



PROGRAM AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2026

11:00 AM – 2:30 PM

Imperial Foyer
(3rd Floor)

Registration

2:00 PM – 3:20 PM

Imperial Ballroom
(3rd Floor)

Opening Plenary

Welcome Address

Dr. Kimberly Lowry
Texas Success Center

Continuous Improvement as Change Management: A Framework for Advancing Student Success

Higher education leaders are increasingly skilled at identifying what students need to succeed — and increasingly frustrated by how slowly institutions can apply interventions and affect change. This plenary makes the case that implementation science and utilization of continuous improvement frameworks isn't just a quality assurance tool — it is an effective change management approach higher education has been slow to adopt. Drawing on national work with colleges, universities, and state systems, this plenary will explore why well-intentioned student success initiatives stall, how the gap between what institutions know and what they do costs students — particularly those who need our support the most — and how continuous improvement offers a practical, people-centered path forward. Attendees will leave with multi-sector insights, tools to drive implementation, and tactics for persisting through initiative fatigue while advancing student-ready change from within their schools and colleges.

Dr. Sarah E. Whitley
Principle, Sova Solutions

3:30 PM – 4:50 PM

Team Strategy Time 1

Please refer to page 9 for Team Strategy Time Room Assignments.

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Reception

Spindletop (31st Floor)

Join your peers at our signature networking reception at Spindletop on the 31st floor. Enjoy light bites, refreshing drinks, and sweeping views of downtown Houston as you connect with colleagues and continue the conversation on advancing student success.

THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Imperial Ballroom
(3rd Floor)

Breakfast

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

9:00 AM – 9:50 AM

Concurrent Sessions 1

Arboretum 2
(2nd floor)

Tejano Flex Learning: A Competency-Based Modality for 21st Century Students

Dr. Myshie Pagel

Dean of Education and CTE,
El Paso Community College

Arboretum 3
(2nd floor)

Insights on Data and Supports for Parenting Students from the Data-to-Action Campaign for Parenting Students at Texas Colleges and Universities

Kimberly Salazar

Research Analyst; Anna
Fleming, Research Analyst;
Urban Institute

Anna Fleming

Research Analyst;
Urban Institute

Arboretum 4
(2nd Floor)

Partnerships that Last: Getting Started and Positioning Your Institution with Employers

Carrie Samson

Director, Solutions Lab

Madison Myers

Manager of Workforce
Partnerships

Kelle Kieschnick

Vice President of Policy;
Business Higher Education
Forum and the Texas
Business Leadership Council

RedBud
(3rd floor)

Building the Workforce Corral: From Blueprints to Boots-on-the-Ground Pathways

Denetra McDaniel

Director of Workforce
and Continuing Education;
Panola College

Magnolia
(3rd floor)

David vs. Goliath in Student Advocacy: Creating a Basic Needs Hub Built to Last

Melinda Berry

Associate Vice President of
Student Advocacy; Trinity
Valley Community College

Live Oak
(4th floor)

Applying Implementation Science & Continuous Improvement as Drivers in Institutional Transformation

Dr. Sarah E. Whitley

Principal; Sova Solutions

Sandalwood
(4th floor)

Transitioning ECHS Students Away From Interdisciplinary Studies: How South Texas College is implementing SB 1887 Texas Direct

Dr. Christopher Nelson

Dean, Division of
Liberal Arts

Antonio De La Cruz

Associate Dean, Dual
Credit Programs; South
Texas College

Willow
(4th floor)

Translating Opportunity Texas: Building Pathways for Multilingual Students

Dr. Fred Hills

Texas Success Center
Consultant

Abbey Ivey

Vice President of
Postsecondary Strategy

Cathy Holl-Cross

Research Associate II;
Texas Success Center,
Student Ready Strategies,
WestEd

Arboretum 2
(2nd floor)

Rewiring Math: A Competency-Based Industrial Trigonometry Model Aligned to Workforce Hiring and Job Skills

Jimmy Smith

Dean of Workforce
Education

Dr. Jackie Johnston

Math, Physics, and
Computer Science
Department Chair

Ms. Cassidi Jacobs

Director of Institutional
Effectiveness, Northeast
Texas Community College

Arboretum 3
(2nd floor)

Efficiency Through Focus: Transitioning to an 8-Week Academic Model

Dr. Cissy Matthews

Vice President of Instruction

Dr. Kavica Williams

Program Coordinator,
Psychology, Sociology, and
Learning Frameworks;
Galveston College

Arboretum 4
(2nd floor)

Lessons Learned in Learning Supports: Scaling Basic Needs and Academic Assistance

Carey Gable

Director of Learning
Resources; Paris Junior
College

RedBud
(3rd floor)

From Guesswork to Guided Pathways: Leveraging Transfer Intent Codes to Strengthen Student Success

Crystal Moreno

Coordinator, Transfer
Pathway

Jesse Bernal

Dean, Student Advising

Joanna Zimmermann

Associate Vice Chancellor,
Student Services; San Jacinto
College

Magnolia
(3rd floor)

Pathways to Progress: a Collaborative Model for Advancing Student Success

Dr. Jason Abreu

Vice President, Student
Affairs

Michelle York

QEP Director and Instructor
of English; Tarrant County
College

Live Oak
(4th floor)

Applying Implementation Science & Continuous Improvement as Drivers in Institutional Transformation

Dr. Sarah E. Whitley
Principal; Sova Solutions

Willow
(4th floor)

General Education Curriculum Reform in Texas

Dr. Christopher Nelson
Dean for Liberal Arts; General Education Curriculum Advisory Committee

Dr. David Troutman
Deputy Commissioner, Academic and Workforce Initiatives, THECB

Irene Benero
Vice President of Student Learning and Success, Hill College

10:50 AM - 11:10 AM

Snack Break

Available on Floors 2, 3, & 4

11:10 AM - 12:00 PM

Concurrent Sessions 3

Peer Exchange: Shared Challenges, Shared Solutions

Arboretum 2 (2nd floor)	Small/ Medium
Sandalwood (4th floor)	Large/ Very Large
Arboretum 4 (2nd Floor)	West
RedBud (3rd floor)	South
Magnolia (3rd floor)	North
Live Oak (4th floor)	Central
Arboretum 5 (2nd)	East
Willow (4th floor)	Southeast
Arboretum 3 (2nd)	Rural
Arboretum 1 (2nd floor)	Urban

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Lunch

Imperial Ballroom
(3rd floor)

Networking Lunch

1:30 PM - 2:20 PM

Concurrent Sessions 4

Arboretum 2
(2nd floor)

Navigating Next Steps: ISD Partnerships for College & Career Success

Will Torres

Associate Vice President of
Organizational Learning &
Engagement

Lori Haltom

Executive Director of College
& Career Connections

Michael Dixon

Provost; Midland College

RedBud
(3rd floor)

Spark a Teaching Revolution: Scaling High-Impact Practices in Pathways for Student Success

Dr. Heidi Leming

Vice Chancellor for Student
Success & Strategic
Partnerships; Tennessee
Board of Regents

Magnolia
(3rd floor)

Driving Pathways Success: How Change Management Strategies Powered TCC's Academic Division Realignment

Allegra Hanna

Advisor, Organizational
Change Management

Demesia Razo

Assistant to the Vice
Chancellor and Provost;
Tarrant County College

Live Oak
(4th floor)

Leveraging Institutional Resources to Redesign Learning Frameworks to Ensure Student Success

Crystal Tewes

Director, Teaching and
Learning; San Jacinto
College

Sandalwood
(4th floor)

Unveiling the Statewide Mental Health & Student Supports Playbook: A Step-by-Step Guide for Institutions

Jenna Parro
Director for Cross System
Strategy and Practice

Kaitlin Hill
MS, LPC-S, NCC, Associate
Dean, Counseling Service;
Meadows Institute and
Dallas College

Willow
(4th floor)

Translating Opportunity Texas: Building Pathways for Multilingual Students

Dr. Fred Hills
Texas Success Center
Consultant

Abbey Ivey
Vice President of
Postsecondary Strategy

Cathy Holl-Cross
Research Associate II; Texas
Success Center, Student
Ready Strategies, WestEd

2:20 PM – 2:40 PM

Snack Break

Available on Floors 2, 3, & 4

2:40 PM – 5:00 PM

Team Strategy Time 2

Please refer to page 9 for Team Strategy Time Room Assignments.

5:00 PM

Adjourn - Dinner on Your Own

FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2026

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Imperial Ballroom
(3rd Floor)

Breakfast

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

9:00 AM – 9:20 AM

Closing Session

Imperial Ballroom
(3rd Floor)

Dr. Kimberly Lowry
Texas Success Center

9:30 AM – 10:50 AM

Problem of Practice

Please refer to the Team Strategy Time page 9 for your college room assignments.

10:50 AM – 11:10 AM

Coffee Break

Available on Floors 2, 3, & 4

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM

Team Strategy Time 3

Please refer to the Team Strategy Time page 9 for your college room assignments.

12:00 PM

Adjourn

TEAM STRATEGY ROOM ASSIGNMENTS

ROOM	COACH	COLLEGES
Pecan	Aisha Lowe	Alamo College, Coastal Bend College
Ebony	Becky Spurlock	Amarillo College, Austin Community College, Blinn College
Dogwood	Brenda Kays	Central Texas College, Howard College, Lee College
Holly	Cynthia Oliva	Laredo College
Ponderosa	Ed Bowling	El Paso Community College, North Central Texas College, Tyler Junior College
Redbud	Eric Heiser	Grayson College, Navarro College, Northeast Texas Community College
Raintree	Eunice Tarver	Frank Phillips, Trinity Valley Community College
Sandalwood	Heidi Leming	Dallas College, Houston City College, Tarrant County College
Windowbox	Levy Brown	Paris Junior College, Ranger College, San Jacinto College
Magnolia	Mary Rittling	Del Mar College, Midland College, Odessa College
Willow	Martha McDonald	Kilgore College, Texas Southmost College
Mesquite	Melba Castro	South Texas College, Southwest Texas College
Arboretum 1	Monique Perry-Graves	Brazosport College, Vernon College
Arboretum 2	Stephanie Sutton	Cisco College, Clarendon College, Galveston College
Arboretum 3	Sue Borrego	College of the Mainland, Lamar State College Orange, Texarkana College
Arboretum 4	Tamara Williams	Alvin Community College, Hill College, Panola College
Arboretum 5	Tiffany Hernandez	Temple College, Victoria College
Live Oak	Tina Hart	McLennan Community College, Western Texas College, Wharton County Junior College