



FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF PHILADELPHIA



Alliance for Higher Education & Democracy  
**PennAHEAD**

# **College Promise Programs and Lower-Income Students**

## **Design, Implementation, and Impact**

May 29, 2019

# Agenda

## College Promise Programs and Lower-Income Students Design, Implementation, and Impact

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May 29, 2019

**9:00 a.m.**      **Registration and Continental Breakfast**

**9:30 a.m.**      **Opening Remarks: Phoebe A. Haddon, Chancellor, Rutgers University–Camden**

**9:45 a.m.**      **Landscape of College Promise Programs**

This panel will discuss the recent proliferation of college promise programs and present research on the effectiveness of promise programs for increasing access and student success for lower-income or first-generation students.

- Meredith Billings, Postdoctoral Research and Teaching Associate, University of Georgia
- Elaine Leigh, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Pennsylvania
- Alyssa Ratledge, Research Analyst, MDRC
- Moderator: Tiffany Jones, Director of Higher Education Policy, The Education Trust

**11:00 a.m.**      **Designing College Promise Programs for Student Success**

This panel will share student and practitioner insights about the program design elements that facilitate or hinder student success and offer advice on how programs can be tailored to the needs of low-income or first-generation students.

- Eileen Divringi, Community Development Research Associate, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia
- Desmond Kirton Jr., Undergraduate Student, Cabrini University and College Possible
- Louis Lin, Undergraduate Student, University of Pennsylvania and Penn First
- Moderator: Jen Mishory, Senior Fellow, The Century Foundation

**12:15 p.m. Break and Lunch**

**12:30 p.m. Keynote: Martha Kanter, Executive Director, College Promise Campaign**

This keynote address will provide a national perspective on promise programs and thoughts on how emerging research can be used to increase the number and effectiveness of promise programs tailored to local contexts.

**1:30 p.m. Creating and Sustaining College Promise Programs**

This panel will present philanthropic, research, and practitioner perspectives on how successful programs are created and which partners are critical for the development of sustainable programs. Panelists will discuss how financing, design, and impact evaluations can influence programmatic operations and outcomes.

- Saleem Ghubril, Executive Director, The Pittsburgh Promise
- Michelle Miller-Adams, Senior Researcher, W.E. Upjohn Institute
- Edward Smith, Program Officer, Kresge Foundation
- Moderator: Martha Kanter, Executive Director, College Promise Campaign

**2:45 p.m. Reflecting Remarks and Call to Participate in Networking, Laura W. Perna, Executive Director, Penn AHEAD**

**3:00 p.m. Coffee and Tea Reception**

Attendees are encouraged to network and engage around topical areas of interest.

**4:00 p.m. Conference Concludes**

# Biographies



## **Meredith S. Billings**

Postdoctoral Research and Teaching Associate  
University of Georgia

Meredith S. Billings is a postdoctoral research and teaching associate in the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia.

Her research interests include college affordability, college access and success, the transition from high school to college, and state higher education policy and finance. Her dissertation focused on nine promise programs in Michigan and estimated the impact of scholarship eligibility on college enrollment, choice, persistence, and degree completion. Billings has worked for six years in higher education administration in the areas of institutional research, undergraduate admissions, and civic engagement.

She has a Ph.D. in higher education from the University of Michigan, an M.A. in higher education from the University of Maryland, and a B.S. in neuroscience from the College of William and Mary.



## **Eileen Divringi**

Community Development Research Associate  
Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia

Eileen Divringi joined the Community Development and Regional Outreach Department of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia in June 2014. She works independently and alongside colleagues to produce research and actionable information on issues related to housing, access to credit, and household financial well-being.

Before joining the Bank, Divringi completed a graduate degree program at the University of Pennsylvania. During her studies, she interned with the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, where she analyzed the agency's portfolios of subsidized housing and municipally owned vacant land. She also interned with the Opportunity Finance Network on their financial services team. Before moving to Philadelphia, Divringi worked with a coalition of Detroit-area municipalities to develop a model program for environmentally sustainable affordable housing.

Divringi has master's degrees in city planning and public administration from the University of Pennsylvania and a B.A. in political science and environmental studies from the University of Michigan.



## Saleem Ghubril

Executive Director  
The Pittsburgh Promise

Saleem Ghubril founded the Pittsburgh Project, a community development organization that provides free home renovations to hundreds of vulnerable seniors each year. It also mentors, educates, and deploys thousands of youth in meaningful volunteer community service. Ghubril led the Pittsburgh Project from its founding in 1985 until 2008, when he assumed leadership of the Pittsburgh Promise.

The Pittsburgh Promise works for a future where all urban youth are equipped to reach postsecondary success, all public schools serve all children excellently, Pittsburgh is flourishing in all its neighborhoods, and the workforce is widely diverse and highly skilled to advance a region that is good and just for all.

In the last 10 years, the Pittsburgh Promise has sent more than 8,800 urban youth to college and provided over \$134 million in scholarships.

Ghubril is the volunteer pastor of Mosaic Community Church in Pittsburgh. He also serves on the boards of the Buhl Foundation, Vibrant Pittsburgh, and the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh.



## Phoebe A. Haddon

Chancellor, Rutgers University–Camden  
Deputy Chair, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia Board of Directors

Phoebe A. Haddon is chancellor of Rutgers University–Camden and deputy chair of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia’s board of directors.

Haddon became chancellor of Rutgers University–Camden in 2014 and is responsible for the administration of more than 7,600 students in 39 undergraduate and 28 graduate programs. Previously, she was dean of the University of Maryland’s Francis King Carey School of Law and a faculty member at Temple University’s Beasley School of Law for nearly 30 years. An accomplished scholar on constitutional and tort law, she coauthored two casebooks in those fields and has written on equal protection, jury participation, academic freedom, and diversity.

Haddon is a member of the American Bar Association’s Commission on the Future of Legal Services, the CEO Council for Growth, and the boards of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Cooper University Health System, and HERS (Higher Education Resource Services). She also served on the board of trustees at Smith College from 1999 to 2009 and as the board’s vice chair from 2004 to 2009.

# Biographies

Haddon has an LL.M. (master of laws) from Yale Law School, a J.D. (cum laude) from Duquesne University School of Law, and a bachelor's degree from Smith College. She received the 2019 Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of American Law Schools.



## Tiffany Jones

Director of Higher Education Policy  
The Education Trust

Tiffany Jones directs the higher education policy team at the Education Trust, where she promotes legislation to improve access, affordability, and success for low-income students and students of color.

Jones and her team design and promote policy to make higher education more affordable, hold colleges accountable, and invest in student success. Jones advises federal and state policymakers, convenes national working groups of civil rights and education reform advocates, and supports emerging equity coalitions in several states.

Her work has been featured in *The New York Times*, on CNN, and on NPR. In her book, *Outcomes Based Funding and Race in Higher Education: Can Equity be Bought?*, she introduces a framework for prioritizing equity issues in higher education accountability systems.

Before joining Ed Trust, Jones led the higher education work at the Southern Education Foundation. Before that, Jones was a dean's fellow at the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California.

Jones has a Ph.D. in urban education policy from the University of Southern California, a master's degree in higher education administration from the University of Maryland College Park, and a bachelor's degree in family studies and English from Central Michigan University.



## Martha Kanter

Executive Director  
College Promise Campaign

Martha Kanter leads the College Promise Campaign, a national nonpartisan initiative to increase college access, affordability, quality, and completion, starting in America's community colleges, supporting College Promise programs in more than 300 communities across 44 states and in 24 entire states. Kanter specializes in policy efforts to identify and apply evidence-based education interventions, financing models, and behavioral incentives to raise America's high school and college graduation rates.

Kanter also serves as a Distinguished Senior Fellow at NYU's Steinhardt Institute for Higher Education Policy. From 2009 to 2013, Kanter was the U.S. Undersecretary of Education, overseeing all federal postsecondary statutory, regulatory, and administrative policies and programs for the U.S. Department of Education. She led the successful implementation of the Direct Student Loan program, resulting in a 50 percent increase in college enrollment for low-income Pell grant recipients, growing from 6 million to more than 9 million students.

From 1993 to 2009, Kanter served as president of De Anza College and then chancellor of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District in Silicon Valley, California.

Kanter has an Ed.D. from the University of San Francisco, an M.Ed. from Harvard University, and a B.A. in sociology from Brandeis University.



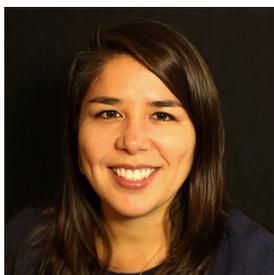
### **Desmond Kirton Jr.**

Undergraduate Student  
Cabrini University

Desmond Kirton Jr. is a freshman at Cabrini University and a participant in College Possible Philadelphia's mentorship programs. Kirton, a finance major, expects to graduate with a bachelor's degree in 2022, and invests in his spare time. Kirton aspires to be a professional stockbroker and investor.

Kirton is a graduate of the Murrell Dobbins Career and Technical Education High School. He credits his College Possible mentor for her role in helping him to apply to and start attending a university. He was appointed to represent the Philadelphia School District, and at the Baltimore Convention Center, he and other youth leaders discussed improvements needed within the school system.

In addition to his studies and investments, Kirton supports himself as a barber, waiter at Nifty Fifty's, and an employee at the Simple Greek restaurant.



### **Elaine Leigh**

Ph.D. Candidate  
University of Pennsylvania

Elaine Leigh is a Ph.D. candidate in higher education, a predoctoral fellow at Penn AHEAD, and a Moorman-Simon Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education. Her research interests include policies and practices that address inequities in college access and completion for underrepresented students and the role of postsecondary education in community and economic development.

# Biographies

Currently, her dissertation explores how local cross-sector education collaborations between K–12, postsecondary, nonprofit, and other public and private institutions approach systems change in postsecondary access and attainment through the programmatic and policy decisions made by different organizational actors and networks.

Leigh’s previous work on College Promise programs and community-university partnerships has been published in *Educational Researcher*, *American Behavioral Scientist*, and *Equity & Excellence in Education*.

Leigh has interned at the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia and at the Institute for Higher Education Policy, and she previously managed nonprofit college access programming and taught middle school science in Philadelphia.



## Louis Lin

Undergraduate Student  
University of Pennsylvania

Louis Lin is a rising senior at the University of Pennsylvania, majoring in health and societies and political science and minoring in Asian American studies, education policy, and environmental studies. He is also in the B.A./master of public health program.

Lin is a first-generation, low-income (FGLI) student and has devoted his time at Penn to advocacy work with Penn First, a FGLI student group on campus. As professional development chair of Penn First, he has worked to increase the support and resources for FGLI students. He also served as the director of administrator programming of 1vyG, the largest FGLI student conference in the country, through which he brought together over 100 administrators from colleges across the country and created the First-Generation Student Interschool Compact with best practices and goals for administrators to use to improve their campus’ FGLI resources. His experiences have fostered a passion for education and health policy as it pertains to equity, access, and quality for low-income communities.

Aside from work with FGLI students, Lin works as a management and program analyst for the Federal Aviation Administration’s Office of the Chief Counsel. He plans to pursue a career in public service, working toward addressing disparities in children’s health and education, and he was recently named a 2019 Truman Scholar.



## Michelle Miller-Adams

Senior Researcher  
W.E. Upjohn Institute

Michelle Miller-Adams, senior researcher at the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research and a professor of political science at Grand Valley State University, is the author of four books and an expert on asset-building and economic development strategies.

Her professional career has spanned the fields of nonprofit management, finance, research, and academia, including as a consultant to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, vice president for programs at the Twentieth Century Fund (now the Century Foundation), and vice president for research at a Wall Street investment bank.

Miller-Adams was the principal investigator for a Ford Foundation-sponsored research project that resulted in the publication of *Owning Up: Poverty, Assets, and the American Dream*. At the Upjohn Institute, she has written two books about the Kalamazoo Promise and the national free college movement.

She serves on the steering committee of the College Promise Research Network and has been involved in planning PromiseNet conferences since 2008. Miller-Adams is currently working on a book on the tuition-free college movement for Harvard Education Press.

Miller-Adams has a Ph.D. in political science and a master's in international affairs from Columbia University, as well as a B.A. in history from the University of California, Santa Barbara.



## Jen Mishory

Senior Fellow  
The Century Foundation

Jen Mishory is a senior fellow at the Century Foundation (TCF), working on issues related to workforce, higher education, and health care, as well as a senior policy advisor.

Before joining TCF, Mishory cofounded and served as the executive director of Young Invincibles (YI), which has grown to become the largest advocacy organization in the country representing young Americans.

While at YI, Mishory published research on and developed policy proposals designed to address the growing economic challenges facing today's young people, particularly those related to higher education, health care, and workforce development. She led initiatives focused on solutions to a range of those challenges, from improving financial aid and other supports for low-income students to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

She has also served as an expert on financial challenges that face consumers for several entities, including as a member of the Consumer Advisory Board of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, as a consumer advocacy negotiator for the Department of Education's negotiated rulemaking around student loan repayment, and as a consumer representative for the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.

Mishory has a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center, where she now teaches as an adjunct professor of law, and a bachelor's degree in economics and political science from UCLA.

# Biographies



## Laura W. Perna

Executive Director

Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy (AHEAD) at the University of Pennsylvania

Laura W. Perna is James S. Riepe Professor and executive director of the Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy (AHEAD) at the University of Pennsylvania. She is past chair of Penn's faculty senate and currently serves as chair of the Higher Education Division of the Graduate School of Education, faculty fellow of the Institute for Urban Research, faculty affiliate of the Penn Wharton Public Policy Initiative, and member of the advisory board for the Netter Center for Community Partnerships.

Perna's research examines the ways that social structures, educational practices, and public policies promote and limit college access and success, particularly for groups that continue to be underrepresented in higher education. Her scholarship is published in a variety of outlets, including books, journal articles, and policy reports. Her recent books include *Taking It to the Streets: The Role of Scholarship in Advocacy and Advocacy in Scholarship*, *The Attainment Agenda: State Policy Leadership for Higher Education* (with Joni Finney) and *The State of College Access and Completion: Improving College Success for Students from Underrepresented Groups* (with Anthony Jones).

Perna's current projects focus on improving equity in higher education in the United States (funded by Lumina Foundation) and advancing knowledge of College Promise programs.

Perna has a Ph.D. in education and a master's in public policy, both from the University of Michigan, and bachelor's degrees in economics and psychology from the University of Pennsylvania.



## Alyssa Ratledge

Research Analyst

MDRC

Alyssa Ratledge joined MDRC in 2012. As a research analyst in MDRC's Postsecondary Education policy area, she works closely with community colleges, technical colleges, and open- and broad-access institutions to implement and evaluate programs for low-income students.

Her primary areas of focus are developmental (remedial) education and financial aid programs. She has coauthored MDRC reports for several studies in postsecondary education, and she is the project manager for the Detroit Promise Path evaluation and the College Promise Success Initiative.

Ratledge has a bachelor's degree in public policy from Brown University.



## Edward Smith

Program Officer, Education  
Kresge Foundation

Edward Smith is a program officer with the Kresge Foundation's Education Program. He helps advance the team's goals and functions by inviting and reviewing funding requests and making recommendations for investments and also manages a portfolio of grants focused on promoting college opportunity and degree completion for marginalized student groups.

Smith previously spent 10 years in education policy research, working to understand how city leaders develop and advance education attainment initiatives rooted in a city's assets and suited to the needs of its people. He held positions at the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators' Research and Policy Institute, and the Institute for Higher Education Policy.

Smith has consulted for New Jersey's Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, the Community College of Philadelphia, and the City of Philadelphia's Office of Education. He also taught courses at the high school, undergraduate, and graduate levels, including at the Davidson County Correctional Facility (Nashville, TN), the Workshop School of West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania State University's College of Education, and the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education.

He has a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education, as well as a master's degree in education and a bachelor's degree in economics from Pennsylvania State University.



## Keith Wardrip

Community Development Research Manager  
Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia

Keith Wardrip joined the Community Development and Regional Outreach Department of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia in 2011 and has served as the community development research manager since 2013.

In this role, he has the dual responsibilities of supervising the work of the department's research analysts and contributing to the development of its research agenda. His work focuses primarily on employment and economic inclusion, as well as funding to support community and economic development.

Before joining the Philadelphia Fed, Wardrip spent six years in Washington, D.C., conducting affordable housing research at the Center for Housing Policy and the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

He has an M.A. in geography with an emphasis in urban studies and affordable housing from the University of Colorado and a B.A. in geography from the University of Kentucky.











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