

# NC Presidents' Academy Symposium: Increasing Postsecondary Credential Attainment among North Carolina's Historically Underserved Populations

## Program Summary



**Presented By:**

**NC STATE**

Belk Center for Community College  
Leadership and Research

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- Building upon information and data provided by the Belk Center that identified underserved populations, this symposium was intended for presidents to (a) Define a problem/opportunity statement that addresses college service area needs and enhances ongoing efforts to increase postsecondary credential attainment for historically underserved populations, (b) Engage the college's team in developing strategies to address the identified problem, and (c) Design college action plans for increasing student credential attainment as the result of responding to the identified problem/opportunity statement
- A working symposium for community college presidents and their college teams to create institutional action plans for increasing the numbers of students completing post-secondary credentials of value
- Each symposium began with a keynote speaker, then community college presidents and their teams spent the remainder of the sessions working together and with facilitators
- Greg Williams, Ed.D., president of Odessa College in Texas, delivered a keynote address entitled "There is a Way to Win Every Game" during the Durham symposium while Ed Massey, Ph.D., president of Indian River College, delivered a keynote address entitled "Realizing Potential for Transforming Change — It's About People" in Charlotte. Both speakers shared stories of how they aligned their colleges' culture with desired student outcomes and how that change led to greater student success.
- Infusing momentum in implementing strategies that support the larger statewide goal to ensure that 2 million North Carolinians have a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential by 2030

**"Excellent opportunity to dive into issues that will truly move our college forward in a setting away from campus."**

## ATTENDANCE

- Over 200 community college leaders attended the NC-East and NC-West symposiums combined, representing 40 of the community colleges in North Carolina (NC-East-22; NC-West-18).
- The majority of teams consisted of Deans/Directors, Vice Presidents of Academics, Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, and staff who work closely with Institutional Effectiveness and Continuing Education and Workforce Development programs.
- Other teams also consisted of staff and faculty working closely with advancement positions, placement testing, career services, advising, and curriculum.

**"My biggest take away from this session is that many of the CCs are dealing with similar issues but we have different ways of dealing with them."**

# “We are planning to take what we learned back to our campus and develop teams to come up with strategies for those things that impact our community.”

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

- Dr. Greg Williams, President of Odessa College (TX), rendered the keynote address titled “There is a way to win every game” for the NC-East attendees
- Dr. Ed Massey, President of Indian River College (FL), offered the address “Realizing Potential for Transformational Change - It’s About the People” during the NC-West symposium
- Other speakers included MC Belk Pilon, President John Enemait, Bill Schneider, and Elizabeth Stoddard.

## FACILITATION

**Dr. James Bartlett** - Associate Professor, NC State University | Director, Community College Leadership Doctoral Program (Charlotte)

**Dr. Ken Ender** - Professor of Practice, Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research | President Emeritus, Harper College (Illinois)

**Dr. Gary Green** - GMG Strategy, LLC | President Emeritus, Forsyth Tech President

**Dr. Audrey “AJ” Jaeger** - Executive Director, Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research | Alumni Distinguished Graduate Professor, NC State University

**Carol Lincoln** - Senior Vice President, Achieving the Dream

**Susan Mayer** - Leadership Coach and Chief Learning Officer, Achieving the Dream

**Dr. Mary Rittling** - Professor of Practice, Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research | President Emerita, Davidson Community College

**Dr. Steve Scott** - President Emeritus, Wake Technical Community College

**Dr. Bob Templin** - Professor of Practice, Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research | Senior Fellow, The Aspen Institute

**Keith Witham** - Managing Director, The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program

## RESOURCES PROVIDED

Data Profiles

1. Descriptive Data for Service Area
2. College Access and Enrollment
3. College Retention and Completion
4. Program Alignment and Labor Market Trends

## OVERALL FEEDBACK

Presidents shared their praise for the keynote speakers, facilitators, and having dedicated time for them to work with their teams on diving into data to inform an action plan. They also appreciated an opportunity to engage with other college teams in their small groups. One President shared, “We are most grateful to the Belk Endowment for providing this excellent opportunity to develop measurable goals to move the needle and reach our state goal for 2030!”

The least favorable aspect reflected some logistical changes that were beyond the control of the planning team. Although some presidents shared that they weren’t sure about the next steps and needed more time, respondents primarily shared an interest in reconnecting with a facilitator, assistance in digging deeper into the data, and an opportunity to meet with others addressing similar issues.

Presidents shared a range of takeaways regarding student success rates for traditionally underserved populations. Some identified specific populations they saw room for improvement in ways they support the groups while others shared an increased sense of urgency to improve how they support students from traditionally underserved populations. Presidents who responded to the survey shared topics across all areas, but primarily within the focus on Partway Home students and increasing enrollment. One college provided their problem statement.

## PLANS BEYOND THE SYMPOSIUM

Teams shared a specific intention in using their statements and focus areas to inform strategic plans, shape campus culture, and guide practice inside and outside the classroom. Attendees were also enthusiastic about exploring the opportunity to engage with other colleges who face similar challenges. Key areas of focus included increasing enrollment of partway home students, improving completion and retention for underserved groups, and offering more programs that lead to credentials of high value.

## CONTACT THE BELK CENTER

For more information about data within this document, please contact the belk center at [belk\\_center@ncsu.edu](mailto:belk_center@ncsu.edu).

*The Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research at NC State’s College of Education develops and sustains exceptional community college leadership committed to advancing college access, the social and economic mobility of their colleges’ students, and the economic competitiveness of their regions. The Center conducts and disseminates research to address current and emerging student success challenges facing community college leadership and policymakers in North Carolina and beyond.*