



11th Annual College Success Forum

Tuesday, January 30, 2024

UPMC Events Center

Robert Morris University

AGENDA

8:00 – 9:00 AM	Registration/Networking <u>Refreshments sponsored by Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education (PCHE)</u>
9:00 – 9:05 AM	General Welcome/Housekeeping Amy Sawdey , President, Western PA College Success Roundtable; PHEAA
9:05 – 9:15 AM	Opening Remarks Dr. Michelle Patrick , President, Robert Morris University
9:15 – 9:45 AM	Keynote Speaker— Dr. Kim McCurdy , Bureau Director for Postsecondary and Adult Education (Pennsylvania Department of Education)
9:50 – 10:35 AM	Breakout Session 1
10:35 – 10:50 AM	Break
10:50 – 11:35 AM	Breakout Session 2
11:40 -12:25 PM	Breakout Session 3
12:30 – 1:05 PM	Networking Lunch Opportunity <i>*Boxed lunches will be available to take for those unable to stay*</i> <u>Lunch is sponsored by Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling (PACAC)</u> <i>Remarks from PACAC and Colonial Cupboard Service Project</i>
1:10 – 1:55 PM	Breakout Session 4
1:55 – 2:00 PM	Closing Remarks

9:50 – 10:35 a.m. Breakout Session 1 - Select 1 of the following options:

It's On Us: Keeping Pennsylvania College Campuses Safe

Hall 1

Presenters: David Stewart, Pennsylvania Department of Education
Christa Cobb, Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education

The Pennsylvania Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education and Adult education propose a session, consistent with Pa. Maslow's, safety pillar. The session will provide information on the various policies, best practices, and collaborative resources at the state and national level, supporting initiatives like "It's On Us", that help to make Pennsylvania's post-secondary institutions safe from sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking for all students, faculty, and staff. This session will also explore trends and vulnerabilities seen by Title IX Offices and provide an opportunity for open discussion to build awareness on how students can protect themselves, and what to do if they become a victim. This session will be co-facilitated by the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), which saw a rise in the number of students being targeted for exploitation via online social media and chat platforms during the 2022-2023 school year.

Success Strategies for Unhoused Students at Community College: A Panel

Hall 2

Presenters: Jeaneen Kish, Community College of Allegheny County
Amy Sosanko, Community College of Allegheny County
Lisa Slagle, Community College of Allegheny County
Sara Shaw, Community College of Allegheny County

At the Community College of Allegheny County, helping unhoused students is a collaborative effort. Please join the CCAC Advising Office, Counseling Center, and Resource Navigator Office in a panel presentation to discuss holistic approaches to aid in student success. Some of our topics will include:

- Being language-sensitive
- Identifying students, intersectionality, and making referrals
- Providing substantial academic and technology support
- Addressing complex basic needs
- Supporting positive mental health strategies

We hope to hold an engaging session that will allow for audience resource sharing as well.

HBCU Busting the Myths

Hall 3

Presenter: Vincent Elliot, Western Pennsylvania Council of HBCU Alumni

Explore the influence and impact of Historically Black Colleges and Universities through an open and honest conversation about some prevailing myths of HBCUs.

9:50 – 10:35 a.m. Breakout Session 1 - Select 1 of the following options:

Thinking Beyond the Status Quo: How to Be Equitable in Your College Counseling Program

Hall 4

Presenter: Carrie Woodard, Pittsburgh Public Schools
Christina Thomas, Pittsburgh Public Schools
Alicia Oglesby, Winchester Thurston School

As high school counselors and college and career advisors, it is crucial for us to engage with and understand the diverse backgrounds of our students. This session brings together three local school counseling leaders to share insights and strategies on cultivating a healthy school culture with a focus on equity and inclusion, particularly for students from historically marginalized groups. This session aims to empower counselors with the knowledge and tools needed to create a more inclusive and equitable environment for all students. Walk away with actionable strategies and a renewed commitment to fostering positive postsecondary planning experiences for every student.

Helping Campus Partners Understand Financial Aid & FAFSA Simplification

Hall 5

Presenters: Julie Franzetta, Carnegie Mellon University
Bridget Lavin, Carnegie Mellon University

Campus Partners are just that... our partners. Designed for admissions counselors and financial aid administrators, this session will provide an overview of who campus partners are, why our relationship with them is so crucial for student enrollment success and how to keep them educated and updated on topics surrounding financial-aid and FAFSA Simplification that are relevant to their role.

10:50 – 11:35 a.m. Breakout Session 2 - Select 1 of the following options:

Test-Optional Policies: Takeaways from a STEM-Focused Institution

Hall 1

Presenters: Julie Franzetta, Carnegie Mellon University
Bridget Lavin, Carnegie Mellon University

As the students whose testing opportunities were initially disrupted by the COVID pandemic approach their college graduations, we'll reflect on test-optional policies and how they've shaped the admission landscape over the past four years. As a highly-selective and STEM-focused institution, we'll share takeaways on what we've observed from our applicants and current students at Carnegie Mellon, share what these policies mean to our applicant pool, how we reflect on data, and the perspectives of our campus partners and stakeholders. This session is designed for counseling, CBO, and IEC partners working with high school students but is open to all.

SNAP Benefits for College Students

Hall 2

Presenters: Sam Serrano, Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank
Wendy Dunlap, PHEAA

Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank can help connect neighbors to SNAP (food stamps) benefits, food assistance, and resources beyond food. In this presentation, staff from the Food Bank will review SNAP benefits and other resources the Food Bank can provide. Additionally, staff from PHEAA will discuss how those working with different post-secondary populations (i.e. foster youth) can help advocate for SNAP.

College in High School Pathway into Early Childhood Education

Hall 3

Presenters: Sue Polojac, Carlow University
Tanya Baronti, Carlow University

Carlow University will share information on the College in High School to Education Pathway. Highlights will include an overview of the CHS program and shared case studies of current students and partnerships.

10:50 – 11:35 a.m. Breakout Session 2 - Select 1 of the following options:

The Power of Mentoring Relationships

Hall 4

Presenter: Sophia Duck, Mentoring Partnership

The Mentoring Partnership would like to offer a session on the value of offering young people 360 degrees of mentoring. As an organization, The Mentoring Partnership believes that all caring adults can provide youth with more intentional mentoring opportunities when they understand the role they play in youth development. This workshop will discuss ways to be more mentor-like in our interactions with you.

School Counselor/College Admissions Panel: Supporting Students on Both Sides of the Desk

Hall 5

Presenter: Karen Rubican, Pennsylvania Department of Education
Michael White, Slippery Rock University
Dr. Jennifer Kirk, Upper St. Clair High School
Emilia Mattucci, East Allegheny High School
Dr. Joe Fraas, Gateway High School

This session will bring together school counselors and college admissions professionals to discuss the ways in which all students are supported as they navigate postsecondary planning and attainment.

11:40 – 12:25 p.m. Breakout Session 3 - Select 1 of the following options:

The Role of Admissions Counselors and the Financial Aid Process

Hall 1

Presenters: Caitlin Engel, Robert Morris University
Jacqui Fraas, Robert Morris University

An admissions counselor serves as a prospective student's guide to all things related to your institution. They serve as a student's first point of contact and continue to be their go to for the duration of the recruitment cycle. They build relationships with students and their families, they develop a sense of trust and become *the person* they seek out when questions arise. Admissions counselors know that financial aid undoubtedly plays a large role in students deciding if they'll attend college and where. The financial aid process can be daunting and even scary for students and oftentimes they aren't sure where to turn for support. Having an admissions team who is cross-trained in financial aid allows students to stick with *their person* to get the information they need to make one of the biggest decisions of their lives. This session will explore the benefits of a cross-trained admissions team and how it helps admissions leadership during the crucial yield season.

Financial Literacy & Wellness in Post Secondary Schools

Hall 2

Presenter: Janet McLaughlin, University of Pittsburgh
Cassie Miller, University of Pittsburgh

We will discuss the importance of establishing a financial wellness/literacy program for college aged students. We will talk about what the University of Pittsburgh has done and discuss the impact of the program.

Documenting What Matters Most: Leveraging Out of School Time Experiences in College Admissions Process

Hall 3

Presenter: Denise Jones, Youth Enrichment Services

This session will help participants understand how to legitimize and document their out of school time experiences to support their admittance into post-secondary institutions

11:40 – 12:25 p.m. Breakout Session 3 - Select 1 of the following options:

How to Use Entrepreneurship Education to Increase Student Engagement and Success In Post-Secondary Pathways

Hall 4

Presenter: Emily Donato, BUILD.org

"41% of youth nationwide want to become entrepreneurs, and 50% believe they will invent something that will change the world. Additionally, 68% of job success comes from excellent soft and people skills. This is why BUILD's mission is to ignite the power of youth in under-resourced communities to build Career success, Entrepreneurial mindsets, and Opportunity. Through entrepreneurship, BUILD helps students become the CEOs of their own lives. Entrepreneurship education can be a great equalizer, with improved outcomes across racial and economic lines. Research shows that it results in youth actively engaging in learning, reduced school dropout, and maximized "real-life" application of 21st century skills. In this session, we will share with educators our best practices for supporting students to learn and apply skills including problem-solving, innovation, and collaboration. Using Human Centered Design and Project-Based Learning, we believe that teachers can deliver introductory entrepreneurship education and that supports students to create successful businesses from scratch and prepare for life after high school.

Collegiate Basic Needs and the Underrecognized Student

Hall 5

Presenters: Susan Dawkins, Carlow University
Jackie Smith, Carlow University
Dr. Ken Smythe-Leistico, Carlow University

Using data from national studies and institutional surveys, we will discuss three areas of collegiate basic needs in preparation for higher education: financial, academic, and social. The presenters will frame their discussion from the lens of the Carlow University mission and student experience. Attendees will leave with a roadmap for understanding and meeting the needs of underestimated and/or underrecognized students with college potential.

1:10 – 1:55 p.m. Breakout Session 4 - Select 1 of the following options:

Expand Access to AP Through AP Seminar as English 10

Hall 1

Presenter: Cassandra Allen, College Board

AP Seminar increased by 30% and was the fastest-growing AP subject in 2023. Even with such growth, 88% of AP Seminar students earned scores of 3+, the same as the previous year. The increase in participation can be attributed to new credit policies allowing schools to offer AP Seminar as a core English course. AP Seminar aims to equip students with the skills to analyze and evaluate information with accuracy and precision so they can develop the ability to craft and communicate compelling evidence-based arguments. Using an inquiry framework, students practice reading and analyzing articles, research studies, and foundational literary and philosophical texts; listening to and viewing speeches, broadcasts, and personal accounts; and experiencing artistic works and performances. Throughout their AP Seminar course, students learn to synthesize information from multiple sources and develop their own perspectives based on those sources while also learning to share those perspectives in research-based written essays and oral and visual presentations. AP Seminar engages students in project-based assessments to determine which content to explore and are assessed on their ability to apply critical thinking, research, presentation, and collaboration skills. This session will share how more and more schools are integrating AP Seminar into their English departments to help students build foundational writing, collaboration, research, and presentation skills for future success in high school, college, and career.

AmeriCorps as a Gap Year Experience

Hall 2

Presenter: Kimmy Ferry, KEYS Service Corps AmeriCorps

Learn about how students can take a gap year between high school and college. Earn money, get an education award and gain experience.

Dual Credit Agreements: A Review of 24 P.S. § 15-1525

Hall 3

Presenter: Karen Rubican, Pennsylvania Department of Education

The requirements for dual credit agreements between school entities and institutions of higher education will be reviewed.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Kim McCurdy



Dr. Kim McCurdy currently serves as the Bureau Director for Postsecondary and Adult Education at Pennsylvania Department of Education. A first-generation college student, Kim started her career in higher education as a work study student in the financial aid office at Indiana University of Pennsylvania where she earned her bachelor's degree in Journalism. She earned a master's degree in Adult Education from Widener University and a Ph.D. in Instructional Management and Leadership from Robert Morris University. Kim also serves as adjunct faculty at Duquesne University in their MS in Higher Education Administration program.

Kim has served in professional organizations – as Secretary of the Pennsylvania Association for Financial Aid Administrators (PASFAA) many moons ago, as well as on a variety of committees and as Government Relations Chair and Public

Advocacy Director for the Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling (PACAC). She helped co-create the NACAC Rising Star Award Winning Advocacy Leadership Credential. Prior to her role at PDE, she was an Access Partner at PHEAA (Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency).

Eleven years ago, a group of college access and success folks got together to work smarter, not harder. They wanted to share ideas, break down silos, and figure out how to make sure Pennsylvania learners are successful in their postsecondary education. The Western PA College Success Roundtable was born.

This is a full-circle moment for Kim. She has spent over 20 years working on college affordability, access, and success for students. PA MASLOW: A Hierarchy of Collegiate Basic Needs is PDE's latest initiative to ensure all learners not only get to a postsecondary opportunity but that they have the resources they need to get through.



Thank you to our sponsors, Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling (PACAC) and Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education (PCHE), for providing refreshments to attendees so we can keep the program free to participants. We know the value of the program and appreciate everything you do for us.

Thank you to Robert Morris University and in particular, Stephanie Hendershot and Dr. Michelle Patrick, for supporting the Roundtable efforts and for always making your campus available for this event. We really appreciate you!

Finally, thank you to all the presenters who have volunteered their time and expertise to make the CSF a valuable professional development opportunity. And to all the attendees, thank you for continuing to attend and support our efforts to share ideas and ensure student success.

We value your feedback when planning our annual CSF! Please help us plan for our 2025 CSF by completing our event survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R9QMNPR> or by scanning the QR code below!



Amy Sawdey, President, WPACSR

