



Member Biographies

Connecticut

Andrea Comer



Andrea Comer is the executive director of the Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA) Education & Workforce Partnership and director of CBIA's workforce development and training. She manages initiatives designed to help the state's businesses become more competitive by developing a skilled workforce.

A former elected member of the Hartford Board of Education and State Board of Education, Comer has spent the past two decades working to improve the lives of children and strengthen communities.

Prior to joining CBIA, she served as chief development officer for an education management organization, where she oversaw communications, outreach and fundraising.

Comer has worked in various municipal government roles, serving as project manager and communications director for the cities of Hartford and New Haven, as a senior program officer for The Community Foundation of Greater New Haven, and as a consultant on youth initiatives for the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities.

As the first female president of the Greater Hartford African American Alliance, Comer developed The Connect, a mentoring project that paired male Hartford middle school students with young professional males of color.

Comer serves on the boards of the Capital Community College Foundation and Teach for America Connecticut. Her community efforts have been recognized by the Connecticut Commission on Children, the YMCA, the Urban League of Greater Hartford and the CT NAACP, which named her among the 100 Most Influential Blacks in the State.

Maura M. Dunn



Maura M. Dunn has been vice president of human resources & administration for General Dynamics' Electric Boat since May 2014.

Previous to joining Electric Boat, Dunn spent nine years at General Dynamics' Advanced Information Systems (AIS), where she was vice president of human resources & administration. AIS is a business within General Dynamics focused on providing intelligence, surveillance and cyber services to a variety of U.S. government agencies.

Prior to joining General Dynamics, Dunn served in a variety of leadership roles at KBR, including chief operating officer of the Infrastructure Americas business unit and vice president of global strategy & marketing for the operations and maintenance and vice president of administration.

Dunn holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Richmond and an MBA from Averett University.

Mae Flexer



Mae Flexer is a Connecticut state senator representing the 29th District, which includes eight towns in Northeastern Connecticut. She is currently serving in her second term in the Senate, first taking office in January 2015. She previously served three terms in the Connecticut House of Representatives, from 2009 to 2015.

Flexer currently serves as the Senate Chair of the legislature's Government Administration and Elections Committee and the Veterans' Affairs Committee. She also serves as Vice Chair of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee and the Environment Committee, and is a member of the Judiciary Committee and Appropriations Committee. In January 2017, Flexer was appointed Deputy President Pro Tempore and the legislature's federal relations liaison, helping represent Connecticut's interests and views on matters of federal policy with its Congressional delegation.

Flexer has been a leader on a range of policy issues that affect women, children, college students, veterans, senior citizens, the environment, and rural communities. She is one of the Legislature's strongest advocates for victims of family violence and sexual assault, leading passage of sweeping reforms to Connecticut's domestic violence and sexual assault laws.

Over the last year, Flexer has focused heavily on economic development in Northeastern Connecticut, working with municipal, higher education and business leaders in her district on an initiative that seeks to leverage local resources and coordinate development in the region. She is currently leading efforts in the legislature to create a state-based Paid Family and Medical Leave system, maintain protections for women's health benefits covered under the *Affordable Care Act*, and to enter Connecticut into the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact.

Flexer has been recognized for her accomplishments by the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Reserve Officers Association and Military Officers Association of America, the Connecticut Farm Bureau, the League of Conservation Voters and the AARP.

Elsa M. Núñez



In August 2016, Elsa M. Núñez began her 11th year as the president of Eastern Connecticut State University. She came to the University in 2006 following more than 20 years as a senior administrator at such institutions as City University of New York (CUNY) and the University of Maine System.

Núñez has been a tenured faculty member of English at Ramapo State College, the College of Staten Island (CUNY), and Lehman College (CUNY). She also holds a faculty position as Professor of English at Eastern.

Author of two books *Pursuing Diversity* (1992) and *Hanging Out and Hanging On: From the Projects to the Campus* (2014), Núñez also has published numerous articles on language acquisition, diversity and other education issues.

Núñez has firmly established Eastern's reputation as Connecticut's only public liberal arts university. Academic enhancements range from an increase in full-time faculty positions to the development of new majors. Under Núñez's leadership, Eastern is ranked by *U.S. News and World Report* as the 26th top public university in the North; is recognized by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* as a "Great College to Work For"; is included in the U.S. Green Building Council's list of the nation's top green colleges; and is recognized as one of the Top Workplaces in Connecticut by the Hartford Courant. Núñez holds a bachelor's degree from Montclair State College, a master's from Fairleigh Dickinson University and a doctorate from Rutgers University.

Mark E. Ojakian



In September 2015, Mark E. Ojakian was appointed of the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU) System, which includes 12 community colleges, four state universities and Charter Oak State College.

Ojakian has spent 35 years in public service, most recently as chief of staff to Connecticut Gov. Dannel P. Malloy. Prior to that, he was deputy secretary of the state's Office of Policy and Management and for 16 years deputy comptroller under Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman, when she served as the state's comptroller. In the Comptroller's Office, Ojakian was responsible for overseeing more than 250 employees and more than \$1 billion in state accounts. From 1988 until 1994, Ojakian served as the senior assistant to the higher education commissioner.

Ojakian holds a bachelor's degree in history from St. Anselm's College and a master's in international relations from the American University in Washington, D.C.

Jennifer Widness



Jennifer Widness is president of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC), a voluntary association of 15 private, nonprofit colleges and universities located in Connecticut.

CCIC provides public policy leadership and support of higher education, fosters cooperative efforts among colleges and universities and serves as a liaison between the state and the independent institutions. Widness served as vice president of CCIC from January 2011 until she was named president in June 2015.

Prior to joining CCIC, Widness worked at the Connecticut Department of Education's legal division as a staff attorney and legislative liaison. Before that, she worked as an associate in the litigation practice group at Carmody and Torrance, LLP. Before attending law school, she worked on public policy for a national nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C.

She is a member of the New England Board of Higher Education, where she chairs the Connecticut delegation, and a member of Connecticut's Commission for Educational Technology, Connecticut's Planning Commission for Higher Education, Connecticut Tech Talent Advisory Panel and the National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities State Executives.

Widness holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia and a law degree from American University.

Maine

Laurie Lachance



Laurie Lachance is Thomas College's fifth president and the first female and alumna to lead the college in its 122-year history.

From 2004-2012, Lachance served as president and CEO of the Maine Development Foundation (MDF). Prior to MDF, she served three governors as the Maine State Economist, and before joining state government, she served as the corporate economist at Central Maine Power Company.

A frequent author and speaker on leadership, education and the economy of Maine, Lachance was inducted into the Maine Women's Hall of Fame in 2014 and has been the recipient of several awards, most recently being recognized by *Maine Magazine* as one of the 50 Mainers Charting the State's Future and making the *Mainebiz* NEXT list as a trailblazer in her industry. She chairs the board of Educare Central Maine, is a trustee of Foxcroft Academy and a board member of Educate Maine.

Lachance holds an undergraduate degree from Bowdoin College and an MBA from Thomas College.

Cary Olson Cartwright



Cary Olson Cartwright is the assistant vice president of corporate social responsibility at Unum and oversees the company's community relations efforts in Chattanooga, Tenn., Portland, Maine, Columbia, S.C., Worcester, Mass., Baton Rouge, La., Glendale, Calif., and the UK and Ireland.

Prior to joining Unum in 2004, Olson Cartwright worked at Fleet/Bank of America, handling the community relations for Maine. A main area of focus was education and she created statewide partnerships with education partners and nonprofit organizations. She began her career in television at WCSH in 1985 working in the news and promotion areas. When she left WCSH, she was marketing director of the station overseeing the promotion, marketing and public service efforts.

Currently she serves on several boards that are focused on supporting Maine's youth and education. She is on the executive and governance committees of Jobs for Maine's Graduates, serves on the Great Schools Partnership and Olympia Snowe Women's Leadership Institute board of directors, and is a trustee of Thomas College.

In 2013, she received the Governor Ken Curtis Leadership Award from the Maine Development Foundation. The Maine Children's Alliance recognized her efforts on behalf of children with its Giraffe Award. The State of Maine Department of Human Services presented her with the Commissioner's Award for her work with children and youth. She was recognized, along with Unum, for a National Education Leadership Award at the Jobs for America's Graduates annual meeting for her work with Jobs for Maine's Graduates. She was also honored with a second award from Jobs for America's Graduates when she was recognized as an honorary 'Specialist.'

She holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Maine. She attended the executive management program at Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management.

James H. Page



James H. Page is chancellor of Maine's Public Universities, as well as a business owner and Maine employer. As chancellor, he is leading Maine's One University Initiative, a pioneering change effort in higher education that seeks to bring the resources and expertise of Maine's mission-differentiated universities to bear in service to our state and its students.

Born in Caribou, Maine, and earning a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Maine at Fort Kent, Page became the first Maine native and public university graduate to lead the University of Maine System upon his appointment in March of 2012. Under his leadership, Maine has become the only state in the country to reduce the real cost of public higher education and the universities have improved access to educational opportunity with comprehensive credit transfer, early college initiatives in most of Maine's high schools, and established an adult degree completion scholarship program that is helping adult learners from nearly 100 Maine communities resume their progress toward a college degree.

Janet Sortor



Janet Sortor is the chief academic officer for the Maine Community College System.

Prior to that, she served as the vice president and dean of academic affairs at Southern Maine Community College in South Portland, Maine, and led its transition to a comprehensive community college.

Sortor has worked in higher education for over 30 years, beginning her career in Boston. She served as a Vista Volunteer in Kansas City, Kansas, prior to graduate school. She serves on the boards of the Maine Space Consortium and MMSA.

Sortor holds a bachelor's degree from Eastern Michigan University, a master's from Boston University and a doctorate in higher education administration from the University of Massachusetts.

Paul Stearns



Paul Stearns served on the Maine Legislature's Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. He also was president of the Maine School Superintendents Association and served as a School Leadership Task Force member.

His 37-year career in public education included teaching and coaching in SAD #4 in the Guilford area before becoming principal of Upper Kennebec Valley Jr./Sr. High School in Bingham in 1996. He then served as principal in SAD 68 (Dover-Foxcroft area) from 1999 to 2003 when he returned to SAD #4 to serve as superintendent of schools for 10 years.

Stearns holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Maine-Presque Isle, a master's and a certificate of advanced study in Educational Leadership from the University of Maine.

Massachusetts

Mohamad Ali



Mohamad Ali is president and CEO of Carbonite Inc., a leading provider of cloud and hybrid backup and recovery solutions for businesses. He is a leader who believes there are very few things that can't be achieved with focus and determination. Under his leadership, the global team is fully engaged in developing and delivering the next generation of business continuity solutions for small and mid-sized businesses.

Driven by a passion for technology and growth, Ali served as chief strategy officer at Hewlett Packard, where he played a pivotal role in the company's turnaround. At IBM, he led the creation of the firm's \$8 billion business analytics software unit, and at Avaya, he oversaw the company's \$2 billion services group. He was also the CEO of the Workforce Optimization division of Aspect Software.

Ali holds a bachelor's degree in computer engineering, a bachelor's in history, and a master's in electrical engineering from Stanford University. He serves on the boards of iRobot, City National Bank, Oxfam America, and the Massachusetts Technology Leadership Council.

Davis Baird



As provost and vice president for academic affairs, Davis Baird is the chief academic officer of Clark University. Reporting to the president, the provost oversees all undergraduate and graduate academic programs, as well as athletics, student affairs, sponsored research, university libraries and the registrar's office.

Baird is a principal architect of Clark's new model for undergraduate education, Liberal Education and Effective Practice, and is also working on a significant expansion of Clark's graduate studies footprint. He was a primary driver behind the creation and launch of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Baird came to Clark in 2010 from the University of South Carolina, where he was dean of the South Carolina Honors College for five years and the Louise Fry Scudder Professor in the Philosophy Department since 2004. Prior to his time as dean, he chaired the Philosophy Department for 13 years.

Baird's research interest is the philosophy of science and technology. In the area of nanotechnology, as principal investigator, he has received more than \$3 million in funding from the National Science Foundation. Prior to his work on nanotechnology, Baird's research focused on the history and philosophy of scientific instruments. He is interested in the epistemology of scientific instruments, or how the things that we make express our knowledge. He is the author of *Thing Knowledge: A Philosophy of Scientific Instruments* (University of California Press, 2004), which won the 2006 Paul Bunge Prize. Baird is also the author of *Inductive Logic: Inferring the Unknown* (Prentice Hall, 1992; Pearson Publishing, 1999) and is co-editor of *Discovering the Nanoscale* (IOS press, 2004) and of two collections published in the Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science series: *Heinrich Hertz: Classical Physicist, Modern Philosopher* (Kluwer, 1994) and *Philosophy of Chemistry: Synthesis of a New Discipline* (Springer, 2006).

Baird holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics and philosophy from Brandeis University and a doctorate in philosophy from Stanford University.

Susan Brennan



Susan Brennan is executive director of corporate relations and career services at Bentley University. She has more than 20 years of experience managing career development and employer outreach programs in business higher education.

Brennan provides strategic direction to undergraduate, graduate and alumni career services functions. She is recognized for her ability to build and maintain strong relationships with employers, alumni, parents, faculty, and staff to increase placement and expand Bentley's reputation in the global marketplace.

Under her direction, Bentley's Office of Career Services is regularly recognized as among the best in the nation.

Alec Carstensen



Alec Carstensen is Vice President of Human Resources for Carbonite Inc., a leading provider of cloud and hybrid backup and recovery solutions for businesses. He is responsible for leading its human resources and talent teams in recruiting and retaining quality employees. He is passionate about creating environments where every employee can maximize their potential and performance.

Before joining Carbonite as Director of Talent Management in 2013, Carstensen was a Group Human Resources Manager and a District Human Resources Business Partner at Target. He also held District Manager positions at Brookstone and Gap.

Carstensen holds a B.A. in Sociology from the University of Vermont.

Christine Yip Cruzvergara



Christine Yip Cruzvergara started at Wellesley College in January 2016 as the first associate provost and executive director for career education, charged with building a comprehensive career model that engages the entire college ecosystem and leading the college's effort to create greater opportunity for women in the 21st century and to empower the next generation of women leaders. In this newly developed role, Cruzvergara has oversight of career services, internships, fellowships & scholarships, and community engagement. She has a reputation of being a creative problem-solver and enjoys the challenge of leading a team to embrace and drive change.

Prior to joining Wellesley, Cruzvergara served as the assistant dean and executive director at George Mason University, where she led an office of 20+ professionals to re-envision career education achieving institutional,

regional and national recognition. She has previously worked in career services at Georgetown University and in new student orientation and student activities at The George Washington University. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from James Madison University and a master's in college student personnel from the University of Maryland, College Park.

Cruzvergara was recently elected to serve a two-year term on the board of directors for the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) and is currently serving on its Conference Committee. She recently concluded her service as the co-chair for the NACE Career Readiness Strategic Initiative Committee and chair for the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) Commission for Career Services. She has participated in the NACE Management Leadership Institute (MLI), received the ACPA Commission for Career Services Innovation Award and the NACE Rising Star Award.

Kerry Healey



Kerry Healey took office as Babson College president in July 2013. Under Healey's leadership, Babson has further strengthened its reputation and position as the recognized global leader in entrepreneurship education. In September 2016, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Babson College the No. 1 undergraduate school for entrepreneurship in the U.S. for the 20th consecutive time.

Internationally recognized for her nearly three decades of service in academia, government and humanitarian work, Healey served as the 70th lieutenant governor of Massachusetts from 2003 to 2007. She introduced, enacted and implemented a wide range of policy and legislative initiatives for the Romney-Healey administration highlighted by a bipartisan effort to successfully craft Massachusetts' first-in-the-nation healthcare reform legislation.

In 2008, Healey was appointed as a founding member of the Executive Committee of the U.S. State Department's Public-Private Partnership for Justice Reform in Afghanistan (PJRA), and has led numerous philanthropic initiatives both in the U.S. and abroad. She has been a visiting researcher at Harvard Law School's International and Comparative Legal Studies Program.

Healey holds a bachelor's degree in government from Harvard College and a doctorate in political science and law from Trinity College, Dublin.

Ellen Kennedy



Ellen Kennedy is the president of Berkshire Community College (BCC).

She previously held the position of chief financial officer at BCC. Prior to joining the college, she served as the interim chief operating officer of the National Patient Safety Foundation, director of development at WFCR-Public Radio for Western New England, the chief advancement officer for Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and president of the MCLA Foundation.

She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (formerly North Adams State College), an MBA from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, an MPA from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and a doctorate from Northeastern University.

Jacqueline Moloney



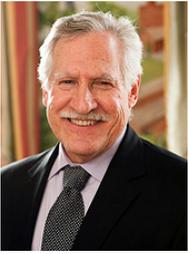
Jacqueline Moloney is a national leader in innovation in higher education and the first woman to serve as chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Lowell in the institution's 122-year history. Her October 2015 inauguration raised \$1.5 million for student scholarships.

Moloney has provided more than 30 years of service to the university, most recently as executive vice chancellor before being named chancellor in August 2015. Her predecessor, Marty Meehan, selected her as the first member of his executive team in 2007, beginning a period of unprecedented growth and transformation at the university that continues today under Moloney's leadership.

UMass Lowell has realized astonishing gains as a result of the strategic-planning process led by Moloney that engaged more than 200 faculty, staff and students in creating *UMass Lowell 2020: A Strategic Plan for the Next Decade*. The strategy to enhance nearly every aspect of the campus, from business practices and the physical plant to student life and alumni relations, has been a resounding success. Guided by the plan, the university has achieved record gains in student enrollment, retention, selectivity and diversity. Faculty hiring, research expenditures, fundraising and economic development activities have all grown to unprecedented levels. The addition of 13 new buildings has transformed the campus. As a result of the university's advancement in nearly every important measure of higher education, UMass Lowell is the second-fastest rising school on *U.S. News & World Report's* national universities list over the last six years, as well as the ninth-fastest growing public doctoral institution in the country, according to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Moloney is active in the Lowell community, where she has served on many boards and been recognized with numerous awards including Woman of the Year. She holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and doctorate in education from UMass Lowell and a master's degree in social psychology from Goddard College.

Carlos E. Santiago



Carlos E. Santiago is commissioner of higher education for Massachusetts, appointed to this position by Gov. Charlie Baker in July 2015. Working with the Board of Higher Education, he is responsible for providing overall direction to public higher education in Massachusetts and helping shape state-level policies that maximize the benefits of higher education to the Commonwealth and its citizens.

Santiago joined the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education in April 2013 as the senior deputy commissioner for academic affairs.

His past academic appointments include that of chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (Wisconsin's second largest research university). He brings over 30 years of experience in public higher education. Santiago also served as provost and chief operating officer at the University at Albany, (SUNY). He was a professor of economics at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and SUNY-Albany.

Santiago is also the author or co-author of six books and has published dozens of articles and book reviews, of which many focus on economic development and the changing socioeconomic status of Latinos in the U.S. On two separate occasions, in 1996 and 2011, Santiago has been named one of the 100 most influential Hispanics in the United States by *Hispanic Business* magazine.

He holds a doctorate in economics from Cornell University.

Ronald L. Walker II



As Massachusetts secretary of labor and workforce development, Ronald L. Walker, II is responsible for directing and executing Gov. Charlie Baker's agenda on workforce development and unemployment assistance, job creation, business services and labor.

He oversees five labor and workforce development regulatory agencies: the departments of Unemployment Assistance, Career Services, Labor Standards, Industrial Accidents and Labor Relations.

In addition, Walker manages Commonwealth Corporation, the secretariat's quasi-public state agency charged with administering over \$22 million in workforce training funds. He also oversees the Joint Task Force on the Underground Economy and Employee Misclassification, which coordinates the efforts of multiple state agencies to eliminate fraudulent employment activities and level the playing field for all employers.

The governor appointed Walker to lead two initiatives that will advise him on meeting the needs of employers and targeted populations of unemployed residents. As chair of the Workforce Skills Cabinet, Walker joins his counterparts in Education and Economic Development in examining the state's workforce development system and aligning economic and educational resources to the labor needs of employers.

Prior to his appointment to Gov. Baker's cabinet Walker was managing partner and president of Next Street, the merchant bank he co-founded.

Walker brings extensive experience in retail and commercial banking to the Baker administration. Beginning in 1990, he served in several senior executive positions at Sovereign Bank, Fleet Financial Group and Bank of New England.

He has received numerous recognitions for his business and community contributions, including CEO of the Year Social Leadership Award from the *Boston Business Journal*, the 2013 Harry Dowd Community Service Award from the Central Boston Elder Services; Heroes in Health Care Award from the Visiting Nurse Association of Boston, and the Boston Chamber of Commerce's Under 40 Leadership Award. Walker has served on a number of nonprofit boards, including The BASE—the mentoring program for African-American and Latino student athletes.

A Mattapan native, Walker holds a bachelor's degree in marketing and finance from Prairie View A&M University of Texas and has completed Executive Education programs: Finance for Senior Executives and Governing for Nonprofit Excellence at Harvard Business School.

New Hampshire

Ross Gittell



Ross Gittell is well-known in policy circles for economic analysis and forecasting. With an extensive background in university teaching, strategic planning and management, Gittell's focus has been on applying economic, organizational and management theory to regional, state and community economic development issues. For many years, as a distinguished professor at the University of New Hampshire's Whittemore School of Business and Economics, Gittell has frequently been a resource for government, nonprofit and business decision-makers in New Hampshire and nationally on such issues as economic policy, workforce development, job creation strategies, community development and the business climate.

Prior to his appointment as chancellor at of the Community College System of New Hampshire, he was the James R. Carter Professor in the Department of Management at the Whittemore School of Business and Economics at the University of New Hampshire. His teaching career in management and economics spans 20 years and includes, in addition to the Whittemore School, teaching at the Graduate School of Management and Urban Policy at the New School for Social Research in Manhattan, and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Gittell is vice president, forecast manager and board member of the New England Economic Partnership, a director of the Exeter Trust Company, a board member of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, and a board member of Exeter Hospital and the Foundation for Healthy Communities. He was appointed by New Hampshire Gov. Hassan and Gov. Benson to the New Hampshire Consensus Revenue Estimating Committee, by Gov. Lynch to the Economic Development Advisory Council and to the Shipyard Advisory Council, and worked with Gov. Shaheen on economic policy. He served on the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation's Task Force for Philanthropy and was a board member of the New England Higher Education Public Policy Collaborative. Gittell is also co-founder and co-director of the Green Launching Pad, an innovative and highly successful business accelerator program in New Hampshire.

Gittell holds a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Chicago, an MBA from the University of California, Berkeley, and a doctorate in public policy from Harvard University.

Rick Ladd



Rick Ladd represents Haverhill, N.H. in the New Hampshire House of Representatives, where he chairs the House Committee on Education.

Ladd also serves on the: Administrative Rules Committee, the Public Higher Education Study Committee, the Statewide Education Improvement & Assessment Program Legislative Oversight, as well as the Council of State Governments Education Committee and the National Conference of State Legislatures Education Committee. From 1980 to 2002, Ladd was a school administrator in Alaska and was recognized as a National Distinguished Principal in 1988. He also 10 years of teaching and administrative experience in Maine, where he published the Maine Studies Curriculum and DownEast Magazine.

He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Maine and a master's degree from the University of Southern Maine.

Todd J. Leach



Todd J. Leach is the seventh chancellor of the University System of New Hampshire (USNH), New Hampshire's four-year public higher education system comprising the University of New Hampshire, Plymouth State University, Keene State College and Granite State College. The system touts one of the best public returns on investment with the lowest per-capita state support and one of the highest degree attainment rates of any public system, as well as the lowest student loan default rates of any public system in the country.

Prior to serving as chancellor, Leach was president of Granite State College, the primary public provider of online education in the state of New Hampshire. During his tenure as president, the college became the fastest growing public college in New England, achieving record enrollment levels. It also transformed from undergraduate programs only to offering its first master's programs. Granite State achieved a top 30 national ranking from *US News* for online colleges and was ranked in the top five institutions nationally on the metric of social mobility by *Washington Monthly*. Prior to his presidency at Granite State, Leach served as the senior associate dean of the College of Professional Studies (CPS), where he oversaw all CPS academic programs and faculty and led the development of over 20 master's and doctoral degree programs. He also provided oversight for Northeastern Online and served as the executive director of the School of Education.

Leach holds an associate degree from Mass Bay Community College, a bachelor's from Worcester State College, an MBA from Bentley University and a doctorate from Northeastern University. Both institutions honored Leach in 2012 and 2011, respectively, with Distinguished Alumni Awards. In addition, Leach completed higher education programs at Harvard University.

Paul J. LeBlanc



Paul J. LeBlanc is president of Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). Under the 13 years of his direction, SNHU has grown from 2,500 students to over 80,000 and is the second largest nonprofit provider of online higher education in the country, and the first to have a full competency-based degree program untethered to the credit hour or classes approved by a regional accreditor and the U.S. Department of Education.

In 2012, the university was #12 on *Fast Company* magazine's "World's Fifty Most Innovative Companies" list and was the only university included. LeBlanc won the 2015 NH Entrepreneur of the Year Award, *Forbes Magazine* has listed him as one of its 15 "Classroom Revolutionaries" and one of the "most influential people in higher education" for 2016. *Washington Monthly* named him one of America's 10 most innovative university presidents.

He most recently served as senior policy advisor to Under Secretary Ted Mitchell at the U.S. Department of Education, working on competency-based education, new accreditation pathways, and innovation. He also serves on the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) and on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's Board on Higher Education and Workforce (and served on its Committee on Quality in Undergraduate Education).

From 1993 to 1996, he directed a technology startup for Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company, was president of Marlboro College from 1996 to 2003, and became president of SNHU in 2003.

Rhode Island

Brenda Dann-Messier



Brenda Dann-Messier became Rhode Island Acting Commissioner of Postsecondary Education in April 2017.

Throughout her career, Dann-Messier has focused on promoting student success and developing the workforce at every level. Under President Obama, she served as assistant secretary of education of career, technical, and adult education, where she led the U.S. Department of Education's efforts in adult education and career and technical education and helped shape the administration's policies on community colleges and correctional education.

In 2013, Dann-Messier was named acting assistant secretary for postsecondary education. She has also worked as an education consultant, most recently with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), where she helped states develop integrated pathways for college- and career-readiness.

Dann-Messier began her career in higher education at the Community College of Rhode Island, before taking a position in the Education Department of the Clinton administration and later serving as president of Dorcas Place Adult and Family Learning Center in Providence. She served on the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education from 2006 to 2009 and on the Board of the Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority from 2007 to 2009.

Dann-Messier holds a bachelor's degree in history and secondary education and a master's in instructional technology from Rhode Island College. She holds a doctorate in educational leadership from Johnson & Wales University.

Louis P. DiPalma



Louis P. DiPalma is a Rhode Island state senator representing Little Compton, Middletown, Newport and Tiverton. He is employed as a technical director for Raytheon.

DiPalma is currently involved with the Middletown School Facilities Core Committee; the Rhode Island Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Advisory Committee; the Aquidneck Land Trust; the Sakonnet Preservation Society; the United States Navy League; the Physics First Advisory Board; the St. Philomena School Board of Trustees; the Rhode Island Science and Engineering Fair; the Rhode Island Space Grant consortium; the UMASS Dartmouth Computer and Electrical/Computer Engineering Advisory Committee and serves as a lector and eucharistic minister at St. Lucy's Church.

DiPalma served on the Middletown Town Council from 2004 to 2008, when he was elected to the Rhode Island Senate. He also serves on the Middletown Democratic Town Committee.

He holds a bachelor's degree in computer engineering from the University of Bridgeport and a masters in computer science from Brown University.

Daniel P. Egan



Daniel P. Egan is the fifth president of the 36-year-old Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Rhode Island (AICU *Rhode Island*).

Egan leads AICU *Rhode Island* efforts in the area of advocacy and consortium activities. Responsible for AICU *Rhode Island* outreach on the federal, state and local level, he represents the collective interests of Rhode Island's independent colleges and universities before numerous external constituencies.

Through AICU *Rhode Island* peer groups and committee structure, he encourages and facilitates consultation and cooperation among association members regarding academic programs, research and community service; joint study with member institutions and appropriate public and private organizations; as well as policy discussion participation with regard to the current and future ability of independent institutions of higher education in Rhode Island to meet the educational needs of the state.

Egan has extensive experience in government relations, communications and higher education administration. Before taking on the role of AICU *Rhode Island* President, he was chief of staff in the Office of the Dean of Medicine and Biological Sciences in the Division of Biology and Medicine at Brown University. In this capacity, he handled a wide range of issues related to faculty, staff, students, hospital teaching partners and public affairs, and served as a conduit with senior university administrators and local, government and community officials.

Prior to Brown, Egan served as vice president for government relations at the Hospital Association of Rhode Island (HARI). Before that, he was vice president of government relations for the local firm; Trion Communications (currently divided into two local firms: Advocacy Solutions and New Harbor Group).

He has also enjoyed various management and communications careers as associate director of athletics at Brown University and assistant director of championships and sport administration at the BIG EAST Conference. He was assistant director of athletic media relations at his alma mater, Providence College. He also served as a graduate assistant in the Media Relations and Marketing Department at Boston College, where he received his master's degree in higher education administration.

His governmental experiences include serving on the staff to the Mayor of the City of Warwick for two administrations, from 1985 to 1991. He also served as campaign scheduler and media and print projects coordinator with two Rhode Island gubernatorial campaigns in 1990.

Donald J. Farish



With more than 40 years of experience in higher education, including 11 as a full-time faculty member, scientist and attorney, Donald J. Farish became the 10th president of Roger Williams University in June 2011.

A respected scientist in his field, Farish is the author of six biology textbooks and has authored and co-authored numerous articles on entomology and animal behavior. Farish joined Roger Williams following 13 years as president of Rowan University in Glassboro, N.J., where he transformed the respected regional institution into a world-class university known for its innovative academic programs. At Rowan, Farish was responsible for the physical expansion of the campus, including the construction of new academic facilities for science, medicine, teacher education and technology research; almost 2,000 additional student residence beds to accommodate rapidly expanding enrollment; and a 26-acre downtown redevelopment project to connect the borough of Glassboro with the university.

Throughout his career in higher education, Farish has demonstrated tremendous commitment to teaching and learning, always considering himself a member of the faculty who also provides administrative leadership. During his tenure at Rowan, Farish elevated the institution from second tier to top tier, where it was ranked third among public master's level universities in the North by *U.S. News & World Report*. He also created incentive programs to enhance student-faculty interaction and established a plan to bring an additional 50 tenure-track faculty members to the university.

Prior to assuming presidency of Rowan University in 1998, Farish held academic and administrative positions at Sonoma State University, the University of Rhode Island and the University of Missouri. A sought-after voice in higher education, Farish served as one of 20 sitting presidents and chancellors at a July 2010 Presidential Roundtable organized in Washington, D.C., by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education to discuss the future of higher education in the U.S.

Since joining Roger Williams in 2011, Farish has guided the university community in articulating an agreed-upon identity that defines the distinctive elements of an RWU education. As a result of that conversation, he launched the Affordable Excellence initiative, which has positioned Roger Williams at the leading edge of the national dialogue regarding cost, debt and job-preparedness for today's college graduates. One of the most visible elements of Affordable Excellence is an expanding focus on meaningful experiential learning projects for students across the academic disciplines, many of which are facilitated through the Community Partnerships Center, created shortly after Farish joined the university.

A native of Winnipeg, Canada, Farish immigrated to the U.S. in 1963 to pursue his graduate education after receiving his bachelor's degree in zoology from the University of British Columbia. He holds a Master of Science degree in entomology from North Carolina State University, a doctorate in biology from Harvard University and a *juris doctor* from the University of Missouri.

Janet Hasson



Janet Hasson is regional vice president for GateHouse Media, which includes president & publisher of *The Providence Journal*, a subsidiary of GateHouse Media, Inc., located in Providence.

As president and publisher of the *Journal*, Hasson oversees a portfolio of media products and printing and distribution services that serve the Rhode Island market. They include, *The Providence Journal*, the oldest continuously published daily newspaper in the U.S. and top-read daily newspaper in Rhode Island, along with providencejournal.com, the most visited local news site. Other products include, BestRide.com, Monster.com, and a suite of digital marketing solutions in partnership with PROPEL Marketing services. She has also assumed Regional Publishing responsibilities, overseeing publications in Nantucket and Norwich.

Before joining *The Providence Journal*, she was publisher and president for Journal News Media in White Plains, N.Y., owned by the Gannett Company. She has more than 30 years of publishing experience working in advertising, marketing, distribution, consumer sales, audience development and publisher roles. She started her media career in Spokane, Wash., working for the Cowles Publishing Company for 15 years, later joining the Gannett Company for 18 years. She has worked in various roles driving growth and digital transformation on brands that include *The Spokesman-Review*, *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, *The Idaho Statesman*, the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, and the *Detroit Free Press*.

She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Eastern Washington University and the American Press Institute's Executive Development Program.

Meghan Hughes



Meghan Hughes became the fifth president of the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) on Feb. 1, 2016. CCRI is the largest community college in New England with four main campuses and two satellites across the state. The college serves 15,000 students, and its workforce division trains an additional 20,000 Rhode Islanders annually. A state landmark for 51 years, CCRI boasts more than 66,000 alumni.

A Rhode Island resident since 1999, Hughes served as executive director of Year Up Providence from 2009 through 2015. During that period, she doubled the size of the program, and the Providence site consistently led Year Up nationally in key metrics, including student retention and positive outcomes. She served on Year Up's National Management Team, National Senior Leadership and National Investment Committees.

Prior to joining Year Up, she taught at Tufts University from 2003 to 2009 and received the school's Excellence in Teaching Award. She led new curriculum development and helped build a partnership with Northeastern University.

Hughes is an Aspen Institute Fellow for Community College Excellence. She was recognized by the Rhode Island Foundation with its Community Leader award in 2015 and was named an "Outstanding Woman of the Year" by U.S. Rep. David Cicilline in 2014. She completed the Harvard Business School's "Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management" in 2013, was a fellow at the Rhode Island Foundation in 2012, and was a member of the Rhode Island School of Design's Museum of Art's Board of Governors, where she chaired the Education Committee and was a member of the Executive Committee. She serves on the Year Up Providence board and also on the board of the Rhode Island Foundation.

Hughes holds a bachelor's degree from Yale and a doctorate from New York University.

Kim Keck



Kim Keck brings more than 25 years of health insurance experience to her role as president and CEO of Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island, the state's largest health insurer. She leads the company's ongoing efforts to drive a simplified customer experience and advance coordinated, patient-centered and affordable healthcare for Rhode Islanders.

Keck served as president of the northeast region and interim president of the southeast region of Aetna and was responsible for \$20 billion in revenue and approximately five million members in the individual, small and middle markets. Under her leadership, she was responsible for strategy and business development initiatives, sales and distribution, operating performance and network development. She was instrumental in Aetna's development of value-based reimbursement programs, models for accountable care and population health, and utilization management.

As chief of staff to Aetna's CEO, she drove resolution of critical business, financial and strategic issues. Keck also held additional

roles as head of enterprise strategy and head of mergers and acquisition integration. While at Aetna, she also held a variety of broad-based financial roles, including leading investor relations, treasury, tax, actuary, controllers, and planning.

Keck was an analyst with Fidelity Investments in Boston prior to joining Aetna.

Keck serves as a director of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council, Rhode Island Quality Institute, Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, and Prime Therapeutics, LLC.

Keck graduated holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Boston College and an MBA in Finance from the University of Connecticut. She is a CFA charter holder, and a member of both the Hartford CFA Society and the CFA Institute.

Stefan Pryor



Stefan Pryor is Rhode Island's first secretary of commerce. He oversees and coordinates the state agencies and offices responsible for economic development, business regulation, housing, workforce development and tourism.

Pryor helped craft a substantial package of initiatives and incentives that are aimed at promoting economic growth in Rhode Island.

From 2011-2014, he served as the commissioner of education for the State of Connecticut. During his tenure, Connecticut passed landmark education reform legislation. Graduation rates increased each year and Connecticut achieved the highest score in reading among participating states on the Grade 12 National

Assessment of Educational Progress, which also showed significant narrowing of the black-white gap in reading achievement.

Before his work in Connecticut, Pryor served from 2006 to 2011 as deputy mayor and director of economic and housing development in the City of Newark, N.J. Before that, he was president of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, which was created in the aftermath of September 11th by the State and City of New York to plan and help coordinate the physical rebuilding and economic revitalization of Lower Manhattan. From 2002 to 2006, he was vice president at the Partnership for New York City, the city's leading business organization.

Pryor holds undergraduate and law degrees from Yale University.

Frank D. Sanchez



Frank D. Sánchez became the 10th president of Rhode Island College (RIC)—the state's first public college—in July 2016. Sánchez oversees the college with an annual operating budget that exceeds \$190 million, supports approximately 12,000 students on campus and across the state.

Working with the Postsecondary Education Council, he is convinced RIC will strengthen its position as a first-choice institution and continue to meet the needs of Rhode Islanders and the region.

For over two and a half decades, Sánchez has advanced higher education policy, programs and services to improve college completion and success. He has consulted, presented and spoken at numerous national forums focusing on student success. He previously served as the vice chancellor for student affairs at The City University

of New York, the nation's largest urban public university serving over 500,000 students.

A native of Wyoming, Sánchez holds a bachelor's in psychology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, a master's in student affairs and higher education from Colorado State University and a doctorate in higher education administration with a concentration in learning, cognition and instruction from Indiana University-Bloomington.

Rosanne Somerson



Rosanne Somerson is a furniture designer/maker, educator, and Rhode Island School of Design's 17th President.

She previously served in the role of provost and chief academic officer. She simultaneously maintains a creative practice, designing and creating furniture for exhibitions and commissions. Additionally, she consults on innovative educational and creative practice for institutions and industry. As a sought-after international lecturer, juror, exhibitor, and evaluator, she applies both local and global perspectives to her work. She has received numerous awards and citations for her work as a designer, artist, and teacher.

Margaret M. Van Bree



Margaret M. Van Bree is president of Rhode Island Hospital and its pediatric division, Hasbro Children's Hospital.

Dr. Van Bree also has responsibility for psychiatry and behavioral health services, including Bradley Hospital, the state's only child psychiatric hospital, and Gateway Healthcare, a community mental health organization.

Prior to joining Rhode Island Hospital in January 2015, Dr. Van Bree was senior vice president and chief executive officer for St. Luke's Medical Center in Houston, Texas. She has also been chief operating officer at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics, the University of Virginia Health System, the University of Minnesota Medical Center and the University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital. She is a fellow of the

American College of Healthcare Executives, a member of the Standards Committee of the Commission on the Accreditation of Health Care Management Education, and on the boards of Bryant University, Providence Chamber of Commerce, the University of Minnesota MHA Alumni Association/Foundation, and Crossroads Rhode Island.

She holds a bachelor's degree in community health education from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, a masters in healthcare administration from the University of Minnesota, and a doctorate of public health in health systems management from Tulane University.

Vermont

Joyce Judy



Joyce Judy became president of the Community College of Vermont (CCV) in 2009, having previously served as dean of students and provost of the college.

A special focus of her work since becoming president has been to help people understand the value CCV brings to Vermonters and to Vermont businesses. She has overseen the expansion of a broad number of workforce-education programs and has been a statewide leader in the development of Vermont's dual-enrollment program for high school students.

By expanding CCV's relationship with the philanthropic community, Judy has achieved significant growth in private support for CCV initiatives, including several scholarship programs the Introduction to College

Studies program to improve the college-going rate of Vermont high school students and enhance service to Vermont's military veterans.

Judy currently serves on several boards, including the Central Vermont Medical Center, the Center for Financial Literacy at Champlain College, the Vermont Higher Education Council and the Vermont Business Roundtable. She has also been a member of several New England Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation teams.

She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of New Hampshire, a master's from Antioch New England Graduate School. She is a recipient of the Vermont Women in Higher Education's Jackie Gribbons Leadership Award.

John J. Neuhauser



John J. Neuhauser was named president of Saint Michael's College in 2007 after serving as University Professor of Boston College. Neuhauser was academic vice president and dean of faculties at Boston College from 1999 to 2005 and, before that, dean and professor of Boston College's Carroll School of Management from 1977 to 1999. He has an impressive record of publications in creative computing and business.

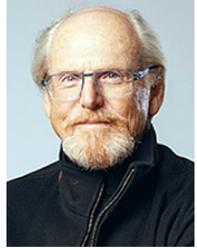
During Neuhauser's tenure at Saint Michael's, the campus has undergone significant improvements and been able to reduce its carbon footprint. The Dion Student Family Center, the Quad Residence Halls and the Pomerleau Alumni Center all were built to improve the student and alumni experience with minimal environmental impact. Neuhauser has led the College successfully through the 2008 recession and has been noted in higher education media outlets for his plan of "shrinking strategically" in response to fewer high school graduates in the Northeast. In 2012, Saint Michael's became a founding member of the Green Mountain Higher Education Consortium, a collaborative of colleges created to reduce costs and improve services to its members.

Through Neuhauser's support and leadership, the college also has made great strides in linking the lifelong benefits of a liberal arts education with applied, experiential learning through initiatives like mentored summer research that offers students in all majors opportunities to learn alongside faculty doing projects more typical for graduate-level students. In recent years, the college also made a concerted effort to help make its exceptional education affordable for disadvantaged, promising students. Saint Michael's

became a member of the *American Talent Initiative* and the *Coalition for Access Affordability and Success*, two important national initiatives. The college also created Saint Michael's Accelerated Summer College, which provides students a way to lower their cost of attendance by taking courses outside of the regular semester schedule. Neuhauser has been a member of the Saint Michael's College Board of Trustees since 2001.

A native of Brooklyn, New York, Neuhauser earned a bachelor's degree in physics from Manhattan College, a master's in operations research and statistics from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and a doctorate in operations research and statistics: mathematics, also from Rensselaer.

Peter Pollak



Peter Pollak has worked for Dynapower since 1976. As general manager through 1980, he was responsible for engineering management, semiconductor specification and procurement as well as the introduction of a perpetual inventory system. In 1980 he assumed the role of president and took full engineering, manufacturing and sales responsibility. Additionally, he introduced the first full-scale ERP system and coordinated the first of two plant expansions.

Pollak became president and CEO in 1986. During his tenure he has acquired Kirkoff Electric's cast coil transformer division, Rapid Power Technologies, DP Converters and iTherm technologies. Under his strategic vision Dynapower successfully completed the first high precision power systems to Fermi National Laboratory and became a key supplier to all of the high-energy physics laboratories in the country. He recently led the initiative into the energy storage and grid tied energy storage systems market.

Pollak holds dual degrees in applied mathematics and physics from the University of Michigan's College Of Engineering. He went on to work in the graduate research laboratory in high-vacuum thin-foil technology, where he co-authored several research papers on electron time of flight. He later moved to Vermont and was a graduate teaching assistant at the University of Vermont before joining Dynapower.

David V. Rosowsky



David V. Rosowsky, was named provost and senior vice president of the University of Vermont, effective August 1, 2013.

Rosowsky came to UVM from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute where he served as dean of engineering. Prior to that, he served as head of the Zachry Department of Civil Engineering at Texas A&M University, where he also held the A.P. and Florence Wiley Chair in Civil Engineering.

A recognized expert in structural reliability, design for natural hazards, stochastic modeling of structural and environmental loads, and probability-based codified design, Dr. Rosowsky has authored or co-authored more than 150 papers in peer-reviewed journals and more than 140 papers appearing in conference proceedings. He has been invited to present his research work around the world including invited lecturers in France, Italy, Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. He has supervised more than 20 Masters and Doctoral students. He is the recipient of the ASCE Walter L. Huber Research Prize, the T.K. Hsieh Award from the Institution of Civil Engineers (UK), and the ASCE Norman Medal.

Rosowsky currently serves on the Editorial Board of the journal *Structural Safety* and is a past editorial board member of the ASCE *Journal of Infrastructure Systems*, the ASCE *Journal of Structural Engineering* and the journal *Natural Hazards Review*.

Rosowsky maintains an active research program in wind and earthquake engineering and continues to supervise graduate students and post-doctoral researchers. He is a registered professional engineer, and holds the rank of Fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers and Fellow of the Structural Engineering Institute.

Rosowsky holds bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering from Tufts University, and a doctorate in civil engineering from Johns Hopkins University.

Jeb Spaulding



Jeb Spaulding began his tenure as Chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges System in January 2015. Since becoming Chancellor, he has focused on creating a more comprehensive and interconnected system of distinctive institutions, in order to increase opportunities and supports for students, create a stronger more diverse community of faculty and staff, and ensure a stronger financial foundation for all VSCS institutions.

From 2011 to 2014 Spaulding served as Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Administration, the senior cabinet position in the Executive Branch, under Governor Peter Shumlin. In 2003, he won his first of five elections to become Vermont State Treasurer, and was honored by his peers in 2009 as President of the National Association of State Treasurers. As State Treasurer, Spaulding served on the boards of the Vermont Economic Development Authority, the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, the Vermont Housing Finance Authority, the Vermont Municipal Bond Bank, the Vermont Education and Health Building Finance Agency, and the Vermont Pension Investment Committee.

Spaulding was a Vermont State Senator from 1985 to 2000, chairing, at various points, the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senate Education Committee, Joint Fiscal Committee, and Joint Administrative Rules Committee. During his time as a State Senator, he was a trustee of the New England Board of Higher Education and a Commissioner of the Education Commission of the States.

Early in his career, Spaulding served as the Director of Career and Workforce Development at the Vermont Department of Education, and as Director of the VAST (Vermont Academy of Science and Technology) Program at Vermont Technical College. After graduating from college, Spaulding entered the radio broadcasting industry and became a founder of WNCS-FM.

Spaulding earned his bachelors degree in Mass Communications in 1975 and an M.Ed. in Administration and Planning in 1993, both from the University of Vermont.

Kate Webb



Kate Webb is a member of the Vermont House of Representatives, representing Shelburne, Chittenden County. She served as assistant majority leader from 2014 to 2016 and as deputy assistant majority leader from 2011 to 2014. She also served on the Sexual Harassment Prevention Panel in 2016.

She has worked as a special education case manager and speech-language pathologist, as a University of Vermont clinical professor supervising graduate students-retired and as a real estate broker.

She was born in Lewiston, Maine, and grew up in Chappaqua, N.Y., moving to Vermont to ski in 1971.

She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's in communication science and disorders from the University of Vermont.

Regional

James T. Brett



James T. Brett is president and chief executive officer of The New England Council.

The council, a nationally respected and influential regional organization, was established in 1925. It is an alliance of schools, hospitals, corporations, and other private organizations throughout New England, working together to promote economic growth and a high quality of life in the region. It identifies and supports federal policies of importance to all six states, and advocates for its membership regionally and nationally.

Brett has been a leading voice in advocating for public policy issues such as healthcare, education, financial services and energy throughout New England and Washington, D.C.

The council's membership and financial growth have been impressive under Mr. Brett's leadership. In the past four years, revenues have doubled and net assets have significantly exceeded historical levels. Brett is co-host of D.C. Dialogue, a monthly public affairs program broadcast on New England Cable News.

Before joining the council, Brett served for more than 15 years as a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. He held a succession of important leadership positions, including the chairmanship of two of the most significant committees in the Massachusetts Legislature, Banking and the Committee on Taxation. In these positions, he brought together various constituencies to create economic opportunity for the Commonwealth's citizens and businesses.

While serving as chair of the Joint Committee on Taxation, for example, Brett co-authored legislation granting tax relief to the Commonwealth's mutual fund companies, in return for the creation of 11,000 new private-sector jobs in Massachusetts over a five-

year period. He also sponsored the “Single Sales Factor” legislation designed to help Massachusetts manufacturers remain competitive, and keep high-skilled and high-wage jobs in the state.

Kurt Heissenbittel



Kurt Heissenbittel joined Fidelity as the vice president and head of university relations in the Enterprise Talent Group in March 2016. He heads the university relations team, determining and executing the nationwide college recruiting strategy for the firm. With a focus on developing strategies for the next generation of college recruiting, Heissenbittel leads the team in the areas of marketing and communications, school selection, early engagement and internship programs, conversion planning and executive engagement.

Prior to joining Fidelity, Heissenbittel spent his career in academia, most recently at Northeastern University. Having held a variety of roles from marketing and programming, to domestic and international recruitment, he brought all those experiences to his role as director of admissions at Northeastern. With an eye toward creating highly personalized experiences for students and families, he led a team of admissions professionals on recruiting, selecting and enrolling Northeastern’s undergraduate class.

Heissenbittel holds a bachelor’s degree from Johnson & Wales University, a master’s from Suffolk University and is near completion of a doctorate in Law & Policy from Northeastern University.

Student Representatives

Heather Bollinger



Heather Bollinger graduated in 2009 from Nute High School of Milton, N.H., with a class of just 48 students. After taking a year to work full-time as a customer service representative for a local telecommunications company, she quickly realized the difference between a job and a career. She decided to enroll in Great Bay Community College (GBCC) to pursue her ambition of working in the business world. Bollinger immediately became involved in extracurricular activities by forming the college’s first outdoor activity club, serving as the vice president of the Student Government Association, and serving as a student ambassador. Outside her educational studies and extracurricular activities at Great Bay, Bollinger graduated from Leadership New Hampshire and from the National Education for Women Leadership New England in 2012. These training programs were designed to develop leadership skills, establish networking strengths, and promote civic engagement. Bollinger graduated from GBCC in 2013 with a degree in liberal arts with a concentration in

business, and a certificate in management. After gaining a great deal of professional experience holding various jobs within the college, she started working at Liberty Mutual Insurance in 2015 as a senior financial operations representative tasked with analyzing the economic impact of bankruptcies to commercial insurance. Bollinger is actively pursuing a bachelor’s in finance with Southern New Hampshire University and will graduate in 2018.

Freddy Cruz



Freddy Cruz is a senior at Eastern Connecticut State University. He will be graduating with a double major in Business Administration and Business Information Systems in the spring of 2018. Upon graduation he intends to work as a systems analyst before pursuing a Master’s degree.

Cruz’ future goal as a systems analyst is to help companies execute their business and technology plans as it pertains to technology and business processes. He will be interning at XL Group Insurance Company in Hartford during the summer of 2017. He is also involved on campus as a resident assistant and president of the Organization of Latin American Students.

Cruz also serves as a peer mentor and is involved as an active member in several other organizations on campus.

Desirae LeBlanc



Desirae LeBlanc is a Dean’s list student at the University of New England. She will graduate to pursue her Master’s degree in Occupational Therapy. She is a four-year student-athlete on the women’s varsity field hockey team, a member of UNE’s Student Athlete Advisory Committee, and secretary of UNE’s Alpha Chi Honor Society Chapter. She is an active Maine Adaptive Sports and Recreation volunteer, and also has volunteer experience at a number of Maine organizations, including Camp Sunshine, Biddeford Primary School, The Atria Senior Living Community, and the St. Louis Child Development Center.

LeBlanc has found an interest in research at UNE, and has assisted as a volunteer researcher for two faculty research studies: a cardiovascular health intervention program (C.H.I.P) for local elementary school students, and a head impact study exploring the cognitive effects of concussions in UNE athletes. In addition, she is pursuing her own qualitative research study about the impact and meaningfulness of adaptive skiing/snowboarding as a part of her senior internship experience with Maine Adaptive Sports and Recreation. Aside from volunteering and researching, she works for UNE's Student Academic Success Center as a peer tutor and supplemental instructor for three courses: Anatomy and Physiology, Pathophysiology, and Neuroscience.

Brendon Loranger



Brendon Loranger is a student at Manchester Community College and will be graduating with an associates degree in business studies in the fall of 2017 with plans to continue onward to obtain his bachelor's degree. Upon finishing his degree, Brendon has interests in pursuing work in the human resources field particularly looking towards recruiting. He has work experience in both white and blue collar jobs due to having worked at an accounting firm for 3 years and working for a tire warehouse for the last four years. This experience gives him a view of qualifications, experiences, similarities, and differences between the two different fields of work.

Mariela Lucaj



Mariela Lucaj is a nursing student at the Community College of Rhode Island. She immigrated to the United States at five years old with her family in the hopes of achieving the American Dream. She has been Student Government president of her campus for the past year and is running again for the 2017-18 term. It has been her mission to aid other students to achieve their potential and to serve as an advocate. Her long-term goals include serving in a nursing leadership role and advocating for women and children.

Tyler Mack



Tyler Mack is currently a senior at Eastern Connecticut State University, where he is majoring in business administration, with a minor in pre-law. Mack has been very active on Eastern's campus from the start of his college career. One of the first steps he took was getting involved in the Student Government Association, where he was elected senator. During this time, Mack served on the Budget and Management committee, which allocates funds to every student organization on campus, and reviews approval of all new student organizations. Furthermore, Mack was one of two students selected to serve on ECSU's Master Planning Committee in the development of the university's master plan. He has also served as a peer advisor in the Advising Center and Resident Assistant in Housing & Residential Life.

In addition to serving as a senator and treasurer in the Student Government Association, Mack last year was elected chief officer of budget and management. For the 2017-18 academic year, he was elected to serve as president of the Student Government Association. In his spare time, Mack has been active in intramurals and has coached two intramural teams during his tenure at ESCU. He plans to pursue a career in politics upon his graduation.

Alexandria Steinmann



Alexandria Steinmann is a Presidential Scholar at Bentley University, graduating in 2018 with a major in finance and a double minor in economics and entrepreneurial studies. During the summer after her freshman year, she studied abroad in London while also participating in an internship at a wealth-management firm. During her sophomore year at Bentley, she completed a long-year internship at UBS while maintaining a full-academic schedule. She was also selected to participate in the Morgan Stanley Sales & Trading Enrichment Program and Credit Suisse Top Talent Women's Program. The summer after her sophomore year, she interned at a stock brokerage, Weeden & Co. She will be interning at Credit Suisse in the Sales & Trading Division of the NYC Investment Bank this summer. On campus, she is the student director for the Bentley Career Services office, vice president of the Bentley Wall Street Club, program manager and committee member for the Bentley Service-Learning Center and co-founder of the Bentley Venture Capital Club.

New England Board of Higher Education

John O. Harney



John O. Harney has been the executive editor of *The New England Journal of Higher Education* (formerly *Connection*) since 1990. In 2009, he began working with colleagues and partners to transform the quarterly print journal to a web-only format, which launched at www.nebhe.org in June 2010.

Harney's work has appeared in a variety of newspapers, magazines and books. His quarterly "Editor's Memo" columns written for the journal explored key issues facing New England and were reprinted in publications such as the *Providence Journal* and *Concord Monitor*.

In 2003, Harney founded *NEJHE's Newslink*, the Journal's then-biweekly digital digest of news and events from New England higher education and beyond. In 2010, *Newslink* moved from an email format to complement the journal on the web at www.nebhe.org. Also in 2010, Harney introduced the weekly email *NEJHE NewsBlast* to highlight recent *NEJHE* content, external coverage of *NEJHE* and other related news around New England.

Harney is a former contributing editor and columnist for Boston-based *BusinessToday.com*. He is the author of *Greater Expectations: College as a Right and Responsibility for All Maine People*, the action plan of the Maine Compact for Higher Education, and co-author of "Academic Regionalism: Higher Education Cooperation in New England," published in *Regionalism in a Global Society* (Broadview Press, 2004).

Susan Lane



Susan Lane has over 30 years of experience in Massachusetts higher education and has been active in national, regional and state education organizations, working consistently to improve access to and success in higher education.

Lane joined NEBHE in March 2017 as the senior director of policy and research. She previously served as associate commissioner for P-20 Access and Success Strategies with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, as president of the New England Institute of Art and prior to that, as associate vice chancellor for professional and continuing education and adjunct professor in education at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. She has held additional leadership positions at Lesley University, the Massachusetts College of Art, and the Massachusetts Governor's Office for Education Affairs. She continues to be a higher education policy advisor to Education Strategy Group and Stevens Strategy. For over 15 years, she has been a member of the Executive Board for ACE's Massachusetts Network for Women Leaders in Higher Education.

Lane holds a bachelor's degree in government and international relations and an elementary education teaching certificate from Clark University, an MBA from University of Massachusetts, Boston and a master's in education from Boston University's School of Education, and a doctorate of education administration, planning and social policy from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

Stafford Peat



Stafford Peat has been a policy research senior fellow at the New England Board of Higher Education since 2011. Peat provides best practices, resources and information to higher education stakeholders on issues such as college affordability, college readiness and student success. He has also led a number of innovative programs, including grant-funded projects such as the Developmental Math Demonstration Project, the Redesigning Student Aid Project, and the New England Data Project intended to help expand the region's capacity to use data to improve college readiness and success.

Prior to joining NEBHE, Peat served as the director of secondary school services at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). While at DESE, he led a number of secondary and postsecondary alignment initiatives including the identification of a Board of Education-endorsed recommended college readiness program of studies—MassCore. During his tenure as the director of secondary school services, state high school graduation rates increased significantly.

Peat has authored numerous successful foundation and federal grants including the increasing college readiness component of the Massachusetts Race to the Top application. He has many years of experience in managing and delivering on high-level state and regional policy initiatives and grants.

Michael K. Thomas



Michael K. Thomas is the president and CEO of the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) in Boston, a regional organization created by the U.S. Congress to work with the 260 colleges and universities in the six New England states. NEBHE works to expand education opportunity and services and to address issues related to New England's human capital and economic competitiveness.

Thomas directs NEBHE's policy, research, publishing and programmatic activities, focused on promoting innovative K-12, postsecondary and lifelong learning policies and on expanding collaboration among leaders of business, government and education. He works extensively in state political and higher education environments, with governors, state legislators, K-12 and higher education executives and with business leaders to address issues of college readiness, access and success.

He joined NEBHE in 2002 as director of policy and research and subsequently served as senior director and senior vice president. He previously worked in corporate training and human resources and in multiple roles in public and independent universities, including executive assistant to the president of Lesley University in Cambridge, Mass.

He holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Brigham Young University and master's degrees in higher education from Teachers College, Columbia University and Harvard University. He earned a doctorate in education and social policy from Harvard University and an MBA from Boston University. He has been a faculty member, adjunct professor and lecturer at several universities. He is a trustee of New England College and served as trustee and vice chair of the board of Worcester State University. He also serves on the board of the Foundation for Student Success.

Candace Williams



Candace Williams is the Associate Director of Policy & Research at the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE). Candace leads NEBHE's Policy team in tracking and analyzing higher education trends, policies, and best practices to support institutions, systems, legislators and state leaders in New England. She has authored reports on dual enrollment and college readiness policies in New England, a primer on completion colleges and a spotlight on higher education's impact on the region's human capital development.

Before joining NEBHE, Williams was an aide to Massachusetts state Senator Michael J. Barrett. A native of mid-coast Maine, she made her way to Boston to earn her undergraduate and graduate degrees in economics at Northeastern University.