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Josh Adams has developed and facilitated trainings for professionals and community members, including the Community Health Worker Training Program. He emphasizes adult peer support and Community Health Workers so they can provide effective support in addiction, mental health, and community care. His work extends beyond training to include collaborating on community health initiatives aimed at improving education, access, and capacity building such as CPE's CLIMB 2.0 program. Josh has also worked with care teams to identify and eliminate social and economic barriers, ensuring equitable access to care for all individuals. These experiences have deepened his commitment to creating sustainable solutions for underserved communities and fostering health equity across Kentucky. Josh Adams is passionate about improving overall health in rural communities, and as a current MSW student at the University of Kentucky, he is focused on addressing addiction and mental health challenges to ensure better health and well-being for all Kentuckians.



Christy Kissick Arnett, MSW, serves as Prison Education Coordinator at Maysville Community & Technical College, supporting students at Eastern Kentucky Correctional Complex. With a background in social work and student success, she brings a student-centered perspective to higher education access, advising, and support. Her work focuses on identifying barriers, strengthening connections between students and the systems that serve them, and finding practical ways to make college more accessible. She believes some of the greatest opportunities for improving higher education can be found by listening to the students who face the greatest barriers in reaching it.



Susie Burkhart is a lifelong educator with a 35-year career of fostering student-centered learning and academic excellence. Currently serving as a Senior Fellow for the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, Susie is supporting the development of the Kentucky Advising Scope & Sequence for grades 6–12. A former Kentucky Teacher of the Year, Susie's career spans roles from university instructor and elementary teacher, instructional coach, and principal to District Program Coordinator, where she oversaw K-12 gifted education, college and career readiness and built a robust dual-credit program for hundreds of students. Her leadership is backed by an Ed.S in Educational Leadership from the University of Louisville and a National Board Certification. Outside of her work in education, Susie is a passionate horticulturalist and the founder of Mon Ami, a sustainable flower farm where she applies her creative energy to growing dahlias and engaging with her local community.



Jason Booher is the superintendent of Mercer County Schools (KY) and a 30-year veteran of public education. A former high school math teacher, administrator, and basketball coach, he led Shelby Valley High School to the 2010 KHSAA Boys Sweet 16 State Championship and was honored three times as Kentucky's Associated Press State Boys Basketball Coach of the Year. As a teenage survivor of the 1988 Carrollton Bus Crash, the

deadliest drunk driving crash in United States history, Jason's life was forever shaped by tragedy, grit, determination, and purpose. That defining moment forged a lifelong mission: to help others overcome adversity, lead with passion, and pursue their dreams. Today, Jason speaks across the country to coaches, educators, students, school administrators and leaders, inspiring them to rise above hardship and lead with heart.



Melissa Chmura is the Admissions & Recruitment Coordinator at SCC. In her role, she supports student recruitment efforts, manages the daily operations of the Admissions Office, and coordinates campus events and tours.



Monica Duvall, Director of Student Experience and Success, leads GFCB's Student Success Center, overseeing academic advising, recruitment/ retention, internships, and career development. Together, they bring nearly 30 years of combined experience serving Gordon Ford students, championing the college's Professionalism Academic Core and Student Success Center to equip students with the skills, mindset, and resources to launch successful careers.



Rachel Evitts is the Program Manager of Ignite in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky, where she developed and implemented an innovative middle school college and career readiness program focused on students with strong potential who benefit from additional support and opportunity. She earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees from Murray State University and is currently a doctoral candidate in the Doctor of Education program. Her professional interests include college access, student belonging, career exploration, and developing partnerships that expand educational opportunities for rural students.



Amanda Ellis is the Senior Vice President of Student Access and Success at the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), with over two decades of experience in Kentucky education leadership, policy, and school administration. Ellis leads strategic initiatives to improve student access, success, and transition from high school to higher education, including dual credit opportunities, college readiness, and teacher quality.



Brandi Forker serves as the Assistant Director of Outreach for the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA). Before stepping into her leadership role, she spent approximately three and a half years working directly with students and families as the Northwestern Kentucky Outreach Counselor. She now supports KHEAA's statewide Outreach team in its mission to help Kentuckians navigate the path to higher education.

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Jessica Fletcher, MPA, has 24 years of experience communicating education and workforce policies and practices in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. After spending the first five years of her career in journalism, she spent 10 years at the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. Jessica also served in leadership roles at the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet, the Kentucky Department of Education, the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence and the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS). She now serves at the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) as Chief Communications Officer.



Magan Gaddis is a Coaching Coordinator with the Transition Education Unit within the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Early Learning. With 21 years in public education, she has served as a special education teacher and coach, supporting inclusive practices and successful post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. Mrs. Gaddis holds degrees in Drama, Exceptional Education, and Educational Leadership and brings both professional and personal perspectives to her work as the parent of children with disabilities and giftedness.



Jan Goldman is a Senior Fellow with the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education and is the Managing Partner of the Kentucky Community Learning Network (KCLN), which provides training for DCBS staff and CLIMB 2.0, an initiative focused on expanding behavioral health career pathways. Jan also works with Kentucky's opportunity populations to help learners gain access from college to high-wage careers and manages the Skillbridge initiative, to help service members transition from the military to a civilian workforce. Her work centers on creating innovative, learner-centered pathways that reduce barriers, accelerate credential attainment, and prepare Kentuckians for high-demand careers. Jan has a bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech, a master's degree from Western Kentucky University, and is pursuing her PhD in Public Administration. Jan currently resides in Western Kentucky but as a military child, wife, and mother has developed a passion for traveling and tries to do so as often as possible.



Jason D. Hamilton, Sr. is currently the Senior Director of Higher Ed Engagement at Common App since May 2023. Before that, they founded and served as the President of FinAide App in September 2019. Jason also worked at Net Natives as the Vice President of Global Technology Solutions from October 2022 to November 2022, and previously as the Product Success Director (U.S.) from January 2022 to September 2022. Prior to their role at Net Natives, they held the position of Assistant VP of Graduate and Corporate Recruiting at Lipscomb University from March 2018 to January 2022. Jason D. also served as the Vice President for Enrollment & Marketing at Hollins University from February 2016 to September 2017. Furthermore, Jason served as the Executive Director of Arkansas Commitment from July 2008 to June 2016. Jason D.'s earlier experience includes working as the Director of Admission at The University of the South from an unspecified date in 2005 until 2008.

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Mitzi Holland is a seasoned educator with more than 28 years of experience advancing Career and Technical Education and Postsecondary Readiness. She began her career as a business educator, where she spent 15 years equipping students with practical skills for success. Building on that foundation, she served for eight years as a College and Career Counselor, guiding students as they explored college and career opportunities. Today, as Director of the Kentucky Advising Academy, an initiative of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, Mitzi leads statewide efforts to strengthen postsecondary advising. Her vision and leadership continue to shape best practices, empower practitioners, and expand opportunities for students across Kentucky—leaving a lasting impact on the field.



Amanda Hutchinson currently serves as the superintendent of instruction for McLean County Public Schools.



Kevin Kenny is the Founder & Co-Chief Executive Officer at Level All based in New York City, New York. Kevin received a bachelor's degree from Duke University and a Master of Business Administration - Master of Business Administration from The Wharton School. Level All was founded to provide every student with the personalized, in-depth support and guidance they need to realize their lifelong dreams. The company's mission is to level the playing field for all.



Price Marshall serves as customer success manager at Level All, where he leads onboarding and training for 1000+ schools and organizations, impacting 200,000+ students. Price works to foster collaboration among cross-functional teams such as Content, Strategy, and Engineering, enabling the delivery of high-impact functionality to support thousands of growth opportunities and drive user accessibility and satisfaction.



As a western Kentucky native with disabilities, **Jimmie Martin** is focused on designing programs and systems for first generation, low income, and students with disabilities. He works tirelessly to make sure that these students feel supported and cared for while here at WKU. Martin has a Bachelor of Science in Advertising with a minor in Marketing from Murray State University (2012) as well as a Master of Science in Education, Adult and Higher Education, Student Affairs emphasis from Northern Illinois University (2015). From one-on-one coaching to leading large workshops, he does all that he can to help these students reach their dreams.



Amy Newsome is a Persistence to Graduation Program Consultant with the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Student Success. She began her career as a middle and high school science teacher before serving as a district-level Digital Learning Coordinator and administrative dean. While working in Floyd County, Amy developed a particular interest in Career and Technical Education, recruiting students for the School of

Innovation and Area Technology Center and supporting STEM opportunities across the district. She holds degrees in Secondary Science Education, Teacher Leadership, and Instructional Leadership and is a certified DPP.



Dr. Taylor Odle is an Assistant Professor of Education Policy and, by courtesy, Data Science and Public Affairs, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Taylor is an expert in the economics of education, where his work focuses issues in college access and success, financial aid, and program evaluation. He is ranked among the nation's top scholars who influence education policy and practice, and, among other projects, leads multiple research-practice partnerships with states and systems of higher education to study what "works" for improving and equalizing outcomes. Dr. Odle is especially involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of direct admissions programs and other admissions simplifications nationwide. He is principal investigator of the Tennessee Direct Admissions Pilot, the nation's first program to pair automatic admission with early commitment financial aid awards. Dr. Odle received the 2023 Raymond Vernon Memorial Award from the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, as well as 2026 Early Career Awards from both the Association for Education Finance & Policy and the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness. He holds a PhD in Higher Education from the University of Pennsylvania and a master's in Statistics and Data Science from The Wharton School. Dr. Odle previously led fiscal policy and research efforts for the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and worked with the College Board, MDRC, National Student Clearinghouse, and US Senate HELP Committee.



Dr. Dawn CheNeen Offutt is the Executive Director for Access, Engagement, and Belonging at the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. Dr. Offutt has worked in education in various capacities for over 25 years. She was a Senior Associate for the Council where she was responsible for coordination of the Dual Credit Policy for Kentucky postsecondary institutions and monitored the implementation of corequisite program models. She served as the Director for Program Services for GEAR UP Kentucky 3.0 where she was responsible for ensuring the effective in-school delivery of the GUK 3.0 strategies. Prior to joining the council, she worked for seven years as an Education Administration consultant at the Kentucky Department of Education. She also taught French & Spanish at Southern University Laboratory School and French at Grambling State University. She received her Bachelor of Arts in French with a minor in Spanish from Grambling State University, her Master of Arts in French Linguistics from Louisiana State University and her Doctorate in Education from the University of Kentucky.



Ashley O'Neil is Associate Director of the Kentucky Student Success Collaborative at the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, where she leads the statewide Gateway Course Success strategy. Her work focuses on strengthening institutional practices, supporting educators and advisors, and using data-informed approaches to improve student success in gateway courses.

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John Paise is an Education Administration Program Consultant with the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Career and Technical Education. He leads statewide efforts to strengthen career and technical education pathways, with a focus on supporting high school to postsecondary transitions and postsecondary readiness initiatives. John works closely with educators, school counselors, and administrators to implement strategies that promote meaningful career exploration, equitable access, and student success. He is the developer of the CTE Pathway Strengths Guidance document, a resource designed to help schools align programs with student interests and workforce needs. John champions innovative practices that prepare Kentucky students for lifelong learning and career achievement.



Tracy Parks, Ed.D., is a Coaching Coordinator for the Office of Special Education and Early Learning's (OSEEL) Transition Education Unit. She has 20 years of experience in public education, including roles as a CTE principal, MTSS coordinator, literacy specialist, data visualization specialist, and dual-certified biology/chemistry teacher. Her experience centers on instructional coaching, systems to support continuous improvement. Tracy holds an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Morehead State University, an Ed.S. in Education Administration and Supervision from Eastern Kentucky University, and an M.A. in Literacy Specialization from the University of the Cumberlands.



Trey Pippin is the program director for Futuriti at CPE. He is Adept at building partnerships between K-12, Higher Ed, and community organizations to create equitable, future-ready learning pathways. Pippin is known for his high-impact communication, stakeholder engagement, and visionary thinking that delivers results.



Danyeil Reese Senior Director, Postsecondary Leadership Coach. With 20 years of experience in education and postsecondary preparation, Danyeil Reese is a dedicated leadership coach, advisor, and licensed educator. In her current role, she activates leadership teams to drive systems-level improvements that address structural barriers in preparing every student for success in college and future careers. Her career spans various roles leading college and career readiness initiatives in diverse high school settings. Danyeil holds an Ed.S. in Workforce Education from the University of Georgia and specializes in data-driven advising strategies, college access, and career alignment.



Carla Rose is the Director of the Center for Advising, Retention, and Engagement (CARE) at Somerset Community College, leading advising and persistence initiatives.

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Jenny Sawyer is the Executive Director of Admissions and Associate Provost at the University of Louisville. Sawyer has worked in higher education for a total of 48 years and has spent 45 years at the University of Louisville. She served for nearly two decades on the UofL Family Scholar House Board of Directors (2007–2013) and Board of Trustees (2014–2023). In addition, she has served on the Assumption High School Board of Directors, the Commonwealth Education Continuum, Lincoln Foundation Board of Directors and many more.



Tracy Teater serves as Associate Director of Adult Attainment for the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, where she advances statewide strategies to increase postsecondary attainment among adult learners through cross-sector collaboration, innovative practices, and change leadership. With more than 30 years of experience spanning adult education, workforce development, family literacy, and community impact, Tracy brings a systems-level perspective to the work. She is a first-generation college graduate holding a bachelor's degree in English Education from the University of Kentucky and a master's degree in Adult Education from Western Kentucky University.



Dr. Evelyn Thrasher, Dean and Professor of Analytics and Information Systems at WKU's Gordon Ford College of Business, has served WKU since 2008 as faculty, Senior Associate Dean, and Interim Dean, previously directing the Professional Education and Knowledge (PEAK) Program.



Dr. Aaron Thompson is a passionate advocate for higher education. As a first-generation college student from rural Clay County, Kentucky, he experienced first-hand the transformative power of a college credential. As President of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, he works to ensure all Kentuckians have an equal opportunity to improve their lives through postsecondary education. Before taking the helm of CPE, Thompson served as interim president of Kentucky State University; CPE executive vice president and provost; and faculty member and administrator at Eastern Kentucky University. He has extensive leadership experience within the private and non-profit sectors and is a highly sought-after national speaker. Thompson has authored or co-authored numerous books and peer-reviewed publications on diversity, cultural competence, first-year experience programs, retention, and student success, among other topics. Thompson received his doctoral degree in sociology from the University of Kentucky, with an emphasis on organizational leadership. He earned a master's degree in industrial sociology from the University of Kentucky, and a bachelor's degree in political science from Eastern Kentucky University. He also holds honorary doctorates from Brescia University, Eastern Kentucky University, Kentucky State University, Murray State University and Union College.



Parker N. Tucker serves as Coordinator of Admissions Operations and International/Immigrant Students at Somerset Community College, managing application processing, credential evaluation, and F-1 visa compliance.

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Connor Vogt serves as a Senior Outreach Counselor in the Northwestern Kentucky region with the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA). A military veteran, Connor previously served students and families in Southwestern Kentucky before transitioning to his current region. He helps students and families navigate college planning, financial aid, and the resources available to make higher education more accessible.



Fallon Willoughby is an Associate Professor of First Year Experience at Southcentral Kentucky Community and Technical College (SKYCTC) and has over a decade of experience as both faculty and staff in higher education. She serves as a Senior Fellow for the Kentucky Student Success Collaborative - Gateway Course Success. With a passion for teaching and student support, she has been involved in numerous initiatives and clubs on campus. Her professional interests focus on authenticity in the classroom, digital literacy, writing, and student support. Fallon has a BA in English Literature and History, a MAE in Student Affairs, a MA in Organizational Leadership, and a Graduate Certificate in Postsecondary Literacy, all from WKU, and is currently pursuing her doctorate in Educational Leadership.



Heather Zoll is a Senior Director of Program Design at OneGoal, where she creates systems impact materials and programs that advance postsecondary success for schools and districts nationwide. A veteran educator with more than 17 years of leadership experience, Heather has served as an English teacher, director of a stand-alone career academy, school administrator, and Postsecondary Leadership Coach. Notably, she spearheaded the implementation of wall-to-wall career academies that transformed the relevance and quality of learning experiences across her district. Today, she combines her background in instructional leadership and systems-level coaching to design scalable, equitable frameworks that help district and school leaders bridge strategy with long-term postsecondary impact. Heather holds an Ed.S. and M.A. from the University of Kentucky, a B.A. from Western Kentucky University, and a National Board Teacher Certification.