About IHEP

For more than 25 years, IHEP has been a leading voice championing college access and success. Our staff includes some of the most respected professionals in the fields of public policy and research. IHEP is committed to equality of opportunity for all and helps low-income, minority, and other historically underrepresented populations gain access to and achieve success in higher education. This focus is the major driver of our four policy priorities:

- Affordability & Need-Based Aid
- Data & Transparency
- Degree Completion
- Higher Education for Students Impacted by the Criminal Justice System

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Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)

Description:
The Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization committed to promoting access to and success in higher education for all students. Based in Washington, D.C., IHEP develops innovative policy- and practice-oriented research to guide policymakers and education leaders who develop high-impact policies that will address our nation’s most pressing education challenges.

Stakeholder(s):

Postsecondary Community:
To fully achieve [our] vision, the postsecondary community, as a whole, must do more to meet the needs of students who are underserved by the educational system. Institutional leaders and policymakers at all levels must become engaged and must support efforts to dramatically enhance the quality of the postsecondary experience in ways that are relevant to the demands of the 21st century. Only with policies that open doors and stimulate innovation in quality education can we effectively address the needs of all 21st-century students—a growing percentage of whom are low income, students of color, and adults—pursuing new career pathways. IHEP intends to push the postsecondary community to do more than tinker at the margins.

Underrepresented Students:
We seek real change. Ultimately, IHEP’s aim is to offer underrepresented students a real chance to access a quality, affordable education that not only transforms their lives, but also strengthens the fabric of society.

IHEP Staff

Michelle Asha Cooper, Ph.D.:
President, Institute for Higher Education Policy — In September 2008, Michelle Asha Cooper, Ph.D., became the second president of the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)—one of the nation’s most effective voices in championing access and success. As a results-oriented, decisive leader with significant experience in the postsecondary education field, Cooper is recognized as a well-respected practitioner, researcher, and policy advocate helping to reaffirm IHEP’s role of ensuring equal educational opportunities for all students. Cooper is responsible for stewardship of the organization’s rich history of addressing the educational needs of today’s students, particularly underserved students, many of whom are low income, students of color, and adults. She raises awareness of the organization by identifying innovative solutions that create real change for students who encounter obstacles as they attempt to access and matriculate through postsecondary education. Cooper also oversees the organization’s expansive research portfolio and the analytic expertise used to inform and shape national, state, local and institutional policy reform. On behalf of IHEP, Cooper has raised millions to create and maintain strong partnerships with national and international leaders from the postsecondary, policy, philanthropic, business and civic communities. Under Cooper’s leadership, IHEP has developed a policy agenda to align the organization’s future work through four priorities: (1) access and success pathways, (2) college affordability and institutional finance, (3) meaningful data for accountability and transparency, (4) supporting critical communities and critical institutions serving 21st-century students. Because of IHEP’s nonpartisan, evidence-based approach to advancing postsecondary education, Cooper is often asked to provide advice to Congressional and state legislative staff. She has provided testimony to the U.S. Senate’s Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, and the U.S. House of Representatives’ Education and the Workforce Committee. With a career rooted in the postsecondary community, Cooper also has served as the deputy directing for the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance at the U.S. Department of Education. The Advisory Committee was an independent, nonpartisan committee created by Congress to provide advice and counsel to Congress and the Secretary of Education on higher education and student financial aid policy. In this position, she interacted with policymakers, researchers, policy research activities, and managed day-to-day operations. Before joining the Advisory Committee, Cooper held various leadership positions at the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the Council for Independent Colleges and King’s College. Cooper is a member of the board of directors for uAspire and the Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars. She also serves on several advisory boards, including the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education and the African-American Male Initiative. In addition, Cooper is a National Leadership Council member of the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ Liberal Education and America’s Promise (also known as LEAP), which is a national initiative that champions the importance of a 21st-century liberal education. Additionally, Cooper is a “thought leader” and highly sought-after contributor to the national discourse, providing commentary to media outlets such as C-SPAN, FOX News, NPR as well as The Chronicle of Higher Education, Huffington Post, The Hill, Inside Higher Ed, USA Today, and Washington Post. She has written extensively and co-authored Becoming a Student-Ready College: A New Culture of Leadership for Student Success (link is external), which reverses the college readiness conversation to offer a new paradigm on institutional value-add in boosting student outcomes. Cooper is the recipient of several awards recognizing her work in advancing economic and educational opportunities. She has been awarded the prestigious Aspen Institute Presidential Fellowship (link is external) (2016); the Center for Nonprofit Advancement’s EXCEL (Excellence in Chief Executive Leadership) Award (2014), as well as Politic365’s “Game Changer” (2012, 2013) — which recognized her among a distinguished group of bi-partisan, multicultural leaders from across the country whose foresight and active engagement in both the public and private sectors are critical to America’s domestic success and global leadership. In 2012, the Black Women’s Agenda honored Cooper for her outstanding “economic development contributions to advance, secure and protect the rights of Black women and their families.” In November 2011, Cooper, along with the entire IHEP staff, was recognized by the Association — continued next page
for the Study of Higher Education for showing exemplary leadership to the higher education community. In 2010, ESSENCE magazine selected Cooper as a “powerful visionary,” while celebrating Black women under 40 who are trailblazers. A year earlier, Diverse: Issues in Higher Education magazine also named her “25 to Watch” in its special 25th anniversary issue featuring 25 up-and-coming higher education leaders who are carrying the diversity mantle forward in an avowed commitment to progress. In March 2012, Diverse celebrated Cooper in its first-ever “Women’s History Month” issue as one of 25 women who stand out for their ability to forge solutions to the unprecedented challenges faced by the nation’s colleges and universities. A native of Charleston, SC, Cooper received her B.A. from the College of Charleston, an M.P.S. from Cornell University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, College Park. She also is a member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. A fierce advocate for equity and social justice in higher education, Cooper is well-versed in higher education access and success (domestic and international), with special emphasis on equitable reform of higher education, college affordability and financial aid policy, institutional accountability, diversity and equity, and other national higher education trends and policies. In addition to being a content expert, Cooper has demonstrated strong leadership skills, marked by proven success in strategic planning, fiscal management and revenue generation. Cooper has gained worldwide respect and has strong networks both nationally and internationally. AREAS OF EXPERTISE:

- Access and success—domestic and international
- Diversity and equity
- College affordability and financial aid
- Institutional accountability
- Student learning and success outcomes

Adewale Adams, M.A.: Senior Accountant—Adewale is the senior accountant at the Institute for Higher Education Policy. In this role, Adewale provides analytic support and financial statement oversight to the finance and administrative teams in the areas of grant and contract administration, and financial and operational management reporting. This position also manages account payables, accounts receivable, account reconciliations, and other monthly reports. He has over 15 years of accounting experience in the within various industries. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics with a concentration in Finance as well as a Master of Arts degree in Economics from Virginia State University. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his daughter. In his spare time, Adewale produces high-quality photos and short videos to share online.

Julie Ajinkya, Ph.D.: Vice President of Applied Research—Julie Ajinkya, Ph.D., is the vice president of applied research at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP). Her research interests include equity in postsecondary education and innovative models that improve degree completion for underserved populations. Prior to joining IHEP, Ajinkya worked at the Center for American Progress (CAP), where she focused primarily on underserved populations and the impact that demographic change has on a diverse portfolio of policy issues. Her work at CAP culminated in the production of a book, All-In Nation: An America That Works For All, which argues that equity is the best model for economic growth and lays out a federal policy blueprint to close gaps between racial/ethnic groups and meet our future workforce needs. Ajinkya serves as a visiting professor of government at Cornell University’s campus in Washington, DC, where she teaches courses on race, inequality and public policy. She also sits on the Advisory Council for Amherst College’s Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning, an initiative that works to articulate the value proposition of a liberal arts postsecondary education to the workforce and civil society. Ajinkya earned her M.A. and Ph.D. in government from Cornell University, where she also was first exposed to the importance of postsecondary education for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students through work with Auburn and Cayuga Correctional facilities. Ajinkya also holds a B.A. in political science from Amherst College. In 2019, Diverse Issues in Higher Education named Ajinkya one of the “Top 35 Women in Higher Education.” AREAS OF EXPERTISE:

- Equity
- Higher education access and success
- Benefits of higher education
- Cross-sector community partnerships for attainment
- Postsecondary education in prisons

Michael Scott Brick: Senior Research Analyst—Michael Scott Brick is a senior research analyst for applied research at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP). His research interests include higher education in prison and the civic engagement of currently and formerly incarcerated students. Brick has spent his entire professional career in education, policy, and student affairs. With experience in college admissions, student services, and prison instruction, his commitment to expanding postsecondary opportunities for all individuals has served as the foundation for his career and life. Brick has taught leadership studies at the University of Maryland and taught a variety of subjects at correctional institutions in Maryland and Washington, DC. Brick holds a B.A. in Individualized Studies from New York University with a concentration in education and criminal justice reform, and an M.Ed. in Higher Education Administration from the City University of New York. Outside of IHEP, Brick volunteers extensively with a harm reduction agency in DC, community organizing around justice issues, and runs a support group for LGBTQ youth in Maryland.

Karen Bussey: Research Analyst—Karen Bussey is a research analyst at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), where she is a member of the policy research team. Her research at IHEP includes using data to inform policy and practice; college access and affordability; and federal higher education policy. Karen is also a doctoral student in the Higher Education Leadership and Policy Studies program at Howard University. Her doctoral studies examine the history, role, and influence of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in higher education. Prior to joining IHEP, Karen was the Assistant Director of Campus Life and Leadership at Jackson State University and has served in various capacities as a student affairs professional throughout her career. Karen was influential in implementing the 2014 Ignite Program grant at the University of West Georgia to increase enrollment and retention strategies for academically underprepared students and the 2015 First Year Retention-Student Transition (FIRST) grant at Indiana
University Southeast to support first-generation students. Her work aims to promote access, persistence, and inclusive experiences for underrepresented students in higher education. Karen earned a Master of Education in professional counseling with a concentration in student affairs from the University of West Georgia. She holds a Bachelor of Science in marketing from South Carolina State University.

Kim Dancy:
Research Associate — Kim Dancy is the Research Associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy, where she manages projects and conducts research for the policy research team. Kim’s work focuses on improving college access, affordability, and success, particularly for traditionally underserved students. In addition, Kim works to make higher education data more accurate, complete, and actionable for states, institutions, and federal policymakers. Prior to joining IHEP, Kim was a senior policy analyst with the Education Policy program at New America. She worked with the Higher Education Initiative, where she conducted original research and data analysis on higher education issues. Prior to joining New America, Kim worked for the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, where her work focused on the use of competency-based education in career and technical fields, as well as the alignment of educational programs with labor market needs. Kim holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan, and a master’s degree in public policy from Georgetown University. She is currently a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Leanne Davis:
Assistant Director of Applied Research — Leanne Davis is an Assistant Director of Applied Research at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), where she handles projects and research focused on postsecondary degree completion, including leading IHEP’s Degrees When Due initiative. As part of this nationwide project to reengage adult learners and promote degree reclamation, Davis develops learning experiences for practitioners to apply IHEP’s research in practice and conducts groundbreaking research focused on postsecondary education. Her focus includes state policy and funding for higher education, equity in postsecondary access and completion, and innovative programs that support students historically underrepresented populations. Davis’s nearly one decade as a college counselor fueled her interest in understanding how students decide where to attend college and how resources available to them inform that decision. Prior to joining IHEP, Davis conducted in-depth research into adult college completion and college financing. Before shifting to higher education, Davis worked for several years in various non-profit management and fundraising settings. Davis earned her M.A. from the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University, with a concentration in higher education policy and finance. She graduated from the United States Naval Academy with a B.S. degree in Political Science and served as a Naval Aviator. Outside of IHEP, Davis serves as President of the Board of Trustees of Alumon Montessori School and is an avid cyclist and swimmer.

Katelyn DiBenedetto, Ph.D.:
Research Analyst — Katelyn DiBenedetto is a research analyst at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), where she is a member of the policy research team. Her research interests include college access and affordability and federal higher education policy. Prior to joining IHEP, DiBenedetto was a Postdoctoral Scholar with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas’ (UNLV) Graduate College. As a postdoc, she had the opportunity to help build, implement, and manage graduate student professional development programming, manage various events and workshops, conduct research on policy issues related to graduate education both at the university and within southern Nevada, and manage the Council of Graduate Schools’ Understanding PhD Career Pathways for Program Improvement project. DiBenedetto holds a B.A. in Anthropology from the State University of New York at Albany, and a M.A. and Ph.D. in Anthropology from UNLV. Her dissertation focused on past land and water management issues on the eastern Mediterranean island of Cyprus.

Jihad D. Dixon:
Communications Associate — Jihad D. Dixon serves as IHEP’s communications associate, where he supports the organization’s strategic communications messaging and efforts. A first-generation college graduate and advocate for an equitable education system for all students, Dixon is passionate about finding ways to support historically under-served populations through orientation, transition, persistence, retention, and graduation. Prior to joining IHEP, Dixon served as the Program Coordinator for all new student orientation programs at West Virginia University, a program welcoming over 15,000 students and guests to campus each year. At WVU, he was responsible for planning, coordinating, and executing over 20 orientation sessions and has extensive knowledge centered around student affairs best practices. In addition, he served as an Admissions Counselor in the WVU Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Recruitment. A proud West Virginian, he received both his B.A. in political science and M.A. in higher education administration at West Virginia University. He also is a lifetime member of the NAACP and a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

Tola Fadeyi, ACA, CPA, CGMA:
Director of Finance — Tola Fadeyi is the Director of Finance at IHEP. In this role she is responsible for the financial operations of the organization including cash and grant management, financial analysis, period-end closings, audit preparation, compliance and internal controls. Tola brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in the non-profit space. Prior to joining IHEP, Tola spent the last 15 years at the helm of the Finance Department of a $32 million non-profit in Bethesda, Maryland. In this role she was responsible for positioning the Finance Department to handle the growth of the organization from a $5 million to a $32 million organization and had a history of clean audits throughout her tenure. Tola is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and a member of the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA), Maryland Association CPAs (MACPA) and Greater Washington Association of CPAs (GWSCPA). She plays an active role on the Not-for-Profit Committee of the Maryland Association of CPAs. She also holds the Certified Global Management Accountant certification (CGMA) awarded by the AICPA, which demonstrates management accounting expertise, determination and commitment to achieving sustainable business success. She is also a Chartered Accountant and member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria. She has volunteered as Treasurer for her local PTA — continued next page
Institute for Higher Education Policy

Piper Hendricks, J.D.

Anita Guberovic

Kathryn Gimborys

for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) to head their global communications efforts. An advocacy and communications expert, Hendricks lives and works at the intersection of advocacy, storytelling, and brain science. After interning with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Hendricks began her career as an associate at Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver, & Jacobson. Following a federal judicial clerkship in the Southern District of Florida, she worked for several years in international human rights litigation. Disappointed by the number of important cases that never reached trial and inspired by the impact of media engagement and federal advocacy, she founded p.h. balanced films, a nonprofit that would go on to launch programs specifically for women seeking to use storytelling, including film, to advocate for the causes that matter most to them and their communities. Hendricks also served several years as the first Director of Advocacy Communications at Habitat for Humanity International and later joined the Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) to head their global communications. Hendricks graduated with honors from Vanderbilt University, where she majored in communications, and earned her Juris Doctorate with honors from the University of Michigan.

Lacey H. Leegwater, M.Ed.

Vice President of Planning and Operations — Lacey H. Leegwater, M.Ed., is the vice president of planning and operations at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP). In this role, she oversees the operations of the organization, including IHEP’s finances, information technology, human resources, and convenings. Leegwater also oversees new project development and contributes to the strategic positioning and future directions of the organization and serves as an expert contributor to a number of the organization’s applied research projects. She has a deep passion for helping institutions and communities successfully improve how their students—particularly 21st Century students—gain entry to and succeed in postsecondary education. Previously, Leegwater managed IHEP’s institutional portfolio, including its work with minority-serving institutions (MSIs), through projects like the Building Engagement and Attainment for Minority Students project, Lumina MSI Models of Success Program, Project Win-Win, and Walmart Minority Student Success Initiative. Prior to joining IHEP in 2005, Leegwater worked at the American Association for Higher Education, where she began her work with MSIs and worked on other student learning and engagement initiatives, including electronic portfolio projects. Leegwater earned her M.A. in education from the University of Virginia’s Curry School of Education, with a specialty in social foundations of education. Leegwater also holds a B.A. in political science and economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. AREAS OF EXPERTISE:

• Student success and engagement
• Minority-Serving Institutions
• Intra- and inter-campus collaboration and solution management
• Data-informed decision making
• Institutional Change

Konrad Mugglestone, Ph.D.

Senior Research Analyst — Konrad is a Senior Research Analyst on the Policy Research Team at IHEP. He is responsible for quantitative and qualitative research focused primarily on increasing college access, affordability, completion, and data transparency. Prior to joining IHEP, he worked as a Senior Policy Analyst at Education Reform Now (ERN), where he focused extensively on expanding and improving upon the debt-free college promise movement. Before ERN, he worked as a Policy Analyst at Young Invincibles, where he published briefs and policy proposals focused on college access, affordability, workforce training, economic mobility, and the challenges facing underrepresented and non-traditional students. Konrad holds a Ph.D. in American Politics and Public Policy from the University of Maryland, College Park, as well as a bachelor’s degree in Political Science from Furman University.

Alyse Gray Parker

Research Analyst — Alyse Gray Parker is a research analyst on the policy research team at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP). Her research interests include college access and affordability, completion, and federal higher education.
policy as it relates to students who have been historically marginalized by the postsecondary system. Prior to joining IHEP, Parker was a graduate fellow with the Trellis Foundation in Round Rock, Texas and a fellow with the American Evaluation Association diversity internship program. Parker also interned with the Lumina Foundation through the Archer Center Fellowship program with the University of Texas System. Parker began her career in higher education at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas as a student accessibility specialist, where she assisted students with disabilities gain equal access to a college education. Originally from the Cleveland, Ohio area, Parker earned her B.A. in Psychology and M. A./Ed.S. in School Psychology from The Ohio State University. She is currently working on her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at The University of Texas at San Antonio.

Eleanor Eckerson Peters:
Assistant Director of Policy Research — Eleanor Eckerson Peters is the assistant director of policy research at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), where she is a member of the policy research team. Her research interests include college access and affordability; student outcomes; and federal higher education policy. Prior to joining IHEP, Peters was a research fellow at the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR). Her work on IWPR’s Student Parent Success Initiative focused on supporting students with dependent children who are pursuing postsecondary credentials, such as by improving access to quality on-campus child care. Before shifting to higher education policy, Peters worked to elevate teachers’ voices in state education policy, Peters worked to elevate teachers’ voices in state education policy, and to educational opportunities that lead to college success for underserved students in Boston. Peters earned an M.A. in public policy with a concentration in women's studies from The George Washington University. She holds a B.A. in women's studies from Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

Jennifer Pocai:
Research Analyst — Jennifer Pocai is a research analyst for applied research at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP). Pocai is passionate about removing barriers to postsecondary access and success for underserved student populations. Her research interests include increasing academic outcomes for both parenting and adult students. Prior to joining IHEP, Pocai worked as an Initiative and Program Manager for Northern Virginia Community College’s Pathway to the Baccalaureate programs. Pathway to the Baccalaureate provides students from traditionally underserved populations multifaceted, individualized support from high school through transfer to a four-year institution. Pocai also serves on George Mason University’s Student Parent Working Group. Pocai holds both a bachelor’s and master’s degree in Higher Education from George Mason University. During her undergraduate studies, Pocai focused on underserved student populations, taking coursework in social justice and human rights. At the graduate level, her concentration was Student Services with an emphasis on diversity.

Andrés Quintanilla:
Research Analyst — Andrés Quintanilla is a research analyst on the applied research team at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP). Quintanilla is passionate about better serving historically underserved groups and increasing their access to and representation in higher education. With experience as both a student and employee of college access groups, he hopes to help institutions and programs provide students with the kind of support that he received. Prior to joining IHEP, he was the Institutional Practices Manager at Excelencia in Education - a national non-profit focused on research and policies that impact Latinx students in higher education. At Excelencia, he helped share evidence-based practices that are effective in serving students across the country. Quintanilla is a proud DC area native and the son of immigrants from El Salvador and Honduras. He completed his bachelor’s degree at the University of Maryland, College Park and his master’s in Higher Education Administration at The George Washington University. Throughout his education, his interest has been focused on social structures that impact men of color.

Amanda Janice Roberson:
Director of Policy Research — Amanda Janice Roberson is the director of policy research at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), where she manages projects for the policy research team. Much of Amanda’s work centers on postsecondary data, metrics and infrastructure, including contributions to the postsecondary metrics framework and designs for a federal student-level data network. Her research interests include: using data to inform policy and practice; advocacy that advances equity in higher education; college access, affordability, and success; and federal and state policy. Prior to joining IHEP, Amanda served as the assistant director for the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria, managing the scholarship program, guiding students through college financial aid processes, and tracking outcomes of program participants. This position sparked an interest in and passion for college access and success for low-income and underserved students. In graduate school, she was a research assistant for a U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration grant, providing technical assistance to communities in Appalachian Ohio. Amanda earned a Master of Public Administration degree from the George V. Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs at Ohio University, with a focus on nonprofit management and economic development. She previously graduated from Ohio University with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE:
- Postsecondary data and metrics
- Federal higher education policy
- Higher education access and success

Emily Sellers:
Degrees When Due Project Manager — Emily Sellers serves as the Degrees When Due (DWD) Project Manager at the Institute for Higher Education and Policy (IHEP). In this role, Sellers manages the project’s implementation, onboards a critical mass of states and institutions into the initiative, builds partnerships to ensure meaningful participation, and connects DWD program execution to policy priorities within the Applied Research team, as well as IHEP broadly. Prior to joining IHEP, Sellers served as Director of Alliance Relations for Complete College America. In this role, she provided support and resources to 24 Alliance members through trainings, technical assistance and in-person support. She worked closely with Alliance members to support completion efforts and drive results. She also engaged with national higher education policy and philanthropic communities to strengthen the network of...
support within the college completion movement. Sellers also served as Director of Outreach and Engagement for the Indiana Commission for Higher Education where she was responsible for leading the Outreach and Engagement team which focused on four areas: Communications and Outreach; Constituent Development and Engagement; Training, Technical Assistance and Support; and Capacity Building. Emily also provided leadership over the 21st Century Scholars program, Indiana’s early-promote college access scholarship program. Sellers brings over a decade of higher education experience and earned her Bachelor’s in Movement Science from Grand Valley State University and her Master’s in Public Administration from the School of Public and Environmental Affairs program at Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI).

Nayo Thomas:
Operations and Events Manager — Nayo Thomas is the Operations and Events Manager at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP). In this role, Nayo serves as a key member of IHEP’s Operations Team by providing day-to-day management of all operational aspects of the Institute: facilities and event planning. This includes planning and executing the convening of external and internal colleagues, stakeholders and partners. Prior to joining IHEP, Nayo worked for other non-profits such as the Association of Black Cardiologists and the Henry L. Stimson Center. She also interned with the United States Air Force and the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. Originally from Denver, Colorado, Nayo attended Howard University in Washington D.C. where she studied political science and business administration. In keeping with IHEP’s mission, Nayo is continuing her education journey and is currently studying business management.

Mamie Voight:
Vice President of Policy Research — Mamie Voight is the vice president of policy research at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP). She leads IHEP’s projects on affordability, transparency, and postsecondary data policy and works with the organization’s senior leadership team to inform the strategic direction of the organization. Voight and the policy research team launched and manage the Postsecondary Data Collaborative (PostsecData), which brings organizations together to advocate for the use of high-quality postsecondary data to advance student success and educational equity. At IHEP, she has co-authored over 10 reports and briefs on higher education topics. Before joining IHEP, Voight was a research and policy analyst and assistant director for research and policy at The Education Trust (Ed Trust), an organization that works to promote high academic achievement for all students, with a particular emphasis on closing opportunity and achievement gaps. At Ed Trust, she researched college access, success, and affordability issues, advocated for policies that would enhance equity in America’s higher education system, and was lead author on several publications. Before entering the field of education policy, she worked as an engineering consultant for departments of transportation in multiple states. Voight holds her B.S. in civil engineering from Villanova University, her M.S. in civil engineering from the University of Delaware, and her M.P.P. from Georgetown University. AREAS OF EXPERTISE: • Higher education access and success • Federal higher education policy • Equity • Postsecondary data and metrics • Financial aid and college affordability

IHEP Board of Directors:
The IHEP Board of Directors is a team of committed individuals who care deeply about the organization’s mission and vision. Their continued support is integral to the success of IHEP.

Rob Anderson:
President, State Higher Education Executive Officers Association — Rob Anderson currently serves as president of the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO). He previously served as interim chief academic officer and executive vice chancellor for educational access and success at the University System of Georgia where he led system-wide efforts to remove barriers to postsecondary education as well as support student readiness to succeed. Prior to his tenure with the University System of Georgia, Anderson served as executive vice chancellor for administration at the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission in Charleston, West Virginia. He previously served as vice chancellor for policy and planning at the same agency, director of research and planning for the Tennessee Higher Education Commission in Nashville, Tennessee, and as an administrator and instructor at Montreat College in Montreat, North Carolina. Anderson’s scholarly focus has been in the areas of student access and financial aid policy with a particular interest in merit aid programs and their impact on institutional and student outcomes. A native of Augusta, Georgia, Anderson holds degrees from The Citadel (B.A.) and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div.). He is currently completing his doctoral dissertation at The University of Georgia’s Institute of Higher Education. He sits on the boards of the Institute of Higher Education Policy in Washington, D.C. and Read Aloud West Virginia.

Daren Briscoe:
Business Narratives at Google — Daren Briscoe previously served as Senior Vice President at GMMB, where as a member of the education team, he helped clients advance issues of equity and excellence in education while leading accounts and key projects for clients including Howard University, The Council for the Great City Schools, The Campaign for High School Equity, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Daren’s strategic communications work is informed by ten years of journalism and communications experience prior to joining GMMB. He spent four years in the Obama administration, most recently as press secretary at the U.S. Department of Education, where he shaped and amplified the education reform efforts of Education Secretary Arne Duncan. Prior to that, Daren served as chief speechwriter to White House Drug Policy Office (ONDCP) director R. Gil Kerlikowske. Daren’s work at ONDCP was instrumental in helping reposition the Obama administration’s drug policy efforts as a prevention- and treatment-focused public health policy. He also spent nearly eight years as a journalist, first as a beat reporter at the Los Angeles Times and later at Newsweek magazine, where he worked in the D.C. bureau covering breaking and national news, including the entirety of the 2008 presidential campaign as an embedded reporter with the Obama campaign. AREAS OF EXPERTISE: • Communications

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Laura Cronin: Senior Associate, Booz Allen Hamilton — Laura Cronin is a Senior Associate at Booz Allen Hamilton. She is an organizational transformation leader on the firm’s Air Force team, providing expertise in strategic planning, organizational design, process improvement, change management, and project management and implementation. She has led complex transformation efforts, helping organizations define their desired future state and develop and implement their strategic roadmap to achieve that vision. Prior to Booz Allen, she worked at NVR Building Products, helping the organization transform their traditional manufacturing processes to Lean operations. She holds a B.S. in Industrial Engineering from the Pennsylvania State University, an M.B.A. from the University of Maryland, and has certifications in Change Management, Lean, Six Sigma, Knowledge Management, Innovation, and Design Thinking.

José Luis Cruz: Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, City University of New York (CUNY) — José Luis Cruz is the executive vice chancellor and provost for the City University of New York (CUNY). He served as the third president of the Herbert H. Lehman College of The City University of New York from 2016 to 2019. Previously, President Cruz served as provost of California State University, Fullerton. He is a former vice president of Higher Education Policy and Practice at The Education Trust in Washington, D.C. and a former vice president of Student Affairs for the University of Puerto Rico system. He began his career as a faculty member in engineering at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, rising through the ranks and serving as chair of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department and dean of Academic Affairs. President Cruz is a professor of physics in Lehman’s School of Natural and Social Sciences and serves on the board of directors of The Education Trust and of the New York Botanical Garden. He is a Senior Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers as well as a National Science Foundation Career Award recipient. President Cruz is a frequent keynote speaker and writer on higher education issues and has testified before the U.S. Congress. His work on optical interconnections for massively parallel processing systems has been published in scientific journals and presented at international conferences. He earned his bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering (magna cum laude) from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, and his doctorate from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Stella M. Flores: Associate Professor of Higher Education, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development at New York University — Dr. Stella M. Flores is an Associate Professor of Higher Education at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development at New York University. She is also Director of Access and Equity at the Steinhardt Institute for Higher Education Policy at NYU. In her research, Stella investigates the effects of state and federal policies on college access and completion rates for low-income and underrepresented populations. She has written about Minority Serving Institutions, immigrant students, English Language Learners, the role of alternative admissions plans and financial aid programs in college admissions in the U.S. and abroad, demographic changes in U.S. education, and Latino students and community colleges. Her work has been cited in the 2003 U.S. Supreme Court Gratz v. Bollinger decision (dissenting opinion) and in various amicus briefs submitted to the Supreme Court on affirmative action in higher education admissions. Prior appointments before NYU include Associate Professor at Vanderbilt University as well as positions as a program evaluator for the U.S. General Accountability Office and a program specialist for the U.S. Economic Development Administration. AREAS OF EXPERTISE:

- Academic research

Jacob Fraire: Chairperson — President and Chief Executive Officer of the Texas Association of Community Colleges — Jacob Fraire serves as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC). He also provides leadership to the Community College Association of Texas Trustees, an affinity organization of community college Board trustees and regents. Before joining TACC, Mr. Fraire served as vice president of philanthropic and Student Loans (TG). He served as chief architect of TG’s corporate philanthropy and authored the company’s public policy advocacy blueprint. Mr. Fraire served on the board of directors of Grantmakers for Education, and on the Committee on Measures of Student Success, a federal advisory committee authorized by Congress to study effective measurements of community college success. Mr. Fraire served as an education advocate and lobbyist for the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), National Association of Student Employment Administrators, National Association for Migrant Education, and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. He also served as director of legislation and policy analysis for HACU and as senior legislative coordinator for the law firm of Jorden, Burt, Berenson, & Johnson, LLP. The son of migrant farm workers, Jacob grew up in El Paso, Texas. In May 2013, he was awarded an honorary associates degree of applied arts from El Paso Community College. He also holds a bachelor of science from St. Edward’s University and a Master of Public Affairs from the University of Texas at Austin.

Kristin Hultquist: Secretary — Partner, HCM Strategists — Kristin Hultquist is a founding partner of HCM Strategists. She has been integral to the bi-partisan progress made to simplify federal financial aid, including the FAFSA, as well as the development and management of Lumina Foundation’s Strategy Labs. Hultquist served the National Governors Association for nearly a decade and Secretary Margaret Spellings during the Bush Administration. She also is a trustee for Metro State University Denver, a Hispanic-Serving Institution.

Ericka Miller: Vice President, Isaacson, Miller — Ericka Miller is currently Vice President of the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller, placing exceptional leaders in mission-driven nonprofit organizations. Before rejoining the firm, she was Chief of Staff for the National Governors Association for nearly a decade and Secretary Margaret Spellings during the Bush Administration. She also is a trustee for Metro State University Denver, a Hispanic-Serving Institution.

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ing high academic achievement of all students, kindergarten through college. Ericka was also President and Chief Operating Officer of the McKenzie Group (now part of American Institutes for Research), a comprehensive education consulting firm with a 20-year history of providing evaluation and technical assistance services to school districts, institutions of higher education, federal agencies, foundations, and other public and private organizations. From 1997 through 2000, Ericka served as Legislative Assistant to former U.S. Senator Bob Kerrey, of Nebraska, advising the senator on all elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education policy issues. Before her time on the Hill, Ericka was Assistant Professor of English Literature at Mills College, in Oakland, California. Prior to launching her career in education, she was an editor at the Washingtonian magazine. Ericka holds a bachelor’s degree in English Literature from Georgetown University and master’s and doctoral degrees in English Literature from Stanford University. She is a member of Leadership Greater Washington’s class of 2004, and she serves on a number of nonprofit boards. AREAS OF EXPERTISE:

- Nonprofit leadership
- Strategic planning and management
- Finance
- Policy

Cheryl A. Oldham:
Vice President of Education Policy, U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Vice President, Education and Workforce Program at U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation — Cheryl Oldham is vice president of education policy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and is also vice president of the education and workforce program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Cheryl has 20 years of experience in public policy development and implementation as well as in project management and government relations. Her previous experience includes serving for 8 years in President George W. Bush’s administration. In July 2008, the president designated Cheryl as acting assistant secretary for postsecondary education while also serving as chief of staff to the under secretary of education. As chief of staff, Cheryl was the senior adviser on policy and strategy and oversaw the coordination of the programs and policies for which the office was responsible. In September 2005, the secretary of education appointed Cheryl executive director of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education. Cheryl began her career working in the Texas Office of State-Federal Relations in Washington, D.C., handling policy matters under the umbrella of health and human services. AREAS OF EXPERTISE:

- Federal policy

Vision
All people, regardless of background or circumstance, have the opportunity to reach their full potential by participating and succeeding in higher education

Mission
To improve college access and success in higher education for all students—with a special focus on underserved populations—by providing timely research to inform public policy decisions
Values

Opportunity
Education
Data
Transparency
Innovation
1. Postsecondary Education

Promote affordable postsecondary education

Stakeholder(s)

Students

Postsecondary Educational Institutions

Affordability & Need-Based Aid — Need-based aid does more than make college more affordable - it makes college possible. — At a time when approximately two-thirds of jobs across the country will require some postsecondary education, a college degree is increasingly important for today's students, families, and our workforce development. As state investment and the purchasing power of need-based financial aid remain stagnant or even decline, today's students face affordability challenges that threaten to derail their college dreams. If college access and attainment are predicated on a student's ability to pay, we only worsen the inequities we see today. To promote affordable postsecondary education for today's students, IHEP [pursues the following objectives]

1.1. Affordability

Identify affordability challenges that disproportionately impact today's students

1.2. Innovation

Examine innovative approaches to address financial challenges - always with an eye to the equity impact of the approach

1.3. Need-Based Aid

Encourage the protection of need-based aid and support at the federal, state, and institutional levels

Stakeholder(s):

Federal Government

State Governments

Post-Secondary Institutions

1.4. Strategies & Policies

Work with policymakers and practitioners to advance strategies and policies that prioritize investment in students from low- and moderate-income backgrounds.

Stakeholder(s):

Policymakers

Practitioners

Students

Low-Income Families

Moderate-Income Families
2. Data & Transparency

*Use data to promote strong student outcomes*

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<th>Stakeholder(s)</th>
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<td>Students</td>
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<td>Employers</td>
<td>Colleges</td>
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Data & Transparency — Strong use of data promotes strong student outcomes. — Timely, high-quality, complete, accessible, and disaggregated postsecondary data is critical to promoting student success and closing equity gaps in college access and success. Students and families need data to inform their college choices and find their best-fit school. Institutions and employers need data to drive institutional improvement and align college offerings with workforce needs. And policymakers need data to promote evidence-based decision-making. To more effectively serve today's students, IHEP [pursues the following objectives]

2.1. Student Data

*Advance the creation of a secure, privacy-protected federal student-level data network to ensure that students, families, institutions, employers, and policymakers have access to the information they need to make informed decisions*

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<td>Students</td>
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<td>Families</td>
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2.2. Data Collection & Reporting

*Identify trends in higher education data collection and reporting at the federal, state, and institutional levels*

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<td>State Governments</td>
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2.3. Data Use

*Support a culture of data-use on campuses through timely research, interactive guidebooks, trainings, and communities of practice*

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<th>Stakeholder(s):</th>
<th>College Campuses</th>
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2.4. Policy Making

Work with policymakers, practitioners, and institutional leaders to encourage the use of disaggregated data to inform and evaluate policies to promote student success

Stakeholder(s):

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<th>Institutional Leaders</th>
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<tr>
<td>Practitioners</td>
<td>Students</td>
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3. Degree Completion

Promote pathways to degree completion

Degree Completion — To close equity gaps, students must cross the degree completion finish line. — Today’s students are more diverse than ever before, including students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, working students, parenting students, veteran and military-connected students, and returning adult students, to name a few. Furthermore, there are 36 million American adults who began college and earned credits, but didn’t make it across the degree completion finish line. To best serve today’s students and future students, our system of higher education must provide a strong pathway to earn a degree of value. Those completed degrees, in turn, strengthen our families, communities, and workforce. To promote pathways to degree completion for today’s students, IHEP [pursues the following objectives]

3.1. Barriers
   
   Identify barriers to completion and degree attainment that disproportionately impact today’s students

3.2. Innovation

   Examine innovative approaches to promote completion at the institutional, state, and federal levels

3.3. Solutions

   Work with policymakers and practitioners to eliminate the barriers, including through the use of disaggregated data, efforts to reengage and support students, and informed policies and practices.

Stakeholder(s):

Policy makers

Practitioners

Students
4. Criminal Justice System

Serve students impacted by the criminal justice system

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<td>Impacted Students</td>
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Higher Education for Students Impacted by the Criminal Justice System — The criminal justice system is filled with potential students who stand to benefit the most from high-quality postsecondary education. — Our criminal justice system contains millions of potential students, including the very populations whom the Higher Education Act (HEA) was originally intended to reach. For historically marginalized groups, in particular, higher education has the potential to change lives, strengthen communities, and sustain our workforce. Postsecondary opportunities that meaningfully position incarcerated and formerly-incarcerated individuals for success and dismantling policy barriers that prevent justice-impacted students from accessing high-quality postsecondary programs. To serve students impacted by the criminal justice system, IHEP [pursues the following objectives]

4.1. Barriers

Identify barriers to college access and success for students

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<td>Colleges</td>
<td>Students</td>
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4.2. Academic Quality & Outcomes

Examine approaches by correctional and postsecondary leaders to assess academic quality and outcomes for the growing number of students who are participating in higher education programs while incarcerated

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<td>Correctional Leaders</td>
<td>Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postsecondary Educational Leaders</td>
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4.3. Opportunities

Work with policymakers and practitioners to advance opportunities for students who are currently- or formerly-incarcerated.

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<th>Stakeholder(s):</th>
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<tr>
<td>Policymakers</td>
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<td>Practitioners</td>
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### Administrative Information

Start Date: 
End Date: 

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