

Learners First Convening V: Radically Rethinking the Learner Experience

December 8, 2021

The Learners First convening series has explored how higher education can innovate within existing policies, leverage emerging technologies, and realign itself with the world of work to better serve students. The fifth and final convening in this series will focus on other ways that we can collectively rethink the learner experience, such as by reorienting institutions' business models around learners' well-being and by focusing on the assets learners bring to the table instead of the deficits they must overcome. How can institutions better acknowledge and support learners' needs to serve all learners in more personalized ways? The discussion will also explore how we can ensure the lessons of the series and the learners-first mindset are not simply empty words but rather a new mantra for higher education moving forward.

AGENDA

December 8, 2021

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| 2:00 - 2:05pm ET | <i>Welcome Remarks: Recap and the Road Ahead</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Jim Manning, Presidents Forum |
| 2:05 - 2:15pm | <i>A Student Perspective</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Jennifer Gentry, Providence Portland Medical Center+ Moderator: David Schejbal, Excelsior College |
| 2:15 - 2:45pm | <i>Beyond Deficit Thinking: Asset Framing the Learner Experience</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Leanne Davis, Institute for Higher Education Policy+ Yolanda Watson Spiva, Complete College America+ Ruth White, InsideTrack+ Moderator: Ed Klonoski, Charter Oak State College |
| 2:45 - 3:15pm | <i>Managing the Tension between Institutional Certainty and Student Centricity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Jim Hundrieser, NACUBO+ Roberto Montoya, Colorado Department of Higher Education+ Amelia Parnell, NASPA+ Moderator: Scott Smallwood, Open Campus |
| 3:15 - 3:20pm | <i>Break</i> |

3:20 - 3:50pm *Lightning Discussion: “Wicked Problems” that Higher Education Cannot Afford to Ignore*

- + Moderator: Scott Pulsipher, Western Governors University

3:50 - 4:25pm *Sustaining Change: Building the New Reform Coalition*

- + Joe May, Dallas College
- + Kate Smith, Rio Salado College
- + Michele Spires, American Council on Education
- + Moderator: Scott Pulsipher, Western Governors University

4:25 - 4:30pm *Wrap-Up*

- + Jim Manning, Presidents Forum

SPEAKER BIOS

Welcome Remarks: Recap and the Road Ahead

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.



A Student Perspective

Jennifer Gentry is the chief clinical and nursing officer at Providence Portland Medical Center, where she leads in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the quality of clinical care. She is responsible for driving a service-oriented culture focused on patient experience, employee engagement, quality, patient safety, and operational efficiency by setting and enforcing professional nursing practices. Jennifer advocates for strategic patient care priorities with internal and external constituents and



stakeholders, ensuring optimal operating effectiveness, market positioning, and quality outcomes. In addition, Jennifer is a three-time graduate of Excelsior College and current member of the Excelsior College board of trustees.

David Schejbal became president of Excelsior College in August 2020. He is a leading voice in adult and nontraditional higher education, and with his leadership, the College remains student focused. Throughout his career, Schejbal's primary focus has been on making education accessible, affordable, and flexible for all students. He previously served as vice president and chief of digital learning at Marquette University. Prior to joining Marquette, he was dean of continuing education, outreach, and e-learning at the University of Wisconsin-Extension, working across all 26 campuses to extend the resources of the university to communities throughout the nation. Schejbal has received many awards, including the Julius M. Nolte Award for Extraordinary Leadership, which is the highest award given by the University Professional and Continuing Education Association. His affiliations with industry organizations include serving as a member of the executive committee of the Council of Environmental Deans and Directors (CEDD), a member of the governing board of the Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN), chair of the Board of Visitors of the Army War College, and the past president of the University Professional and Continuing Education Association (UPCEA). Schejbal is a frequent keynote speaker, and his articles about reinventing higher education have appeared in such publications as *Innovative Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed*.

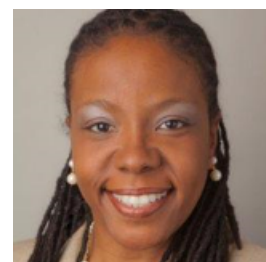


Beyond Deficit Thinking: Asset Framing the Learner Experience

Leanne Davis is the associate director of research and policy at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP). In this role, she leads research, policy, and advocacy projects and research focused on student outcomes, transfer, and postsecondary degree completion. Before joining IHEP, Leanne spent nearly a decade as an independent college counselor, helping student-athletes and their families navigate the college recruiting and admissions process. Leanne has worked in management and fundraising positions for non-profit organizations across the U.S. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Leanne served as a Naval Aviator and was a CH-46 helicopter pilot.



Dr. Yolanda Watson Spiva serves as the president of Complete College America (CCA). Headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana, CCA is a bold national advocate for dramatically increasing college completion rates and closing equity gaps by working with states, systems, institutions, and partners to scale highly effective structural reforms and promote policies that improve student success. Dr. Watson Spiva's over 25-year career in



postsecondary education spans a range of executive leadership, general management, federal government, public affairs, operations, and academic officer positions. She is the former president and CEO of College Success Foundation, a national non-profit college readiness, access, success, and scholarship organization headquartered in Bellevue, Washington. She has also held various positions with the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, DC, and Atlanta, GA, and been awarded the prestigious Turknnett Leadership Character Award for outstanding leadership in the nonprofit sector. Dr. Watson Spiva earned her undergraduate degree in economics from Spelman College, her master's degree in public policy from the University of Chicago, and her Ph.D. in higher education from Georgia State University.

Ruth Bauer White currently serves as president of InsideTrack, the nation's leading nonprofit student success organization, and has dedicated her career to unlocking human potential through education and training. Ruth joined InsideTrack in 2013 as vice president of operations, rising to the role of chief operating officer before taking over leadership of the organization in late 2020. Under her operational leadership, InsideTrack grew to serve more than 2 million students and 4,000 academic programs for clients as diverse as Harvard, the Cal State System and Ivy Tech Community College. Before InsideTrack, Ruth held executive client service roles at Monsoon, KinderCare Education and Via Training. Ruth was born and raised in Portland, Oregon, receiving a B.A. in English from the University of Oregon and an M.B.A. from Portland State University.



Ed Klonoski was named president of Charter Oak State College in February 2008. The College assists adult learners in achieving their educational goals. Previously, Klonoski spent 10 years as the first President of the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC), a collaborative effort by 50 Connecticut institutions of learning to deliver high-quality, web-based education. From Course Management System applications to pedagogy, student services, and institutional research, Klonoski has facilitated the Consortium's online innovations. Prior to the CTDLC, Klonoski served as director of information technology at Charter Oak State College and spent 15 years teaching composition and rhetoric in a networked classroom and five years teaching faculty to create interactive multimedia. Klonoski served as the chair of the Presidents Forum and is immediate past chair of the Hartford Consortium for Higher Education. He also serves on the boards for Leadership Greater Hartford, the Greater New Britain Chamber of Commerce, and the Central Connecticut Chamber of Commerce and was a founding Board member of the Competency-Based Education Network. He has been a lifetime resident of Connecticut with degrees from the University of Connecticut and the University of Hartford.



Managing the Tension between Institutional Certainty and Student Centricity



Dr. Jim Hundrieser is the inaugural Vice President for Consulting and Business Development with the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO). At NACUBO, he is providing higher education institutions with new strategies to match ambition with action focusing on revenue growth, building capacity, providing pragmatic solutions, and conducting operational assessments. Jim has had a 30+ year career in higher education, previously serving in leadership roles at the Association of Governing Boards, Plymouth State University, Lynn University and Marymount Manhattan College.

Dr. Roberto Montoya is the first chief educational equity officer at the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE). He brings more than 20 years of corporate, governmental, and higher education experience to CDHE. Before joining the CDHE leadership team, he worked for the Government Alliance on Race and Equity at Race Forward, partnering with state and local governments to implement policies, practices, and procedures that focus on racial equity. Dr. Montoya has worked for the City and County of Denver and the University of Colorado Denver, where he led and implemented initiatives that centered on race and social justice with the goal of positively changing outcomes for all. He has taught several undergraduate and graduate courses at the University of Colorado Denver in the School of Education regarding the social foundations of race in education and society. Dr. Montoya has numerous peer-reviewed publications, and his research focuses on educational equity, speculative race fiction, and teacher education. He holds a B.S. in political science from Colorado Mesa University, an M.A. in ethnic studies from Regis University, and a Ph.D. in urban education from the University of Colorado Denver.



Amelia Parnell is vice president for research and policy at NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. Amelia writes and speaks frequently about student affairs, college affordability, student learning outcomes, and leadership in higher education. She is the author of the new book, *You Are a Data Person: Strategies for Using Analytics on Campus*. She holds a Ph.D. in higher education from Florida State University and masters and bachelor's degrees in business administration from Florida A&M University.



Scott Smallwood is the co-founder and editor-in-chief of Open Campus, a nonprofit news organization dedicated to improving local coverage of higher ed. Founded in 2019, Open Campus has local reporters in nine partner newsrooms around the nation, supported by a national team of editors and subject-matter experts. Before Open Campus, Scott worked for nearly twenty years at *The Chronicle of Higher Education* as a reporter, managing editor, and director of digital products.



Lightning Discussion: “Wicked Problems” that Higher Education Cannot Afford to Ignore

Scott Pulsipher has served as President of Western Governors University, the nation’s premier 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. Prior to WGU, Scott led several technology-based, customer-focused businesses, including Amazon, Sterling Commerce (now part of IBM), and two successful startups. 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, a member of the Executive Committee on the Taskforce on Higher Education and Opportunity, and board member at the American Council on Education. Scott holds an MBA from Harvard University and a bachelor’s degree in management from Brigham Young University.



Sustaining Change: Building the New Reform Coalition

Dr. Joe May has served seven years as Chancellor of Dallas College and brings a strong commitment to improving the Dallas economy and growing regional jobs. Under his leadership, the College is taking responsibility for many of the community’s most challenging issues, including regional workforce needs, growth of minority-owned businesses, the negative impacts of income disparity, and providing opportunity equality. To help meet the needs of Dallas County students, May led the consolidation of seven separate colleges into a single institution. Previously known as the Dallas County Community College District, Dallas College now serves over 150,000 North Texas students.



Kate Smith is the 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.



Michele Spires is the acting executive director for learning evaluations at the American Council on Education. She brings years of wide-ranging



experience in post-traditional and workforce education. Spires is actively engaged in tackling critical topics such as the evaluation of educational experiences that occur outside the traditional classroom, credit for prior learning, military culture, transcripts, competencies, credentials, transfer credit, and trends related to workforce education and training. In 2021, she co-authored the brief [Recognition of Learning Across Military and Corporate Settings](#). Connecting individuals to education and career pathways is her passion!

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Wrap-Up

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