

2022 CTE Leadership Collaborative Convening Speakers

October 18 - 20, 2022

Nashville, TN

Plenary Speakers

Dr. Emily House

Executive Director, Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Emily House has served as the Executive Director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation since January 2021. Prior to assuming this role, she served as the agency's Deputy Executive Director and Interim Executive Director.

Emily formerly led the THEC/TSAC Research and Planning team and College Access teams as the Chief Research and Policy Officer. In this capacity, she developed and executed the State of Tennessee's higher education research agenda, and worked with executive and legislative leaders to design, implement, and evaluate higher education initiatives including Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect.

Previously, Emily served as a Teach for America corps member, and currently teaches Statistics and Research Design courses to doctoral students at East Tennessee State University and Vanderbilt University.

A native of Rochester, New York, House earned her Bachelor's degree at Cornell University, her master's of Public Policy at Vanderbilt University, and Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Michigan. She is a graduate of the Tennessee Government Executive Institute, and is the recipient of the inaugural THEC Presidential Fellowship.

Dr. Jothany Reed

Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, The College System of Tennessee

Dr. Jothany L. Reed is the vice chancellor for academic affairs for The College System of Tennessee, the state's public community and technical colleges.

Reed previously served as vice president for academic success at San Antonio College in Texas, winner of The Aspen Institute's 2021 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, which recognizes high achievement and performance among America's community colleges.

With over 23 years of experience, Reed demonstrates a passion for teaching and learning and developing innovative models to support student success. Prior to her current appointment, she has played key roles in system- and college-level initiatives including:

- Led system advisory committees that engaged nearly 100 industry/business partners.
- Established a Pathways Leadership Council, an integrated, systematized leadership collective for multiple colleges.
- Led a system-wide redesign on Guided Pathways that was recognized by the Community College Research Center (CCRC).
- Led development of one of the first bachelor's degree at a community college.
- Implemented a faculty mentoring program and Teaching and Learning Center.
- Led Courageous Conversations and Charrettes to engage stakeholders.

Reed also served as:

- Liaison for strategic/integrated planning for State Center Community College District in California.

- Dean of instruction for fine, performing and communication arts at Fresno City College.
- Faculty member and coordinator of the composition program at Fresno Pacific University.
- Director of the writing center and English instructor at Fisk University.

A native of Nashville, Dr. Reed earned two degrees from Tennessee State University – a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Masters in English. Dr. Reed also earned a Doctorate from the California State University, Fresno in Educational Leadership. She was also selected to participate in a Leadership Institute at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Dr. Ivory Toldson

National Director of Education Innovation and Research, NAACP, and Professor, Howard University

Dr. Ivory A. Toldson is the national director of Education Innovation and Research for the NAACP, professor of counseling psychology at Howard University and editor-in-chief of The Journal of Negro Education. Previously, Dr. Toldson was appointed by President Barack Obama to devise national strategies to sustain and expand federal support to HBCUs as the executive director of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (WHIHBCUs). He also served as president and CEO of the QEM Network and contributing education editor for The Root, where he debunked some of the most pervasive myths about African-Americans in his Show Me the Numbers column. Dr. Toldson is the executive editor of the Journal of Policy Analysis and Research, published by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc. He is also the author of Brill Bestseller, No BS (Bad Stats): Black People Need People Who Believe in Black People Enough Not to Believe Every Bad Thing They Hear about Black People. Dr. Toldson is ranked among the nation's top education professors as a member of Education Week's Edu-Scholar Public Influence Rankings, an

annual list recognizes university-based scholars across the nation who are champions in shaping educational practice and policy.

Michael Frazier

Owner, Reverence Bourbon

Founder Michael Frazier created Reverence to pay homage to his childhood experience that forever changed his life. After the events of September 11th, his mother, serving in the military, was immediately deployed for active duty. His younger sister relocated to stay with their god mother and his older brother sacrificed playing football in high school to care for his little brother while their mother was away. For a 12 year old, the experience was traumatizing emotionally at times, however it was the foundation and fabric of Frazier's character and work ethic today. This situation taught him how to endure hardships and overcome life's adversities to reach personal goals and success. Frazier believes "That success comes with hard work and perseverance through difficulties, and that we should celebrate every success in life. Therefore give Reverence."

Michael Frazier is a native of Memphis, TN. His entrepreneurial spirit and life experience are the catalyst to creating the Reverence Brand. He envisioned in creating a spirit that not only enjoyable for everyone but to create an experience that gives purpose behind celebration. Frazier founded Reverence Bourbon in June of 2020 in Nashville, TN. Reverence is a Tennessee Bourbon that is true to the Volunteer state. From the aged barrels all the way to the classic label and finish of the bottle. Reverence is an exclusive Tennessee premium bourbon.

Concurrent Session Facilitators

Dr. Nicole K. Arrighi

Assistant Dean of Teacher Education, Tennessee State University

Assistant Dean of Teacher Education at Tennessee State University. Arrighi has additional appointments as the Faculty Athletic Representative and NCAA Division 1 Council member for the Ohio Valley Conference (OVC), HBCU C2 Curriculum specialist for the National Center of Smart Technology, ACUE Facilitator, adjunct professor for Trevecca Nazarene University, and online instructor for the Tennessee Board of Regents – TNeCampus (including 8 years as a faculty mentor).

Recognized as a 2017 ATHENA Young Professional nominee and 2015 Women of Distinction in the field of education, Arrighi trains teachers and students on how to incorporate technology within the classroom, presents nationally and internationally on topics such as classroom management, Millennial learners, and digital citizenship, and continues to work diligently in her field preparing pre-professional educators for teaching, learning, and advocacy of children and public education. Her higher education online training and consulting involved several historically black institutions, K-12 school districts, and internationally in England, Senegal, and most recently the United Nations (UNESCO) 2014 mobile learning week. She served as a senior member of the National Education Association's Content Quality & Review board which recommended online professional development courses to the NEA Academy, and taught five years as an educator for Metro-Nashville Public Schools.

As a member of International Forum for Women in eLearning, Phi Delta Kappa, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated and other professional organizations, Arrighi encourages mentoring and networking as a means of building community, developing citizenship and responsibility, and promoting a society in which everyone's role is valued.

Arrighi has one child, Giselle. They reside in the Nashville, TN.

Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer

Owner/CEO, Teamer Strategy Group

As CEO of Teamer Strategy Group, LLC., Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer brings more than 30 years of experience in administrative management;

strategic enrollment management; workforce development; faculty and staff training; leadership searches; board development and training; research, assessment and evaluation; and diversity, equity and inclusion. Prior to her role as CEO, Barnes-Teamer served as a principal at HCM Strategists, LLC. where she provided expertise in state and system-level higher education research, policy, and cross sector collaboration.

Barnes-Teamer served as a consultant for Ruffalo Noel (formerly Noel Levitz) as well as Vice President for student success at Dillard University (LA). Prior to her role at Dillard, Toya served as Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs for the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS); Vice Chancellor/Provost for Louisiana Technical College, District One; Associate Director of Admissions for recruitment and enrollment management at the University of New Orleans (LA) and as Associate Director of Admissions at Loyola University (LA).

Toya holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Loyola University New Orleans and received her Ph.D. in higher education administration from the University of New Orleans.

Dr. Jeff Cockrell

Special Projects Coordinator, Tennessee College of Applied Technology

Dr. Jeff Cockrell has served in several roles in academics including school administrator professor. Currently with Tennessee College of Applied Technology Nashville, he oversees academic offerings at local prisons creating a positive and lasting impact on incarcerated individuals. He coordinates community and industry partnerships to develop programs that support various stakeholders. He is active in the community serving on local boards and committees. As a TN Achieves mentor Dr. Cockrell enjoys helping students achieve their academic and career goals by guiding high school graduates through the college-going process.

Michael Connet

Associate Deputy Executive Director of Outreach and Partner Development, ACTE

Michael Connet is the Associate Deputy Executive Director of Outreach and Partner Development at the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE®). In this role, Michael is responsible for promoting the impact of high-quality CTE on America's learners and supporting the development and growth of the Association's service to 200,000+ professionals engaged in preparing America's next generation of workers. Michael leads the Association's efforts to build relationships that harness the potential of career and technical education and create projects and initiatives that elevate the profession. Michael formerly served as the Senior Director of Programs and Communications.

Prior to joining ACTE, Michael coordinated educational technology programs at community colleges in Iowa and South Carolina, was an executive with public television overseeing education outreach, and led two Fortune-50 telecommunications/technology companies' charitable Foundations in their efforts to support education. A frequent author and speaker on educational excellence, Michael resides in the Washington, DC area with his wife, a lifelong educator.

Dr. LaMetrius Daniels

Associate Vice President, Dean, Office of the Graduate School Program Director for MS Instructional Design & Technology Trevecca Nazarene University

LaMetrius Daniels, Associate Vice-President and Dean of the Graduate School, is a catalyst for change and innovation in education. She provides strategic leadership for online and blended learning programs and works closely with university leaders to identify market trends to build programs and training for workforce development. She served as the Dean for several years and has worked in online learning and higher education for over 16 years.

In addition to her work experience at Trevecca, she has served in various leadership roles in higher education as an Online Learning Director at a

Community College and the Dean of Student Engagement and Campus Technology at a 4-year private higher education institution. Dr. Daniels redesigned and developed programs for institutions to improve the technology infrastructure, online learning delivery, and engagement in these different roles.

Dr. Daniels earned her Ph.D. in Instructional Systems and Technology from Mississippi State University, focusing on improving adult learners' digital literacy. As a researcher in instructional design, she is guided by proven methods, cognitive research, and education to stay abreast of instructional design trends and technology trends.

Michael Diallo McLendon

Michael Diallo McLendon is an experienced actor, writer and Stellar Award-nominated spoken word artist who speaks to audiences in various cities throughout the U.S. He shares spoken word and motivational messages with youth groups, churches and festivals as well as on television, radio and the Internet. He can tailor his presentations to fit a variety of audiences who want to hear inspirational messages about family, culture, God, homelessness, achieving dreams, setting goals and overcoming obstacles. If you love spoken word and are not familiar with the riveting poetic presence of Michael Diallo McLendon, get ready. Genius, passion and vocal sensitivity all take center stage whenever this gifted thespian embraces the microphone. This Tougaloo College alumnus has released two well-received spoken word projects, The Diallo Experience and LOVEREVOLUTION, with The Diallo Experience being nominated for a Stellar Award. His music video, The Forgotten Ones, received the Best Music Video award at The TECH JXN Film Festival in 2020. "We just want to produce art that is honest and wholesome as well as gritty and soulful," said McLendon, a native of Waynesboro, MS. Also a prolific actor, McLendon has appeared in various theatrical productions and studied the craft under veteran performers Richard Lawson, Mykelti Williamson and Tasha Smith. He starred as Walter Lee Younger in Circle Players production of A Raisin In The Sun (Nashville) and made brief appearances in country music artist Jewel's video Satisfied and the FX pilot Outlaw Country. McLendon has made

several television appearances and was featured as Mayor Coleman in Bearfruit Films summer children's film, *The Little Savages*. In July he was awarded Best Producer at the International Black & Diversity Film Festival in Toronto Canada for his short film *Fragility*. Author of the children's book, *Let's Go To Tougaloo*, McLendon has served as director of the Tougaloo College Journalism Program. He has also served as a media specialist at Tougaloo College as well as Tennessee State University where he eventually secured the positions director of Publications and director of the Center for Media Arts and Production. He divides his time between Nashville and Atlanta.

Nancy Eisenbrandt

CCE, Consultant, Talent Development, Nashville New Skills Ready

Nancy joined the economic development team of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce in 1980. In 1990, she was promoted to vice president of business services and in that role developed and led the Chamber's small business, existing business, international business, and workforce initiatives.

Nancy served as the Chamber's chief administrative and chief workforce development officer for 12 years and in her last role at the chamber lead the education, workforce, and talent recruitment team. She also served as the director of the Nashville Chamber Public Benefit Foundation. Nancy served as project leader for Nashville's Lumina Foundation Talent Hub project.

The Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) designated Eisenbrandt, a Certified Chamber Executive (CCE) in 2006. The CCE is the only national certification for chamber professionals. She is a graduate of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Eisenbrandt retired from the Nashville Chamber July 2020. She now serves in a consultant role for the Chamber on the New Skills Ready Nashville initiative funded by JPMorgan Chase Philanthropy

An active community leader, Nancy co-chaired ACCE's Education and Talent Development Division for 7 years. She chaired the Middle Tennessee Workforce Board (MTWB) and served on the MTWB for a number of years. Nancy was elected to the board of the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) in 2015 and served for 5 years. She is a member of TCAT-Nashville's Advisory Board and is currently Vice Chair of the Nashville State Community College Foundation. In 2021, Eisenbrandt was recognized by the Tennessee Board of Regents with the highest honor of Excellence in Philanthropy, in recognition of her lifelong career and commitment to postsecondary education, workforce development, TCAT Nashville and Nashville State Community College.

Jennifer R. Farmer

Founder, Spotlight PR

Jennifer R. Farmer is an author, lecturer and strategic communications professional. She works with grassroots leaders, celebrities, and executives who are committed to social and racial justice. Jennifer helps them to navigate personal and professional crises, cultivate and maintain their brands, and tell their stories more effectively.

Her debut book, "Extraordinary PR, Ordinary Budget: A Strategy Guide," is a compilation of strategic communications case studies from racial and social justice campaigns she has led or supported.

Most recently, Jennifer worked with Netflix to promote her client, Michael Render's (pka Killer Mike) new Netflix series 'Trigger Warning with Killer Mike.' She helped facilitate and maintain a month-long media tour for the rapper, activist and businessman, which saw him quoted in more than 75 media stories from January 16, 2019 through February 12, 2019. Farmer booked Render on 'The Breakfast Club with Charlamagne the God,' an interview that yielded more than 2.3 million views as of Feb. 2019, and the Joe Rogan Podcast, which garnered over 2.2 million views as of Feb. 2019. Render recognized her work in many interviews, including his interview with Joe Rogan (12:06 minute mark).

Jennifer has held range of senior leadership positions with Advancement Project, Faith in Action, the Service Employees International Union, SEIU District 1199 (KY/WV/OH) and the Ohio Department of Transportation, in the administration of former Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland. She has worked with celebrities and leaders such as Jesse Williams (Grey's Anatomy), former Ohio State Senator Nina Turner, the Rev. Dr. Brianna K. Parker, the Rev. Michael McBride, and veteran civil rights attorneys Penda D. Hair and Judith Browne Dianis.

Jennifer's clients have been featured in leading print, digital and broadcast media outlets including The View, The Wendy Williams Show, CNN's Brooke Baldwin, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, Politico, MSNBC, HBO's Real Time with Bill Maher, and The Rachel Maddow Show.

Dr. Christopher J. Garner

Director of Student Life, Meharry Medical College

Dr. Christopher J. Garner was born and raised in Oak Park, IL (Suburb outside of Chicago). He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Speech and Theatre Communications from Tennessee State University, MBA from Bethel University, and Doctor of Education from Trevecca Nazarene University in Leadership and Professional Practice. Before entering higher education, Dr. Garner had a brief stint in broadcast journalism as a videographer/reporter in Bowling Green, KY, at WBKO ABC 13. It is at WBKO where Dr. Garner learned how to form and build relationships with people from all walks of life, which eventually led him to work in higher education.

Dr. Garner has held several positions within higher education, ranging from Student Success Advisor, dissertation adviser, Coordinator, and adjunct instructor. He currently volunteers as a TN Promise Mentor, where he helps guide first-year college students with questions regarding the college onboarding process. Dr. Garner is very passionate about the overall success and well-being of students. He believes that all students can achieve their goals through hard work, dedication, and

someone encouraging them along the way. Dr. Garner is the current Director of Student Life at Meharry Medical College.

Dr. Alexis G. Heaston

Assistant Professor, Tennessee State University

Dr. Alexis Gatson Heaston currently serves as an assistant professor in the Department of Public Health, Health Administration, and Health Sciences at Tennessee State University. After spending a number of years in enrollment management, Heaston pursued a career in academia and has served in the department since July 2016. Dr. Heaston engages in research activities in the areas of substance abuse prevention, health disparities, and risky health behaviors in college students. Her most recent publication addressed collaborations between public health entities and faith-based organizations with COVID-19 recovery efforts. In addition to her role as an assistant professor, she also serves as the faculty liaison for the university's quality enhancement plan (QEP), which seeks to promote student success through holistic, integrative advising, including improved utilization of academic and student support resources and the integration of educational and career planning.

Outside her scholarly activities, she enjoys spending time with her husband, Dr. Marlon Heaston and their daughters, Alexandria and Madelyn.

Dr. Tachaka Hollins

Assistant Vice Chancellor, Tennessee Board of Regents

Dr. Tachaka Hollins serves as the Assistant Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the Tennessee Board of Regents. She earned her Bachelor of Business Administration in Computer Information Systems and Master of Business Education from Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). She earned her Educational Doctorate degree (Ed.D.) in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis program from East Tennessee State University.

Dr. Hollins is a 2022-2023 Complete Tennessee Leadership Institute Fellow, 2021-2022 ACTE Post-Secondary Leadership Fellow. She is a 2019 LEAD Tennessee Alliance 10 graduate and a 2014 graduate of the Tennessee College of Applied Technology Leadership Institute. She was the 2016 Cable Athena Young Professional Award nominee and served in the 2016 Class of TBR Maxine Smith Fellows.

Dr. Shanna Jackson

President, Nashville State Community College

Dr. Shanna L. Jackson has been serving Nashville State Community College as president since June 2018. Nashville State is a seven-campus comprehensive community college that students in a seven- county region. Her extensive experience in administration, teaching, workforce, and community development experience is guiding the college's mission to increase access, completion, and post- completion success for all students who come to Nashville State. Jackson serves on the local boards of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, Alignment Nashville, Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee, Urban League of Middle Tennessee, the Memorial Foundation and the United Way of Middle Tennessee. Jackson earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and an MBA from Florida A&M University and an Ed.D. in Administration and Supervision from Tennessee State University.

Dr. Kevin Johnson

Senior Advisor, Advance CTE

Dr. Kevin R. Johnson Sr. is as a Senior Advisor at Advance CTE. Dr. Johnson oversees and manages major organization-wide, highly visible initiatives that support, promote and increase equitable access to and success in high-quality Career Technical Education (CTE). He leads and manages the Postsecondary State Career Technical Education Leaders Fellowship at Advance CTE – Sponsored by ECMC Foundation and the Opportunity Gap Analysis Technical Assistance work within states. Dr. Johnson has served as a Statewide CTE Coordinator at the Texas Education Agency, an Assistant Principal at Lyndon Baines Johnson Early

College High School (Austin, Texas); a CTE/Academy Specialist at Stony Point High (Round Rock, Texas) for two-years; and as a Health Science Technology teacher for four-years.

Heather Justice

Education Strategy Group (ESG) and Consultant, New Skills Ready Network

Heather Justice joined ESG in 2020 to lead and support the work on career readiness and aligning high quality K-12, postsecondary, and industry pathways. Prior to joining ESG, Heather served as the Division Director for College, Career and Military Preparation within the Texas Education Agency where she oversaw the implementation of the Texas Regional Pathways Network, high-quality Career and Technical Education programs, work-based learning, industry certifications of value, and College and Career Readiness School Models such as Early College High Schools, Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools, and Texas STEM Academies. During this time she also created a pathway for high school students into teacher preparation programs, assisted in implementing a statewide Grow Your Own program, and instituted an early teaching credential.

Prior to joining the Texas Education Agency, Heather was the Executive Director of Career and Technical Education for the Tennessee Department of Education. In this role she managed the comprehensive reform of Career and Technical Education programs of study, instituted data sharing agreements to obtain industry certification data, overhauled licensing of CTE educators and standards for teacher preparation programs, established a statewide professional development model for CTE educators, assisted in teacher preparation report card overhaul, and received a federal grant to implement alternative teacher preparation programs.

Heather taught high school accounting and marketing and served as a public relations and campaign finance consultant. She holds a Master's in education from the University of Phoenix and a Bachelor's degree in business administration from the Florida State University.

Andrea Messing-Mathie

Director, Jobs for the Future (JFF)

Andrea Messing-Mathie, PhD, is a director at JFF. She is a member of the team in the Center for Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning. She focuses on building integrated strategies with national, state, and local partners to change existing education and workforce systems and to help communities to develop the capacity and will to reimagine and rethink the ways in which people, both young people and adults, engage with and experience the education and workforce systems and improve their economic and educational outcomes. She leads a body of work, working with employers, schools, and community partners, that is creating momentum to execute on the promises of work-based learning and build systems that enable young people to experience apprenticeship as part of a viable postsecondary pathway.

Andrea's areas of expertise include education and industry partnerships, college and career readiness, work-based learning, secondary and postsecondary alignment, and DEIA in education outcomes. She is dedicated to understanding the importance of the connections between classroom instruction and the economic opportunities for young people.

Nyema Mitchell

Director, Jobs for the Future (JFF)

Nyema Mitchell has over 15 years of experience as a researcher, technical assistance provider, grant maker, and leader. She is currently a Director of Unit Strategy and Learning at JFF where she supports teams to develop and finalize proposals for partners, philanthropy, federal opportunities. One of her biggest projects focused on supporting institutional transformation in community colleges across the country through the management of \$20 million in grant funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that included securing a \$4 million extension. Ms. Mitchell worked closely with multiple program officers to ensure that the grant outcomes were being met, engaging a network of postsecondary systems and organizational partners to provide technical

assistance, and administering grants to our partner organizations. Prior to joining JFF, she was a researcher with the Center for Education Policy at SRI International, where she contributed to the design and implementation of large-scale, multi-year evaluations; conducted systematic data analysis; managed teams of researchers; wrote proposals; and built strong relationships with external partners. Ms. Mitchell has a master's degree in public policy from the Georgia Institute of Technology and a bachelor's degree in education studies and public policy from Brown University.

Cristen Moore

Cristen Moore has more than a decade of experience in public policy and community engagement. She provides strategic guidance across stakeholder groups to advance impact through equitable policies for communities of color with an expertise in increasing educational attainment. A trusted thought partner and committed collaborator, Moore works to bridge the gap between public policy and the communities it affects, prioritizing an intentional commitment to social justice, diversity, racial equity and inclusion.

Most recently, Moore served as the Director of Equity and Change Management at HCM Strategists, a public policy and advocacy firm, and provided a portfolio of services including strategic planning and support, and the development of equity-minded leadership and coalitions. Her work spans higher education systems, state-level government agencies, community-based organizations, the workforce sector and educational institutions with a focus on community colleges, MSIs and HBCUs. She supports this work for nonprofits such as Ascendium Education Foundation, ECMC Foundation, Strada Education Network and Lumina Foundation. Prior to joining HCM, Cristen worked on Capitol Hill as a Barbara Jordan Scholar in the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee and served as a Legislative Fellow in the House of Representatives.

A proud graduate of a historical black college, Moore received her bachelor's from Howard University and also earned her master's of

public administration from George Washington University. She currently resides in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Sheila K. Morris

Director of Education & Professional Learning, Business Professionals of America

Sheila K. Morris is Director of Education & Professional Learning at Business Professionals of America (BPA) where she oversees all educational programs, including student competitive events for the middle, secondary, and post-secondary divisions. In this role, she also creates and implements advisor professional learning frameworks for over 1000 advisors and oversees the Classroom Educators Advisory Council (CEAC).

A highly sought-after presenter, she has created strategies for high-quality instruction and has developed training curriculum for adult learners. Her expertise in professional development has created frameworks to improve and sustain professional learning for the audience of administrators, teachers, and students.

As a member of the Educator Advisory Board for the Federal Reserve Bank, St. Louis Branch, she is also a trained Site Visitor for the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Ms. Morris earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Alabama A&M University and a Master of Arts in Public Administration from Tennessee State University and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership & Policy Studies from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Dr. Jeffery Norfleet

Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Assistant Professor of Leadership Studies, Trevecca Nazarene University

Jeffery W. Norfleet, EdD was born and raised in Clarksville, Tennessee. He received all his primary and secondary training in the Clarksville

Montgomery County School System. After high school, he continued his studies at Tennessee State University where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Humanities and a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction. Jeffery earned his doctoral degree in Education with an emphasis in Leadership and Professional Practice from Trevecca Nazarene University. Jeffery's interest in education, leadership, and technology led to employment at the Tennessee Board of Regents. Jeffery served as a member of the Regents Online Degree Program. While Jeffery's first professional opportunities were in public higher education, he made a professional move to gain an understanding of private higher education. In 2013 Jeffery joined the team at Trevecca Nazarene University as a Coordinator of Academic Affairs. Jeffery's desire to learn more led him to additional positions as Assistant Director of Academic Affairs, Director of Academic Services, and Associate Dean of Academic Services for the School of Graduate and Continuing Studies. In January 2020, Jeffery received an opportunity to serve as Director of Academic Affairs for the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

In this role Jeffery served the state of Tennessee's public four-year institutions in the review and development of quality academic programs. Additionally, he served as the off-campus instruction administrator for the state's technical colleges, community colleges, and public universities as it relates to instruction separate from the institution's main campus. Jeffery is now the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assistant Professor of Leadership Studies at Trevecca. Jeffery is a strong believer in family and community. He and his beautiful wife are raising three wonderful children. Jeffery is a leader who is looking to place a positive impact on the community and surrounding areas in which he lives. He believes in sharing knowledge and empowering others to be successful.

Bob Obrohta

Executive Director, Tennessee College Access and Success Network

Bob Obrohta is a leader in college access to higher education for first-generation and low-income students. His 30+ year career has spanned

providing direct service work for thousands of students in both urban and rural communities to policy advocacy at the state and national level. A low-income/first-generation college student himself, Bob is the founder of both the Oasis Center's (Nashville, TN) Oasis College Connection program and the Tennessee College Access and Success Network (TCASN). In his current position as executive director of TCASN, Bob provides leadership on program design, professional development, college admissions, financial aid, scholarships, and advocacy.

Bob sits on the National College Attainment Network's (NCAN) National Policy Council and is its 2018 recipient of their executive leadership award. He has a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of St. Francis (Joliet, IL) and is the 2017 recipient of the university's Distinguished Alumni Award for the College of Arts and Sciences. He has a master's degree in higher education administration from Teachers College, Columbia University (New York, NY) with concentrations in college student development theory and financial aid. Bob and his wife, Lora, live in Nashville with their two sons (both public school graduates and currently enrolled in college). Iris Palmer

Deputy Director for Community Colleges with the Education Policy program, New America

Iris Palmer is deputy director for community colleges with the Education Policy program at New America. She is a member of the higher education team and also works closely with the Center on Education & Labor. She provides research and analysis on community colleges, adults enrolled in higher education, apprenticeship, and the ethical use of predictive analytics in higher education.

Iris previously worked at the National Governors Association on postsecondary issues, where she helped states strengthen the connection between higher education and the workforce, support competency-based systems, use data from effectiveness and efficiency metrics, and improve licensure for veterans. Prior to joining NGA, she worked at HCM Strategists on the Lumina Foundation's initiative to develop innovative higher education models, including new technologies

and competency-based approaches. Before joining HCM Strategists, she worked at the U.S. Department of Education in all of the offices related to higher education: the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education; the Office of Postsecondary Education; the Policy Office; and the Office of the Undersecretary.

She received her master's of public policy from George Mason University and her undergraduate degree in political science from Goucher College.

Leah Palmer

Executive Director AzAMI Workforce | Applied Science, Mesa Community College

As the current Executive Director for the Arizona Advanced Manufacturing Institute (AzAMI), Leah has developed workforce implementation strategies for the manufacturing sector, connecting the talent supply with competency-based training in automation, robotics, electronics, 3D printing, drafting, machining and welding programs effectively addressing the growing workforce demands in Arizona. Her expertise is strategic planning, program design, funding acquisition, and building a systems approach to support economic impact by developing collaborative processes that bring together education, workforce resources and industry partners.

Leah has established a proven record of transformative and innovative results with over 20 years of hands-on experience forging collaborative partnerships and workforce solutions. The advanced manufacturing sector growth demands for a talent pipeline has inspired designing accelerated technician training in aerospace and semiconductor, upskilling hundreds of students for advanced manufacturing companies like Boeing, Intel and others. Next on the horizon is the growing Electric Vehicle manufacturing technician engaging in the “future of work” skills needed for tomorrows’ jobs.

Prior to serving as the Executive Director for AzAMI at Mesa Community College, Leah has worked in other leadership capacities as the Director for Workforce and Community Partnerships building both credit and

noncredit workforce training partnerships and the Associate Director for Community Partnerships for the Center for Public Policy - Engaging with regional executive leadership, enhancing resource acquisitions and supporting private, Federal and state funding to grow the talent supply for the Arizona advanced manufacturing sector. Leah is best known for finding solutions and creating opportunities.

Erica Simon

Deputy Director of Strategy and Higher Education, WE CAN TX

As the Deputy Director of Strategy and Higher Education at Educate Texas, Erica leads the Workforce and Education Community College Apprenticeship Network. WE CAN TX engages workforce boards, community colleges, and economic development partners to build modern work-based learning experiences, including pre-apprenticeships, youth apprenticeships, and apprenticeships. WE CAN TX is committed to the development of pathways from education to workforce that are aligned to employer needs and that are sustainable and scalable. The seven-region network across Texas aims share best practices to break down barriers in pursuit of equitable outcomes for first-generation, low-income students of color in Texas.

Prior to joining Educate Texas, Erica spent nearly a decade as Assistant Director of Research in Mathematics Education in Southern Methodist University's School of Education. She holds a bachelor's degree in Art History and Spanish from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master's degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Texas, Arlington.

Michelle Van Noy

Director & Associate Research Professor, Education and Employment Research Center (EERC), Rutgers University

Michelle Van Noy is the Director of the Education and Employment Research Center at the School of Management and Labor Relations at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. She has over 20 years of

experience conducting research on education and the workforce focused on credentials, community colleges, and connections between higher education and the labor market. She is currently leading studies on technician education and economic development, quality in community college noncredit education non-degree credentials, student decision making about programs and careers, higher education labor market alignment, and effective practices in workforce education. Before joining EERC, Dr. Van Noy conducted research at the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, the Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University, and Mathematica Policy Research. She holds a Ph.D. in sociology and education from Columbia University, a M.S. in public policy from Rutgers, and a B.A. in psychology and Spanish from Rutgers.

Nzvinga Williams

Director of CTE, Central Piedmont Community College - Merancas Campus

Dr. Nzvinga Williams started her career in higher education in 2013 at Wake Technical Community College, in Raleigh, NC, as an Office Assistant to the Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) Academy. In 2014, she moved to Charlotte, NC where she continued to work with BLET at Central Piedmont Community College. In 2016, she became a Career and Technical Education Coordinator where she served as liaison between the college's CTE Programs of Study, community, and K12.

In July 2022, she became the Director of Career and Technical Education. This role provides her the opportunity to give college wide direction on Perkins V and CTE efforts to bridge the gap between K12, community, and industry partners. Nzvinga holds an EdD in Adult and Community College Leaders, Bachelors of Arts in Psychology, and Bachelors of Arts Criminology from North Carolina State University. Along with a Master's of Business Administration from University of Phoenix. She is married to her husband, Michael, and they have two fur babies (Bella and Roscoe).