

Learners First Convening II: Aligning with the World of Work

January 26-27, 2021

An inescapable theme of the past several years, and especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, has been the need to create stronger connections between higher education and the workforce. Higher education has a vital role to play in reimagining how learners can better understand and share their skills and competencies, opening up new career pathways and promoting economic mobility. What should the role of higher education institutions be in not just responding to those economic trends, but also enabling the translation of skills and educational experiences into credentials that matter in today's labor market?

AGENDA

JANUARY 26, 2021

6:00 - 7:30pm ET *Happy Hour (optional)*
+ Scott Jaschik, Inside Higher Ed

JANUARY 27, 2021

1:00 - 1:10pm ET *Welcome and Introduction*
+ Jim Manning, Presidents Forum
+ Kate Smith, Rio Salado College

1:10 - 1:45pm ET *Listening to Learners: Insights from the Front Lines*
+ Hector Morales, American Military University & Walden University
+ Aaron Mukuna, Southern New Hampshire University
+ Katie Squires, National University
+ Moderator: Paul LeBlanc, Southern New Hampshire University

1:50 - 2:25pm ET *Equity and Inclusion: From the Classroom to the Workplace*
+ Julie Elberfeld, Opportunity@Work
+ Karin Norington-Reaves, Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership
+ Eloy Ortiz Oakley, California Community Colleges
+ Moderator: Michael Collins, JFF

2:25 - 3:00pm ET *Forging New Pathways Between Education and Employment*

- + Maria Flynn, JFF
- + Johnny Taylor, Jr., SHRM
- + Moderator: Alison Griffin, Whiteboard Advisors

3:00 - 3:40pm ET *The New Skills Frontier: A Volatile Present and an Unknown Future*

- + Marni Baker Stein, Western Governors University
- + Jason Tyszkowski, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation
- + Michelle Weise, Imaginable Futures
- + Moderator: Anne Kim, *Washington Monthly*

3:40 - 4:15pm ET *Better Together: Employers and Providers Getting Results*

- + David Andrews, National University
- + Chris Graham, National University System
- + Scott Ralls, Wake Tech Community College
- + Juan Torres, Biogen
- + Susan Zukowski, Workforce Education Solutions
- + Moderator: Courtney McBeth, Strada Education Network

4:15 - 4:45pm ET *A Mandate for Change: Moderated Group Discussion*

- + Kate Smith, Rio Salado College

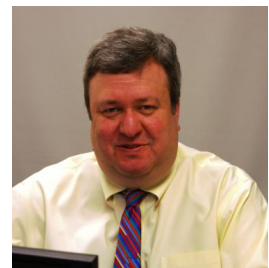
4:45 - 5:00pm ET *Wrap-Up*

- + Jim Manning, Presidents Forum
- + Scott Pulsipher, Western Governors University

SPEAKER BIOS

Happy Hour

Scott Jaschik is one of the three founders of *Inside Higher Ed*. With Doug Lederman, he leads the editorial operations of *Inside Higher Ed*, overseeing news content, opinion pieces, career advice, blogs and other features. Scott is a leading voice on higher education issues, quoted regularly in publications nationwide, and publishing articles on colleges in publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Washington Post*, *Salon*, and elsewhere. He has been a judge or screener for the National Magazine Awards, the Online Journalism Awards, the Folio Editorial Excellence Awards, and the Education Writers Association Awards. Scott served as a mentor in



the community college fellowship program of the Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media, of Teachers College, Columbia University. He is a member of the board of the Education Writers Association. From 1999-2003, Scott was editor of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Scott grew up in Rochester, N.Y., and graduated from Cornell University in 1985.

Welcome and Introduction

Jim Manning was appointed executive director of the Presidents Forum in October 2019. Jim is a veteran of government and public service with more than thirty years of policy and program management experience. He served under six Presidential Administrations, most recently as the Acting Chief Operating Officer of Federal Student Aid, an office of the U.S. Department of Education. He was recruited as the Education Team Leader for the Presidential Transition Team and directed a comprehensive review of the Department of Education programs, activities and initiatives to create an “as is” picture of the current status of the Department’s policies, programs and operations, and make recommendations to the new Administration and the incoming Secretary of Education on retention or changes to the new administration and incoming Secretary of Education.



Kate Smith is the Interim President of Rio Salado College. She is known for her enthusiasm, energy, and collaborative leadership style and is dedicated to eliminating barriers by making education affordable, accessible, and equitable for all students. Previously, Smith was Rio’s Chief Academic Officer and champion for student success. She has nearly 30 years’ educational leadership experience and is currently a 2020-21 Aspen Rising Presidents Fellow. She is passionate about learning, student empowerment, and giving back.



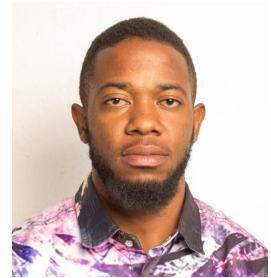
Listening to Learners: Insights from the Front Lines

Hector Morales is a National Academy of Sports Medicine certified trainer and a U.S. Army veteran. He is an operating room technician at Park Avenue Medical Center in Connecticut working directly with COVID-19 patients. Hector graduated magna cum laude from American Military University with a bachelor’s and master’s degree in Public Health. He is currently pursuing his doctorate in public health at Walden University. Hector is a single parent of a 19-year-old son, and he attributes his



compassion and patience to his role as a father. He has traveled throughout Europe as he helped his son pursue martial arts training.

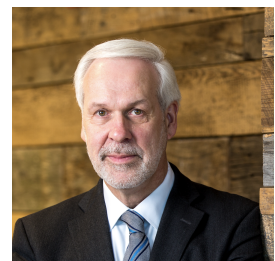
Aaron Mukuna is a student at Southern New Hampshire University pursuing a BA in Business Management with a concentration in Logistics and Operations. He holds a diploma in social work from Regis University and works as a professional translator and interpreter for the UN's Refugee Agency (UNHCR). He is passionate about cross-cultural communication and hopes to pursue a career in communications and marketing after graduation. He is Congolese by nationality but currently lives in Dzaleka Refugee Camp, Malawi.



Katie Squires is a field engineer and full-time student at National University. Katie returned to school as a working adult, studying her passion, construction management. Starting in the construction industry as an entry level admin, she has progressed her career by implementing her studies. She prides herself as an ambassador not only for women in construction, but as a scholar for the National University Scholars Program, a full-merit scholarship engaging in leadership development and community engagement. She is on track for graduating with her B.S. in construction management with honors in the spring of 2021.



Dr. Paul J. LeBlanc is the president of Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). Since 2003, under Paul's leadership, SNHU has grown from 2,800 students to over 150,000 learners and is the largest nonprofit provider of online higher education in the country. *Forbes* magazine has listed him as one of its 15 "Classroom Revolutionaries" and one of the "most influential people in higher education." *Washington Monthly* named him one of America's ten most innovative university presidents. Paul was the first person in his extended family to attend college and is a graduate of Framingham State University (BA), Boston College (MA), and the University of Massachusetts (PhD).



Equity and Inclusion: From the Classroom to the Workplace

Julie Elberfeld spent over three decades in technology, including as a commercial banking CIO, most recently with Capital One and previously with Fifth Third Bank and US Bank. Julie is a recognized speaker, award-winning culture builder, and results-oriented DEI advocate. She is now an executive advisor focused on diversity, inclusion, and belonging. Additionally, Julie is an Executive-in-Residence for non-profit Opportunity@Work.



Karin M. Norington-Reaves is a lifelong public servant with more than 25 years of experience in education, law, advocacy, community, and workforce development. In 2012, Karin was named the founding Chief Executive Officer of The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (The Partnership) by then-Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. As CEO and change agent, she led the merger and restructuring of three diverse workforce systems into the nation's most extensive public workforce system managed by a non-profit administrative agency. She serves as a member of the Cook County Economic Development Advisory Committee, the Board of Advisors for LISC Chicago, and the Board of Trustees for the Workforce Development Council of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, among others. Karin holds a J.D. from Southern Methodist University School of Law in Dallas, Texas, and a B.A. in Spanish Language and Literature from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. She began her career as a bilingual Spanish educator teaching Spanish-speaking children to read and write in their native language and English as a Second Language to adults.



Eloy Ortiz Oakley is an American educator and a leading voice on improving equity in higher education. Growing up in the Mexican American neighborhoods of South East Los Angeles, Oakley's experiences would shape his belief that quality education opportunities are a critical ingredient in achieving social and economic mobility. Oakley was appointed as Chancellor of the California Community Colleges in December 2016. He leads the nation's largest and most diverse system of higher education consisting of 116 colleges that serve more than 2.1-million students. Under his leadership, the California Community Colleges are positioned as a vital source for maintaining the global competitiveness of the California workforce. Through the implementation of innovative practices and policies, the California Community Colleges have begun to close education attainment gaps and have prepared more Californians for the 21st-century economy. Oakley's work includes the establishment of the California College Promise, the design and implementation of the systems' strategic vision, the Vision for Success, the elimination of standardized testing, the reform of remedial education, the adoption of a student-centered funding formula, and the launch of California's first public, fully online, competency-based education college.



Michael Collins is Vice President at JFF, a national nonprofit that drives change in the American workforce and education systems to increase economic advancement for all. He leads a new JFF effort to increase equity in education, employment, earnings, and economic mobility outcomes for Black learners and workers. He holds a Master of Public Affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin.



Forging New Pathways Between Education and Employment

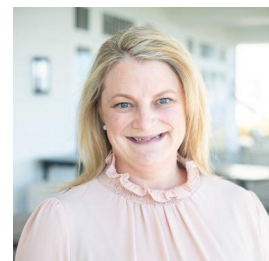
Maria Flynn is president and CEO of JFF, a national nonprofit that drives transformation in the American workforce and education systems. She is a national authority on the future of work, technology's role in the labor market, career pathways for the underserved, and employer engagement. She launched JFFLabs to bridge traditional education and workforce systems with new approaches and tech-enabled solutions. Before becoming CEO, Maria joined JFF as an executive in 2007 after an extensive career at the U.S. Department of Labor where she was a member of the Senior Executive Service. During that time, she was a key driver of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, the national school-to-work initiative, and the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills initiative. A frequent national speaker and published thought leader, Maria was recognized by The Commonwealth Institute and The Boston Globe as CEO of one of Massachusetts' top 100 women-led businesses.



Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., SHRM-SCP, is President and CEO of SHRM, the Society for Human Resource Management. He is a member of the White House American Workforce Policy Advisory Board and Chair of the President's Advisory Board on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. He serves on the boards of the University of Miami, Jobs for America's Graduates, the American Red Cross and Guild Education.



Alison Griffin is a senior vice president at Whiteboard Advisors. A *Forbes* columnist and frequent commentator on innovation in higher education, Alison has more than 15 years of experience working at the intersection of education and employment, policy, and practice. Her experience on the implementation side of higher education, and as a grantmaker, is reflected in her practical understanding of higher education practice and policy. Alison's career in education policy includes two terms as a policy advisor to the Chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce, as well as roles with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU).



The New Skills Frontier: A Volatile Present and an Unknown Future

Dr. Marni Baker Stein serves as Provost and Chief Academic Officer of Western Governors University (WGU), where she leads academic programs and drives focus on student success. Under her guidance, WGU develops and implements programs that improve access and affordability, without compromising quality. Marni has 25+ years in development and administration of pioneering, competency-based program models for The



University of Texas, Columbia University, the University of Pennsylvania, the US Information Agency (Turkey, Japan), and others. She holds a Ph.D. in teaching, learning, and curriculum from the University of Pennsylvania.

Jason A. Tyszko is vice president at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation where he advances policies and programs that preserve America's competitiveness and enhance the career readiness of youth and adult learners. This includes the Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) initiative—the Foundation's signature workforce development strategy—as well as the Job Data Exchange (JDX), T3 Innovation Network, and Talent Finance initiative. Tyszko's prior experience focused on coordinating interagency education, workforce, and economic development initiatives for the State of Illinois.



Michelle R. Weise is the author of *Long-Life Learning: Preparing for Jobs that Don't Even Exist Yet*. She is a senior advisor at Imaginable Futures, a venture of The Omidyar Group, as well as BrightHive, a data collaboration platform. Her work over the last decade has concentrated on preparing working-age adults for the jobs of today and tomorrow. She was the chief innovation officer of Strada Education Network's Institute for the Future of Work, and Sandbox Collaborative, the innovation center of Southern New Hampshire University. With Clayton Christensen, she co-authored *Hire Education: Mastery, Modularization, and the Workforce Revolution* (2014) while leading the higher education practice at Christensen's Institute for Disruptive Innovation.

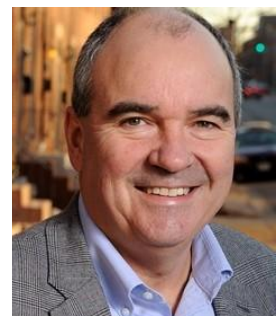


Anne Kim writes about poverty, higher education, and economic mobility. She is a contributing editor at *Washington Monthly* magazine and the author of *Abandoned: America's Lost Youth and the Crisis of Disconnection* (The New Press), winner of the 2020 Goddard Riverside Stephan Russo Book Prize for Social Justice. A veteran of think tanks and Capitol Hill, her work has appeared in numerous national publications.



Better Together: Employers and Providers Getting Results

Dr. David W. Andrews is President of National University, one of California's largest, private non-profit universities. With over three decades of acclaimed higher education experience in a broad range of academic and educational leadership posts. Andrews is leading National University's commitment to transforming higher education through a more precise, student-centric approach that focuses on continued student success and satisfaction, more affordable tuition, and the growing importance of workforce relevance. Prior to coming to National University, Andrews was Dean of the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University.



Chis Graham is the president of national workforce solutions at the National University System. He oversees the National University System's educational partnerships and prior learning pathways and provides education and scholarship opportunities to corporate and community members. He has overseen all aspects of alumni relations, public relations, career services, government relations, and corporate and community involvement for the National University System. His expertise in business development, sponsorship programs, and education initiatives have strengthened the System's network of over 150,000 alumni. Prior to joining the System, he held senior-level positions in external relations at San Diego State University. Mr. Graham holds an MBA and B.A. from San Diego State University.



Dr. Scott Ralls became Wake Tech's fourth president in April 2019. His extensive experience includes serving as president of Northern Virginia Community College, president of the NC Community College System, and president of Craven Community College. He has worked for the NC Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Commerce, and U.S. Department of Labor. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, North Carolina's highest civilian honor.



Dr. Juan Luis Torres is the chief quality officer at Biogen. Torres leads the company's Global Quality organization of more than 500 employees and is responsible for quality systems at all Biogen sites. He previously held leadership positions at Centocor, Inc., Bayer Corporation, Organon Teknika, and Akzo Chemicals. Torres previously served as a member of the Advisory Board of the NC State Poole College of Management and as a member of the Board of Directors of the Raleigh Chamber of Commerce. He is currently serving on the board of the Kenan Institute for Engineering, Technology, and Science and in the Board of Trustees for Wake Tech Community Colleges. He is also the founder and board chairman of Ingenuitas, a non-profit organization supporting innovative solutions to chronic health problems in the developing world. He is a founding member and served as board president for Hands of Compassion, a non-profit organization that provides primary medical services for impoverished communities in South America and Africa. Torres received his Ph.D. in biochemistry and toxicology from NC State University and his master's and bachelor's degrees from the University of Dayton. Originally from Seville, Spain, he now resides in Cary, North Carolina.



Dr. Susan Zukowski leads Workforce Education Solutions Training and Development team at National University, building customized education programs with industry partners, creating professional development and continuing education courses, looking for opportunities for prior learning credit, and collaborating with industry to upskill workforce and



reduce gaps in workforce needs. Susan's professional experience has crossed a variety of industries including healthcare, higher education, continuing education, and manufacturing where she has helped build teams and improve workforce culture, morale, skills, and efficiency. She has led diverse teams with members spanning multiple states and countries and has experience driving organizational change, healthcare administration, quality management, performance improvement, organizational development, research, data analytics, program development, strategic planning, and leading philanthropic endeavors. In addition to working directly in industry, Susan has taught bachelor and master's courses for fifteen years in psychology, research methods, organizational effectiveness, business, strategic planning, project management, and marketing to predominately adult learners. Susan earned a B.A. in political science legal studies from University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, a MBA from Lakeland College, and a PhD in psychology with a specialization in forensic psychology from Walden University, all while working full-time and raising a family. Susan understands the challenges of non-traditional learning firsthand and has a passion to help others continue to grow and advance their professional careers.

Dr. Courtney H. McBeth is senior vice president of Strada Impact Operations at the Strada Education Network. She oversees operations for Strada Impact, which includes philanthropy, research, thought leadership, and communications. Prior to joining Strada, McBeth was special assistant to the president of the University of Utah, where she ran presidential initiatives and strategic planning. She holds a doctorate in higher education management from the University of Pennsylvania.



A Mandate for Change: Moderated Group Discussion

Kate Smith is the Interim President of Rio Salado College. She is known for her enthusiasm, energy, and collaborative leadership style and is dedicated to eliminating barriers by making education affordable, accessible, and equitable for all students. Previously, Smith was Rio's Chief Academic Officer and champion for student success. She has nearly 30 years' educational leadership experience and is currently a 2020-21 Aspen Rising Presidents Fellow. She is passionate about learning, student empowerment, and giving back.



Wrap-Up

Scott Pulsipher has served as President of Western Governors University, the nation's leading nonprofit competency-based university, since April 2016, leading all academic, operational, and organizational functions. He cultivates a student-first environment by using technology and data to



improve learning outcomes, graduation rates, employment, and overall student wellbeing. He serves on multiple higher education and technology boards, including: Education Co-Chair for Committee for Economic Development, advisory board member at the Presidents Forum, board member at the American Council on Education, and member of the American Workforce Policy Advisory Board. Pulsipher was recently named a Top 100 Influencer in EdTech by EdTech Digest.