


ASPEN PRESIDENTIAL FELLOWSHIP



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25 Community College Presidents Selected for Aspen Institute's New Presidents Fellowship to Advance Student Success

*New leaders of colleges educating more than a quarter-million students to participate
in program to advance student success*

Washington, D.C., September 20, 2021 – The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program today announced the 2021-22 class of the [Aspen New Presidents Fellowship](#), which supports community college presidents in the early years of their tenure as they aim to achieve higher and more equitable levels of student success. The fellowship's philanthropic partner is JPMorgan Chase.

The 25 Aspen Presidential Fellows, who lead colleges that collectively serve more than 280,000 students, were selected through a highly competitive process. Starting later this year, the fellows will engage over nine months in residential sessions and virtual learning to develop strategies to meet their goals for student success and equity with data to assess challenges and progress.

“We continue to learn how the best community colleges improve outcomes for students and close persistent race- and income-based equity gaps,” said Josh Wyner, executive director of the College Excellence Program. “This year’s fellows have demonstrated their commitment to achieving excellent and equitable student outcomes, and we are eager to work with them as they join Aspen’s network of more than 100 fellows who serve as community college presidents.”

As community colleges grapple with the impact of COVID and enrollment declines, turnover among presidents remains high. Aspen is committed to helping prepare the next generation of exceptionally capable and highly diverse leaders through its fellowship programs for new and rising presidents. The incoming class of New Presidents Fellows is 52 percent female, and 64

percent are people of color. Located in 17 states, their institutions too are diverse, from a tribal college with fewer than 500 students to an urban college that educates more than 35,000.

“Community colleges play a critical role in helping to prepare young adults and incumbent workers for in-demand jobs of the future,” said Monique Baptiste, vice president and head of jobs & skills for global philanthropy at JPMorgan Chase. “Ensuring that the leaders of these institutions are equipped with the support and training they need to develop equitable student success is an integral part of building capacity over the long run. JPMorgan Chase is proud to partner with the Aspen Institute to build the next generation of exceptional college leaders as they work to advance the prosperity of the diverse communities and students they serve.”

JPMorgan Chase’s philanthropic support for the Aspen Presidential Fellowship is part of the firm’s New Skills at Work initiative to prepare young people for the future of work and meet the growing demand for skilled workers, and a \$30 billion commitment to advance racial equity and drive an inclusive economy.

The 2021-22 Aspen New Presidents Fellows

- **Rebecca Ashford**, Chattanooga State Community College (TN)
- **Seher Awan**, Los Angeles Southwest College (CA)
- **Leah Barrett**, Northeast Community College (NE)
- **Vincent Bowhay**, Independence Community College (KS)
- **J.B. Buxton**, Durham Technical Community College (NC)
- **Karin Edwards**, Clark College (WA)
- **Angélica Garcia**, Berkeley City College (CA)
- **Veronica Garcia**, Northeast Lakeview College (TX)
- **Tracy Hartzler**, Central New Mexico Community College (NM)
- **Greg Hodges**, Patrick Henry Community College (VA)
- **Stephanie Kashima**, West Valley College (CA)
- **Georgia Lorenz**, Seminole State College of Florida (FL)
- **Kimberlee Messina**, Spokane Falls Community College (WA)
- **Rachel Pokrandt**, Umpqua Community College (OR)
- **Christy Ponce**, Temple College (TX)
- **Monte Randall**, College of the Muscogee Nation (OK)
- **Anton Reece**, West Kentucky Community and Technical College (KY)

- **Ángel Reyna**, Madera Community College (CA)
- **Claudia Schrader**, CUNY Kingsborough Community College (NY)
- **Ricky Shabazz**, San Diego City College (CA)
- **Ron Slinger**, Miles Community College (MT)
- **Willie E. Smith**, Baton Rouge Community College (LA)
- **Russell Swagger**, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe College (WI)
- **Justina Wilhelm**, Iñisagvik College (AK)
- **Jermaine Williams**, Nassau Community College (NY)

For bios and photos of all extraordinary 25 leaders, visit [here](#).

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The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program aims to advance higher education practices and leadership strategies that significantly improve student outcomes. Through the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the Aspen Presidential Fellowship for Community College Excellence, and other initiatives, the College Excellence Program works to improve colleges' understanding and capacity to teach and graduate students, especially the growing population of low-income students and students of color on American campuses. For more information, visit higher.ed.aspeninstitute.org and follow us on Twitter at @AspenHigherEd.

The Aspen Institute is a global nonprofit organization committed to realizing a free, just, and equitable society. Founded in 1949, the Institute drives change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve the most important challenges facing the United States and the world. Headquartered in Washington, DC, the Institute has a campus in Aspen, Colorado, and an international network of partners.

About JPMorgan Chase

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