



THE COMEBACKER CONVENING:

Improving Adult Access & Success

FEBRUARY 6-7, 2020

Louisville Marriott East

Made possible through a partnership between the
KY Council on Postsecondary Education and The Graduate! Network

CONVENING-AT-A-GLANCE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2020		ROOM ASSIGNMENTS
8:30 a.m.	Information & Registration Table Opens	Hallway <i>1st Floor</i>
9:30-11:30 a.m.	<p>MORNING PLENARY SESSIONS</p> <p>9:30 Adult Completion Matters: The National Perspective</p> <p>10:00 Kentucky's Promise: The Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship</p> <p>10:30 Promises Kept: How Tennessee Reconnects Adults to Higher Education</p>	Commonwealth Ballroom ABC
11:30-1:45 p.m.	<p>LUNCH & AFTERNOON PLENARY SESSIONS</p> <p>11:30 Networking Luncheon and Speaker</p> <p>12:00 50,000 Degrees and Beyond: Louisville's Decade of Adult Attainment</p> <p>12:45 Elevating Student Voice in Improvement Efforts</p>	Commonwealth Ballroom ABC
2:00-3:00 p.m.	<p>CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS</p> <p>Helping Adults Navigate Multiple Pathways to College and Careers</p> <p>Creating Data-Driven Implementations That Work for Comebackers</p> <p>Making It Easier to Come Back</p> <p>Redesigning Academic Systems for Adults</p>	Bluegrass Rm A/B Bluegrass Rm C Bluegrass Rm D/E Colonel Rm A/B
3:15-4:15 p.m.	<p>CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS (REPEAT)</p> <p>Helping Adults Navigate Multiple Pathways to College and Careers</p> <p>Creating Data-Driven Implementations That Work for Comebackers</p> <p>Making It Easier to Come Back</p> <p>Redesigning Academic Systems for Adults</p>	Bluegrass Rm A/B Bluegrass Rm C Bluegrass Rm D/E Colonel Rm A/B
4:15-5:30 p.m.	Networking Reception and Adult Student Testimonials	Pre-function <i>2nd floor</i>

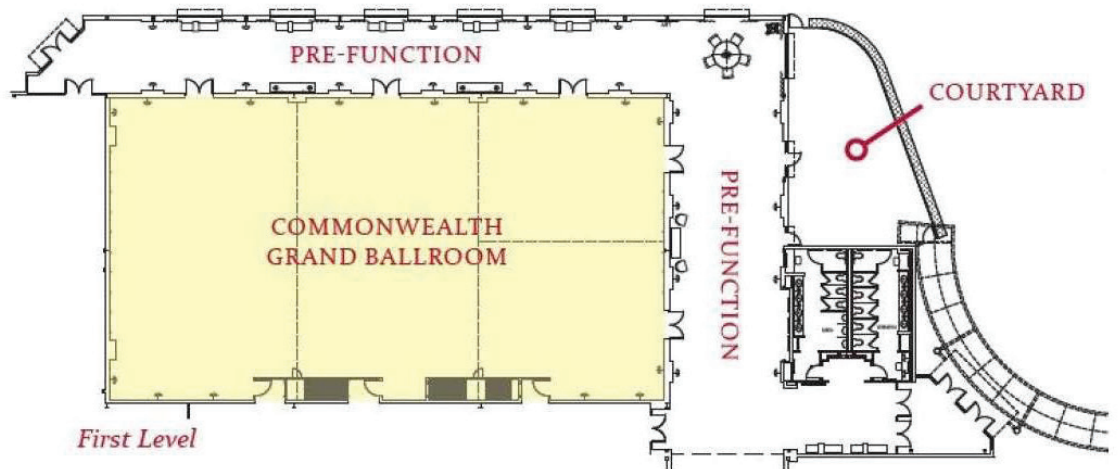
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2020		ROOM ASSIGNMENTS
7:30-8:15 a.m.	Networking Breakfast	Commonwealth Ballroom D
8:30-10:15 a.m.	<p>MORNING PLENARY SESSIONS</p> <p>8:30 Kentucky's Big Attainment Goal: How We Get to 60% by 2030</p> <p>9:15 Effective Employer Partnerships</p>	Commonwealth Ballroom ABC
10:30-11:30 a.m.	<p>CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS</p> <p>Best Practices for Advising Adults</p> <p>Strategic Partnerships for Community-Based Outreach</p> <p>Attracting and Retaining Underrepresented Populations</p> <p>Breaking Down Non-Academic Barriers and Braiding Resources</p>	Colonel Rm A/B Bluegrass Rm A/B Bluegrass Rm D/E Bluegrass C
11:45-12:30 p.m.	<p>AFTERNOON PLENARY SESSION</p> <p>11:45 The Case for the Adult-Friendly Institution</p> <p>12:30 Concluding Remarks</p>	Commonwealth Ballroom ABC

VENUE FLOOR PLAN

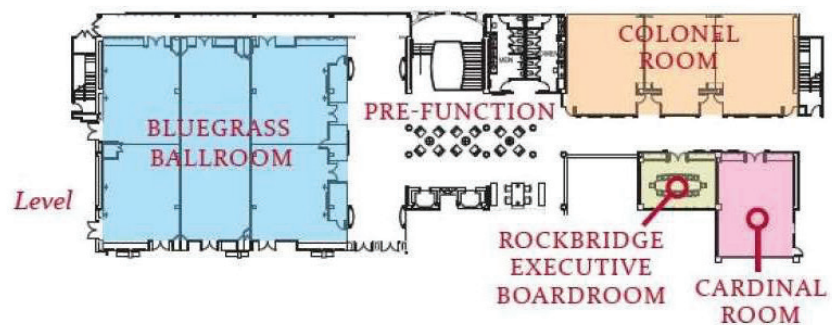
Marriott
LOUISVILLE EAST



First Level



Second Level



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2020

8:30 a.m.

Hallway
(1st floor)

Information & Registration Table Opens

Please stop by the registration table to receive your name badge and information packet. The table will remain staffed throughout the day to assist you.

9:30-10:30 a.m.

Opening Session

Commonwealth
Ballroom ABC
(1st floor)

WELCOME

Lee Nimocks, Chief of Staff and Vice President, Council on Postsecondary Education

ADULT COMPLETION MATTERS: A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The Graduate! Network is leading a national movement to increase adult college completion. As U.S. jobs increasingly require a college credential, time is running out for regions with critical talent shortages. Learn how the Graduate! Network is working with local leaders to develop a regional infrastructure for serving comebackers.

Presenter: Hadass Sheffer, President and Co-Founder, The Graduate! Network

KENTUCKY'S PROMISE: THE WORK READY KENTUCKY SCHOLARSHIP

Kentucky offers tuition-free credentials for people interested in high-demand technical careers. Learn how KCTCS, which offers the majority of these programs, is serving the adult market through innovative, accessible programs and support services.

Presenter: Jay Box, President, Kentucky Community & Technical College System

10:30-11:30 a.m.

Morning Plenary

Commonwealth
Ballroom ABC
(1st floor)

PROMISES KEPT: HOW TENNESSEE RECONNECTS ADULTS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

When it comes to providing resources and assistance to adult learners, Tennessee is leaving no stone unturned. Dr. Krause will discuss how the state was able to secure support for its Reconnect initiative and become a national model for serving adults.

Presenter: Mike Krause, Executive Director, Tennessee Higher Education Commission & Student Assistance Corporation

11:30-12:30 p.m.

LUNCHEON & SPEAKER

Commonwealth
Ballroom ABC
(1st floor)

A buffet lunch will be provided. Please feel free to sit where you like and network with colleagues from across the state. The luncheon speaker will begin around noon.

55,000 DEGREES AND BEYOND: LOUISVILLE'S DECADE OF ADULT ATTAINMENT

A decade ago, Louisville mobilized community, business, and education leaders around a common goal - to add 40,000 bachelor's degrees and 15,000 associate degrees to the city's workforce by the year 2020. Executive Director Mary Gwen Wheeler reflects on their challenges, successes, and next steps.

Presenter: Mary Gwen Wheeler, Executive Director, 55,000 Degrees

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2020

12:45-1:45 p.m.

Afternoon Plenary

Commonwealth
Ballroom ABC
(1st floor)

ELEVATING STUDENT VOICE IN IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

In 2009, Lumina launched an ambitious goal to improve America's level of educational attainment. Since then, many states have set their own goals, the achievement of which will require institutions to serve more diverse students in more innovative ways. When redesigning programs and services to meet these goals, institutions would do well to listen to adults, whose needs don't always conform to our preconceived notions of what a traditional college student wants.

Presenter/Moderator: Danette Howard, Chief Strategy Officer & Senior Vice President, Lumina Foundation

Student Panelists:

- Jill Angelle, Eastern Kentucky University
- Michael Dames, Northern Kentucky University
- Brandon Weathers, Jefferson Community and Technical College
- Crystal White, Jefferson Community and Technical College

2:00-3:00 p.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions (choose 1 of the 4 options)

Bluegrass A/B
(2nd floor)

HELPING ADULTS NAVIGATE MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

Today's ecosystem of postsecondary credentials is complex, fragmented, and multilayered. It presents significant challenges to learners, employers, and policymakers. Sometimes a sub-baccalaureate certificate can be worth more than a degree; it all depends on the program of study. Middle-skills pathways at the associate level can be especially lucrative for individuals interested in STEM, healthcare, and management jobs. How can we help adults with no prior postsecondary experience understand and take advantage of the multiple pathways to college and career?

Facilitator: Lee Nimocks, Chief of Staff and Vice President, Council on Postsecondary Education

Presenter: Tanya I. Garcia, Ph.D., Senior Fellow, Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce

Bluegrass C
(2nd floor)

CREATING DATA-DRIVEN IMPLEMENTATIONS THAT WORK FOR ADULT COMEBACKERS

The Graduate! Network has teamed up with New America, a higher education think tank, on a project to more deeply understand the college-going behavior of adult and returning students. This project, called "Data that Move Us," provides a clearer picture of how thousands of people interested in returning to college fare once they re-enroll and what types of interventions best support their journey from credits to a degree.

Presenter/Facilitator: Hadass Sheffer, President and Co-Founder, The Graduate! Network

Panelists:

- Paul Bolton, Director of Graduate Admissions, Spalding University
- Cedric Deadmon, Outreach and Advising Project Manager, KC Degrees
- Jessica Gibson, Assistant Executive Director of Adult Learner Initiatives, Tennessee Higher Education Commission and Student Assistance Corporation

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2020

2:00-3:00 p.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions (continued)

Bluegrass D/E
(2nd floor)

MAKING IT EASIER TO COME BACK

Wayne State University and Ivy Tech Community College are making national headlines with innovative programs aimed at the adult market. Wayne State's Warrior Way Back is a debt forgiveness scholarship for returning students with outstanding balances. Ivy Tech's Fresh Start program is one of several initiatives the college is launching to provide adult students with financial assistance and wraparound supports.

Facilitator: Matt Bergman, Assistant Professor & Program Director, University of Louisville

Panelists:

- Dawn Medley, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, Wayne State University
- Catherine Sherrard, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Ivy Tech Community College
- Tyiana Thompson, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services, Ivy Tech Community College

REDESIGNING ACADEMIC SYSTEMS FOR ADULTS

Rethinking higher education for adults requires significant attention to both policy and practice. Complete College America's "Better Deal for Returning Adults" outlines some of the key strategies that can increase adult access and success, like credit for prior learning and accelerated programs. Florida has incorporated these strategies into Complete Florida, a statewide effort to enroll and serve adults.

Presenters:

- Nikolas Huot, Strategy Director, Complete College America
- Michelle Horton, Director, Complete Florida

Colonel A/B
(2nd floor)

3:15-4:15 p.m.

Repeat of Concurrent Breakout Sessions

4:15-5:30 p.m.

Networking Reception

Prefunction
(2nd floor)

Enjoy an opportunity to network with your peers, view poster submissions, and hear from adult students in this "coffee house" style reception.

Appetizers will be served, and a cash bar will be available.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2020

7:30-8:15 a.m.

Networking Breakfast

Commonwealth
Ballroom D
(1st floor)

All conference attendees are invited to a breakfast buffet in Commonwealth Ballroom D to enjoy casual conversation with your peers. Buffet will close 15 minutes before the first plenary session.

8:30-9:15 a.m.

Plenary

Commonwealth
Ballroom ABC
(1st floor)

KENTUCKY'S BIG ATTAINMENT GOAL: HOW WE GET TO 60% BY 2030

Kentucky will not reach our 2030 attainment goal of 60% of Kentuckians with a postsecondary credential unless we enroll and graduate more adult students. Dr. Thompson will discuss his priorities for ensuring all Kentuckians know how and why higher education matters, and how institutions can make their campuses more adult friendly.

Presenter: Aaron Thompson, Ph.D., President, Council on Postsecondary Education

9:15-10:15 a.m.

Plenary

Commonwealth
Ballroom ABC
(1st floor)

EFFECTIVE EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS

Rapid advances in technology are creating challenges for both employers and employees who need to continuously adapt and upskill to remain competitive. Industry representatives and state economic development leaders will discuss recent efforts to close leaks in Kentucky's talent pipeline, focusing on how deeper engagement between education providers and business and industry leaders might create more seamless transitions for workers while filling gaps in Kentucky's current and future workforce.

Facilitator: Dan Ash, Research Director of Bridging the Talent Gap, The Graduate! Network

Panelists:

- Beth Davison, Executive Director, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Workforce Center
- Tim Ernst, Director of Human Resources at East & Westbrook Construction Co.
- Todd Schmiedeler, Senior Vice President of Foundation and Workforce Development, Trilogy Health Services, LLC

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2020

10:30-11:30 a.m. **Concurrent Breakout Sessions** (choose 1 of the 4 options)

Colonel Rm A/B
(2nd floor)

BEST PRACTICES FOR ADVISING ADULTS

Adult learners are a diverse population balancing work, school, family, and other demands. In order to succeed, they need flexible academic schedules, a sense of connection to the campus community, and a reliable support system. This session touches upon best practices in academic advising to better support adult learners.

Facilitator: Nikolas Huot, Strategy Director, Complete College America

Presenter: Cindy Firestein, Director of Undergraduate Advising, Simmons University, and Chair of NACADA Advising Adult Learners Community

Bluegrass A/B
(2nd floor)

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED OUTREACH

In 2018, CPE received a \$400K Adult Promise grant from the Lumina Foundation. As part of the grant, CPE embarked on a partnership with The Graduate! Network and three community and technical colleges to pilot an ambassador program to mobilize community volunteers to recruit adult learners. These colleges will share how they implemented an ambassador program to fit the needs of their respective communities.

Facilitator: Bridgett Strickler, Vice President of Network Engagement, The Graduate! Network

Panelists:

- Gina Embry, Jefferson Community & Technical College
 - Felecia Johnson, Madisonville Community College
 - Michael Troy Shell, Jefferson Community & Technical College
 - Ella Strong, Hazard Community & Technical College
 - Elizabeth Teer, Jefferson Community & Technical College
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Bluegrass D/E
(2nd floor)

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS: COLLEGE FOR INCARCERATED PERSONS, VETERANS, AND OLDER ADULTS

Veterans, senior citizens and incarcerated persons are often overlooked as prospective college students, but they can enhance the college experience in unexpected ways. Learn about some of the ways Kentucky is working to engage these underserved populations in higher education.

Facilitator: Kathy Zandona, Senior Vice President of Network Engagement, The Graduate! Network

Panelists:

- Colonel Walter Herd, National Director of Transition Assistance Program, United States Army
- Mardi Montgomery, Senior Director, Workforce Development and Community Engagement, Eastern Kentucky University
- Jen Schramm, Senior Strategic Policy Advisor, AARP Public Policy Institute
- Aneshia Gray, Senior Program Assistant, AARP Kentucky

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2020

10:30-11:30 a.m. *Concurrent Breakout Sessions (continued)*

Bluegrass C
(2nd floor)

BREAKING DOWN NON-ACADEMIC BARRIERS & BRAIDING RESOURCES

A number of states are looking beyond traditional financial aid sources and free college programs to better support adults with low incomes. Learn how they are streamlining access to public benefit programs such as SNAP, TANF, and child care assistance to increase postsecondary attendance and completion. Family Scholar House, a Kentucky nonprofit, will share how they are helping adults break the cycle of poverty, achieve self-sufficiency, and succeed in higher education.

Facilitator: Melissa Young, Director of Special Projects, Council on Postsecondary Education

Presenters:

- Amy Ellen Duke-Benfield, Senior Fellow, National Skills Coalition
- Charles Brian McAdams, Academic Services Coordinator, Family Scholar House

11:45-12:30 p.m. *Closing Plenary*

Commonwealth
Ballroom ABC
(1st floor)

THE CASE FOR THE ADULT-FRIENDLY INSTITUTION

To strengthen our state and nation, we must help adults find a pathway to educational credentials that fit their lives. We are witnessing a fundamental shift in the academy's historic way of doing business. The entrepreneurial spirit is finally making inroads into the fabric of traditional institutions. Dr. Matt Bergman will discuss some strategies you can use to help your institution join the revolution.

Presenter: Matt Bergman, Assistant Professor and Program Director, University of Louisville



PRESENTERS & PANELISTS (A-Z)



JILL ANGELLE is a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University who recently received a bachelor's degree in liberal arts and science with a minor in painting. She has returned to pursue a certificate in apparel design. Angelle is a creative artist in many mediums and teaches painting and sewing classes. She is a Gallery 123 fellow, an arts accelerator program sponsored by Berea Tourism. She has

been sewing by hand and machine since 1986.



DAN ASH is the Research Director for The Graduate! Network's "Bridging the Talent Gap" employer and employee engagement initiative. An expert in workplace psychology and training program development, Ash served as the founding Executive Director of Metropolitan College, a partnership between UPS, The University of Louisville and Jefferson Community and Technical

College. Since its inception in 1998, Metropolitan College has become a national and international model for education-business partnerships, and he has been instrumental in establishing similar programs at Norton Healthcare, Humana, ResCare, and the UPS Chicago Area Consolidation Hub. Since 2009, Ash has served on the leadership team responsible for creating Greater Louisville's education initiative, 55,000 Degrees.



MATT BERGMAN, Ph.D., is a Program Director and Assistant Professor at the University of Louisville. His latest book is *Unfinished Business: Compelling Stories of Adult Student Persistence*. Bergman's research is focused on retention and persistence, prior learning assessment, leadership, and degree completion. His work has appeared in prestigious refereed journals as well as national media outlets,

and he has been recognized for innovative teaching and programs by the Association for Continuing Higher Education, the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, the American Public and Land Grant Universities, the Gheens Foundation, Metroversity, and the University of Louisville. Bergman also serves as a Fellow for Complete College America, where he advocates for adult degree attainment both locally and nationally.



PAUL BOLTON is an experienced enrollment management professional with a demonstrated history of working in higher education. Bolton currently serves as the Director of Graduate and Online Admissions at Spalding University and also hosts his own podcast, "Reboot Higher Ed," which focuses on front-line adaptations needed for sustainable growth in today's complex post-traditional, enrollment management environment.

Paul earned a B.A. in communications from Spalding University and a master's degree in management from Sullivan University.



JAY BOX was named the second President of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) on November 19, 2014. He is a community college graduate and has more than 30 years of experience in community college leadership. Box served as President of Hazard Community and Technical College from 2002 to 2007, followed by his tenure as a KCTCS Vice

President and then Chancellor. Box received an associate degree from Howard College, a bachelor's degree in education from Southwest Texas State University, a master's degree in education from Texas Tech University, and a doctorate in educational administration with a higher education/community college specialty from Baylor University.



BETH DAVISSON is the Founding Executive Director of the Kentucky Chamber Workforce Center. She is a lifelong resident of Kentucky, earning her undergraduate degree from the University of Kentucky and MBA from Sullivan University. She has spent the last 10+ years advocating for Kentucky's workforce throughout the state and in the nation's capital, as well as

aligning talent to the strategic plans of business. Davison was honored as a "Top 40 under 40" and named a "Top 20 People to Know in Human Resources" by Business First Louisville. Previous employers include Greater Louisville Inc., The Oliver Group, and Sullivan University. Beth also serves as the Workforce Readiness Chair for the Kentucky Society for Human Resource Management.



MICHAEL DAMES is a student at Northern Kentucky University majoring in information systems (cyber security) and minoring in computer science. He anticipates graduating in May 2021. He received an associate degree in electronic engineering in 1987, but did not complete his bachelor's degree. In the last 30 years, he has worked for Xerox, Avionics, and

Proctor and Gamble; he currently works as an Electrical Controls Engineer with Yamazaki Mazak Corp.



CEDRIC DEADMON is the Outreach and Advising Project Manager and Business Engagement Lead for KC Degrees. Deadmon joined Mid-America Regional Council in August 2016, where his work has evolved around talent development, educational attainment, business engagement, and policy affecting adult learners at the local, state, and national levels.

He organizes and advances projects to increase public awareness and college attainment rates among adults in the Kansas City region through robust partnerships with the public and private sectors, philanthropic foundations, higher education institutions,

PRESENTERS & PANELISTS (A-Z)

economic development organizations, and businesses. Deadmon has a bachelor's degree from Lane College, is a nationally certified college and career advisor through the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, and was selected as a Kauffman Fellow as part of the Kauffman Foundation focus on creating equity in the K-12 ecosystem.



AMY ELLEN DUKE-BENFIELD is a Senior Fellow at National Skills Coalition (NSC). She serves as NSC's organizational expert on state postsecondary policy development and implementation, including as it intersects with public benefits policy. She also provides technical assistance to NSC's State Policy and Advocacy Network coalitions and other state partners, including state and institutional leaders. Prior to joining NSC, she was a Senior Policy Analyst at the Center for Law and Social Policy, where she analyzed and advocated for postsecondary policies to better serve low-income adults and other non-traditional students, including workers, student parents, and students of color. She holds an undergraduate degree from Swarthmore College and a master's degree from Emory University. She is based in Brooklyn, NY, and Washington, DC.



GINA EMBRY is Program Director for Student Support and Partner Initiatives at Jefferson Community and Technical College. She has fifteen years of experience working with adult education in Jefferson County, first within the family education program as an ESL and math instructor, and then as an advisor focused on student assignment and class placement during intake and orientation. In 2013, Embry transitioned into the role of Accelerating Opportunity Kentucky Coordinator at JCTC, where she leads a team of student support areas, including the Hub (JCTC's food pantry and social service area), Ready to Work, AccessAbility Resource Center (disability services), GED Plus, SNAP Employment and Training, and other initiatives. She is a graduate of Western Kentucky University.



TIM ERNST is the Director of Human Resources at East & Westbrook Construction Co. in Buckner, Kentucky, where he directs human resources activities for over 180 employees. At E&W Construction, Ernst has overseen enormous company growth, reduced turnover, and developed a formal leadership development process. Prior to this, he worked in human resources at Pizza Wholesale of Lexington, Montplast of North America, and Lexmark International. He has bachelor's and master's degrees from Western Kentucky University, and he has completed doctoral studies in human resources and leadership development at the University of Louisville.



CINDY FIRESTEIN, M.Ed., GCDF, is the Director of Undergraduate Advising at Simmons University in Boston, MA. Firestein has been advising for over ten years and specializes in working with adult learners. She holds multiple leadership positions within NACADA, including Chair of the Advising Adult Learners Community and Co-Chair of Programs for the 2020 Region 1 Conference. She also is a member of the Publishing Advisory Board. In 2017, Firestein received the Outstanding Advisor Award from NACADA's Global Awards Program.



TANYA I. GARCIA is Senior Fellow at the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, where she has conducted research on non-degree credentials and supported states integrating postsecondary and labor data to improve policy and practice. Previously, she served at Wiki Education Foundation, Lumina Foundation, State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, and New Mexico Higher Education Department. Garcia earned a B.A. in philosophy and a B.S. in biology at Florida International University; an M.A. in higher education administration from The George Washington University (DC); and a Ph.D. in public administration at American University (DC).



JESSICA GIBSON is the Senior Director of Adult Learner Initiatives at the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. In this capacity, Gibson leads THEC's initiatives that focus on increasing educational attainment rates among adults, including those who started college but did not complete a degree or credential. She contributes to strategic planning on Drive to 55 initiatives, including Tennessee Reconnect, the component focused on adult learners. Gibson administers several projects involving adult learner completion, business and higher education engagement, student advising, and prior learning assessment. Gibson holds a B.A. from Centre College and an M.A. in international development studies from The George Washington University.



ANESHIA GRAY has served as the Senior Program Assistant at AARP Kentucky since January 2017. She is responsible for volunteer management, event support, and coordinating special projects. Gray provides support to members of the community, volunteers, and community partners to ensure meaningful community engagement with all Kentuckians, especially the 50-plus population. Gray holds a B.S. in health

PRESENTERS & PANELISTS (A-Z)

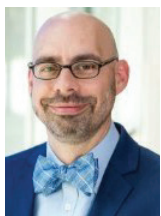
and human performance (exercise science) and an M.P.H. with a focus on health behavior and promotion from the University of Louisville. She also is certified by the National Board of Public Health Examiners in public health.



WALTER HERD was commissioned into the Regular Army in June 1983, becoming the sixth generation of his family to serve in America's military. He has served in over 25 countries and spent most of his career in Special Operations. He served in the 1st Ranger Battalion, later commanded a Special Forces A-Team, three Special Forces Companies, a Special Forces Battalion of some 350 "Green Berets," and ultimately a Special Forces Group in combat. He has a B.A. in history from Centre College of Kentucky and three master's degrees, one from Marymount University in human resource development and the other two from Staff College and War College in strategy and military science. Having returned to his roots, he is excited to now direct the Army's Transition Assistance Program charged with helping America's soldiers transition back into civil society.



MICHELE HORTON has 12 years of experience working with adults returning to college. She currently directs Complete Florida, a statewide initiative to help adult learners finish their degree. Horton has a doctorate in higher education leadership and a master's in administration with a specialty in human performance technology. Horton administered a satellite location of a Florida state college and served as an advisor and recruiter. She collaborates with organizations like Complete College America and the Florida College Access Network. She also serves on the statewide articulation committee for Early Childhood Education to share completion strategies for adults returning to college.



NIKOLAS HUOT is the Strategy Director for Complete College America (CCA). At CCA, Huot plans and implements 15 to Finish, Purpose First, MSI Initiative, Momentum Year, Academic Maps, Proactive Advising, and Adult Learners in an effort to close achievement gaps. Prior to joining CCA, Huot worked as Associate Director for First-Year and Transition Programs with the Office of Student Success at Georgia State University.



DANETTE HOWARD, Ph.D., is Senior Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer at Lumina Foundation. Howard oversees several of Lumina's key strategies to increase Americans' attainment of high-quality postsecondary degrees and credentials, including strategic work in both state and federal policy. She also

leads the Foundation's efforts to mobilize and engage employers, metropolitan areas, higher education institutions, and other key actors with a stake in postsecondary attainment. Prior to joining Lumina, Howard served as Secretary of Higher Education in Maryland, leading the state's postsecondary education coordinating agency. She earned a bachelor's degree from Howard University, a master's degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and a Ph.D. in higher education policy from the University of Maryland, College Park.



FELECIA JOHNSON is a professor at Madisonville Community College (MCC) and coordinator of "MCC Accelerate," a program geared toward encouraging working adults to return to college or enroll for the first time. In this role, she schedules, recruits, advises, and reassures. She also teaches business employability skills, leads the Personal Effectiveness Skills initiative at MCC, and conducts customer service training for MCC's Workforce Solutions.



MIKE KRAUSE has served as the Executive Director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and Student Assistance Corporation since August 2016. Previously, he served on the staff of Governor Bill Haslam as the founding Executive Director of the Tennessee Promise, coordinating the launch of the nation's first tuition-free college program and serving as a senior advisor to the Governor on higher education. Before joining the Haslam administration, he held the role of Assistant Executive Director at THEC, leading a variety of initiatives within the academic affairs division. He is a Woodrow Wilson Higher Education Policy Fellow and the recipient of the 2019 Southern Regional Education Board Trailblazer award. Krause earned his bachelor's degree from Austin Peay State University and a master's in public policy from Vanderbilt University.



CHARLES BRIAN MCADAMS, Ph.D., is the Academic Services Coordinator at Family Scholar House, where for nearly eight years, Brian has helped students pursue their educational dreams. He is an adjunct professor at Spalding University, where he teaches African-American religion, religion and social justice, and other classes. He earned a doctorate in religion from Temple University in 2010. His doctoral dissertation examined the role of religion in civic life in light of the Civil Rights Movement. He earned a Master of Divinity from the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 1996, and a bachelor of science degree in geography from Murray State University in 1992.

PRESENTERS & PANELISTS (A-Z)



DAWN MEDLEY serves as the Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management at Wayne State University. Prior to joining Wayne State, Medley served as a Vice President at St. Andrews University, Warren Wilson College, and Forest Institute, and she was the Chief Enrollment Officer at the University of Arkansas. As the creator and champion of the Warrior Way Back

program, the nation's first student debt forgiveness program, Medley often speaks to and teaches other institutions to support returning students. She is a member of the Leadership Detroit Class and active in numerous professional organizations. Championing a social justice model for educational access to prevent barriers from blocking students, Medley recently led the charge to launch the Heart of Detroit pledge, which provides free tuition for all admitted students in the city of Detroit.



MARDI MONTGOMERY is the Senior Director of Workforce Development and Community Engagement at Eastern Kentucky University. In this role, she leads workforce initiatives through one of only 26 authorized OSHA Training Institute Education Centers nationwide. She also pilots Eastern Kentucky University's Workforce and Community Engagement

initiative, which provides quality professional development and training opportunities to a broad range of business, industry, and education partners. She earned her B.A. in English from Centre College, a master's in education and Rank I from Eastern Kentucky University, and a gifted education certification from Georgetown College.



LEE NIMOCKS is Vice President for Strategy and Chief of Staff for the Council on Postsecondary Education, where she oversees the areas of policy and data analysis, board development, planning, public relations and legislative affairs. She led the development of Kentucky's 2016-2021 strategic agenda for postsecondary and adult education, as well as the accountability

system that monitors institutional and system-level performance. Her current areas of policy focus include postsecondary education affordability, adult learner access and success, and workforce and education alignment. Nimocks holds a B.A. degree in English from Rhodes College in Memphis, an M.A. in English from Vanderbilt University, and has completed doctoral coursework in education policy studies at the University of Kentucky. She is a 2011 graduate of Leadership Kentucky, a 2012 Lumina Foundation Academy for State Policy Leadership in Higher Education fellow, and is Kentucky's state liaison for Complete College America.



TODD SCHMIEGELER is Senior Vice President of Foundation and Workforce Development at Trilogy Health Services, LLC. He provides leadership for workforce development, Trilogy Foundation, Live a Dream Foundation, employee well-being, and community initiatives. Most recently, he developed and implemented Trilogy apprentice programs for

students pursuing CNA, culinary, hospitality, and life enrichment credentials. This program is DOL approved with 6,000+ employees enrolled, making it the largest healthcare apprentice program in the U.S., as well as the largest employer-based apprentice program in the four-state service region. In June 2019, Trilogy also launched its Trilogy Promise program with free tuition for all full-time and part-time employees enrolled in Purdue Global's 172 degree programs.



JEN SCHRAMM is a Senior Strategic Policy Advisor at the AARP Public Policy Institute. As part of the financial security team, she identifies policy challenges and opportunities related to workers ages 50 and over. Through research and analyses of emerging employment trends, she develops policy options to help older workers find and

retain jobs. Prior to working at AARP, Schramm managed the workforce trends and forecasting program at the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). She holds a B.A. from the University of Michigan and a Master of Philosophy from the University of Cambridge in sociology and political science. A Research Fellow of the Sloan Center on Aging and Work at Boston College, Schramm has written extensively on workforce issues and trends, including writing the monthly Trend Watch column for *HR Magazine*.



HADASS SHEFFER is the Founding President of The Graduate! Network, Inc., and the Co-Founder and first Executive Director of Graduate! Philadelphia, the program that launched the Network. Her vision and drive are to align systems and services so that every adult has the resources and connections to earn their postsecondary

credentials and realize their career and personal goals. Under her leadership, The Graduate! Network is building regional and state capacity across the country for getting more adults to finish college. Prior to Graduate! Philadelphia, she served as Director of Higher Education Fellowships and Program Development at the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. Her portfolio included several higher education fellowships, campus-community grants for the 2000 White House initiative *Imagining America*, and *Humanities@Work*,

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a program that introduced doctoral students to non-academic careers. Sheffer earned an M.B.A. from Temple University and completed doctoral coursework in linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania. Her B.A. in linguistics is from The Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

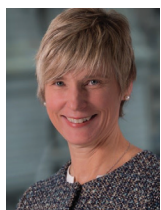


MICHAEL TROY SHELL is an Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at Jefferson Community and Technical College (JCTC). Shell is an advisor for JCTC's Phi Theta Kappa chapter, an honor society for community college students, and he has been awarded JCTC Adjunct Teacher of the Year in acknowledgment of his passion for creative and experiential teaching. He is JCTC's lead ambassador for the Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship, and a self-proclaimed evangelist for the good news of free education for students in Kentucky.



CATHERINE SHERRARD serves as Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana, Sellersburg Campus. Sherrard oversees academic administration and full-time faculty, and she represents the college on many statewide committees, including the Campus Academic Officers Committee and the Talent Development and Assessment Council.

Under her leadership, the Sellersburg campus has successfully completed several programmatic accreditations, most recently, the ten-year statewide reaffirmation of accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission. Sherrard has a B.A. in criminal justice from Kentucky Wesleyan College, an M.S. in justice administration from the University of Louisville, and an Ed.D. in leadership education from Spalding University.



BRIDGETT STRICKLER is Vice President of Network Engagement at The Graduate! Network. She is passionate about educational attainment issues related to adult learners and has encouraged advancement in the greater Louisville region through her work with two Graduate! Network sites—Degrees At Work and Education Matters Southern Indiana. Strickler

also is the Co-Principal Investigator and business engagement lead of Bridging The Talent Gap, a new project funded by Lumina Foundation and sponsored by The Graduate! Network. Strickler earned an M.B.A. from the joint executive program at the University of Louisville and University of Kentucky, a master's degree in teaching from the University of Louisville, and a bachelor's degree in economics and international relations from Bucknell University.



ELLA STRONG is the Dean of Innovation and Educational Technologies at Hazard Community and Technical College. She is an experienced educator and leader dedicated to guiding and supporting others while inspiring an insatiable passion for lifelong learning. She is a visionary leader, faculty builder, and educator with over 25 years of experience advising secondary/postsecondary students, creating curriculum to enhance programs, implementing effective processes, leading change and innovation, supporting faculty and staff, and inspiring systemic change. Most recently, she was involved with Kentucky Adult Promise, Perkins, Starfish, Online Learning, and other initiatives supporting and engaging students. Ella earned her B.S. in business administration in computer information systems from Eastern Kentucky University in 1989; a master's in computer technology and education from Nova Southeastern University in 1995; and an Ed.D. in educational policy studies in 2011.



ELIZABETH TEER is the Associate Director of Admissions at Jefferson Community and Technical College. A graduate of Texas A & M University and a Texas native, Teer moved to Kentucky in 2018 to continue her career in higher education. She enjoys working with students and is dedicated to helping them achieve their educational and life goals. In her current role at Jefferson, Teer oversees recruitment and orientation. She has the opportunity to help new students navigate the college admissions process and assist returning or transfer students in continuing on their educational path. She takes great pride in the work of the recruitment and orientation team and loves being able to support the diverse student body at Jefferson.



AARON THOMPSON, Ph.D., is the President of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) and a passionate advocate for higher education. As a first-generation college student from rural Clay County, Kentucky, he experienced first-hand the transformative power of a college credential. As President of CPE, he works to ensure all Kentuckians have an equal opportunity to improve their lives through postsecondary education. Before taking the helm of CPE, Thompson served as Interim President of Kentucky State University and as Executive Vice President, Provost, and faculty member at Eastern Kentucky University. He has extensive leadership experience within the private and non-profit sectors and is a highly sought-after national speaker. Thompson has authored numerous books and peer-reviewed publications on diversity, cultural competence, first-year experience programs, retention, and student success, among other topics. In 2019, he was inducted into the Kentucky Civil Rights Hall of Fame. Thompson received his doctoral degree

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in sociology from the University of Kentucky, with an emphasis on organizational leadership. He earned a master's degree in industrial sociology from the University of Kentucky, and a bachelor's degree in political science from Eastern Kentucky University.



TYIANA THOMPSON is the Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Services at Ivy Tech Community College. Thompson has 15 years of experience in postsecondary education administration and has served in leadership roles at both private and public institutions, where she has created strategic enrollment initiatives targeting adult, minority, and online students. Thompson was named a Top 20 People to Know in Education by Louisville Business First and Alumni of the Year from Eastern Kentucky University in 2018. She was crowned Mrs. Kentucky in 2017, where she chose accessibility and diversity in education as her platform. She has dedicated her life personally and professionally to instilling the importance of education in others. Thompson holds a B.S. from Eastern Kentucky University, an M.S. from Sullivan University, and is currently pursuing an Ed.D. in educational leadership from Western Kentucky University.



BRANDON WEATHERS is an adult learner at Jefferson Community and Technical College majoring in computer information technology. After completing his degree at Jefferson, he plans to transfer to Western Kentucky University to complete a bachelor's degree. Weathers is a member of the Black Student Union, a 15K-Rise Together Ambassador, and a student worker for the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement.



MARY GWEN WHEELER is the Executive Director of 55,000 Degrees. Previously, she served as the Mayor's Senior Advisor for Education and Youth for Louisville Metro Government, leading policy development and the implementation of education and youth initiatives. In Jerry Abramson's first term as Mayor, she served as Secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. In June 2010, Wheeler was appointed by Governor Beshear to the Kentucky Board of Education. With a B.A. in American studies and a master's in public and private management from Yale University, Wheeler also has experience in family literacy, workforce development, non-profit management, strategic planning, and international development. This includes ten years with the National Center for Family Literacy as a Project Manager and Vice President of Planning and Development.



CRYSTAL WHITE is an adult learner at Jefferson Community and Technical College. After working several years in the healthcare industry, she decided to transition from the administrative to the clinical side of healthcare and become a nurse. While attending Jefferson, she has earned her A.A. and L.P.N. degrees and is on track to obtain an African-American studies certificate. She will graduate with an associate degree in nursing in 2021. White serves as a 15K-Rise Together Ambassador. Mother of one, she is active in the auxiliary of the Prince Hall Shriners and is a member of the National Black Nurses Association.



MELISSA YOUNG is the Director of Grants and Special Projects at the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. She has over 20 years of policy and programmatic experience in adult and higher education administration. As CPE's lead grant writer since 2011, she has secured nearly \$5 million for educational initiatives in Kentucky. Her areas of focus include adult learner access and success, strategic planning and accountability, communications, and program and event coordination. Young received a B.A. in English from Transylvania University and an M.A. in English from the University of Kentucky.



KATHY ZANDONA is the Senior Vice President of Network Engagement at The Graduate! Network. Zandona provides education and workforce development consulting to help business and community leaders see the potential for improving the educational attainment of their citizens. She focuses on engaging the business community and providing technical assistance to new member communities. She has extensive background in meeting facilitation, leadership training and development, and organizational development. Prior to this, Zandona was Vice President of Education and Workforce Development for Greater Louisville Inc. and the metro Chamber of Commerce, where she served as key liaison in a community-wide effort to increase educational attainment, which led to the formation of 55,000 Degrees. She is a graduate of the University of Kentucky.



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