

About the Speakers

Julie Davis Bell

Julie Davis Bell is director of the Education Program for the National Conference of State Legislatures. She has been with NCSL for 21 years and has directed the Education Program for 19 years. In that capacity she oversees a staff of 10 and is responsible for setting program priorities, responding to constituent needs and requests, developing new education projects, and interfacing with other national education policy organizations. She also serves as the program policy specialist for higher education issues. Julie speaks and writes regularly about education and legislative issues. She received her Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California at Davis in 1986. Prior to joining NCSL she was a policy associate with the Center for Policy Research in Denver and taught political science courses at the University of Colorado.

Cheryl Blanco

Cheryl Blanco is vice president for special projects at the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). She oversees special initiatives on college readiness and college completions 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. She has held positions at Arecibo Technological University College, University of Puerto Rico, including assistant to the vice president for academic affairs, director of the office of continuing education, and tenured associate professor in the English Department.

Monnica Chan

Monnica Chan currently serves as the director of policy and research at the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE). NEBHE is a nonprofit, congressionally authorized agency that promotes greater educational opportunities and services for New England residents. With the Policy and Research team, Monnica synthesizes education and demographic data into compelling regional analyses with public policy implications. She also coordinates the data collection and analysis for NEBHE's Developmental Math Demonstration Project, a project investigating the impact of Khan Academy materials on developmental math course design and student outcomes. Prior to joining NEBHE, Monnica coordinated the Bonner AmeriCorps Leaders Program at Burlington County College where she initiated the college's service-learning program while strengthening campus resources for civic engagement. She holds a bachelor's degree from Barnard College and a master's degree in higher education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Jimmy Clarke

Jimmy Clarke is director of the Lumina Foundation-supported Higher Education Productivity Strategy Labs. The Labs bring together state policymakers in a variety of ways to identify cost-effective solutions to increase the number of students completing postsecondary education.

Promoting interaction and the provision of information and resources, the labs connect essential policy strategies including increasing and rewarding completion, generating and reinvesting savings, and educating and training in affordable ways. Prior to his joining Lumina, Clarke was executive director of the ACT Center for College and Career Success, served as chief of staff for then Louisiana Governor Blanco for several years; served in multiple positions for the Louisiana Board of Regents including as deputy commissioner for academic & student affairs and deputy commissioner for planning, research and performance, and was a dean of enrollment management at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Tanya Garcia

Tanya I. Garcia is state policy officer at Lumina Foundation, where she contributes her expertise in state higher education policy. At Lumina, Tanya manages StrategyLabs.LuminaFoundation.org and coordinates the technical assistance that the Strategy Labs provide to states. She also works with state policy partner organizations to advance Goal 2025. As a senior policy analyst at the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO), she became a recognized expert in state postsecondary data systems. At the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED), she led the development of a statewide dual-credit program to provide collegiate opportunities to students regardless of income or geographic origin. Tanya holds a doctorate in public administration from American University and a master's degree in higher education administration from George Washington University.

Marshall Hill

Marshall Hill is executive director of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), which provides a voluntary, regional approach to state oversight of postsecondary distance education. His involvement with SARA spans work with the Presidents' Forum/ Council of State Governments drafting team, the development of SARA agreements with the country's four regional higher education compacts, and membership on the National Commission on Regulation of Postsecondary Distance Education. Prior to assuming his NC-SARA position in August of 2013, Hill served eight years as executive director of Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. Before his service in Nebraska, Hill was assistant commissioner for universities and health-related institutions at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, working directly with 35 public universities and eight health-science centers. During his time there, he and his staff developed and administered statewide policies on distance education, the creation of new institutions and new professional schools, and broad academic issues. He has represented state agencies of higher education on three negotiated rule-making panels for the U.S. Department of Education, negotiating federal rules affecting accreditation and student financial aid. Active in several regional and national organizations, in October 2012 he began a year of service as the chair of the executive committee of the State Higher Education Executive Officers association (SHEEO). Hill was a faculty member for 17 years, serving as an assistant or associate professor of music and conducting choirs and orchestras at Cumberland College, Duquesne University, Utah State University, Iowa State University, and the University of Southern Mississippi.

Larry Isaak

Larry Isaak is president of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC). Isaak has helped lead a significant expansion in MHEC activities related to student access, policy research and cost savings initiatives. The MHEC student exchange program has expanded to include additional states saving students nearly \$10 million annually in tuition. Also, an electronic transcript program has been implemented to simplify and ease transfer of high school and college student transcripts. MHEC is now actively engaged in a number of new policy initiatives including preparation of annual reports on a number of higher education performance indicators, holding annual policy summits, and engaging in a special initiative on education to workforce. MHEC's cost savings programs have expanded rapidly now saving states and institutions nearly \$25 million annually. Previously, Isaak was the chancellor of the North Dakota University System and was named chancellor emeritus upon his departure in October 2003. Isaak also worked in the North Dakota Office of Management & Budget serving both as acting director and as the state executive budget analyst from 1981 to 1983. From 1974-1981 he served as the assistant legislative budget analyst and auditor for the North Dakota Legislative Council. Isaak has served as chair of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) and as a commissioner to both the Midwestern Higher Education Compact and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

Dennis Jones

Dennis Jones is president of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), a research and development center founded to improve the management effectiveness of colleges and universities. A member of the staff since 1969, he is widely recognized for his work in such areas as: state and institutional approaches to budgeting and resource allocation, strategic planning, educational needs assessment, faculty workload and productivity and information for strategic decision-making and the development of educational indicators. Jones has written many monographs and articles on these topics, has presented his work at many regional, national, and international conferences, and has consulted with hundreds of institutions and state higher education agencies on management issues of all kinds. Prior to joining NCHEMS, Jones served as an administrator (in business and in institutional planning) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Stan Jones

Following three decades successfully reforming higher education in Indiana as commissioner of Higher Education, state legislator, and senior advisor to the governor, Stan Jones founded Complete College America in order to build a network of states committed to substantially increasing the number of Americans with a postsecondary credential. He began his longstanding commitment to education in 1974, when, at the age of 24, he was elected to the Indiana House of Representatives. As a member of both the House Education and State Budget committees, he developed expertise in higher education and higher-education finance. Stan served 16 years in the Indiana State Legislature and more than five years as a senior advisor to Governor Evan Bayh. His service as Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education spanned 12 years and the tenure of four different governors from both political parties. As commissioner, he was credited as a primary architect of several landmark education policy initiatives in Indiana. These initiatives include the 21st Century Scholars program, an early promise scholarship program aimed at increasing the number of low-income students attending and completing a postsecondary education; the development of Indiana's new

community college system; the creation of Indiana's Education Roundtable; and the implementation of Core 40, a college prep curriculum that has contributed to a significant increase in high school seniors going to college.

Demarée Michelau

Demi is the director of policy analysis at the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). The author of numerous education reports, policy briefs, and magazine articles, she has experience in higher education policy on issues such as accelerated learning options, adult learners, college affordability and access, articulation and transfer, and K-16 reform. Previously, she worked for the National Conference of State Legislatures as a policy specialist. Michelau received her bachelor's degree in public law from Northern Illinois University and her master's degree and Ph.D. in political science from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Brian Prescott

Brian Prescott is the director of policy research at the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). In this role, he co-manages WICHE's Policy Analysis and Research unit, with primary responsibility for obtaining and analyzing education and workforce data with public policy relevance. He is author of the two most recent editions of *Knocking at the College Door*, WICHE's widely-used projections of high school graduates by state and race/ethnicity. Additionally, he manages grant and contract-funded projects and authors occasional policy briefs, chapters, and research reports. Prescott has experience working directly with states on issues of access, success, affordability, accountability, workforce development, and data systems development. Currently, he is managing WICHE's Gates Foundation-funded project to develop a multistate longitudinal data exchange. Prescott also serves on the board of directors of the National Association for College Admission Counseling. Prescott earned a Ph.D. in higher education from the University of Virginia. He also holds degrees from the University of Iowa and the College of William and Mary.

Malia Sieve

Malia Sieve is a policy and strategy expert who brings to HCM a deep commitment to improving lives and creating a world with greater equity. She lends her considerable experience to HCM's higher education practice, helping clients to develop the relationships and strategies necessary to achieve their policy goals. After graduating from the University of Connecticut with a bachelor's degree in social policy and a master's degree in social work, Malia served as project director for the Connecticut Policy and Economic Council. In that role, she honed her policy analysis and data collection skills, evaluating the effectiveness of the state's juvenile justice system. With a larger platform from which to affect change, Malia led several state-level policy committees focused on maximizing Connecticut's education and workforce initiatives. Firmly entrenched in the higher education policy realm, Malia then joined the policy staff of the Connecticut Board of Regents of Higher Education, where she led the board's efforts to align secondary and postsecondary education and workforce initiatives. A believer in the power of collaborative relationships to further good policy, Malia managed the Governor's P-20 Council and facilitated educator partnerships to improve student outcomes and college readiness. She also put to work her policy implementation know-how, directing several multi-million federal grants to improve students' readiness for and access to higher education. Malia began her relationship with HCM as an independent consultant and quickly realized that the firm shared her talent and passion for

strategic thinking and coalition building to advance good policy. A people person at heart, Malia enjoys HCM's emphasis on bringing organizations together and aligning objectives to prepare more students for academic success. Married with twins, Malia currently lives in Norwich, Connecticut. In constant pursuit of the elusive work-life balance, Malia spends her free time cheering her children during their sporting events and traveling with her family.

Dustin Weeden

Dustin Weeden is a policy specialist with the National Conference of State Legislatures. He specializes in higher education issues including: affordability, finance, student aid, performance-based funding, college savings plans, student loans, tuition policy, and governance. Weeden holds a bachelor of arts degree from Kansas State University, a master of public policy degree from the University of Denver, and is a Ph.D. candidate in Higher Education at the University of Iowa.

Katie Zaback

Ms. Zaback joined SHEEO in the spring of 2010 as a policy analyst. She supports SHEEO's efforts to improve state policymakers' access to quality information that will help inform their education policy decisions. Katie has helped support SHEEO's partnership with Complete College America to create a streamlined data collection process to meet state needs and she has also been involved with SHEEO's efforts to inform development and encourage adoption and implementation of the Common Education Data Standards. Katie also performs policy analysis on various topics relevant to SHEEO members and has recently produced reports on student financial aid and affordability, the economic benefits of a degree and trends in college staffing. She also provides technical support for SHEEO's multi-state collaborative project on measuring student learning outcomes. Katie's prior experience in higher education includes serving as a research associate and institutional researcher at Regis University and a project associate with the National Survey of Student Engagement. In these roles, she helped develop data policies and reporting infrastructures in addition to assisting college and university personnel in understanding and using data. Before joining SHEEO, Katie worked as a program evaluator with a consulting firm focused on serving non-profit and public sector clients. She has a master's in public affairs with a concentration in policy analysis from the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University at Bloomington, she holds a B.A. in economics and political science from Hastings College as well as a Master's Certificate in database design from Regis University.
