SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

CHERYL BLANCO
VICE PRESIDENT, SPECIAL PROJECTS, SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD

Cheryl D. Blanco oversees initiatives on college readiness and college completion and develops new projects. Blanco’s career has focused primarily on higher education policy and research and the connections between postsecondary and K-12 education. Prior to joining the SREB staff, Blanco was Vice President for National College Access Programs and Executive Director of the Pathways to College Network at TERI, Vice President for Policy and Research at the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, Senior Program Director for Policy Analysis and Research at the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, and Educational Policy Director at the Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission.

NANCY BRYNELSON
CO-DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF READING, OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Before coming to CSU in 2001, Nancy Brynelson served for seven years as a consultant in the California Department of Education, primarily in the area of reading/language arts. Brynelson began her career in Monterey County in California as a bilingual teacher and an English as a Second Language teacher. As an administrator she served seven years as a principal of a high-poverty, diverse elementary school and eight years as a director of categorical programs and special projects in various school districts.

ROBERT DENN
DIRECTOR, SEAMLESS ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATED LEARNING SUPPORT (SAILS) AND DEAN, SCHOOL RELATIONS & UNIVERSITY ARTICULATION, CHATTANOOGA STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Robert Denn is the Dean of School Relations and University Articulation at Chattanooga State Community College and the director and co-creator of Tennessee’s acclaimed SAILS program, which is being scaled statewide in Tennessee high schools. Denn leads Chattanooga State’s secondary/postsecondary partnership initiatives including the Tennessee Transfer Pathways, Early College, and Collegiate High School programs. He is the co-founder of STEM School Chattanooga and created the College Awareness and Access for Rural Students (CAARS) program.

EMMY GLANCY
ACADEMIC POLICY OFFICER, P20 ALIGNMENT, COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Emmy Glancy manages the engagement of higher education stakeholders in Colorado’s reform efforts aimed at ensuring more high school graduates are college and career ready. Glancy oversees postsecondary participation and alignment with recent K-12 reforms, including the Common Core State Standards and aligned assessments. Previously, Glancy was a Program Manager for the Colorado Department of Education. Glancy was recently selected for the Institute for Educational Leadership’s Education Policy Fellowship Program.
KATHERINE HUGHES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE INITIATIVES, THE COLLEGE BOARD

Katherine Hughes provides leadership regarding the College Board’s community college initiatives and serves as a national advocate and spokesperson on community college–related issues; coordinates the work of the Community College Advisory Panel, works across the organization to identify and develop strategies that strengthen the College Board’s programs and services for community college educators and students; and leads special projects for the Higher Education division. Prior to her appointment as Executive Director, Hughes served as the Senior Director of College Readiness. Previously, she was the Assistant Director of the Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University.

MODERATOR BIOGRAPHIES

ELISABETH A. BARNETT
SENIOR RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH CENTER, TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Elisabeth Barnett leads CCRC’s research on Reshaping the College Transition, a project that examines early college readiness assessments and transition curricula in multiple states. Since joining CCRC in 2007, she has led research on a range of subjects related to the high school to college transition as well as workforce education. Over the years, her research interests have included dual enrollment, middle and early college high schools, Tech Prep, International Baccalaureate schools, career and technical education, and community college persistence. Barnett is also associated with the National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools and Teaching at Teachers College, where she began working in 2004. She was previously Assistant Director of the Office of Community College Research and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

RICHARD KAZIS
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

Richard Kazis leads JFF’s policy and advocacy efforts. Since joining JFF in the early 1990s, his areas of focus have included: strategies for improving outcomes for low-income community college students; state policies to promote college and career readiness for struggling students; policies to promote low-wage worker advancement; the emerging role of labor market intermediaries in workforce development; and school-to-career models and policy. Mr. Kazis oversees JFF’s efforts to support state-level improvement in community college student success and completion, and coordinates JFF’s efforts to promote federal and state policies that identify, promote, and expand effective school models for struggling high school-aged students, with a particular focus on approaches that blend secondary and postsecondary learning.

JOEL VARGAS
VICE PRESIDENT, HIGH SCHOOL THROUGH COLLEGE, JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

Joel Vargas leads the work of JFF’s High School Through College team and helps to set the organization’s priorities and direction. He also researches and advises on state policies to promote improved high school and postsecondary success for underserved students. He has helped policymakers and intermediary organizations develop state and federal policies that expand early college schools and other school designs incorporating college coursework into high school. In 2005, Vargas was featured in the Chronicle of Higher Education as one of “Higher Education’s Next Generation of Thinkers.”