

**Creating Caring Institutions and “Student-Ready” Colleges
Roundtable on Systemic Change in Undergraduate STEM Education**

Speaker Biographies

Diversity and Student Support: How to Better Support Students in STEM

CATHIE AXE is the Executive Director of Johns Hopkins’ Student Disability Services (SDS) university-wide. Her role was created in 2019 to bring disability services across the schools and campuses into one consistent, efficient and inclusive system. From developing a collective mission to centralizing services to increasing accessibility and reducing ableism, her work involves collaborations and partnerships with students, faculty, staff and community members. With over 30 years of higher education experience, 27 of those years managing disability services at a variety of institutions, Cathie has had the opportunity to engage in the evolution of services and perspectives around disability. She earned her Master’s degree in Counseling and Development in Higher Education at George Mason University, where she also got her start in disability services. She received her Bachelor’s degree from Brown University in Business Economics where she worked in her most recent past role as Associate Dean and Director of Accessibility Services. Over her sixteen years at Brown, she developed disability services from a one-person office to a robust and progressive team of staff, campus partners, and engaged students. Her work in disability services has spanned a variety of institutions including Northern Virginia Community College and American University where served as an LD/ADHD specialist.

SOPHIA RAHMING is an associate director in the Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT) at Florida State University (FSU). While Dr. Rahming engages in faculty development and support, in addition to various grant-funded STEM projects, her primary responsibility is the supervision and growth of FSU's Learning Assistant Program. The LA program supports student learning and success at FSU and beyond by: improving student success in high-enrollment, lower-division courses, which provide the foundation for learning in later courses; increasing access to STEM majors and careers for groups traditionally underrepresented in those fields; creating a meaningful opportunity for undergraduate las to support learning while growing as students and professionals themselves; and supporting faculty in their course design and teaching practices by fostering a community for pedagogical exchange and innovation. Dr. Rahming's research scholarship focuses on the STEM-related experiences of Afro-Caribbean women and other international women of color in USA-based STEM education and careers. She and other Black women faculty in North America recently published an edited book, *Black Sisterhoods: Paradigms and Praxis*, in which authors explore notions of Sisterhood among Black women as a noun and a verb. She earned a Doctor of Philosophy in educational leadership and policy studies from FSU, where she was awarded a dissertation fellowship. Her academic credentials include a Master of Arts in curriculum and instruction from the University of St.

Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, and a Bachelor of Arts in elementary education from the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota.

ALI MARTIN SCOUFIELD cares about students. In her nearly twenty years working in higher education, she has prioritized the student experience, student safety, and student belonging. She is continuing that work as the Assistant Vice President for Campus Engagement and Dean of Students at Cleveland State University (CSU), overseeing CARE Management, Center for Campus Engagement, Community Standards & Advocacy, Counseling Center, Food Pantry & Resource Center, Health Services, Office of Disability and Testing Services, and Student Wellness. With a team of incredible colleagues, Ali hopes to support students in achieving their academic goals while prioritizing health, wellness, and identity. Ali has worked in various functional areas, including residence life and housing, assessment, equity, Title IX, volunteer programs and alternative breaks, leadership, and community standards. She has facilitated over 150 regional and national presentations focusing on advocacy, community engagement, inclusion, and policy development. Ali holds a BA in History from Western New England University, an MS in College Student Personnel from Miami University, and a MLS in Human Rights and Social Justice from Southern Methodist University. She is completing her Ph.D. in Urban Education Policy at CSU, focusing on the intersections between trauma and policy for students with disabilities.

TADARRAYL STARKE is the Associate Vice Provost for Student Success at the University of Connecticut. In his role, he oversees the Division responsible for many of UConn's retention, academic engagement, access, and educational equity efforts across the five-campus system. His portfolio includes exploratory and graduation advising, first-year experience, learning communities, academic support, an innovation zone/makerspace facility, TRIO programming and pre-college initiatives, diversity in STEM, and first-generation support services. Starke also serves as the Project Director and Co-PI of the Northeast Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) and oversees the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Program which is STEM-based at UConn. Prior to UConn, Starke served as the Director and Department Chair of the Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement (CARE) at Florida State University. There, he managed department operations for first-generation, minoritized, and other students traditionally underrepresented in higher education, which included pre-collegiate programs, a 400+ student Summer Bridge Program, student transition and engagement, advising and success coaching, homeless and foster care student engagement, post-graduation preparation, and assessment and evaluation. He brings over 20 years of advising, financial aid, grant writing and management, and engagement programming experience at both 2-year and 4-year institutions, focusing on historically underserved populations to increase access and success in higher education. Starke earned his Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, a Master's in Higher Education, and a Doctorate in Higher Education Administration, all from Florida State University.

CHANDRA MYRICK (Moderator, Roundtable Member) serves as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life and Executive Director of University Housing at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She previously worked in housing and residence life at Florida State University, Georgia State University, and the University of Georgia. Her research areas of interest are housing and residence life, women in leadership, and Black women in higher education.

Chandra has been recognized by the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International as the 2017 recipient of the James Hurd Award and the 2021 recipient of the Dissertation of the Year Award. She earned a bachelor's degree from Troy State University and a master's and doctoral degree from Florida State University.

Asset-based Approaches to Improving Student Experiences: Lessons from Research and Practice

FELISHA HERRERA VILLARREAL is the Director of the Research & Equity Scholarship Institute and a Professor at San Diego State University. She is a widely published scholar and has procured over \$14 million in funding to support her research. As a nationally recognized expert in STEM education, she serves as principal investigator for several large-scale, National Science Foundation-funded research projects, including HSI-STEM (NSF DUE-1832528) and ED-SYSTEMS (NSF DUE-1644990) investigating the role of community colleges and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and as Co-PI for ADAPT: A Pedagogical Decision-Making Study (NSF HRD-1759947) and NSF INCLUDES Alliance: ALRISE – Accelerate Latinx Representation In STEM Education with Institutional Intentionality and Capacity Building for Experiential Learning (NSF HRD-2120021). To inform system-wide change, her research employs advanced statistical techniques to examine contextual factors—institutional (structure, process, and policy), geographic, demographic, political, and economic contexts—that impact postsecondary outcomes. Her research featured in the field's top-tier, peer-reviewed journals and focuses on minoritized and underrepresented students in STEM and policy issues related to diversity and equity. Her scholarship is enhanced by nearly two decades of experience as a higher education professional at two- and four-year institutions, several Minority-Serving Institutions/Hispanic-Serving Institutions, including faculty and professional positions in student affairs, institutional research, and administration. She completed her Ph.D. and M.A. in Higher Education & Organizational Change at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and earned master's and bachelor's degrees from the University of New Mexico (UNM) and an associate's degree from UNM-Taos.

JENNIFER M. JOHNSON is an Associate Professor in the Higher Education Program at Temple University. She is an active scholar-practitioner in the fields of college access and student retention. A former Philadelphia middle school teacher with a background in science and mathematics, she spent several years working as a counselor and advisor for college access and success programs. Her research interests include pre-college access programs, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs, and high-achieving students of color. This scholarship explores the ways race, gender, and class intersect to shape the educational experiences of students across diverse institutional contexts.

AMBER WILLIAMS is a highly accomplished higher education professional and Vice Provost for Student Success at the University of Tennessee. In this capacity, she oversees multiple departments that focus on supporting students in achieving their academic goals and realizing their individual success stories. Williams has played a pivotal role in launching several initiatives

at UT that foster a strengths-based approach to student success, while also prioritizing students' well-being and equipping graduates with the skills and confidence necessary to succeed in a rapidly evolving global workforce. Prior to assuming her current role at UT in 2020, Williams served as assistant vice chancellor for enrollment management at the University of Nebraska. During her tenure there, she was responsible for creating the Nebraska College Preparatory Academy, a highly innovative program that prepares first-generation and low-income students for academic and personal success. Williams is a distinguished scholar, holding a bachelor's degree in communication studies from the University of Kansas, a master's degree in leadership education, and a doctorate in educational administration from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. She is a highly sought-after national speaker on topics such as organizational leadership and development, diversity and inclusion, student success, women in business, and enrollment management

CHRISTINA YAO (Moderator, Roundtable Member) is an Associate Professor of Higher Education and Program Coordinator of the Higher Education and Student Affairs Master's program at the University of South Carolina. She is a qualitative researcher who has published extensively on undergraduate and graduate student engagement and learning in higher education. She operationalizes her research focus through three connected topical areas: international student mobility, scholar-practitioner preparation, and transnational education. Dr. Yao is involved in several professional organizations, including Vice Chair for the Council for International Higher Education (CIHE) for the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) and prior involvement with the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES). She also serves on the editorial board for several journals, including the Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, the Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, and the Journal of International Students. She is the recipient of several awards, including the 2022 NASPA Mid-Career Faculty Award, the 2021 Excellence in International Research Award from College Student Educators International (ACPA), the 2020 Best Article Award from the CIES Study Abroad & International Students SIG, and the Loyola University Chicago School of Education 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award.