized advising services from a first-come, first-served model to a caseload-by-major model to support campus connections. Through this decentralization, advisor offices were embedded in academic buildings with faculty and students within their assigned major. In Fall 2021, caseload assignments were directly aligned with newly implemented Guided Pathways. This session will unpack lessons learned and the opportunities and challenges in shifting an entire student population to provide students with an ideal student experience.

Dr. Marissa Moreno

Associate Vice President,
Transfer and Educational
Partnerships, Lee College

Sarah Tidwell

Director, Advising and
Transfer Programs, Lee
College

Texas Ballroom A



Texas-Sized Wellness and Belonging Strategies

This presentation will focus on belonging as an integral part of wellness and how it contributes to our students' overall performance. This presentation will include examples of the interventions and strategies used at Houton Community College to promote belonging and to place wellness in the spotlight as everyone's business. In this interactive session, participants will reflect on how the strategies presented could be replicated at their own institution to promote positive outcomes.

Dr. Mahnaz Kolaini

Director of Counseling and
Ability Services, and Title
IX Coordinator, Houston
Community College



Research in Action: Findings from the Community College Research Fellowships

The Texas Success Center's community college research fellowships build the knowledge base supporting Talent Strong Texas Pathways to advance evidence-based innovations. Come hear the results of three action-oriented fellowship projects! Dr. Paula Whitman will share findings from her mixed-methods project to examine placement and outcomes for students placed below and into developmental math and how these placement decisions and student supports contribute to the completion of math courses along students' pathways. Elizabeth Scherer will share findings from her study of the factors that influence the sense of belonging among students from different backgrounds at Houston Community College and recommendations for how colleges can foster a sense of belonging. Sarah Tidwell will share findings from her study of the factors that influence the behaviors of students who intend to transfer and what community colleges need to know to support higher transfer rates. Each fellow will also share the research tools and protocols used in their studies that will be available to other Texas community colleges looking to learn more about their own student populations.

Elizabeth Scherer

Research Fellow, Director of Institutional and Market-Based Support, Houston Community College

Sarah Tidwell

Research Fellow, Director of Advising and Counseling, Lee College

Dr. Paula Whitman

Research Fellow, Division Chair of Math/Science, Vernon College



Translating Opportunity Texas (Part 1 - By Invitation Only)

These two sessions are the initial working meetings for colleges participating in Cohort 1 of Translating Opportunity Texas. Institutional teams will work with the Translating Opportunity Texas project team to begin their institutional planning process, review their current data, and prepare for next steps. Institutional teams will also learn about the details of the research agenda and share learnings from their experiences.

Amy Getz

Senior Program Associate, WestEd

Dr. Fred Hills

Translating Opportunity Texas Consultant

Dr. Abbey Ivey

Director of Policy and Research, Student-Ready Strategies

Dr. Vanessa Keadle

Partner and Chief Strategy Officer, Student-Ready Strategies

Dr. Coral Noonan-Terry

Program Manager, Special Projects, Center for Community College Student Engagement

10:15 AM – 11:30 AM

Problem of Practice

Please refer to the Problem of Practice handout to select your topic of interest.

Join your fellow peers from around the state to discuss an institutional problem of practice in the context of the Talent Strong Texas Pathways strategy. The goal of this session is to surface new and unique ways of looking at a complex challenge and to help your peers from other institutions explore new approaches to address the issues presented that may inform their strategic action planning during Team Strategy Time 4.

During Team Strategy Time 1, attendees selected a topic/college to join to explore a specific institutional challenge or dilemma associated with Pillar 3. College presenters and notetakers should attend the room assigned to their college; all other team members should plan to split up and join as many different conversations as possible.

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM

Lunch

Texas Ballroom Foyer

Networking Lunch

Buffet in Texas Ballroom Foyer; Dine in Texas Ballroom E-F.

Individuals may network with peers, or College Leadership Teams may meet with their Pathways Coach.

Texas Ballroom E-F

Data “Round-Up”: Texas Trends in Persistence

Dr. Kristina Flores

Senior Director of Research and Evaluation, Texas Success Center

Leadership Academy Capstone Posters Gallery Walk

Congratulations to the 41 Leadership Fellows from Cohort 1! After your lunch, please join us for their Capstone Posters Gallery Walk to learn about their research and their implementation of new strategies to “steer” students on their right pathway.

1:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Team Strategy Time 2

Please refer to your Team Strategy Time Room Assignments.

What Does the Data Tell Us?

Fort Worth Ballroom 4



Expanding Internships: Employer Insights and Scalable Solutions

This session will explore insights from [BHEF's national survey](#) of 2,700 employers that reveal key factors for expanding high-quality, paid internships. With only 13% of community college students participating in internships, despite their clear benefits, the session will address employer challenges, share best practices, and highlight scalable strategies your college can take to increase opportunities. Participants will leave with actionable insights to expand internship programs within their institutions, empowering students with the skills and experiences that boost employability.

Kelle Kieschnick

Vice President of Policy, Texas
Business Leadership Council

Dr. Shelley Pearson

Vice Chancellor and Provost,
Tarrant County College

Gloria Smith

Vice Provost of Workforce
Education, Dallas College

Jennifer Thornton

Chief Program Officer,
Business-Higher Education
Forum

Fort Worth Ballroom 5



Resources Remix: A Fresh Perspective with Speed Networking and Escape Room Challenge

Join Panola College for an on-your-feet engaging speed networking professional development challenge that ends with an interactive escape game. Panola College developed a resource workshop for front-line workers and advisors that includes speed networking professional development so employees know all the resource “owners” and what is available and where on campus they can connect to specific resources. This interactive workshop ends with an interactive Escape Room that assesses your knowledge of campus resources. Come and learn about our exciting approach to professional development related to supporting student’s needs.

Whitney McBee

Director of Workforce and
Continuing Education, Panola
College

Dr. Rebecca Morris

Dean of Academic Transfer,
Panola College

Angie Musgrove

Director of Dual Enrollment,
Panola College

Natalie Oswalt

Dean of Career and Technical
Programs, Panola College

Dr. Jessica Pace

President and CEO, Panola
College

Tryphena Walker

Director of Institutional
Planning, Panola College



Developing and Operationalizing an Evidence-Based Theory of Change

Austin Community College has developed an evidence-based theory of change to sharpen our focus on the evidence-based practices that increase student success at scale. We understand that when students start strong, enroll full-time, we meet their basic needs, in a culture of belonging and connection, they will succeed. Each element of the theory is supported by robust institutional data. We aim to reach a rate of 70 percent completion and transfer success by 2030. Guided by the principles of grassroots leadership, radical transparency among employees, and radical simplicity for students, our theory of change is the organizing frame for a new way of designing operations and student supports.

Dr. Samantha Croft

Biology Faculty, Austin
Community College

Dr. Jenna Cullinane Hege

Vice Chancellor, Institutional
Research and Analytics,
Austin Community College

Sundance 3



College and Career Readiness School Models: Connections with HB 8 and Student Success Goals

Texas Education Agency's innovative College and Career Readiness School Models (CCRSM) are driving student success and creating effective educational pathways that prepare students for entry into college and career. This session will highlight the Early College High School (ECHS) and Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) programs in partnership with colleges that provide structured pathways with multi-tiered systems of supports to enable students to achieve college credits, industry credentials and postsecondary certificates. Come and learn about CCRSM program frameworks, their alignment to Building a Talent Strong Texas and HB 8 goals, and best practices of Texas colleges supporting successful CCRSMs.

Mary Hausle

College and Career Readiness
School Models Coordinator,
Texas Education Agency

Sundance 4



Connecting Dots: Faculty and Staff Engagement Strategies

Houston Community College's *Student Success Framework*, grounded in the student experience, has become the driver for all professional development activities, serving both faculty and staff. Professional development is critical to the development of personalized student supports that are tailored to faculty and staff's area of influence. Attendees will be equipped with effective strategies and best practices for developing professional development frameworks back at their home campus that promote student success, retention, and completion.

Marlon Anderson

Director of Advising,
Houston Community College

Dr. Betty Fortune

Interim Associate Vice
Chancellor, Student
Retention and Completion,
Houston Community College

Stockyards 1



AlamoADVISE: Advising for Milestone Momentum

Join us for an engaging session on AlamoADVISE, where we explore the power of TouchPoints and milestone momentum in driving student success. Learn how strategic advising at key moments supports students' academic and career journeys, from enrollment to completion. We'll dive into best practices for tracking progress, providing personalized interventions, and ensuring consistent engagement. Discover how these intentional TouchPoints empower students to overcome obstacles, stay on course, and achieve their goals, ultimately enhancing retention and completion rates.

Blanca Balle Villegas

District Director of Advising,
Alamo Colleges

Deborah Gaitan

Interim Vice Chancellor for
Student Success, Alamo
Colleges

Texas Ballroom C



Driving Student Success: Engaging Faculty and Building Early Alerts through Strategic Milestones and Support Systems

In this session, Coastal Bend College Dean of Career and Technical Education and Dean of Academic Support will explore the process of developing strategic semester milestones that facilitate timely faculty engagement in submitting early alerts, designed to identify and support at-risk students. Participants will learn how to integrate these milestones into academic workflows, ensuring that faculty play a proactive role in student success. Additionally, we'll discuss how to build a robust communication system and implement support structures, including tutoring services and non-cognitive learning specialist events, delivered both in-person and virtually. This session will provide practical strategies for creating a culture of retention that enhances student outcomes across diverse learning environments.

Jarod Bleibdrey

Dean of Career and Technical
Education, Coastal Bend
College

Christi Morgan

Dean of Academic Support,
Coastal Bend College

Texas Ballroom B



Sense of Belonging and Excellence for Students and Employees: A Two-Pronged Approach for a Caring Culture

San Jacinto College implemented a *Sense of Belonging and Excellence (SB&E)* plan that focuses on both employees and students. This two-pronged approach was established based on employee engagement results, healthy minds student survey results, and a new employee Key Performance Indicator. Significant activities include a student belonging session for all faculty that focused on classroom student engagement strategies, in partnership with the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, and employee professional development sessions on emotional intelligence, psychological safety, and an SB&E Certification program. Learn how to implement a two-pronged approach for developing a caring culture at your campus.

Dr. Rachel Garcia

Associate Vice Chancellor,
Teaching and Learning, San
Jacinto College

Dr. Laurel Williamson

Deputy Chancellor and
College President, San Jacinto
College

Texas Ballroom H



First Year Touchpoints to Keep Students on Their Pathway

This session explores several successful Tarrant County College programs that keep targeted students (FTIC, TSI-liable, developmental education, or dual enrollment) on their pathway. Topics include pathways-based faculty mentoring, innovative online co-requisites, partnerships, and basic needs support. We will also share our best practices for implementing organizational changes, including building change support networks, and fostering a culture of forward-thinking innovation.

Allegra Davis Hanna

Training Lead, Organizational Transformation, Tarrant County College

Michelle York

English and INRW Faculty/ QEP Director, Tarrant County College

Texas Ballroom I



Hold it Steady: Supporting Student Mental Health to Ease Their Path to Success

Mental health concerns are significant for college students across the country. As Texas community college teams work to ensure students remain on a pathway to success, many are taking action to address students' need for support. In this session, CCCSE will present data on mental health in Texas. Central Texas College and Dallas College will also share examples of how they responded to the need for mental health support. Participants will engage in a thought exercise to consider how to enact change at their institutions.

Nadiya Filimonova

Director, Wellness and Counseling Services, Central Texas College

Dr. Marisol Garza

Program Manager, Institutional Engagement and Capacity Building, Center for Community College Student Engagement

Dr. Thaddeus Mantaro

Dean, Student Health and Wellness, Dallas College

Fort Worth Ballroom 6



Personalized Pathway Planning: Implementing a Software Solution for Advising with FlightPath

Learn about a simple software solution that facilitates advisor-student text messaging, pathway planning, and instructional course scheduling. In partnership with FlightPath Academics, Lee College has developed MyPath, a student-ready, mobile-optimized tool that allows students to easily access their personalized pathway plan and interact with pathway advisors in order to effectively monitor their progress towards completion and transfer. Included analytical tools provide instructional teams with student-specific information for intentional course scheduling. Join us to learn more about designing a simple, affordable, and student-ready software solution.

Dr. Carl Husband

Registrar and Director, Admissions and Records, Lee College

Sarah Tidwell

Director, Advising and Transfer Programs, Lee College

Texas Ballroom A



Scaling Pillar 3 Essential Practices: Exciting Innovations from the Field

Join the Texas Success Center as we showcase the strategies and innovations underway in Texas community colleges relating to Pillar 3: Keeping Students on Their Pathway. This session will highlight findings from the 2023 Scale of Adoption Assessment and share how Pillar 3 has evolved for Talent Strong Texas Pathways. Come and learn more about keeping students on their pathway from your peers!

Dr. Kristina Flores

Senior Director of Research and Evaluation, Texas Success Center

Dr. Stacy Ybarra

Research Associate, Texas Success Center

Fort Worth Ballroom 3



Research in Action: Findings from the Community College Research Fellowships

The Texas Success Center's community college research fellowships build the knowledge base supporting Talent Strong Texas Pathways to advance evidence-based innovations. Come hear the results of two more action-oriented fellowship projects! Dr. Kristy Urbick will share findings from her analysis of the typology of credential maps created by Texas colleges as advance work for the November 2023 Pathways Institute and results from student focus groups focused on understanding the utility of credential maps from the students' point of view. Dr. Paula Guidry will share the algorithm and program she developed to analyze the stackability of programs at the course-level at Dallas College and how the results can be used to identify how and in what way courses can stack in multiple programs along a credential pathway. The fellows will also share the research tools and protocols used in their studies that will be available to other Texas community colleges looking to learn more about their own student populations.

Dr. Paula Guidry

Research Fellow, Dean of Pathway Success, Dallas College

Dr. Kristy Urbick

Research Fellow, Department Chair, Kinesiology, Del Mar College



Translating Opportunity Texas (Part 2 - By Invitation Only)

These two sessions are the initial working meetings for colleges participating in Cohort 1 of Translating Opportunity Texas. Institutional teams will work with the Translating Opportunity Texas project team to begin their institutional planning process, review their current data, and prepare for next steps. Institutional teams will also learn about the details of the research agenda and share learnings from their experiences.

Amy Getz

Senior Program Associate,
WestEd

Dr. Fred Hills

Translating Opportunity
Texas Consultant

Dr. Abbey Ivey

Director of Policy and
Research, Student-Ready
Strategies

Dr. Vanessa Keadle

Partner and Chief Strategy
Officer, Student-Ready
Strategies

Dr. Coral Noonan-Terry

Program Manager, Special
Projects, Center for
Community College Student
Engagement

3:45 PM – 5:00 PM

Team Strategy Time 3

Please refer to your
Team Strategy Time
Room Assignments.

Connecting the Dots to Move Toward Action

5:00 PM

Adjourn - Dinner on Your Own

7:30 AM – 8:50 AM

Texas Ballroom Foyer

Breakfast

Buffet in Texas Ballroom Foyer; Dine in Texas Ballroom E-F.

Individuals may network with peers, or College Leadership Teams may meet with their Pathways Coach.

9:00 AM – 10:15 AM

Closing Plenary

Texas Ballroom E-F

Charting the Future for Student Success

Dr. Kimberly Lowry

Executive Director, Texas Success Center; and Vice President, Texas Association of Community Colleges

Ray Martinez, J.D.

President and CEO, Texas Association of Community Colleges

Cynthia Ferrell Pathways Star of Excellence Awards Ceremony

We are pleased to recognize three Texas community college leaders who exemplify excellence and who have worked tirelessly to significantly improve student success and experience. Selected by the Pathways Coaches based on their characteristics of Leadership, Empathy and Care, Motivation, and Advocacy, these individuals are leading systemic transformation on their campuses. Join us to celebrate the great work happening among our Texas community colleges!

Dr. Martha Ellis

Senior Pathways Lead, Texas Success Center

Featuring:

Talent Strong Texas Pathways Coaches

A Transfer Status Report: How Will We Build a Sustainable Pathway for Our Students?

Texas data reveals that only 12.6% of FTIC enrollees transferred to a four-year institution with 15+ college credit hours within three years. The rate is lowest for part-time students, academically underprepared students, and non-dual credit students (6.7%, 7.6%, and 10.2%, respectively). Nationally, only 16 percent of community college students transferred to a four-year institution and earned a bachelor's degree within six years. While transfer success is widely understood as the gateway to socio-economic mobility, it fails more students than it serves. If we cannot improve the productivity of this educational onramp, we may need to abandon one of postsecondary education's longest running and progressive ideals. This session articulates the opportunities and challenges ahead for transfer leaders, advocates, practitioners, and researchers.

Dr. Stephen Handel

Director of Strategy, Postsecondary Education Transformation, ECMC Foundation

Speaker Introduction:

Dr. Kristina Flores

Senior Director of Research and Evaluation, Texas Success Center

10:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Team Strategy Time 4

Please refer to your
Team Strategy Time
Room Assignments.

Action Planning for Transformational Change

11:30 AM

Adjourn

Team Strategy Time

Room Assignments

Eileen Baccus

- Alamo Colleges
- Tarrant County College

Sundance 2

Ed Bowling

- Frank Phillips College
- Hill College
- North Central Texas College
- Paris Junior College

Sundance 6

Martha Ellis

- El Paso Community College
- Houston Community College
- Kilgore College
- McLennan Community College
- Temple College
- Texarkana College

Fort Worth Ballroom 6, 7, and 8

Maria Harper-Marinick

- Austin Community College
- Dallas College
- San Jacinto College

Fort Worth Ballroom 5

Tina Hart

- Angelina College
- Northeast Texas Community College
- Odessa College
- Vernon College
- Western Texas College

Fort Worth Ballroom 4

Krista O'Neil

- Coastal Bend College
- Howard College
- Trinity Valley Community College

Stockyards 1

Mary Rittling

- Blinn College
- Del Mar College
- Texas Southmost College

Texas Ballroom I

Laura Rittner

- Grayson College
- Tyler Junior College
- Victoria College
- Wharton County Junior College

Texas Ballroom A and B

Team Strategy Time

Room Assignments

Teresa Leyba Ruiz

- South Texas College
- Southwest Texas Junior College
- Weatherford College

Texas Ballroom C

Linda Watkins

- Amarillo College
- Brazosport College
- Midland College

Fort Worth Ballroom 1-2

Adelina Silva

- Central Texas College
- Laredo College
- Lee College

Sundance 4

Linda Welsh

- Lamar State College Orange
- Panola College

Texas Ballroom G

Stephanie Sutton

- Cisco College
- Clarendon College
- Galveston College

Texas Ballroom D

Ted Wright

- Alvin Community College
- College of the Mainland
- Ranger College

Texas Ballroom H

Plenary Speakers



Chrissy L. Davis Jones, Ed.D.

Dr. Chrissy Davis Jones serves as the Vice President for Student Success and Chief Enrollment Officer at Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) in Central Pennsylvania. With over 25 years of experience at various post-secondary institutions, Dr. Davis Jones brings a student-centered approach to her work. She understands that the student experience is best served when academics, student support services, and co-curricular activities are considered holistically. Since she arrived at HACC, Dr. Davis Jones has quickly made an impact by securing a 2.3-million-dollar Title III SIP Grant to transform the first-year experience for greater student success. Dr. Davis Jones also established and co-led the college's strategic enrollment planning committee. Her focus on implementing a collegewide strategic enrollment plan with student access and success at the center increased HACC's fall-to-fall and fall-to-spring retention for the first time in 10 years.

Dr. Davis Jones leverages her knowledge and experience as an author. Her most recent works include a co-authored chapter entitled Supporting the Training and Development of Primary Role, Faculty, and Peer Advisors in Comprehensive Advisor Training and Development, 3rd Edition (2022), and Deconstructing the Cafeteria Model: Educational Plans as an Agent of Change (2024). She is also a reviewer and consultant for NACADA, and active member of National Association of Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education (NASPA), and an alumna of the Aspen Institute's Rising Presidents Fellowship program and the League of Innovation's Executive Leadership Institute.

Dr. Davis Jones completed a baccalaureate degree in social work from the University of Wyoming. She earned a master's degree in social work at the University of Denver and earned a doctorate in education in Higher Education Administration from the University of North Texas.



Stephen J. Handel, Ph.D.

Dr. Stephen Handel is the premier leader on transfer in higher education and specializes in college and university transformation as a key lever in substantially increasing student degree and credential completion and advancing their social and economic mobility. As the Director of Strategy, Postsecondary Education Transformation at ECMC Foundation, Dr. Handel oversees a portfolio of grants designed to solidify the Foundation's commitment to the systematic and widespread improvement of students' postsecondary education outcomes, especially students from underserved groups. Prior to joining ECMC Foundation, Dr. Handel served as the College Board's Senior Strategist for Strategic

Higher Education Assessment Use and Opportunity. He also served as Chief Admission Officer for the University of California (UC) system, providing leadership on freshman and community college transfer policy and practice for the nine UC undergraduate campuses.

A prolific writer, Dr. Handel is the co-author of books and monographs on higher education, including *Beyond Free College: Making Higher Education Work for 21st Century Students* with Eileen L. Strempel (Rowman & Littlefield, 2021) and the two-volume series, *Transition and Transformation* (also with Strempel, 2016, 2018), *The Promise of the Transfer Pathway: Opportunity and Challenge for Community College Students Seeking the Baccalaureate Degree* (with Ronald Williams, 2012) and the *Community College Sourcebook: Strategies for Advising Transfer Students from Experienced Community College Counselors* (2009).

Dr. Handel earned received an associate degree from Cosumnes River Community College, a baccalaureate degree from California State University, and earned his master's degree and Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles.



Josh Wyner, J.D.

Josh Wyner is the founder and Executive Director of the College Excellence Program at the Aspen Institute, where he also serves as a Vice President. The College Excellence Program aims to advance higher education practices, policies and leadership that significantly improve student outcomes, with a focus on students who are historically underserved in higher education.

Mr. Wyner has spent the past two decades designing and building new organizations that promote talent development and social mobility. He has authored numerous publications about education, including a book, *What Excellent Community Colleges Do: Preparing All Students for Success* (Harvard Education Press, 2014).

Mr. Wyner earned a baccalaureate degree from Vassar College, a Master of Public Affairs from Syracuse University, and a J.D. from New York University School of Law.

Texas Success Center Staff



Christine Bailie, Ed.D.

Dr. Christine Bailie is the Senior Director of Institutional Strategy at the Texas Success Center. In her role supporting 47 Texas community colleges in implementing guided pathways reforms, she designs the curriculum for statewide institutes to support their ongoing reform efforts to redesign the student experience, coordinating with national strategic partners to implement and scale research-based best practices. These experiences allow college leaders throughout the state to learn from one another to accelerate progress in scaling the essential practices of the Center's Talent Strong Texas Pathways strategy. Additionally, Christine manages a comprehensive portfolio of grants, aligning funder partners' priorities with the Center's mission to support whole-college institutional transformation.

Prior to joining the Texas Success Center, Christine has worked in the field of education for 20+ years and brings expertise in the nexus of practice, research, and policy. Most recently, Christine served as the Assistant Director for Postsecondary Preparation Programs at the Texas Education Agency. Responsible for executing the six-year strategic plan for the College and Career Readiness School Models initiative, Christine doubled the number of high-quality early college programs across the state. Christine has served as a high school educator, led state and regional initiatives to redesign institutional systems, conducted policy analysis, designed research studies, created professional development to promote capacity-building and knowledge development, and facilitated cross-sector regional partnerships to strengthen and align P-16 pathways. Christine currently serves as a lecturer for doctoral students in North Carolina State University's Community College Leadership program.

Christine holds a baccalaureate degree in Economics from Texas A&M University and a Master of Public Affairs from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin. She also earned an Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership and Policy from the University of Texas at Austin.



Kristina Flores, Ph.D.

Kristina Flores is the Senior Director of Research and Evaluation at the Texas Success Center. She manages internal and external collaborations to ensure projects are high quality, action oriented, and aligned with the Talent Strong Texas Pathways Knowledge Development Agenda. Additionally, Kristina manages the Knowledge Development Steering Committee, Community College Research Fellowships, Center databases, and performs and supervises quantitative and qualitative analyses. She composes reports and other research deliverables, communicates findings with stakeholders, and informs the creation of training, technical assistance, and professional development for Texas Pathways colleges.

Kristina brings 15 years of teaching and administrative experience to her role. Prior to coming to the Texas Success Center, she served as an associate professor of mathematics, assistant dean of academic courses, developmental math advisor, and campus math contact at Austin Community College to support improvements across the student experience.

Kristina holds a baccalaureate degree in Mathematics from Georgetown University, a master's degree in Mathematics from New York University, and a Ph.D. in STEM Education from the University of Texas at Austin.



Kimberly M. Lowry, Ph.D.

Dr. Kimberly Lowry serves as the Vice President of the Texas Association of Community Colleges and Executive Director of the Texas Success Center. In this leadership role, Kim spearheads initiatives aimed at enhancing student success and community college leadership across Texas.

Prior to joining TACC, Kim was the Director of Leadership and Impact at The Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program. There, she played a pivotal role in developing strategies and executing initiatives that significantly advanced student success and community college leadership nationwide. Her leadership substantially contributed to the professional growth of numerous community college presidents and the overall enhancement of community college education standards.

Kim's career is distinguished by her dedication to fostering educational excellence and her ability to lead impactful programs. As a nationally recognized expert on community college student success and a published author, Dr. Lowry has made substantial contributions to the field through her research and thought leadership. Before her tenure at The Aspen Institute, she held several key positions, including Vice President of Instruction and Student Services at Lone Star College-Houston North and Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Engagement and Success at Houston Community College. Her efforts have consistently led to significant improvements in student retention, graduation rates, and overall student engagement.

Kim remains actively involved in numerous professional associations. She has served as the Director of the Community College Division for NASPA, as well as a board member for the National Council of Instructional Administrators and the Southern Region of the National Council on Black American Affairs.

Kim graduated from Antelope Valley Community College before transferring to California State University, Long Beach, where she earned both her baccalaureate degree in Psychology and a M.S. in Counseling with an emphasis on Student Development in Higher Education. Kim received her Ph.D. in Higher Education from the University of North Texas.

Pathways Coaches



Eileen Baccus, Ph.D.

Dr. Eileen Baccus serves as a consultant to institutions of higher education and continues coaching a significant number of Achieving the Dream colleges in their efforts to improve the retention and graduation rates of low-income students and students

of color since the initiative's inception.

Previously, Eileen was the President of Northwestern Connecticut Community College and the former Thames Valley State Technical College. She also held administrative positions at the University of Connecticut. Having served on numerous Boards, Commissions, and Advisory Committees, including for the American Association of Community Colleges, the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning, and the College Board, she is currently serving a second term on the Board of the National Student Clearinghouse and NSC's Research Center Board of Directors.



Ed Bowling

Ed Bowling is the executive director for completion and performance at Guilford Technical Community College in North Carolina and served as the managing partner director for Completion by Design in North Carolina from 2011-2018. Before joining GTCC

as a developmental education adjunct instructor in 2006, Ed held a senior management position at a large bank. In 2010, he became the Developmental Education Initiative grant director, overseeing the scaling of three core programs and two smaller projects under the DEI grant.

Ed has engaged in state and national guided pathways work since 2011. In addition to his leadership with Completion by Design, an initiative of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Ed has provided coaching and consulting to institutions in seven states through the North Carolina Student Success Learning Institute, AACC Pathways Project and Pathways 2.0, Texas Pathways, and the National Center for Inquiry and Improvement. Furthermore, he shares the work and outcomes of Completion by Design and guided pathways at state and national conferences. Ed received the BB&T Staff of the Year Award for the North Carolina Community College System in 2014.

Ed earned a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.



Martha Ellis, Ph.D.

Dr. Martha Ellis is the senior pathways lead for the Texas Success Center, Coach for Texas Pathways and the College Excellence program at the Aspen Institute, leadership development consultant, and professor in residence at the University of Texas at Austin.

She brings deep experience, substantive knowledge, and research-based innovation to leaders as they confront the challenges and opportunities facing higher education today and in the future. She facilitates strategic planning, governance strategies, and effective collaboration workshops for community college boards of trustees and executive leadership teams.

Martha has 35 years of experience in a variety of leadership positions at universities and community colleges in Texas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. Most recently, Martha has served as the interim CEO for the Texas Association of Community Colleges. She has also served as Managing Director for the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin and Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs for the University of Texas System. She was president of Lee College and Texas State Technical College. Martha has won numerous teaching awards, has scholarly publications, served on national boards, and is an invited presenter at national conferences. Martha was recognized by the U. S. Congress and the Texas House of Representatives for her leadership in community colleges.



Maria Harper-Marinick, Ph.D.

Dr. Maria Harper-Marinick served the Maricopa Community College District in Arizona for almost 30 years in a variety of leadership roles, including four years as Chancellor. She is currently a Senior Fellow in the College Excellence Program at the Aspen

Institute. Maria has served on the boards of the American Council of Education, American Association of Community Colleges, Excelencia in Education, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, Creighton University and many other organizations. She chaired the Federal Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance and is an Aspen Institute Ascend Fellow and a Distinguished Fellow of the Arizona State University Morrison Institute for Public Policy.

Diverse: Issues in Higher Education named Maria one of 25 exceptional women leaders who have made a difference in higher education. Maria is originally from the Dominican Republic and came to the U.S. as a Fulbright Scholar.



Tina Hart, Ph.D.

Dr. Tina Hart's career in higher education spans service in a variety of roles including Student Activities/Development, Athletics, Employee Development, Grants, Accreditation, Institutional Effectiveness, Enrollment Management, branch campus

oversight, and all functions within Student Services. After many years of service at Aspen award-winning Indian River State College, Tina retired as Vice President Emeritus. She served as the Interim Vice President of Enrollment and Student Services at Edmonds College and is currently the Interim Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Success at Reynolds Community College.

Tina currently serves as a Pathways Coach with the Texas Success Center and is a member of the Achieving the Dream cadre of coaches. She works with colleges, higher education organizations, and student success centers when her assistance, expertise, and involvement is requested.

Tina holds a Ph.D. in Higher Education Leadership from Florida Atlantic University.



Krista O'Neill

Krista O'Neill recently retired as the coordinator of advising and counseling services at Lorain County Community College (LCCC), a position she held since 2010. In addition to managing enrollment services and advising, Krista advised students for 32

years, working primarily with dismissal students returning to LCCC.

In 1995, Krista was nominated by LCCC and honored by the National Academic Advising Association as one of thirteen Outstanding Advisors nationally. A certified college alliance Bridges Out of Poverty trainer, Krista was a key contributor to LCCC's Completion by Design and Achieving the Dream initiatives. Krista provided leadership for LCCC's redesign effort whereby all students are assigned to an advisor and advisors work in specialty advising teams. Using a case management model infused with predictive analytics and early identification of students in need of support, the advising redesign contributed to the 79% increase in LCCC's graduation rate since 2011. Krista currently serves as an advising redesign coach for the Ohio Association of Community Colleges.

Krista graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Hiram College in 1985 and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa honor society.



Mary Rittling, Ed.D.

Dr. Mary Rittling served as president of Davidson County Community College (DCCC) from 2003 to 2018 and was named North Carolina Community College President of the Year in 2012. During her tenure, DCCC was recognized as a leader in the guided

pathways movement through its work with Completion by Design and Achieving the Dream.

Prior to joining DCCC, Mary served four years as regional vice president of West Virginia University, where she also was president of Potomac State College of West Virginia University. In addition, Mary spent seven years as a senior administrator at the State University of New York at Delhi, where she served as interim president of the College of Technology and vice president for academic programs and services, among other roles. Mary's teaching experience includes eight years as a professor and associate professor of nursing at the State University of New York College of Technology at Delhi.

Mary completed the Harvard University Institute for New Presidents in 1999 and earned a Ed.D. in Higher and Adult Education from Columbia University.



Laura Rittner

Laura Rittner serves as Vice President of Operations and Student Success at the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC). In this role she supports overall association management and oversees the OACC's student success initiatives including Ohio's

guided pathways project for community colleges, the Student Success Leadership Institute, and the Leadership Academy for Student Success. The Success Center's portfolio of grants has grown to include over \$20 million in state, federal and private foundation investments under Laura's leadership. She has engaged many national partners in the OACC's student success efforts and served as an inaugural coach for the American Association of Community College's Pathways Project from 2016-2017. Laura is currently serving as a coach for Talent Strong Texas Pathways and NCI's Rural Pathways Project.

Laura has 19 years of experience in community college leadership. She joined the OACC in 2013 as Director of Research and Data Analysis after working for 7 years at Lakeland Community College in Kirtland, OH as Director for Institutional Research. Laura holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Psychology from Miami University in Oxford, OH and a Master of Public Policy from The George Washington University in Washington, DC.



Teresa Leyba Ruiz, Ed.D.

Dr. Teresa Leyba Ruiz has served students, faculty, staff, and the community as an educator for over 30 years. She retired as the President of Glendale Community College in the Maricopa County Community College District in January 2023 after 27 years of service

in higher education. Her administrative experience includes serving as a Vice President of Student Affairs, Associate Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, and Dean of Academic Affairs. In her role as an executive leader, she has developed partnerships with community colleges, universities, municipalities, high tech industry, and nonprofits that have benefited students and the community.

Teresa currently serves as a Senior Vice President, Chief Advocacy & Programs Officer for Education Forward Arizona and is honored to serve as a Commissioner on President Biden’s Advisory Commission for Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics.

Teresa holds a Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education from Arizona State University and a Master of Education from Northern Arizona University. She earned an Ed.D. in Higher and Post-Secondary Education from Arizona State University.



Adelina S. Silva, Ph.D.

Dr. Adelina Silva is Vice Chancellor for Student Success Emeritus for the Alamo Colleges District. With over 49+ years’ experience, Lina is nationally and internationally recognized as a leading voice in student success. She has pioneered the establishment of community

education centers, returning adult and women’s centers, limited English proficiency centers, student leadership institute, career and experiential learning, and implementing innovative retention and advising models.

Lina has been a visionary leader and mentor throughout the community and is recognized for her many contributions to the State and South Texas community. She served eight years on the Junior/Community College Student Personnel Association of Texas (J/CCSPAT) Board of Directors. Most recently, Lina was recognized with the 2024 College Board Prepare - Modelo de la Comunidad Award for her outstanding leadership and commitment to improving Latino communities.

Lina earned an associate degree from San Antonio College, a baccalaureate degree from Texas A & I – Corpus Christi, a MA in Guidance and Counseling from the University of Texas in San Antonio, and a doctorate in Education Administration in Community College Leadership from The University of Texas at Austin.



Stephanie Sutton, Ed.D.

Dr. Stephanie Sutton has over 30 years of higher education experience with leadership responsibility for enrollment management, admissions, financial aid, registration, and institutional research along with advancing student services and success

initiatives. Stephanie serves as the Vice President of Enrollment Management for Stark State College in North Canton, Ohio. She previously served as Associate Provost of Enrollment Management & Student Success at Lorain County Community College in Elyria, Ohio. Stephanie is a proud graduate of the community college system and worked in various other positions including Director of Financial Aid and Dean of Enrollment, Financial, & Career Services. Stephanie also served as an adjunct faculty member.

Stephanie prides herself on providing student-centered leadership for student equity, access, and success. She takes an evidence-based approach in collaborating across campus and is an advocate for systems-thinking and change management. Stephanie presents and coaches at the state and national level on financial aid, enrollment services, guided pathways, advising redesign, change management and other college reform initiatives. Stephanie also served as a past president for the Ohio Chief Student Affairs Officers and past president of the Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. Removing barriers and finding ways to say “yes” to students is her passion!



Linda Watkins, Ed.D.

Dr. Linda Watkins began community college work after receiving degrees from The University of Texas at Arlington and Texas A&M-Commerce. She has taught at the high school, community college, and university levels. She began her work with community

colleges as a faculty member in Sociology, with an emphasis on organizational behavior. Her doctorate degree provided her an opportunity to focus on leadership and organizational management in secondary and higher education. Linda moved into administration, serving as a Dean at Tyler Junior College and then as a Vice President and President with the San Jacinto College District in Houston, Texas.

After retiring as a President, Linda continues to work as a Texas Pathways Coach, a coach with IEBC/Caring Campus, and a Leadership Coach with Achieving the Dream. She has worked with many colleges across the nation, including colleges in Illinois, Michigan, Texas, Washington, Oregon, and New Mexico. She continues to stay abreast with current research and to make presentations at national and international conferences. Linda is committed to the success of community college students and strengthening economic vitality through a skilled workforce.



Linda Welsh, Ph.D.

Dr. Linda Welsh is a consultant in early childhood and higher education. She recently served as the Houston/Southeast Texas Regional Coordinator for Scaling Mathematics Pathways and Transfer initiatives for the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of

Texas at Austin, where she also was a Math Pathways to Completion consultant with the state of Missouri.

Previously, Linda was the Dean of Graduate Students and Academic Support for the Roueche Graduate Center's Community College Leadership Program at National American University. As Child Development Chair at the Austin Community College District, she led the department through national accreditation and served a term as President for the Faculty Senate. Prior to that Linda was the Early Childhood Coordinator for the City of Austin, Texas where she facilitated community-wide planning and program development for the early childhood system of Austin.



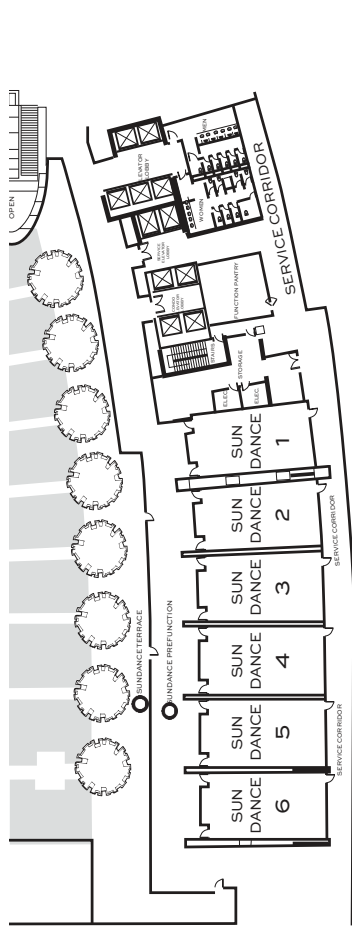
Ted Wright, Ed.D.

Dr. Ted Wright has accumulated 45 years of higher education experience having served as an institutional research leader and administrator at Miami-Dade College and Broward College, and as a higher education consultant.

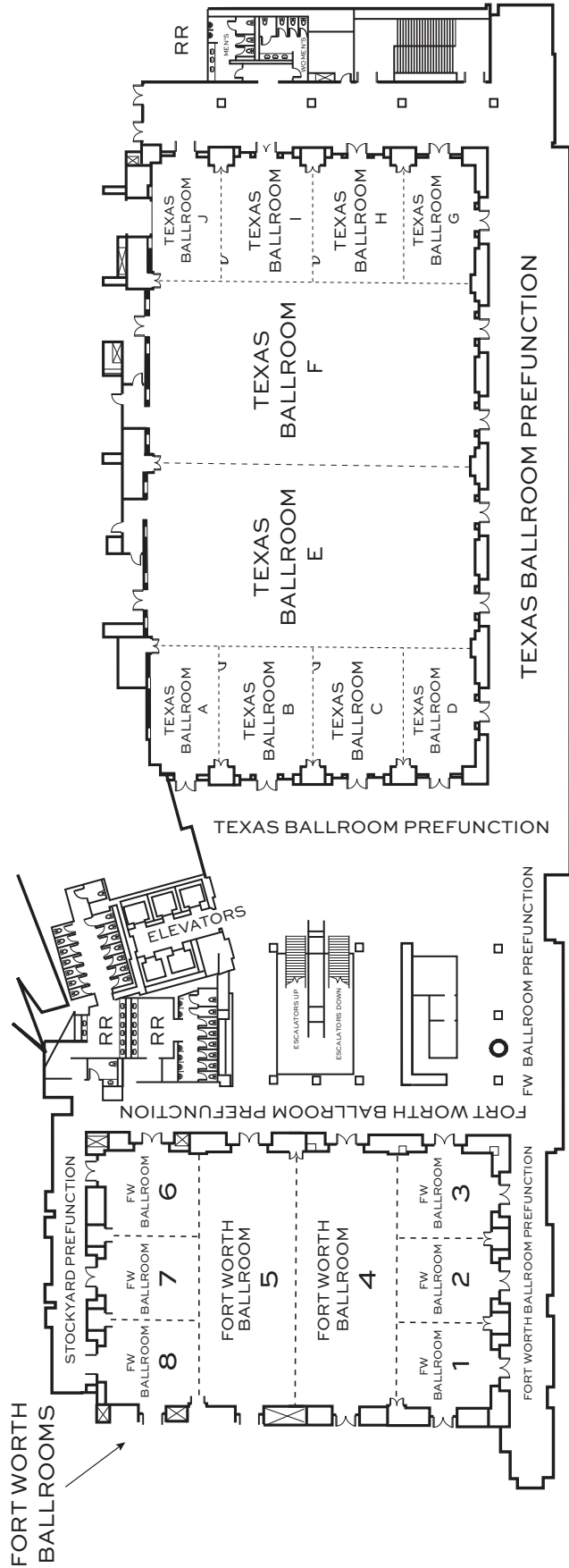
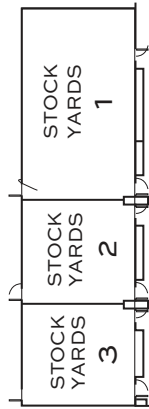
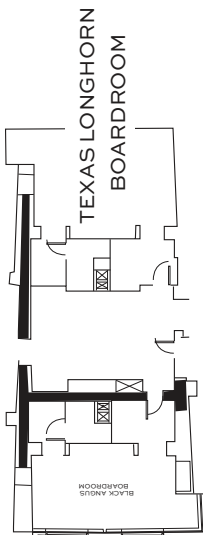
Following his retirement from Broward College as Special Assistant to the President, Ted has worked with dozens of colleges as a consultant and coach for numerous student success initiatives including Achieving the Dream, Texas Pathways, and the Board of Trustees Institute. He holds an Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership from Florida International University.

Hotel Map

3RD FLOOR SUNDANCE ROOMS



15TH FLOOR BOARDROOMS



Parking Options

