

Speaker Biographies

Dr. Joshua Aronson is an associate professor of developmental, social, and educational psychology at New York University. Aronson's research focuses on the social and psychological influences on academic achievement.

Aronson is probably best known for his pioneering research on stereotype threat and minority student achievement, which has been cited over 6,000 times in academic literature, cited in four supreme court cases, and has appeared in every psychology textbook for over the last decade. Seeking remedies for stereotype threat, Aronson pioneered a widely used and replicated intervention, popularized by Carol Dweck under the name of the "Growth Mindset." Aronson's work has been featured in popular books like *Blink*, *Nurtureshock*, *Mindset*, *Drive*, *Nerve*, *Choke*, *Grit*, *How Children Succeed*, *Intelligence and How to Get It*, and *Whistling Vivaldi*.

Listed by *Education Week* as one of the most influential education scholars in America, Aronson is the editor of *Improving Academic Achievement* (Academic Press) and *Readings about the Social Animal*, and is co-author of best-selling text, *The Social Animal* (Worth). He has received numerous awards and grants for research and teaching, including early career awards from the American Psychological Association's Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues and the William T. Grant Foundation, the National Science Foundation. Most recently he was awarded the Scientific Impact Award from the Society of Experimental Social Psychology for his research on stereotype threat. Aronson is also an award-winning teacher, recipient of the G. Stanley Hall Lecturer Award from the American Psychological Association, and the Carl Rogers Laureate Award from the Kappa Delta Pi (the honor Society of teachers), and the Teaching Excellence Award from NYU Steinhardt.

Collin Callaway is the Chief Operations Officer for Arkansas Community Colleges, a non-profit membership association representing all 22 public community colleges in the state. Her primary responsibilities include advocacy, project management, and professional development. Collin earned her bachelor's in psychology from the University of Central Arkansas in 1997 and her master's in social work from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 2000. Since earning her master's degree, Collin has worked as an advocate in the fields of mental health, juvenile justice, education, and higher education. She has been with Arkansas Community Colleges since 2008 and is currently working on her doctorate in adult and lifelong learning at the University of Arkansas.

Alex Chough currently serves as Vice President for Government Relations at the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP), where he leads government relations, empowers the consumer voice in college access, and develops new products and services. Prior to joining NCCEP, Alex served as The College Board's Senior Advisor for Strategy and New Product Development. He also served as the Director of Policy Development and Strategic Initiatives at ACT, Inc., and had previous stints with the U.S. Department of Education (where he administered the \$100M Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program) and at NCCEP (where he served as Director of Government Relations.)

Allie Ciaramella is Communications Manager at the National College Access Network, where she delivers and promotes key messages, information and opportunities to NCAN members, policymakers, the media and other stakeholders in the field of college access and success. That includes managing the content in NCAN's quarterly newsletters and its weekly, members-only Success Digest, as well as the network's main Twitter account, @collegeaccess. She also runs NCAN's national FAFSA completion campaign, Form Your Future.

Before joining NCAN, Mrs. Ciaramella covered federal and state higher education policy at POLITICO Pro., where she reported extensively on the Barack Obama Administration's postsecondary agenda, including efforts by the Education Department to streamline federal financial aid, simplify the FAFSA form and strengthen the volume and value of Pell Grants. She also covered efforts in Congress to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, improve student loan servicing and hold colleges more accountable for student outcomes.

Prior to POLITICO, Mrs. Ciaramella was a reporter at *Inside Higher Ed*, where she covered the National Collegiate Athletic Association and student affairs issues such as health, activism and administration. She earned her bachelor's degree in 2010 from the University of Oregon, majoring in newspaper/editorial journalism and minoring in environmental studies.
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Jill Cook is assistant director of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), where she helped develop and continues to oversee the National School Counselor of the Year and Recognized ASCA Model Programs. Jill also serves as a liaison to numerous K-12, nonprofit and for-profit organizations that work on issues related to the well-being of our nation's students.

She was a member of the Standards Revision task force that assisted in the revision of Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning and currently works with the US Army and the National Association of Secondary School Principals on the Leadership and Professional Development Symposium for principals and school counselors. In 2014, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention presented her with the Allies in Action Partner Award for her work on the development of a model school district policy.

Jill received her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and has done postgraduate work at UNC-Greensboro and Appalachian State University. A music teacher, middle school counselor and assistant principal before joining ASCA, her goal as a social purpose leader is to improve her profession while helping students regardless of socioeconomic status, country of origin, wealth, or privilege.

Eileen Diggs Provides academic and personal support to an estimated 160 low-income single parents in the Career Links Program at Howard Community College. Her experience includes conducting assessments to single parent adult learners returning to college and providing education to returning students about the entire college transition, matriculation, retention and financial aid processes. Eileen meets students each semester to develop academic plans and to support their academic performance. She works closely with students to identify and deal with potential barriers to academic and personal success. Prior to Howard Community College, Eileen served as Lead Family Advocate for House of Ruth/Hope Rising, where she provided clinical case management services to women and their children whom were victims of domestic violence.

Juan Garcia oversees the Strategic Partnerships for the Center for Equity in Learning, where he works with existing and new partnerships to help people achieve education and workplace success. Prior to joining ACT, Mr. Garcia served as a champion of college access and readiness for the Iowa College Access Network (ICAN). As the Executive Director of ICAN, Mr. Garcia established relationships with school, district administration, state and local leaders, as well as other nonprofits to reach at-risk students, ensuring that these students were aware of the support that was available to them for pursuit of higher education.

Prior to his work in improving education opportunities for our students, Mr. Garcia led marketing and promotions for the launch of a new Spanish magazine published by Meredith Corporation and served as an Account Executive in Latin America for the Hispanic Marketing Division of Donnelley Marketing, Inc. In November 2016, Mr. Garcia graduated from the Harvard University Business School program of Leadership Best Practices. In 2015, he received the award for Diversity and Inclusion from ACT, Inc. nominated and selected among all company employees (more than 1,300). Mr. Garcia is originally from Lima, Peru.

Jessica Gibson is the Assistant Executive Director of Adult Learner Initiatives at the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. In this capacity, Jessica leads THEC's initiatives that focus on increasing education attainment rates among adults, including those who started college but did not complete a degree or credential. Through this work, contributes to strategic planning on Governor Haslam's Drive to 55 initiatives, including Tennessee Reconnect, the component of the initiative focused on adult learners. Jessica administers several grant projects focused on college productivity and completion of adult students, business and higher education engagement, student advising, and prior learning assessment initiatives.

Prior to joining THEC, Jessica served six years as a policy analyst for the Offices of Research and Education Accountability, a division within the Tennessee State Comptroller's office, before serving as a policy advisor for former Governor Phil Bredesen. Jessica holds a B.A. from Centre College and an M.A. in International Development Studies from The George Washington University.

David Hawkins is the Executive Director for Educational Content and Policy for the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), based in Arlington, VA. The National Association for College Admission Counseling is a non-profit membership association that represents more than 15,000 high school counselors and college admission officers throughout the U.S. and around the world. NACAC is devoted to making the transition between high school and postsecondary education equitable, transparent, and fair. Mr. Hawkins holds a BA and MA in Government from the College of William & Mary.

Brian Kathman is the CEO of Signal Vine. He's spent most of his career building successful companies and has deep experience across technology, philanthropy, and high-growth companies, often translating product innovation into new business models and markets. Prior to Signal Vine, Brian was the Chief Operating Officer at Arabella Advisors, a philanthropy services firm that grew 1000% during his five years. He founded his first company at 28 years old. In 2003, Brian launched Five Wireless, one of the first mobile strategy companies in the US with clients that included NeuStar, Mastercard, Verizon Wireless, Intrado, IDG China, and several early-stage mobile companies. In 2006, he founded Hook Mobile, a multimedia messaging firm with clients such as CBS Television, which he sold in 2008. Brian is a third-generation entrepreneur with a BS in Marketing from Indiana's Kelley School of Business and an Executive MBA from Georgetown's McDonough School of Business.

Karen Keegan brings a passion for working with students, parents and the college process to her position within the Delaware Department of Education. As the College Access Program Administrator, Karen runs all of the statewide programs around helping students, schools and families plan for next steps after high school. She runs College Application Month, in which all public and charter schools in the state participate, allowing students time during the school day to work on college applications. Since being in this position for 4 years, many Delaware initiatives around college access have been created, including FAFSA completion efforts, data collection/tracking for students who have shown academic readiness for college, a statewide texting program, Delaware College Scholars Program – a summer college access program for low-income, first-generation students in 10-12 grade, to name a few. Karen's favorite part of her job is connecting directly with students. She's known for having conversations about college in check-out lines, restaurants, sporting events – always interested in learning about a person's dreams or paths of how they got to where they are. She has an MBA from American University, a B.A. in Psychology from Clark University, and graduated with an elementary education certification.

Patrick Lane is the director of data initiatives at WICHE, a role that includes managing the Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange, which seeks to improve linkages between state data systems to provide better information to students and their families while also improving education, workforce, and economic development policy. He previously coordinated WICHE's Adult College Completion Network and has worked extensively on a project called Non-traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners. Both projects focus on identifying policy and practice solutions to help adults with prior college credit return to postsecondary education to complete their degrees. He also coordinated WICHE's College Access Regional Network, which focused on increasing the number of low-income students prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. He came to WICHE having spent several years working in education policy in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. He received a master's degree from the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University in 2007 and completed a Ph.D. in public administration at the University of Colorado Denver in 2015. He can be reached at 303.541.0266 or plane@wiche.edu.

Sarah Ohle Leibrandt is a research analyst for the Policy Analysis and Research Unit at WICHE. Prior to joining WICHE, she worked for the Colorado Department of Education and Red Rocks Community College. Sarah earned a Ph.D. in Education Policy from University of Colorado Boulder and a Bachelors degree from Wellesley College. Sarah previously interned for WICHE in 2012 and is a proud Colorado native.

Maureen Marshall holds a B.S. in Psychology from the University of Dayton and an M.S. in Counseling Psychology from Loyola University Maryland. Ms. Marshall has worked in community based non-profit organizations in addition to her experience in higher education. For most of her career, Ms. Marshall worked as a career counselor and served clients aged 14-80, with education from GED to Ph.D. Ms. Marshall has been Assistant Director for the Career Links Program at Howard Community College since 2012 and enjoys the opportunity to provide support to single parents and displaced homemakers as they advance their education and careers.

Juterh Nmah (pronounced Ju-Tay Ma) is a Regional Coordinator for the Field Outreach Services and GEAR UP at the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA). She was previously a Professional School Counselor at Zachary High School in Zachary, Louisiana, and Abramson Elementary School (K-8) in New Orleans, Louisiana. Originally from Liberia, she moved to Baton Rouge almost seven years ago from Atlanta, Georgia, where her family currently resides. Juterh is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration with a concentration in education policy. She graduated from Georgia State University in 2009, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology, and with a Master of Education degree in School Counseling in 2012 from Louisiana State University (LSU). She is passionate about working with economically disadvantaged students and ensuring students receive quality college and career readiness. Her hobbies include volunteering, watching and playing sports, spending time with family and friends, interior designing and gardening.

Autumn Perry serves as Coordinator for College Access and Success Programs for the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. She coordinates outreach efforts and implementation for the Commission's college access and success initiatives, including College Application and Exploration Week, College Decision Day, and CFWV.com, in the eastern region of the state. She also serves as the statewide project director for College Goal Sunday. Prior to joining the Commission, Autumn worked in career services and academic advising at Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, WV. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology at West Virginia University and a Master of Arts in College Student Development and Administration degree at Shepherd University.

Stephanie Ricker is a graduate of the University of Dayton with a bachelor's degree in communication management and marketing. Before graduation, she began a nonprofit career at a wish granting organization. While having the title of "Wish Fairy" in a previous role, she is excited about her work at the Colorado Department of Higher Education to fulfill student's dreams of attending college not only in Colorado, but across the country. She enjoys working strategically in a proactive environment on various projects and initiatives for higher education in Colorado – including FAFSA Completion, Attainment Gap, and the NGA Policy Academy's Dashboard.

Courtney Rogers is the Coordinator for College Access and Success Outreach at the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. She received her bachelor's degree in English and History of Art from Vanderbilt University and her Master of Fine Arts in Writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts. Courtney taught middle school language arts for two years in Colorado before returning to Tennessee where she worked in grant writing, public affairs, and development at Teach For America's Nashville office. In her current role, Courtney works to ensure all Tennessee students and college access practitioners have the tools and information they need to navigate the college going process.

Eric Waldo currently serves as Executive Director of Michelle Obama's Reach Higher initiative, where he hopes to inspire every student in the U.S. to take charge of their future by completing their post-secondary education, whether at a professional training program, a community college, or a 2-year or 4-year college or university. His role cuts across policy, advocacy, and community engagement to further the goal that the U.S. once again leads the world in terms of college graduates. After leaving the White House, Waldo has moved over to the non-profit, Civic Nation, where he continues to lead Mrs. Obama's college access and completion initiative as the Executive Director of Reach Higher and the Executive Vice President for Education. Prior to joining the first lady's staff, Eric served as Deputy Chief of Staff at the U.S Department of Education for Secretary Arne Duncan. He earned a J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School, an M.Ed. from Harvard University, and an A.B. from Brown University

Mark Williams Mark Williams worked for 10 years in quality control for a chemical company. He decided to get an associate's degree in business administration from the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC), working at the chemical company at night and taking classes during the day. While attending school, he served as president of the student government association and began working with new students, helping them with orientation and with signing up for classes. It was there that his interest in academic advising first took hold.

In 2000, he earned a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Baltimore, and he took a job a year later with CCBC as an academic adviser. After five years, he made the move to director of career development for the Catonsville campus of CCBC, and two years ago took his current position, overseeing not only career development at Catonsville but at the Dundalk and Essex campuses. During his time at CCBC, he earned a master's degree in human resource development from Bowie State University and this January will begin an online doctoral program at Capella University, specializing in organizational development.
