

Speaker Biographies

Linda García, Ph.D., is the Executive Director of the Center for Community College Student Engagement (the Center) at The University of Texas at Austin (UT). Prior to this role, she served as the Assistant Director of College Relations at the Center. Previously, Linda was Vice President of Community College Relations at the Roueche Graduate Center at National American University, and she has worked at Lone Star College, Maricopa Community Colleges, and The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College. Linda's experience includes student development, instructional support, grant writing, and teaching. She serves as a coach for the American Association of Community Colleges Pathways 2.0 and Texas Pathways Project.

Linda earned a Bachelor of Journalism with a concentration in broadcast and a doctorate in higher education administration with a specialization in community college leadership from The University of Texas at Austin. Her Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies degree is from The University of Texas at Brownsville.

Monica W. Walker, Ed.D., is the Dean of Special Academic Programs for the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) where she serves as the chief advisor in the administration of instructional areas including accelerated developmental education, library services, honors program, high impact educational practices, academic development, high school collaboration, and academic support. She has also held administrative and academic posts as CCBC's Interim Vice President of Instruction, Department Chair & Associate Professor of English, and Coordinator for Developmental Writing & Learning Communities. In these capacities, she provided strategic leadership for curriculum reform, program evaluation and assessment, academic policy, K-20 articulation, culturally responsive pedagogy, early college high schools, faculty development, and teaching and learning excellence. Prior to her career in higher education, she enjoyed working in public relations as a member of the Baltimore Orioles front office staff and in non-profit management and development for the American Cancer Society.

As a fourth generation educator, Dr. Walker delights in using her gifts to promote education, mentoring and service. She is the recipient of several prestigious awards including the *Exemplar Award* for Innovation from the North American Council for Staff, Program & Organizational Development and the *Innovation of the Year Award* from the League of Innovation in the Community Colleges. In 2020, she was named one of Maryland's Top 100 Women by the Daily Record. Dr. Walker holds a Bachelor of Science in Communication from James Madison University, a Master of Public Administration from the University of Baltimore, and a Doctorate of Education in Higher Education/Community College Leadership from Morgan State University.

Thomas Arnett, MBA is a Senior Research Fellow in education for the Clayton Christensen Institute. His work focuses on studying innovations that amplify educator capacity, documenting barriers to K-12 innovation, and identifying disruptive innovations in education. Thomas previously served as a trustee and board president for the Morgan Hill Unified School District in Morgan Hill, California, worked as an Education Pioneers fellow with the Achievement First Public Charter Schools, and taught middle school math as a Teach For America teacher in Kansas City Public Schools.

Thomas received a BS in Economics from Brigham Young University and an MBA from the Tepper School of Business at Carnegie Mellon University.