

RHODE ISLAND OFFICE OF THE POSTSECONDARY COMMISSIONER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING TWO: EQUITY IN ENROLLMENT, PERSISTENCE, AND AFFORDABILITY

Friday, September 24th, 2021 | Rhode Island Nursing Education Center | Providence, Rhode Island

INTRODUCTION | RHODE ISLAND OPC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Advisory Committee Co-Chairs will give brief opening remarks welcoming working group members back and providing a short recap of the last meeting.

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM

WELCOME REMARKS AND MEETING 1 RECAP

- **Robert A. Weygand**, Vice President of College Unbound; Former U.S. Congressmen and RI Lieutenant Governor
- **Beverly Ledbetter**, Esq. Chair of the Board of Directors for the Rhode Island Urban League; Former Vice President and General Counsel, Brown University

RE-INTRODUCTION OF WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

MEETING OVERVIEW | EQUITY IN RHODE ISLAND'S POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

Research shows that completing some form of postsecondary credentialing improves lifetime earnings, creates stronger community engagement, and leads to greater personal growth and fulfillment. While Rhode Island has committed to raising attainment rates to 70% by 2025, attainment gaps still exist for Black and Latinx students. Further, more work is needed to fill the financial void that has arisen for middle/low-income individuals that do not qualify for Pell grants, adult learners, and Black and Latinx students. Supporting students through college in high school programs (a term that encompasses dual credit and dual enrollment) and providing financial support to students who need it are ways to increase attendance and persistence.

9:30 AM - 9:50 AM

WHAT IS EQUITY IN ENROLLMENT, PERSISTENCE, AND AFFORDABILITY

- **Dr. Sylvia C. Spears**, Vice President for Administration and Innovation, College Unbound

9:50 AM - 10:10 AM

CURRENT STATE OF EQUITY OF THE POSTSECONDARY SYSTEM IN RHODE ISLAND AND NATIONALLY

- **Scott Jenkins**, Strategy Director for State Policy, Lumina Foundation

10:10 AM - 10:15 AM

REMINDER OF BREAK OUT GROUP LOGISTICS

10:15 AM - 10:30 AM

BREAK



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SESSION ONE | CLOSING EQUITY GAPS IN RHODE ISLAND'S POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

While equality means treating every student the same, equity refers to making sure every student has the support, resources, and opportunities to be successful. To create equity in education, systems must be put in place to ensure every student has an equal opportunity for success. Discussion on this topic will include an analysis of the current state of equity in the Rhode Island postsecondary education system, the current barriers to equitable student outcomes that exist, and ways to provide more equity and opportunity to any student in the education system.

10:30 AM – 11:00 AM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

OPC Advisory Committee members will break into small groups to discuss the importance of closing equity gaps within the postsecondary education landscape and how to better support IHE leaders in this mission. At the end of the breakout session, each group should be prepared to identify two to three policy priorities and actionable items.

11:00 AM – 11:30 AM

REPORT OUT

One member of each group will use chart paper to report out their discussion, including the two to three policy priorities related to workforce development identified in their breakout sessions.

11:30 AM – 12:10 PM

FULL GROUP DISCUSSION

This conversation will review the common features of policy priorities and action items identified in the small groups and will give OPC AB members an opportunity to provide additional feedback and context.

12:10 PM – 12:15 PM

SESSION ONE WRAP UP AND TRANSITION TO LUNCH

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SESSION TWO | AFFORDABILITY AND ITS ROLE IN EQUITY

Affordability describes not just the cost of tuition, but all the other costs and fees associated with postsecondary education and credentials. Often these non-tuition costs are less predictable and create barriers to affordability that are especially present in low-income and underrepresented communities. Discussion for this topic will focus on how to make postsecondary education affordable for all students and how fixing the affordability gap will support the goal of creating equity in Rhode Island's postsecondary system.

12:15 PM – 1:00 PM **LUNCH**

12:40 PM – 1:00 PM **WHAT IS AFFORDABILITY AND NATIONAL TRENDS IN
POSTSECONDARY AFFORDABILITY**

- **James Mikolowsky**, Director of Higher Education, The Hunt Institute
- **Dr. Winn Decker**, Senior Policy Analyst, The Hunt Institute

1:00 PM – 1:30 PM **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

OPC Advisory Committee members will break into small groups to brainstorm specific strategies that can be used to expand access and strengthen postsecondary affordability. At the end of the breakout session, each group should be prepared to identify two to three policy priorities.

1:30 PM – 2:00 PM **REPORT OUT**

One member of each group will use chart paper to report out their discussion, including the two to three policy priorities related to short-term/stackable credentials that were identified in the breakout session.

2:00 PM – 2:40 PM **FULL GROUP DISCUSSION**

This conversation will include a discussion of the common features of policy priorities identified in the small groups and will give OPC AB members an opportunity to provide additional feedback and context.

2:40 PM – 2:45 PM **SESSION TWO WRAP UP**

2:45 PM – 3:00 PM **CLOSING REMARKS**

- **Robert A. Weygand**, Vice President of College Unbound; Former U.S. Congressmen and RI Lieutenant Governor
- **Beverly Ledbetter**, Esq. Chair of the Board of Directors for the Rhode Island Urban League; Former Vice President and General Counsel, Brown University