

Leadership Summit - Speakers

Bernard Little

Waubonsee Community College - Chief Diversity Officer and Dean for Students
Welcome: Charge to Students

Bernard Little is currently the Chief Diversity Officer and Dean for Students at Waubonsee Community College in Illinois. Before starting at Waubonsee, Bernard served as an Assistant Dean of Students at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. Prior to that role, Bernard served in several capacities at The University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Chicago, and the University of Richmond. Bernard holds a B.A. in Communication from Bowling Green State University, an M.S. in Higher Education from Miami University, and is currently completing his doctoral studies at DePaul University. As a professional in the field for 15 years, Bernard has progressive leadership and administrative experience in advocating for students and championing issues of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Bernard spends time engaging with students and staff to change organizations to best support the current needs of access and opportunity for all who seek higher education.



Ellen Huxtable

Advantage Business Concepts - Owner
Breakout Session: Learning from Failure

Ellen Huxtable, the owner of Advantage Business Concepts, is a business professional with experience in both the corporate and entrepreneurial sectors. She has managed departments, launched corporate initiatives and assisted entrepreneurs. Ellen is an advisor and instructor for the Waubonsee Small Business Development Center and received her MBA from the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University.



Leadership Summit - Speakers

Pam Dilday

Joliet Junior College – Director of Student Activities (Retired)
Breakout Session: Time Management

Pam Dilday retired in June 2020 after almost 25 years at Joliet Junior College, the majority of that time serving as the Director of Student Activities. In that capacity, she developed co-curricular programs for students and spearheaded a two-tiered leadership series along with college wide programs, advising Student Government, maintaining the department budgets, serving on many college committees and overseeing the department. Pam graduated from Illinois State University with a Bachelor's degree in Child Development and Family Relations and from University of Illinois Springfield with a Master's degree in Educational Leadership.



Richie Heredia

Waubensee Community College – Student Conduct and Education Coordinator
Breakout Session: Building an Identity & Self-Esteem

Richie Heredia is the new Student Conduct and Education Coordinator at Waubensee. He has several years of experience in developing and advancing initiatives that address student development, retention, and success. Richie has a background in Community and Nonprofit Leadership and is experienced in advocating for immigrant rights and for the rights of other disenfranchised communities. He is always stressing the importance of supporting one another, the importance of spending time with the people we care about, and the importance for self-care. In his spare time Richie enjoys traveling to other countries, riding horses, cooking, and playing Dungeons & Dragons with his old graduate school buddies. He is always grateful to be able to connect with students and he looks forward to setting roots in the Waubensee community.



Leadership Summit - Speakers

Dr. Becki Vaughn

Waubonsee Community College – Professional Tutor & Academic Coach
Breakout Session: Student 101

Dr. Becki Vaughn (**or just Becki!**) teaches at Northern Illinois University in addition to her role as academic coach and writing tutor here at Waubonsee. In her 25+ years of teaching, she has taught courses in college reading, study strategies, teacher education, and test preparation. Becki has presented at leadership, educational, and student success conferences. She believes that learning is a life-long process and considers it a privilege to accompany students on their academic journeys.



Daniel Portincaso

Waubonsee Community College – Associate Professor of English
Breakout Session: Civil Dialogue

Dan Portincaso is a writer and Associate Professor of English at Waubonsee Community College where he teaches composition and fiction writing and has previously taught Leadership, Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, and college success. Dan is the faculty advisor for the Waubonsee Creative Writing Club and the *Horizons Literary Magazine* on campus. He completed his general education courses at McHenry County College and holds two degrees in fiction writing, a bachelor's from Columbia College Chicago and an MFA from Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Before coming to Waubonsee he was Head Docent and Facilities Manager at the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum on the University of Illinois Chicago campus where he worked to bring the history of social justice on the Near West Side of Chicago to people from around the world through tours, exhibitions, research, and community development



Leadership Summit - Speakers

David Barreto

Waubonsee Community College – Counselor and Associate Professor
Breakout Session: Mental Health & Wellness

David Barreto is Assistant Professor/Counselor at Waubonsee Community College. He has provided mental health, career and academic counseling to college students. He is also owner of Lighthouse Counseling Center where he provides mental health counseling in Aurora, IL. David has taught undergraduate psychology courses, currently teaches a career exploration course to community college students and also has taught graduate counseling courses. He completed his first master's degree in psychology with an emphasis in clinical psychology and completed a second master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. David has co-authored two book chapters and has presented at the American Counseling Association and the Illinois Counseling Association annual conferences.



Gabriela Rios

Waubonsee Community College – Student Success Coach
Breakout Session: Mental Health & Wellness

Gabriela is a student at Northern Illinois University where she is finishing her master's degree in counseling with an emphasis on education. She is a Student Success Coach at Waubonsee Community College where she works directly with underrepresented students. She knows balance in all aspects of life plays an important role in success. She promotes balance and overall wellness to students through the practice of mindfulness and self-care.



Leadership Summit - Speakers

Imelda Koehler

Waubonsee Community College – Educational Advisor
Breakout Session: Planning for your Future

Imelda Koehler is a first-generation college student raised in Illinois. She has her master's degree in counseling from Northern Illinois University. She has worked with Waubonsee students in various capacities and has also taught the COL100 Great Beginnings: College Life and Success class. You can find Imelda in the TRIO/SSS office in the Student Center!



Scott Green

Edward Jones Investments – Financial Advisor
Breakout Session: Adulting 101

Scott Green is a Financial Advisor with Edward Jones Investments. With twenty years of experience in investing, Scott's practice centers around personal finance with an emphasis on holistic financial wellness. His philosophy as an Advisor is rooted in the belief that financial empowerment is the key to creating a life well-lived. In addition to his role as a Financial Advisor, Scott sits on the Board of Directors for the Fox Valley Food for Health non-profit organization and serves as Committee Chair for the Finance Committee. Originally from New England, Scott has lived from coast to coast before settling down in the Chicago area with his wife Madeline.



Leadership Summit - Civic Engagement Panel

Dr. Melinda Tejada

Waubonsee Community College - Vice President for Student Development and Executive Director of the Foundation

Dr. Melinda Tejada serves the college as Vice President for Student Development and as Executive Director of the Foundation. Dr. Tejada began her 33rd year at the college this January. She worked first as a part-time counselor in the original Student Support Services program. She then worked with the Athletic Department and developed what is now known as STAR (Students Taking Academic Responsibility). In 1995, she was asked to begin an administrative role as Director of Student Life. Since that time, she has served in the capacity of Assistant Dean of Counseling and Student Life, Dean for Student Development, Assistant Vice President for Student Development, and is now in her current role.

Dr. Tejada has served several terms as President of the Skyway Conference, President of the Illinois Community College Chief Students Officers, and was an Advisory Board member to ACPA. Currently, she is serving as Board Chair for AID (Association for Individual Development), the Investment Committee for the Fox Valley United Way, and is a member of the Yorkville Kiwanis.



Scheketa Hart-Burns

City of Aurora – Alderman, Ward 7

Alderman Hart-Burns was first elected in 1991. She has served on the Finance Committee and is also on the office committee for the Aldermen's Office. She is currently the chairperson of the Public Health, Safety and Transportation Committee (PHST), as well as a member of the Finance Committee.

Alderman Hart-Burns is a graduate of Edison College. She is happily married to William F. Burns and is the mother of 5 adult children: Malik, Kehinde, Hakim, Amina and Ahmad Hart (deceased) and Michael, Vernon and Arvin Burns.



Leadership Summit - Civic Engagement Panel

Kyla Brittain

The Fox Valley United Way – Director of Community Engagement

Kyla Brittain is currently the Director of Community Engagement for The Fox Valley United Way where she is responsible for fundraising, event planning, volunteers and community initiatives. Having graduated from Kendall College (Chicago, IL) in 2010 with a Bachelor's in Hospitality, Kyla has worked for famed entertainment venues including Soldier Field (Chicago, IL) and The Grand Ole Opry (Nashville, TN). After a successful career in hospitality, Kyla made the transition to non-profit management to fuse her passion for philanthropy and event planning. Kyla is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) and the Association for Leaders in Volunteer Engagement (ALIVE) and is currently pursuing her CFRE (Certified Fund Raising Executive). She is an active Rotarian and Membership Chair for Women Inspiring Mentoring of The Fox Valley.



Desiree Elsbree

League of Women Voters – Co-Vice President

Denise Elsbree, LCSW, has lived and worked in Aurora for over 30 years. She is the current Co-Vice President of the League of Women Voters Aurora Area. Past community involvement includes working for local not-for-profit organizations and serving on several community boards. Denise is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. She is a National Trainer for the National Council for Behavioral Health's Mental Health First Aid curriculum. Other work experiences include: managing a drop-out prevention program; providing social work services within a police setting and a truancy prevention program. She has supervised social work interns and taught social work courses at Aurora University.



Leadership Summit - Diversity and Equity Panel

Amy Liss

Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley - Relationship Coordinator

Amy Liss works part-time at Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley in Villa Park, IL. Easterseals is a pediatric therapy facility that enables infants, children, and adults with disabilities to achieve maximum independence. Her job title is Relationship Coordinator and she has been a part of the Development Department since 2006. Amy works to help staff and families feel valued and appreciated. This year she is also serving as a leadership consultant at Blair Academy in New Jersey. For the past eight years, she has been a staff member at the Julie Foudy Sports Leadership Academy where she has learned to believe in the power of self. Born with severe cerebral palsy and needing help with all daily living skills, Amy lives each day with an attitude of gratitude – her motto in life. Outside of work, she has had the opportunity to spread her personal message across the country speaking to businesses, college athletes, and schools on service, gratitude and giving back in spite of limitations. Amy's passion is volunteering and making people smile.



Jocelyn Santana

Northern Illinois University – Director of Social Justice Education

Jocelyn has 17+ years in higher education. In her current role as the Director for Social Justice Education at Northern Illinois University, she is responsible for leading initiatives to support diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work. She is a trained practitioner in restorative justice. In her role, Jocelyn oversees social justice education-- curriculum and programming efforts to engage students, staff, faculty and community members in examining and understanding themselves as diverse humans to actively engage in addressing social justice issues on campus and in the community.

Jocelyn is currently ABD, Ed.D in Adult and Higher Education and earned a Master's in Adult in Higher Education with a focus in Student Affairs. Jocelyn has also worked in student activities, minority transfer center, career services for nine years, and testing and assessment. Jocelyn is co-leading and working on establishing a Black Lives Matter chapter in DeKalb, IL. Jocelyn is actively examining how to educate the members on DEI issues and mobilize the members to action within the community.



Leadership Summit - Diversity and Equity Panel

Jorge Tennin

College of Lake County – Director of Student Activities

Jorge Tennin was born and raised in Rockford, Illinois. He is the Director of Student Activities at the College of Lake County. Jorge attended Rock Valley Community College and received his Associates Degree in Communications. He then went on to Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, IL where he received his Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, and completing his Doctorate Degree in Higher Education this May 2021. He is a father of five and has been married to his beautiful wife, Tiffany, for 16 years. Mr. Tennin is extremely passionate about mentoring African-American young men that come to college, as well as young men before entering college. He wants to help them "navigate" through higher education, increase their understanding of how school works, and to be an outstanding citizen in their communities. Mr. Tennin is also a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Incorporated, where their motto is Brotherhood, Scholarship and Service!



Richie Heredia

Waubonsee Community College – Student Conduct and Education Coordinator

Richie Heredia is the Student Conduct and Education Coordinator at Waubonsee. He has several years of experience in developing and advancing initiatives that address student development, retention, and success. Richie has a background in Community and Nonprofit Leadership and is experienced in advocating for immigrant rights and for the rights of other disenfranchised communities. He is always stressing the importance of supporting one another, the importance of spending time with the people we care about, and the importance of self-care. He is always grateful to be able to connect with students and he looks forward to putting down roots in the Waubonsee community.



Leadership Summit - Diversity and Equity Panel

Dr. Rachel Lauren Storm

City of Urbana – Arts and Culture Coordinator

Dr. Rachel Lauren Storm has worked in education, advocacy, arts, and cultural work for over 15 years, focusing on broad issues of diversity, inclusion, and cultural development. Prior to her role as the City of Urbana's Arts and Culture Coordinator, she received her B.A. in International Studies and M.Ed. in Educational Policy, and Ph.D. in Educational Policy, Organization and Leadership from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. While there, she worked full-time as the Assistant Director of the Women's Resources Center in the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations in Student Affairs, focused on issues related to diversity and inclusion. Her work has included a broad commitment to education and programs developed to address social inequity spanning race, ethnicity, class, gender identity, sexuality, ability, citizenship, religion, and culture. She taught intergroup dialogue within the Department of Educational Psychology and Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Illinois, while being actively involved in local nonprofit boards and community projects. She is an advocate for leadership as a practice that lives at the intersection of interpersonal and structural issues.



Stephanie Kaegebein

Waubonsee Community College – Student

Stephanie Kaegebein is an Auto CAD Design/Architectural Design Student with Waubonsee Community College. She wanted to boldly go in the direction of her uncharted passion, enrolling as a STEM Student. She has been a part-time student since 2017. She has a diverse background which includes being a recipient of The John J. Swalec, Jr. President's Achievement Award scholarship, The Career and Technical Education Scholarship(s), a participant and graduate of the Engaging Leaders Program, the National Technical Honor Society, a guest feature with Waubonsee's Returning Adults and has participated on numerous panels within the Waubonsee Community. She is a former educator, most recently working with the incarcerated students at the Illinois Youth Correctional Facility.



Leadership Summit - Diversity and Equity Panel

T'Keya Hicks

Waubonsee Community College – Graduate Assistant for Student Life

T'Keya Hicks is currently pursuing her M.S.Ed in Higher Education and Student Affairs at Northern Illinois University (NIU), where she will be graduating this upcoming May 2021. She also serves as the Student Life Graduate Assistant at Waubonsee Community College where she co-advises the National Society of Leadership and Success and assists with overseeing the Gustafson Scholar's Program. As an undergraduate student, T'Keya found her passion for social justice and equity work when she participated in her first peaceful march advocating for Black Lives Matter. In the past few years, T'Keya has continued to dedicate her time and commitment toward the advancement of social justice and equity work by volunteering at NIU. She currently volunteers for the Academic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office where she conducts research and finds salient resources to provide to faculty, staff, and students in efforts to enhance their knowledge on social justice issues. More recently, T'Keya was invited to be a part of an Equity Working Group Committee that works together to identify barriers impacting student retention for Black students across the state of Illinois.



Leadership Summit - Career Exploration Panel

Betsy Santana

Mutual Ground – Marketing and Development Coordinator

Betsy Santana, Marketing and Development Coordinator for Mutual Ground, has been working in the non-profit world for over 13 years. With a background in education, Ms. Santana began her career working as a substance use prevention specialist with Breaking Free. Working in the field has allowed her to really understand what type of support a non-profit needs from the development team. After working in Prevention for 9 years, Betsy transitioned into the role of marketing and fundraising coordinator. Now that Breaking Free has merged with Mutual Ground, Betsy is an integral part of the marketing that will be involved to bring both organizations together within the communities' eyes.



Rebecca Carney

Waubonsee Community College – Academic & Career Advisor

Rebecca Carney is an Academic & Career Advisor at Waubonsee. She completed her Bachelor of Science Degree at Illinois State University, with a focus on Sociology and Human Development. Although part of her focus is on Academics, her main focus is on Career Development. Within Career Development, she helps students with resume writing, cover letter writing, job search, and interviewing (both in-person and virtually). Career Development's main goal is to help students, alumni and community members feel confident and prepared to enter or continue in the workforce. Also, Career Development can help you build your career by combining what you learn in the classroom with real-life experiences, internships, study abroad, and what you can do with your major.



Leadership Summit - Career Exploration Panel

Michelle Pawinski

Advocate Medical Group – Clinical Practice Specialist

Michelle Pawinski, MSN, RN, CCRN is a Clinical Practice Specialist with Advocate Medical Group. In this role, Michelle works with medical assistant programs and nursing schools to further development and clinical rotation programs within the outpatient setting across Illinois. Michelle also has an extensive background in nursing practice within the inpatient as well as academic setting. Michelle maintains a bedside nursing role in the Surgical Trauma ICU at Advocate Christ Medical Center. In this role, she has worked with unit leadership to develop and disseminate education, support COVID unit development, act as charge nurse and provide direct patient care. Michelle also holds an adjunct faculty role with Loyola University, Chamberlain College, and Moraine Valley Community College. She earned her ADN from the City Colleges of Chicago, her RN-BSN from the University of Illinois at Chicago and her Master's of Science in Nursing Education from Benedictine University.



Chrissy Somers

Families on the Fox – Entrepreneur

Chrissy Somers, owner and founder of **Families on the Fox**, was a middle school language arts teacher for nearly a decade before stepping into the entrepreneurial arena. Chrissy created the website FamiliesOnTheFox.com to fill a void; helping residents spend less time **searching** and more time **doing**. **Families on the Fox's** mission is to connect residents of the western Chicago suburbs to the LOCAL businesses and organizations, sharing all the things to do and places to go that make our community a unique place to live.



Leadership Summit - Career Exploration Panel

Alyson Gaspar

Waubonsee Community College – Career & Technical Education Services Manager

Dr. Alyson Gaspar attended Eastern Illinois University and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Communications Disorders Sciences in 2000. She was accepted into the Audiology program at Northern Illinois University but withdrew to pursue employment as a case manager at the Association for Individual Development. She later re-enrolled at NIU and earned a Master in Education Degree in Counseling in 2006. Dr. Gaspar joined Waubonsee Community College in 2006 and worked in the Adult Education department managing the Youth Services Program, providing academic and personal support to help students complete short-term certificate programs and find employment in their field. In 2017, Dr. Gaspar became the administrator of the Perkins Grant, which supports the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs offered at Waubonsee. In May 2020, Dr. Gaspar earned a Doctor of Education in Leadership in Adult and Higher Education through Aurora University.



Ryan Butzman

Cresswood Shredding Machinery – President

Ryan Butzman began his career in manufacturing back in 1996, taking a job at a career fair for a second shift press brake operator at Generac Corp. in Eagle, Wisconsin. Since then, he's worked for a variety of manufacturing companies. He's worked extensively in sheet metal fabrication, aerospace gear manufacturing, hobbing, machining, and the electric motor manufacturing sectors. Ryan earned a B.A. from Luther College in Decorah, IA in 1993. Later in life, he earned an MBA from Capella University, all while working full-time and raising two kids. He's also earned a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt (LSSBB) certification from Villanova University in 2011. He is currently serving as the president of Cresswood Shredding Machinery in Cortland, Illinois - a family-owned OEM manufacturer of heavy industrial equipment used for recycling of wood, pallets, plastics, and paper.



Leadership Summit - Career Exploration Panel

Bayley Murphy

Waubonsee Community College – Digital Communications Coordinator

Bayley Murphy is the Digital Communications Coordinator at Waubonsee Community College where she collaborates with key stakeholders to drive engagement, increase brand awareness, and deliver institutional messages across the college's social media channels. Bayley's lifelong passions for creativity and education influenced her career path. After college graduation, she served as the Digital Marketing Coordinator and Copywriter at Pesola Media Group. She later worked at Aurora University in the Office of Financial Aid followed by Phillips Library. Bayley's current role at Waubonsee not only provides creative opportunities, but also the chance to help students succeed. Bayley holds a B.A. in Communication and Art and an MBA from Aurora University.

