

Speaker Biographies

Becky Ament, Zane State College

Becky Ament joined Zane State College in 1988. She initiated the college's placement test; developmental education program and learning assistance center. Under Becky's leadership the Developmental Education Courses were awarded Advanced Certification from the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) and the tutor training program was certified by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). In 2007 Becky received an Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate award which is presented annually to ten college educators by the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. Becky has presented at national conferences of NADE, Achieving the Dream, NISOD, and RCCA

Dr. Rose Beebe, West Virginia University at Parkersburg

Dr. Rose Beebe began her career at West Virginia University at Parkersburg in 1983 as an instructor of Nursing. In 2006, she accepted the role of Chair of Health Sciences and is responsible for nursing, surgical technology, pharmacy technician, and CNA/Allied Health programs. As the administrator of the division, she has been successful in leading the accreditation review process and gaining full continuing national accreditation for the nursing and surgical technology programs. She has been involved with the development and approvals for a RN-BSN program which is in the final stage of HLC approval and the transitioning of the surgical technology program from a certificate to an associate of applied science degree. As a member of the West Virginia Consortium for Associate Degree Nursing Taskforce, she has been instrumental in the development and submission for approval of a common state-wide associate degree nursing program. Dr. Beebe has presented on issues about nursing student's perception of success and the impact of simulation on knowledge and critical thinking skills of nursing students at national conferences including the Association of Institutional Research (AIR) National Forum, Southeastern Association for Community College Research (SACCR) Annual Conference, 12th Annual International Nursing Simulation/Learning Resource Centers (INACSL) Annual Conference, and CAE's HPSN World 2013 International Conference. She earned her MS in Nursing at the Ohio State University and EdD in Educational Leadership from West Virginia University.

Drew Bennett, Missouri State University – West Plains

Drew Bennett became the Chancellor of Missouri State University-West Plains on July 1, 2007. Dr. Bennett received his B.A. in History from Tulane University, his M.S. in Human Relations from Golden Gate University, his M.S. in National Security Strategy from the National War College, and his Ph.D. in Adult and Extension Education from Texas A&M University. Commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps, he rose to the rank of colonel. In addition to publishing numerous articles and book reviews, Dr. Bennett has taught as a full-time faculty member at Texas A&M University and the National War College and as an adjunct faculty member at Blinn College, Central Texas College, George Washington University and Norwich University. Prior to becoming Chancellor, he held the Commandant of the Marine

Corps Chair at the National War College in Washington, D.C. Since joining Missouri State University, Dr. Bennett has led an effort to make college more accessible for citizens in the Missouri State University-West Plains service area. An innovative outreach program, extensive communication campaign, and college access grant funding have been used to increase enrollment by 40%. His op-eds on education have appeared in papers throughout the state and in two national journals, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed*. Under Dr. Bennett's leadership Missouri State University-West Plains was selected for two years in a row as "A Great College To Work For" by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, as well as recently being selected for two years in a row by the Aspen Institute as one of the top 120 two-year colleges in the United States. This August, Missouri State University-West Plains was ranked sixth in the *Washington Monthly's* "Best Community Colleges" category for 2013.

Jennifer Blalock, Nova Southeastern University

Jennifer Blalock is a doctoral candidate in higher education leadership at Nova Southeastern University in the Higher Education Administration program. She is currently the Chief Student Support Services Officer at Phi Theta Kappa, with a specialized focus on scholarship programs; completion programs; transfer preparation; and completion. She has over a decade of leadership as an administrator in community and state colleges, including Florida Keys Community College; State College of Florida; and Brevard Community College, where she served as an Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management, Marketing & Community Relations. She was the recipient of the Faculty of the Year while at Florida Keys; won "Top Presentation" at the Fall 2012 Alabama NACADA Advising Conference; and presents at conferences nationally.

Kelley Brandt, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)

Kelley Brandt currently works at Boise State University as the eCampus Center Associate Director. In addition, he has been working with WICHE's Internet Course Exchange (ICE) for the past 4 years to promote multi-institutional collaborations. Kelley holds an M.Ed. in Higher Education and Student Services Administration from the University of Vermont.

Melinda Byrd-Murphy, Alabama Southern Community College

Melinda Byrd-Murphy currently serves as the Director of the Alabama Center for Literary Arts/Division Chair of Humanities/Instructor of English at Alabama Southern Community College. Dr. Byrd-Murphy has twenty years of work experience at the secondary and postsecondary level and brings to this position a comprehensive view of education and an appreciation of the literary arts in southwest Alabama. Additionally, Dr. Byrd-Murphy is a native of Monroeville—"The Literary Capital of Alabama." As the Director of the Alabama Center for Literary Arts, Dr. Byrd-Murphy discusses the influence of Harper Lee and "To Kill A Mockingbird" on Alabama writers and their works and is responsible for organizing the annual Alabama Writers Symposium. Dr. Byrd-Murphy received her doctorate in Higher Education Administration from the University of Alabama. She is a past participant and a graduate of the Alabama Community College Leadership Academy and is a member of several civic and professional organizations.

Daryl Conte, American Student Association

Daryl Conte is a Campus Engagement and Education Consultant who joined ASA in 2012. He has 25 years of experience working in student affairs administration and an unwavering commitment to lifelong learning through development of assessment and retention strategies that support student success and persistence rates among historically underserved student populations. As a Campus Engagement and Education Consultant, Daryl assists schools in creating a campus-specific plan for promoting SALT on campus, based on the school's student and alumni populations, campus culture, and available resources. He is a member of the Maine Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (MASFAA) and the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA). Daryl has a BS in Marketing from Long Island University, an MS in Education Administration and Supervision from Pace University, and an MBA from Alfred University

Shannon Cunningham, Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College

Shannon Cunningham serves as the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College in Miami, OK,. Cunningham has spent the past ten years of her career at NEO, having served as a faculty member, horse judging team coach, and department chair for Agriculture. Cunningham has served as a consultant in agriculture education for Azerbaijan, hosted many horse judging clinics, and serves on several local and state committees to promote excellence in education.

Juanita Gamez Vargas, University of Oklahoma

Juanita Gamez Vargas is a tenure-track Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in the Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education at the University of Oklahoma. She graduated with a Ph. D. in higher education administration from Texas A&M University in 2008. Her research interests focus on (ethnic) women in leadership and community colleges.

Dr. Linda Garcia, National American University

Dr. Linda Garcia is the Vice President for Community College Relations at National American University. Her role includes leading the partnerships between NAU and community and technical colleges, which provide baccalaureate opportunities for AAS graduates. Previously, she served as an Assistant Dean of Instruction at Lone Star College (Texas). Dr. Garcia earned her Bachelor's in Journalism and Doctorate in Educational Administration (Community College Leadership Program) from The University of Texas at Austin, and she received her Master's in Interdisciplinary Studies from The University of Texas at Brownsville.

Dr. Beth Hagan, Community College Baccalaureate Association

Dr. Beth Hagan has been the Executive Director of the Community College Baccalaureate Association since 1999. She holds M.Ed. and MBA degrees from the University of Illinois and a Ph.D. in Entrepreneurship Education.

The mission of the Association is to promote better access to the baccalaureate degree on community college campuses and to serve as a resource for information on various models for accomplishing this purpose. She believes strongly that everyone should have access to post secondary education, including those place-bound by families and careers and those who are economically challenged. Dr. Hagan has presented about issues of access to postsecondary

education at many conferences including the National Council for Workforce Education (NCWE), National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), The League for Innovations, *Innovations 2001 – 2008*, and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

Brent Hastey, Yuba Community College District

Mr. Brent Hastey is the Board Chair/President of the Yuba Community College District (YCCD) Board of Trustees in northern California. Mr. Hastey was first elected to the YCCD governing board in 2008. Mr. Hastey is a business owner. In 2009 he developed Plumas Lake Self Storage and is the owner/operator of this family-owned business. In addition to serving as Board Chair at YCCD, he currently serves as the public representative to the Yuba County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and is Chairman of the Board for the Bank of Feather River. Mr. Hastey's previous professional accomplishments have included serving two terms on the Yuba County Board of Supervisors, as President of the Yuba Sutter Economic Development Corporation (YSEDC), two terms on the board of the Yuba County Water Agency (YCWA) and as Chairperson in 1996 and 1997, and on the board of Reclamation District 784, as well as Chairmanships of the Measure J Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee (CBOC) and of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). Mr. Hastey also served on the board of the Regional Council of Rural Councils (RCRC) and as a lobbyist for that group at the State Capitol. From 2001-2010 he owned and operated Hastey Consulting working with developers and local boards specializing in land development in rural counties. Mr. Hastey enjoys volunteering his time to the Yuba Feather Rivers Rotary Club and to the Boy Scouts of America. Mr. and Mrs. Hastey have four children.

Dr. Douglas Houston, Yuba Community College District

Dr. Douglas B. Houston serves as the Chancellor of the Yuba Community College District (YCCD), his second CEO position in the State of California. Dr. Houston's 34-year career has been in various leadership roles: as commander of various military units, as an administrator to several community colleges, as a Boy Scout leader, and in various leadership roles in his church and community. He currently serves on the California Community Colleges' Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee, the Boards of NextEd (the Sacramento area P-20 Council) and SACTO (the Sacramento Area Commerce and Trade Organization) and on the Advisory Committees for the U.C. Davis CANDEL and CSU Sacramento doctoral programs. Prior to coming to YCCD, Dr. Houston served as the Superintendent/President of Lassen College in Susanville California, successfully leading the College's accreditation and fiscal recovery. While in Susanville he initiated the development of the Lassen Educational Collaborative, a partnership of education, business and community to establish K-14 seamless transition and improve student success in rural Lassen County, and served on the Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium / Workforce Investment Board and the Lassen Economic Development Council.

Dennis Lancaster, Missouri State University – West Plains

Dennis Lancaster was born and raised in the West Plains, Mo., and, after going away to college at Drury University in Springfield and the University of Missouri in Columbia, he returned to his

hometown to serve, first, as a newspaper reporter and then, in 1992, as a member of the Missouri State University-West Plains campus team of instructors and staff members. As a staff member, he has served as Assistant Director of Public Relations, Coordinator of Special Projects, Interim Chancellor, Assistant to the Chancellor, Assistant Professor of Letters, and, currently, Interim Dean of Academic Affairs. As a faculty member, he has taught courses in journalism, leadership development, philosophy, ethics, and media analysis. His particular love, however, is serving as Director of the William and Virginia Darr Honors Program, as the 15-year-old program's lead instructor and, yes, as its lead learner. As a staff member and administrator, he authored the campus' first successful Title III grant and coordinated the self-study process that helped to garner the campus' first 10-year accreditation cycle from the Higher Learning Commission. Lancaster holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Philosophy from Drury University, a Master of Arts degree in Journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and is currently finishing his dissertation toward a Doctorate of Education in Higher Education Leadership from Lindenwood University.

Lisa LaVigna, Excelsior College

Lisa LaVigna is the Executive Director of Outreach and Access at Excelsior College. She has over 20 years experience in the education field. Lisa holds an MBA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and a Bachelors in Public Affairs from the State University of New York in Albany. Excelsior College was established in 1971 as a "credit aggregator" by the New York State Board of Regents. Its mission is to help working adults complete a degree. Every student at Excelsior is a transfer student. The college has over 40 years experience with alternatives to the traditional college classroom experience for degree completion.

Dr. Tricia Leggett, Zane State College

Tricia Leggett began her career at Zane State College in 1998 as clinical coordinator in the Radiologic Technology program. She was promoted to Program Director in 2002 and, in 2013, transitioned to the Director of the Department of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning. Tricia has been the project manager for the Building and Scaling Leaner Analytics for a Purdue sponsored grant and has been appointed to the Advisory Council for the Gateways to Completion through the John N. Gardner Institute. She has been extremely involved with assessment, accreditation, and strategic planning, but most importantly, student success.

Johnny McMoy, Wallace State Community College

Johnny McMoy is the College Dean at Wallace State specializing in accreditation, institutional effectiveness, and academic assessment. He has spent the last fourteen years in Higher Education Administration, working chiefly as a planning and assessment practitioner and consultant. Prior to his employment in Higher Education, he spent twenty years in domestic and international business, working as a strategic marketing analyst for American Airlines in Chicago and spending six years as an airport administrator in the Middle East. He has served on more than ten commissions or boards of directors, and is a frequent speaker at campus and community events. He has previously presented at the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the Southern Association of Institutional Research, the Tennessee Association of Institutional Research, the Southeastern United States—Canadian Provinces Alliance, and the American Association of Community Colleges. He served for three years as Chair of a state-mandated Annual Anti-

Terrorism Conference for Georgia's airport managers. He is ABD on a doctorate in Higher Education Administration from Georgia Southern University (expected 12/13), and holds a Master's degree in English from the University of Tennessee and an MBA from Vanderbilt.

Dr. Jimmy Middlebrook, Walden University

Dr. Jimmy L. Middlebrook received his Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Georgia in 1986. He is a Licensed Psychologist with 15 years private practice experience specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of emotional, behavioral and learning problems of children and adults with an emphasis in ADHD and Learning Disabilities.

Dr. Middlebrook has taught numerous psychology and business courses over the past 20 years at the undergraduate and graduate level at several universities and has served as an academic administrator as the Faculty Lead in University Success courses, Learning Center Director, Chair of Student Success, Program Director and currently as the Associate Dean for the College of Undergraduate Studies at Walden University.

His research interests include predictors of student success, learning styles, and effective leadership. He has delivered over 200 presentations to public and professional audiences and has published in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Jay Olsen, Snow College, Utah

Jay Olsen has cowboied, farmed, and ranched in Utah, Florida and Idaho. In 1997 Jay joined Snow College as a Farm/Ranch Business Management educator. He has taught and advised over 300 farm families in managing their farm and ranch businesses. Each month for at least one year, Jay visits 30 – 40 farm and ranch families and teaches them financial and production record keeping and analysis, using their financial and production records. For the past three years Mr. Olsen has also been rebuilding the Agriculture offering at Snow College as the Director of Agriculture and Farm/Ranch Business Management. Over the past 3 years he has received \$400,000 in USDA grants to expand Farm/Ranch Business Management education to central Utah farm and ranch businesses.

Nationally, Mr. Olsen has served on the Uniform Farm Management Project committee, the National Farm Management Benchmarking committee and Secretary, President Elect, President, and Past President of the National Farm Ranch Management Education Association. Mr. Olsen graduated from Brigham Young University with a B.S. degree in Agriculture Economics and a M.S. degree in Animal Science.

James Perey, Yavapai College

James Perey's experience as an educator spans the high school, community college, and university settings. James, a native Arizonian, grew up in Mayer and has worked for Yavapai College for over ten years. Over the last six years, James has served as an administrator. James's teaching background is in agricultural education teaching agribusiness, plant and animal science, aquaculture and leadership. He has been instrumental in building and launching over eight career and technical education programs for Yavapai College and continues to build relationships and articulations with the local high schools and state universities.

He is currently the Verde Valley Dean managing the Verde Valley Campus and the Sedona Center for Arts & Technology. James serves on the Yavapai College President's Leadership Team and is an active member of the Executive Committee of the Verde Valley Chapter of the Yavapai College Foundation.

James also represents the college on many community boards and committees in the Yavapai County District. Currently, he is a member of the Cottonwood Economic Development Council (CEDC) and a member of the Sedona Visioning Core Committee. James is an active member of the Arizona Occupational Administrators Council (AOAC) and currently serves as treasurer.

Dr. Liz Ross, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Dr. Liz Ross has been an instructor in a college setting since 1999. She is the faculty advisor for the Native Alaskan Business Leaders at UAF. Her family is from the rural village of Unalakleet, Alaska. She is one of a small number of Alaska Natives with a doctorate in Business Administration. As a former CEO of an Alaska Native Corporation and a volunteer mentor for her native village, Liz understands the importance of advocacy programs to empower rural students in communities.

Dr. Barry Russell, California Community College

Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs Dr. Barry A. Russell was appointed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to serve in the Chancellor's Office in 2009. Under his direction, the Academic Affairs Division provides leadership and technical assistance, enhancing the capacity of the community colleges in the areas of academic planning, academic support programs, program approval, and the review of degrees and certificates. Prior to becoming Vice Chancellor, Barry served as Vice President of Instruction at College of the Siskiyous in Weed, California. He also served as the Dean of Fine Arts and Communication at Cerritos College and held the same position at Southwestern College in Chula Vista, California. Russell was the Director of the Central Texas Tech Prep Consortium and was a faculty member in music and computer science at Paris Junior College in Paris, Texas. He is active in both state and national community college organizations, serving as a member and officer on several boards.

Shannon Cunningham serves as the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College in Miami, OK,. Cunningham has spent the past ten years of her career at NEO, having served as a faculty member, horse judging team coach, and department chair for Agriculture. Cunningham has served as a consultant in agriculture education for Azerbaijan, hosted many horse judging clinics, and serves on several local and state committees to promote excellence in education.

Dr. Bob Rustad, Western Governors University

Dr. Rustad received his master's degree in public affairs and doctorate in education policy from the University of Minnesota. Bob worked for the Minnesota Higher Education Board for 12 years as director of policy studies, for 17 years in sales management in the education software industry and for the last nine years as director of partnership programs for Western Governors University.

Chenae Shiner of Roosevelt, Utah reigns as Miss Rodeo America 2013.

She received the crown on December 12, 2012 at the conclusion of the week-long pageant held in Las Vegas, Nevada at the MGM Grand Hotel & Casino in conjunction with the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo. Chenae will travel more than 100,000 miles during her reign representing Miss Rodeo America, Inc. and the Professional Rodeo Cowboy's Association.

"For me, queens embrace the spirit of rodeo, never hesitating to turn a spectator into a true fan." Shiner said. "To represent this rodeo family as an ambassador would be my greatest honor." Chenae obtained an Associates Degree from Utah State University and is currently pursuing a Bachelors Degree in Radiologic Sciences with a special emphasis in Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and Computed Tomography (CT). She will be taking time out from her studies at Weber State University to reign as the "First Lady of Professional Rodeo." She will be able to use the \$22,500 in scholarships she was awarded as Miss Rodeo America from the Miss Rodeo America Scholarship Foundation to help further her educational goals. As a WPRA card holder, Chenae proudly says that rodeo is her favorite sport! She truly feels at home on their family ranch where branding or herding 600 head of cattle can't be beat! She also enjoys lake-surfing, wakeboarding, cycling, running, hiking and snow skiing. She can't wait to travel across the country and her home state promoting the Miss Rodeo America organization as well as our great sponsors!

Kathleen Spencer, Center for Rural Assistance Center

Kathleen Spencer, MS, MLS, has worked 9 years as a Librarian/Information Specialist for the Rural Assistance Center (RAC) located at the University of North Dakota, Center for Rural Health, School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Ms. Spencer collects and develops online information resources for the RAC website and assists clients in finding resources that support rural health and human services in their communities. She has participated on several HRSA rural focused grant review panels and presents at both health and human service conferences on RAC's services, rural issues and grant writing. Kathleen is a member of the National Rural Health Association Rural Health Congress, the Minnesota Rural Health Association and has completed fellowships for the National Rural Health Association, Marine Biological Laboratory Medical Informatics, and the Mountain Plains Library Association Leadership programs. Ms. Spencer has also served on the city council for the rural community in northern Minnesota where she resides.

Dr. Penny Wills, Yavapai College

In August 2011, Dr. Penny Wills became the ninth president of Yavapai College. She came to Arizona from Northeast Iowa Community College where she served as President for the past seven years. Her professional experience includes various leadership positions in higher education at the state, regional, and national levels. Her expertise in such fields as student development, assessment, planning, quality improvement, and community partnerships is well respected. Dr. Wills' career has allowed her to be a valued member of communities across the USOhio, Florida, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Georgia, Iowa, and now Arizona. Being a first generation college student is a point of pride for Dr. Wills. She holds a Ph.D. in Higher Education from Michigan State University; an M.S. in Counseling from Miami University, OH; and a B.S. in Education from the University of Cincinnati. Her professional accomplishments are many, including being selected for higher education institutes at Harvard University; serving in leadership positions in professional associations such as AACC, NASPA, and ACE; and teaching in various professional colloquiums across the country. She is leading Yavapai College during these challenging times in higher education as she sees the importance of strengthening academic excellence, increasing accountability to the community, and economic development for the region and state.

Joshua Wyner, Aspen Institute College Excellence Program

Joshua Wyner is the Executive Director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, which aims to strengthen practice and develop leadership that substantially improve college student success.

Started in early 2011, the Program's first two initiatives are the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, which strives to reward and shine a spotlight on community colleges that deliver exceptional student results and stimulate replication of successful campus practices and New College Leadership Project, which works to strengthen efforts to recruit and train college presidents who are driven by - and capable of - substantially improving student success.

Josh has spent 16 years as a nonprofit leader, initiating organizations aimed at improving educational outcomes and urban policy. From 2001-2009, Josh led the design and implementation of programs as Executive Vice President of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. There, he established national scholarship and grant-making programs for - and conducted original research about - high-achieving low-income students from elementary through graduate school. From 1995 to 2001, Josh was founding Executive Director of the DC Appleseed Center, which analyzes and actively seeks to resolve problems affecting the daily lives of those who live and work in the Washington, DC area. During his tenure, DC Appleseed led successful efforts to resolve Washington, DC's \$5 billion unfunded pension liability and alter the structure of the DC Board of Education.

Josh spent his early career as an organizer and policy analyst with Citizen Action, a program evaluator at the US Government Accountability Office, and an attorney with Beveridge & Diamond. He has a B.A. in History from Vassar College, holds a Master's in Public Administration from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, and is a cum laude graduate of New York University School of Law.