

Linda Battles, M.P.AFF
Deputy Commissioner for Agency Operations and Communications
Chief Operations Officer
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Linda Battles is the Deputy Commissioner for Agency Operations and Communications/Chief Operations Officer at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). Originally from El Paso, Texas, Battles has 25 years of experience working in Texas higher education and state government. She joined the Coordinating Board staff in September 2000 and has served in various positions within the agency, including Assistant Director for Governmental Relations, Assistant to the Commissioner, Senior Advisor to the Commissioner, and Associate Commissioner/Chief of Staff.

As the Deputy Commissioner, Battles is responsible for the overall management of the agency's core operations: financial services (including student financial aid programs and a \$1.5 billion loan program); information technology services; human resources; and legislative, media, and board relations. She is also responsible for agency strategic planning; ensuring employees are aware of the agency's priorities and are working efficiently and effectively toward established goals; risk management training and ensuring compliance with state and federal laws and agency rules and policies; ensuring consistency in agency communications, internally and externally; and developing and shepherding through the legislative process the agency's legislative appropriations request, which represents an annual budget of \$1.7 billion.

Prior to her employment at the THECB (from 1994-2000), Battles was the Chief of Staff and Legislative Director to State Representative Irma Rangel, former chair of the House Higher Education Committee.

Battles earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology with a minor in Sociology from The University of Texas at Austin (UT-Austin) in December 1993. She earned a Master of Public Affairs degree from UT-Austin's Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs in December 2007 while working full-time at the THECB. In June 2009, Battles completed Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government Executive Education Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government and was certified in basic mediation in 2014. In 2016, Battles was named a "Woman of Distinction" by the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce.

Edward B. Burger, Ph.D.
President and Professor
Southwestern University

Dr. Edward Burger is President of Southwestern University as well as a professor of mathematics and an educational leader on thinking, innovation, and creativity. Previously he was the Francis Christopher Oakley Third Century Professor of Mathematics at Williams College. He has delivered over 700 addresses worldwide at venues, including Berkeley, Harvard, Princeton, and Johns Hopkins as well as at the Smithsonian Institution, Microsoft Corporation, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the New York Public Library, and the National Academy of Sciences. He is the author of over 70 research articles, books, and video series (starring in over 4,000 online videos), including the book *The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking*, published by Princeton University Press and translated into over a dozen languages worldwide. His latest book, *Making Up Your Mind: Thinking Effectively Through Creative Puzzle-Solving*, also published by Princeton University Press, was on several of Amazon's Hot New Releases lists.

In 2006, *Reader's Digest* listed Burger in their annual "100 Best of America" as America's Best Math Teacher. In 2010, he was named the winner of the Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching—the largest prize in higher education teaching across all disciplines in the English speaking world. Also in 2010, he starred in a mathematics segment for NBC-TV on the Today Show; that appearance earned him a 2010 Telly Award. The Huffington Post named him one of their 2010 Game Changers: "HuffPost's Game Changers salutes 100 innovators, visionaries, mavericks, and leaders who are reshaping their fields and changing the world." In 2012, Microsoft Worldwide Education selected him as one of their "Global Heroes in Education." In 2013, Burger was inducted as an inaugural Fellow of the American Mathematical Society. In 2014, he was elected to The Philosophical Society of Texas. He is now in his fourth season of his weekly program on thinking and higher education produced by NPR's Austin affiliate KUT. The series, Higher ED, is available at kut.org/topic/higher-ed/ and on iTunes. In January 2020, he will become the next President and CEO of the St. David's Foundation.

Burger graduated from Connecticut College in 1985, where he earned a bachelor's degree, summa cum laude with distinction, in mathematics and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He earned a Ph.D. in mathematics at The University of Texas at Austin in 1990 and was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Waterloo in Canada. In 2013, he was awarded an LL.D. honorary degree by Williams College.

Cobby Caputo, J.D.
School Lawyer
Bickerstaff Heath Delgado Acosta LLP

Cobby Caputo is a school lawyer who provides general counsel services to schools and colleges in Texas. He is also a litigator, representing schools and colleges in 1st and 14th Amendment constitutional claims, construction claims, Title VII and Title IX suits, and other civil rights litigation. For thirteen years, Caputo served as a city councilmember in Cedar Park, a fast-growing suburb of Austin. He uses the valuable insights he has gained from his public service to advise boards and other local government clients on governance, open government, and liability issues.

Caputo advises boards on a wide array of legal issues, including policy development, open government issues, student discipline, student and employee rights, personnel, special education and disability rights, purchasing, and construction.

He serves as outside general counsel to Austin Community College and several Texas school districts, and performs special project work for Alamo Colleges, Del Mar College, South Texas College, Austin ISD, and others. He frequently speaks on school law issues and serves as an Adjunct Professor in Concordia University's Graduate School of Education.

Caputo is a member of the Texas Association of Community College Attorneys, the National Education Law Association, the Texas Association of School Boards Council of School Attorneys, the National School Boards Association Council of School Attorneys, and Texas City Attorneys Association. He is admitted to practice before all state and federal courts in Texas, as well as the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court.

Caputo holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from The University of Texas at Austin and a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from The University of Texas School of Law. He was admitted to the Texas bar in 1989.

Dona Hamilton Cornell, J.D.
Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs and General Counsel,
University of Houston System
Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel
University of Houston

Dona Hamilton Cornell became vice chancellor for legal affairs and general counsel for the University of Houston System and vice president for legal affairs and general counsel for the University of Houston in 2002. In these roles, she is responsible for legal services in all areas, including contracts and conveyances, employment law, constitutional law, real estate, intellectual property, federal research, tax, gift matters, governance, open government issues, and other matters applicable to higher education law. Prior to her appointment, she served as deputy chief of the General Litigation Division for the Texas Attorney General's office, was a partner in an Austin-based law firm, and was also an Assistant Attorney General from 1987-1992.

Cornell earned her undergraduate and law degrees from The University of Texas at Austin. Prior to receiving her law degree, she served as a committee clerk and legislative aide in the Texas Legislature.

Aaron Demerson
Commissioner Representing Employers
Texas Workforce Commission

Aaron Demerson currently serves as the Commissioner Representing Employers for the Texas Workforce Commission. Governor Greg Abbott appointed him to the three-member Commission on August 20, 2019.

Prior to his appointment, Demerson served as the Director of the Office of Employer Initiatives at the Texas Workforce Commission. In this position, he provided leadership and direction to engage employers, business organizations, and the economic development community in the ongoing development of a customer-focused, market-driven workforce system.

Prior to employment at the Texas Workforce Commission Demerson served as a Senior Advisor to Governor Rick Perry and Executive Director of the Economic Development & Tourism Division in the Governor's Office where he led a team that marketed the State of Texas as a premier destination for both business and travel.

Demerson has a BBA in Finance from Texas A&M University-Kingsville. He also received a general banking diploma from the American Institute of Banking, and is a '91-'92 graduate of Leadership Austin.

Julie A. Eklund, Ph.D.
Assistant Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Funding
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Dr. Julie A. Eklund joined the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board staff in 2005 and was appointed Assistant Commissioner for the Strategic Planning and Funding Division in December 2015. During her 14 years at the agency, she has served in several roles in the strategic planning area. Currently, her responsibilities include overseeing the Education Data Center, and the Strategic Planning and Analysis, Research and Evaluation, and Funding departments. Staff in these areas provide data and analysis support for statewide efforts to reach the goals of the Texas 15-year higher education strategic plan, *60x30TX*.

Eklund holds degrees from Amherst College (BA), Harvard University (EdM), and The University of Texas at Austin (PhD).

Nicole Eversmann
Trustee
Austin Community College District

Nicole Eversmann was elected to the Austin Community College (ACC) District Board of Trustees in November 2016. The six-year term will end in 2022. When elected, she was the first ACC student to serve on the board. Eversmann attended ACC beginning fall of 2013 and graduated in May 2017 with an Associate of Arts Degree in General Studies. Next, she transferred to The University of Texas at Austin and completed a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Government with a minor in Educational Psychology. Currently, Eversmann is a graduate student at The LBJ School of Public Affairs and an intern at the Texas Education Agency in the College, Career, and Military Preparation Division.

Before joining the ACC District Board of Trustees, Eversmann was most proud of her work as a member of the ACC Futures Institute, a research and brainstorming team tasked with determining recommendations for if and how ACC can transition to the guided pathways model outlined in the book *Redesigning America's Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Student Success*.

In June 2019, Eversmann was elected to serve on the Board of Directors for the Community College Association of Texas Trustees (CCATT). Her position is designated to represent very large-sized colleges for a two-year term ending in June 2021.

William "Bill" Franz, J.D., LL.M.
General Counsel
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

William "Bill" Franz is the General Counsel of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. In that capacity, he serves as the Board's attorney as well as the agency's General Counsel. He consults with and advises the Board and the Commissioner on agency legal matters, including providing legal oversight of and support for policies and programs.

Franz has extensive experience in education and administrative law, labor and employment law, and general business law. He has served as general counsel for several clients in the private sector. In addition, he has litigated nearly 200 cases to conclusion. In the public sector, he also has served as Director of Legal and Enforcement sections as well as Executive Director. Franz has been engaged in the practice of law for over 31 years.

Franz graduated from St. Louis University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting, the University of San Diego School of Law with a Juris Doctor degree, and the Georgetown University Law Center with a Master of Laws degree.

David W. Gardner, Ph.D.
Deputy Commissioner for Academic Planning and Policy
Chief Academic Officer
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

As the Deputy Commissioner for Academic Planning and Policy and Chief Academic Officer, Dr. David Gardner leads the Board's Academic Quality and Workforce Division, College Readiness and Success Division, Strategic Planning and Funding Division, and Innovation and Policy Development Division. His primary responsibilities have included coordination of the Board's efforts toward achieving the goals of the former Texas higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, through academic excellence and research at Texas institutions of higher education. His continuing responsibilities include coordination of the Board's efforts toward meeting the goals of the current Texas higher education plan, *60x30TX*.

Previously, Gardner served the agency as the Associate Commissioner for Academic Excellence and Research and as the Assistant Commissioner for Planning and Information Resources. Gardner provided leadership for statewide initiatives such as *Closing the Gaps by 2015*; the college and university electronic library resource sharing consortium; the Texas Accountability System for Higher Education; and the Texas Public Education Information Resource, which includes information on all students enrolled in Texas public schools, as well as both public and private higher education institutions in Texas. He served as an affiliate for Columbia University's Center for Analysis of Postsecondary Education and Employment (CAPSEE), and currently is a member of the Texas Workforce Commission's Jobs & Education for Texans (JET) Advisory Board and the Texas Space Grant Consortium.

Prior to joining the Coordinating Board staff in 1985, Gardner was on the faculty at Hofstra University where he taught in the master's and doctoral programs in the Administration and Policy Studies Department. While at Hofstra, he was director of the master's program, chaired the university's planning committee, and served on the graduate council and the scholarships committee. He also has been a visiting professor at Texas A&M University and an adjunct professor at The University of Texas at Austin.

Gardner earned his Ph.D. and master's degree from Texas A&M University and his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Houston.

Roland Gilmore
Senior Program Director of Finance and Resource Planning
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Roland Gilmore is a Senior Program Director of Finance and Resource Planning at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Prior to joining the Coordinating Board staff, Gilmore served as the Facilities Financial Controller at Advanced Micro Devices, Inc. and Freescale Semiconductor, Inc. In the higher education arena, he has been intricately involved in numerous operational, strategic, and legislative initiatives.

Gilmore earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Management Accounting from Park University.

Fernando C. Gomez, J.D., Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor and General Counsel
Texas State University System

Born in Gallup, New Mexico, Fernando C. Gomez earned degrees from the University of New Mexico (B.A. *cum laude*) and the University of Michigan (J.D. and Ph.D., American Culture). He attained tenure at Michigan State University before serving as assistant attorney general in Michigan and in Texas, and as California State University System general counsel. He has served as Texas State University System vice chancellor and general counsel for 29 years (1986-1990 and 1994-Present). He has authored three books, and he has consulted and lectured on higher education and legal topics throughout the United States and overseas, including Cuba and Yemen.

In December 2011, Texas Review Press published *A Texas State of Mind*, a book edited by Gomez, commemorating the Texas State University System, and its colleges and universities, in celebration of the System's centennial year.

Ginger L. Gossman, Ph.D.
Senior Director for Innovation and Policy Development
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Dr. Ginger Gossman is the Senior Director for Innovation and Policy Development at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). She joined the staff of the THECB in December 2011 and has served the agency in several roles since then. She now leads a small team that focuses on finding and developing new and improved ideas that can help students and institutions succeed. She is also well-versed in THECB data, having served as the Director of Planning.

Gossman studied Anthropology and Sociology as an undergraduate at Miami-Dade College and Florida International University, and as a graduate student at the University of South Alabama. She then completed a Ph.D. in Demography at The University of Texas at Austin. Gossman began her career in public health research at the Battelle Centers for Public Health Research and Evaluation in Seattle, Washington. Her work in education began at the Austin Independent School District where she worked in research and evaluation.

Norma Guerra Gaier
Executive Director for Texas Career Engagement
The University of Texas at Austin

Norma Guerra Gaier serves as the Executive Director for Texas Career Engagement at The University of Texas at Austin. She has worked in the career development field at both private and public institutions for more than 25 years. In addition to her extensive experience in university career services, she has led efforts in law school career services, alumni relations, adult education career development, civic engagement, leadership initiatives, and service learning.

Guerra Gaier serves on the Executive Board as immediate Past-President of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), which is the premiere professional association, representing over 12,500 members, for university career center professionals and employer talent acquisition leaders who hire college-educated talent. She enjoys serving as a NACE mentor and is an active presenter at global and national conferences and meetings. She is also a faculty member for the NACE Management Leadership Institute teaching ethics and strategic planning.

Guerra Gaier has also been active in various leadership positions within her region, state, and locally, and is a proud past-president of the Southern Association of Colleges and Employers, the Texas Association of Employment in Education, and the San Antonio Colleges and Universities Career Centers Association. She has also served as an Expert Reviewer for CAS Standards for Career Services.

Guerra Gaier is a graduate of St. Mary's University, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English-Communication Arts and a Master of Arts in Communication Studies.

Carlena "CJ" Harris
Manager of Talent Acquisition and Organizational Development
Luminex Corporation

Carlena "CJ" Harris considers herself a career strategist. She has been assisting individuals with securing their dream jobs or stretch assignments before she was even a member of the human resources community. She is currently the manager of talent acquisition and organizational development at the Luminex Corporation. She also owns her own talent acquisition/ leadership consulting business, called Brickhaus3, LLC. She has served as a Director on the National Association of Colleges and Employers Board and is currently one of the organization's facilitators. She is results-oriented and an admirer of the journey in getting from here to there.

Harris earned an undergraduate degree in Information Systems Technology from the University of Houston-University Park and a graduate degree in Organizational Leadership & Ethics from St. Edward's University

Stephen C. Head, Ph.D.
Chancellor
Lone Star College

Dr. Stephen C. Head was appointed as the fourth chancellor of Lone Star College (LSC) in 2014 after a 30-year history of high-level positions at LSC, including President of Lone Star College-North Harris, Executive Vice Chancellor, acting Chief Executive Officer, interim President at Montgomery College, and President of Kingwood College. His focus is on student access, equality, success, and completion; academic quality; workforce programs in alignment with community needs; and collaborative agreements with educational, business, and local civic organizations. His values include operating the college on a sound, fiscally conservative model based on data, efficiencies, accountability, and common sense. He also emphasizes transparency, ethical behavior, and a culture of high expectations and achievement.

Head has served on the board of five area chambers of commerce and three economic development districts or councils. He currently serves on the Executive Committee for the Texas Association of Community Colleges and formerly served on the Executive Committee for the American Association of Community Colleges.

Head is a frequent presenter at state and national conferences on community college issues. In 2016, he was appointed by Governor Abbott to serve on the Texas Economic Development Corporation and a special Governor's Committee for Safety and Security.

Head earned his Ph.D. in History from Texas Tech University. He earned a Master of Arts degree in History and a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Lamar University. In addition, he previously taught history undergraduate and graduate classes for Lone Star College System and university partners, and graduate classes in community college leadership and higher education finance.

Jeanette Herman, Ph.D.
Assistant Dean for Academic Initiatives
Director, Bridging Disciplines Programs
The University of Texas at Austin

Dr. Jeanette Herman is the Assistant Dean for Academic Initiatives in the School of Undergraduate Studies (UGS) at The University of Texas at Austin (UT-Austin). As part of her role, she directs the Bridging Disciplines Programs, a set of college-bridging certificate programs for undergraduates, and the Center for the Skills and Experience Flags, which coordinates part of the general education for all undergraduates at UT-Austin. She also works with the Office of Undergraduate Research and other initiatives focusing on cross-college academic programming for undergraduates.\

Before joining UGS in 2006, Herman was the editor for UT-Austin's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, where she managed three series of scholarly monographs and literary translations.

Herman earned her Ph.D. in English from The University of Texas at Austin in 2004, with research focusing on images of suffering bodies in colonial and postcolonial political contexts.

Harrison Keller, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Higher Education/Chief Executive Officer
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Dr. Harrison Keller is the Commissioner of Higher Education for the State of Texas. He is a sixth-generation Texan with more than two decades of experience in educational budget and policy, digital learning, senior university administration, management, fundraising, and building effective coalitions among school districts, community colleges, universities, systems, and policymakers.

Keller's appointment as the sixth Commissioner of Higher Education and chief executive officer for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (Coordinating Board) was effective October 1, 2019. Keller is a recognized innovator in policy and programs to improve college readiness and student success, especially for low-income and first-generation students. He is the founder and was Principal Investigator of the OnRamps dual enrollment initiative that provides college-level courses to tens of thousands of high school students across the state of Texas, and the Texas OnCourse initiative that works with Governor Greg Abbott's Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative to improve secondary college and career advising across the state.

Keller came to the Coordinating Board from The University of Texas at Austin (UT-Austin), where he was Deputy to the President for Strategy and Policy and a Professor of Practice. He also served at UT-Austin as Vice Provost for Higher Education Policy and Research, and Executive Director of the Office of Educational Innovation and the Center for Teaching and Learning. Prior to coming to UT-Austin, Keller was Director of Research for the Texas House of Representatives and Senior Education Advisor for the Speaker of the Texas House. He has taught at Georgetown University, St. Edward's University, and The University of Texas at Austin.

He holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Notre Dame and an M.A. and Ph.D. in philosophy from Georgetown University. He and his wife, Gena Nivens Keller, live in Austin with their three children.

Scott C. Kelley, Ed.D.
Executive Vice Chancellor, Office of Business Affairs
The University of Texas System

As Executive Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs, Dr. Scott C. Kelley serves as the chief business officer for The University of Texas System (UT System) overseeing the financial operations of the eight academic and six health-related institutions of the UT System, as well as UT System Administration. He directs the preparation of short-term and long-range plans and budgets, based upon UT System strategic goals and growth objectives; directs all debt financing for the UT System; manages the Permanent University Fund (PUF) lands; supervises UT System employee benefit and risk management programs; provides strategic direction in the area business development; and manages a number of shared services functions. He oversees management of the following UT System Administration offices: Finance, Contracts and Procurement, Budget and Planning, Controller, Historically Underutilized Business Programs, Employee Benefits, Capital Projects, Real Estate, Shared Information Services, Systemwide Information Services, Technology and Information Services, University Lands, and Collaborative Business Services.

Prior to his appointment as Executive Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs in July 2004, Kelley served as Vice President for Administration, Finance, and Human Resources at West Virginia University for nine years. From 1990 to 1995, he worked in several senior financial affairs positions with increasing responsibilities at the University of Toledo. Previously, he worked on the audit staff at Harvard University and served as an assistant to the president at Middlesex Community College in Bedford, Massachusetts. Kelley began his career in the treasury operations department at the Hertz Corporation in 1982.

Kelley earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics from Brigham Young University, a Master of Business Administration in Finance from Oklahoma City University, and Master of Arts and Doctor of Education degrees in Higher Education Administration from Harvard University.

Jennifer Kirby
Geographic Information Systems Work Lead
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Jennifer Kirby is the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) work lead at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), where she leads the team in technical decision-making related to geospatial data and web applications. She got her start at TCEQ as an intern with the Mickey Leland Environmental Internship Program.

Kirby recently won the Information Resources Division's Employee of the Quarter award for successfully leading the project team through a challenging IT infrastructure upgrade. She also represents TCEQ on the Texas Data Center Services Solutions Group for GIS that is tasked with advancing the GIS community through collaboration, expertise, and cost-sharing initiatives across multiple agencies.

Kirby holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Geography from The University of Texas at Austin.

Cesar Maldonado, Ph.D.
Chancellor
Houston Community College

In May of 2014, Dr. Cesar Maldonado joined Houston Community College (HCC) as Chancellor of the six-college system. Under his tenure, HCC has restructured to focus on student success resulting in an increase of graduates by more than 12 percent per year. Under Maldonado's leadership, HCC has expanded to 19 campuses and facilities and created 14 new Centers of Excellence. As part of a \$425 million Capital Improvement Program, 14 new projects are underway or completed.

As Chancellor, Dr. Maldonado has created academic partnerships that ensure students can seamlessly transition to specified four-year university programs. He has also fostered partnerships with private industries that created additional pathways for students eager to enter the workforce after obtaining their associates degree or certificate. Maldonado's business acumen led the Houston Business Journal C-Suite Awards Committee to name him as a finalist for the 2017 nonprofit CEO of the year.

Dr. Maldonado began his career in 1976 as a process engineer for Celanese Chemical Corporation, where he designed the company's first digital control system used for real-time process optimization. In 1980, he accepted a position as Vice President of Information Systems with Tex-Steel Corporation and became President and Chief Executive Officer within 10 years. Maldonado then joined ASSA ABLOY as Division Vice President and Chief Technical Officer. Subsequently, he became an executive in two successful engineering firms and, in 2008, was named President of Texas State Technical College (TSTC) in Harlingen, Texas. In 2011, he was named Vice Chancellor for Institutional Effectiveness and Commercialization for the TSTC System, while remaining President at TSTC Harlingen.

In addition to his demonstrated business experience, Dr. Maldonado has led legislative efforts to create high school/college dual enrollment opportunities in Texas and served for over a decade as a board member (twice as president) of the Harlingen Consolidated Independent School District. He served as the interim Chairman of the Border Governors Conference on Science and Technology, where he worked to foster bi-national research and technology exchange with scientists across the U.S. and Mexico border. Maldonado was also appointed by the governor to serve as a Regent of the TSTC System.

In 2014, he was elected to the Board of Directors of the non-profit Houston Technology Center, the largest technology incubator and accelerator in Texas, and to the Texas Tech University Industrial Engineer Academy. In 2017, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board appointed Dr. Maldonado to its Community and Technical College Formula Advisory Committee. His business experience encompasses strategic planning, project management, infrastructure design, industrial systems and software design. He is also a member of the Greater Houston Partnership Board of Directors and was elected as a director of the Quality Texas Foundation.

Dr. Maldonado holds Bachelor and Masters of Science degrees in Chemical Engineering from Texas A&M University, a Doctorate in Systems and Engineering Management from Texas Tech University, and is an alumnus of the UC Berkeley Haas School of Business.

Rose M. Martinez, Ph.D.
Director
Bellwether College Consortium

In her 25 years of leadership in higher education, Dr. Rose Martinez has led statewide efforts in college board governance, state policy analysis and advocacy, higher education campaign implementation, pre-college outreach, and student support programs. She has held positions of leadership at the University of California, Irvine; the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; The University of Texas at Austin; and most recently, the Community College Association of Texas Trustees. Martinez also has served as the State Policy Consultant for Lumina Foundation.

Martinez earned her Ph.D. in Educational Administration and Master of Public Affairs from The University of Texas at Austin. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Martinez recently became the director for the Bellwether College Consortium (BCC), which is affiliated with Alamo Colleges District. Beyond her work at BCC, Martinez is a Clinical Professor for the Community College Leadership Program at National American University.

Betty A. McCrohan, M.Ed.
President
Wharton County Junior College

Betty A. McCrohan has been President of Wharton County Junior College since June of 2001. Prior to becoming president, she held the title of Executive Vice-President of Administrative Services.

As President of Wharton County Junior College, McCrohan has overseen the openings of three new campuses, one in Matagorda County and two in Fort Bend County. She also has seen the college reach its highest enrollment to date, with more than 7,400 students.

McCrohan has worked in education for the past 42 years. Prior to joining Wharton County Junior College in 1989, she held several positions at Houston Community College, including Dean of Financial Affairs and Planning, Chief Financial Officer, Director of Budget and Compliance, and Programs Specialist-Assistant to the Vocational Dean. Other positions include: Statistician for the Post-Secondary Division of Occupational Education and Technology in Austin; Clerical Supervisor for the Adult Education Division of Occupational Education and Technology in Austin; and Elementary Teacher for Austin Independent School District.

McCrohan holds a Masters of Education degree with a major in Higher Education Administration from the University of Houston and a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Education from Angelo State University.

Johnette Edwards McKown, Ed.D.
President
McLennan Community College

Dr. Johnette McKown became the third president of McLennan Community College (McLennan) in 2009. She began her tenure at McLennan in 1989 when she provided leadership for the campus, first as Vice President of Business Services and then as Executive Vice President. Prior to coming to McLennan, McKown served at Paris Junior College for 14 years after serving at Vernon College.

McKown's many accomplishments at McLennan include providing leadership in commitment to student scholarships and student support systems, such as the campus food pantry, championing first-generation and underrepresented students, initiating the Stephen and Stuart McKown Emergency Fund, expanding the role of the Presidential Scholars Program, beginning the McLennan Honors Program, promoting student and employee volunteerism, and incorporating "access with success" student initiatives.

A Fulbright Scholar, McKown serves and represents the college and community on several local, state, and national boards. She serves on the Ascension Providence Health Network Board and the Family Health Center Board, the McLennan Community College Foundation Board, the KWBU public radio station board, and has recently been appointed to the Board of Directors of the Waco Business League. She served on the Board of the Texas Association of Community Colleges for six years and was chair during two years. McKown served on the Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) for the past six years, serving in 2018 on the Executive Committee. Additionally, McKown has either chaired or been a member of 15 SACSCOC initial accreditation and reaffirmation committees.

McKown earned a B.A. in English from Louisiana College, an M.Ed. in Secondary and Higher Education from Texas A&M University-Commerce, an A.A. in Accounting and Computer Science from Paris Junior College, and an Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Texas A&M University-Commerce. Her doctoral dissertation was entitled "Critical Behaviors of Texas Community Colleges in Meeting Black and Hispanic Faculty Hiring Goals."

James B. Milliken, J.D.
Chancellor
The University of Texas System

James B. Milliken, a national leader of public higher education with more than 30 years of experience, was named chancellor of The University of Texas System (UT System) in September 2018. He oversees one of the largest public university systems in the United States with 14 health and academic institutions, including six medical schools. UT System institutions enroll more than 240,000 students and employ more than 100,000 health care professionals, researchers, faculty, and support staff.

Prior to joining the UT System, Milliken served in top leadership positions at major university systems in three states: The City University of New York (CUNY), the University of Nebraska (NU), and the University of North Carolina (UNC). In those roles, he led efforts that advanced economic development, online education, global engagement, and student access and success.

As chancellor of CUNY – the nation’s leading urban public university – from 2014 to 2018, Milliken championed programs for underserved and vulnerable students. He led the development and implementation of CUNY’s first university-wide strategic plan, which launched several ambitious initiatives to address student access and success that ultimately significantly increased graduation rates at the 24-campus system.

In 2004, Milliken, a fifth-generation Nebraskan, became the first alumnus to serve as president of NU. During his decade as president of the four-campus system, Milliken established a reputation as a relationship builder, leading initiatives that resulted in expanded access, enrollment growth, record increases in research, a successful capital campaign, and much-needed emphasis on global engagement and workforce development.

At UNC, Milliken served as senior vice president at the 16-campus system, where he led strategy and economic development, institutional research, federal and state relations, and university advancement. He was instrumental in achieving an overwhelming statewide vote to support a \$3.1 billion statewide bond campaign, which at the time was the largest higher education bond package in the nation’s history.

In addition to a bachelor’s degree from the University of Nebraska, Milliken earned a law degree from New York University. He began his career at a Wall Street law firm but left to become an administrator and professor at NU. There he discovered a passion for public higher education and the opportunities it offers through affordable access and high quality.

Over the course of his career, Milliken has received numerous prestigious honors, including the Distinguished Nebraskan Award presented by the state’s governor, the Lifetime Achievement Award from City & State New York, and the Fulbright Award for Global Education. He holds the Lee Hage and Joseph D. Jamail Regents Chair in Higher Education Leadership at The University of Texas System. He has served on the boards of the American Council on Education and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities and on the executive committee of the Council on Competitiveness. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Business-Higher Education Forum, and is the founding chairman of the Daugherty Global Water for Food Institute.

Mark Allan Poehl, BBA, CPA
Director of Internal Audit and Compliance
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Mark Poehl is the Director of Internal Audit and Compliance for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Poehl joined the Coordinating Board staff in 2012 and has 30 years of state government audit experience. Poehl's work experience includes 19 years in higher education internal audit at the Texas A&M University System, as well as 7 years with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Poehl earned his Bachelors of Business Administration in Accounting degree from Texas A&M University. He is a Certified Public Accountant, Certified Internal Auditor, Certified Fraud Examiner, and Certified Information Systems Auditor.

Kelly Miller Quintanilla, Ph.D.
President/CEO
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Kelly M. Quintanilla assumed the role of President of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (A&M-Corpus Christi) in August 2017. Under her leadership, the Island University has been recognized as an R2 doctoral institution with high research activity, has increased the number of honors students by 300 percent, added key programs like civil and industrial engineering, and expanded its presence into downtown Corpus Christi. Additionally, based on the quality of marine and coastal science programs as well as its beauty, A&M-Corpus Christi was named the best university by the sea.

Prior to becoming president, Quintanilla earned her Ph.D. in Communication from the Pennsylvania State University in 1994, joining the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi faculty that same year. Over the years she has served as Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Director of the School of Arts, Media & Communication and Department Chair. She was a professor of communication for 16 years, teaching courses in Business & Professional Communication, Teamwork & Leadership, Organizational Communication, Public Relations and Public Speaking. The 4th edition of her book, *Business and professional excellence: Keys to communicating in the workplace* (with S. T. Wahl), was released this fall.

Quintanilla is active in the community, having previously worked as a consultant and corporate trainer for clients which include: HEB, CCISD, the City of Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi Army Depot, the Port, and the YWCA to name a few. She currently serves as a board member for the Corpus Christi Regional Economic Development Corporation, United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce, Christus Spohn Health System, Art Museum of South Texas, Texas State Aquarium, and the USS Lexington.

Over the years she has received awards for her teaching, advising, research and service, including LULAC's Outstanding Community Leadership Award, the American GI Forum Standing Up for Veterans' Award, and the Dr. Hector P. Garcia Legacy Award. Recently, the Texas Speech Communication Association recognized her as Communicator of the Year.

Michael L. Reeser
Chancellor & CEO
Texas State Technical College System

As Chancellor & CEO of the Texas State Technical College (TSTC), Mike Reeser leads the only statewide two-year technical college system, with 10 campuses across the state. Under Reeser's leadership, TSTC has become well-known as an innovator in higher education operations. Two of the most noteworthy of these are: the Returned-Value Funding Formula, a state-funding method based on student employment outcomes and not on enrollment census; and the Money-Back Employment Guarantee, an employment assurance program that refunds tuition to students who can't find a job after earning a TSTC degree.

Prior to being appointed Chancellor in 2010, Reeser served TSTC in various roles, including chief financial officer, college president, and dean of instruction. In the early half of this career, Reeser was a banker who served in executive and management roles in Waco and Houston.

Reeser is married and has four grown children. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Texas A&M University and an MBA from The University of Texas at Arlington.

Diane E. Snyder, Ph.D., CPA
Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration
Alamo Colleges District

Dr. Diane Snyder is a first generation college graduate who took a curvy pathway to Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration at Alamo Colleges District (ACD). She is a singer-turned-accountant/systems guru that is passionate about removing student barriers to higher education. Snyder believes community colleges are solutions providers to our communities... changing lives, filling workforce needs, and ultimately being the economic engine for our communities and nation.

Snyder is the Chief Operations and Financial Officer serving over 80,000 credit and non-credit students across five colleges. Her team of 450+ employees is responsible for faculty recruitment and development, budgets, payroll, payables, treasury, debt management, billing, grants, purchasing, accounting, human resources, public safety, risk management, financial aid, student contact center, project facilitation, and facilities construction and operations in support of a \$950 million asset base and \$825M annual budget.

She is proud of her team's contribution to ACD being recognized with the 2018 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award that recognizes U.S. organizations demonstrating an unceasing drive for radical innovation, thoughtful leadership, and administrative improvement.

Snyder was selected into the inaugural class of the 2016-17 Aspen Presidential Fellowship for Community College Excellence, a ten-month program to develop a cadre of exceptional leaders that can transform community colleges to achieve higher levels of student success while maintaining broad access. Other honors include being recognized in 2019 by the San Antonio Women's Chamber of Commerce Constellation of Stars and in 2010 by the San Antonio Business Journal as Best CFO Education Category.

In May 2017, Snyder completed her Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration at The University of Texas at Austin, with her research interests in Community College Project Management Process Maturity. She holds a Master of Science degree in Accounting from the University of North Texas, a Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Behavior from Leslie College, and 87 credit hours Vocal Pedagogy studies at Baylor University.

Millicent Valek, Ph.D.
President
Brazosport College

Dr. Millicent Valek is president of Brazosport College and has served in this role since 1996. During her tenure as president, Brazosport College has been named a leader college in the Achieving the Dream student success initiative, has garnered the support of the community for three major facility expansions, and gained legislative authority to offer one of the first baccalaureate degrees at a Texas community college. Her professional interests in workforce and economic development have supported the development of strong and sustainable partnerships with the petrochemical, nuclear, and health-care industries represented along the Gulf Coast. The strength of labor market outcomes for Brazosport College graduates was noted by the Aspen Institute when they named the college as one of the top ten community colleges in the nation in 2013 and again in 2015.

A native Texan, Valek holds a bachelor's degree from The University of Texas at Austin and a master's degree from Texas State University. She earned her Ph.D. through the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin where she received the Distinguished Graduate Award from the College of Education.

George A. Williams, Jr., Ph.D.
Vice President for Student Affairs and Assistant Professor
Our Lady of the Lake University

Dr. George A. Williams, Jr. serves as the Vice President for Student Affairs and Assistant Professor at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas.

With an emphasis in the teaching, learning, and assessment of students with varying exceptionalities, Williams' research agenda is within the development of students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders (EBD) and Learning Disabilities (LD) and the experiences and perceptions of university African American students with LD. Prior to earning his doctoral degree, Williams held positions as a special education teacher in the K-12 setting and as an Academic Student Success Manager by managing the academic accommodations of university students with disabilities.

Williams has presented and served as a guest lecture at the state, regional, national, and international levels, addressing topics such as diversity, leadership, and cultural responsive teaching. Among many earned academic accomplishments, such as Teacher of the Year with the School District of Hillsborough County and recipient of the Presidential Luminaria award for diversity, Williams has also served as a community trailblazer. For example, he fulfilled positions as an international board member of Delta Alpha Pi Honor Society, the state president for the New Mexico Association on Higher Education and Disability (NM-AHEAD), and a school board member for the Las Puntas Charter School. Currently, he is completing three successful terms as treasurer of the Texas Council for Exceptional Children; serves as chair of the Scholarship Committee with the San Antonio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Commission; board member of the Carver Culture Center; and board member of the Healy Murphy Center.

Like many educators, Williams vowed to make a difference in the lives of youngsters. His primary goal has been to work in the field of special education and enjoy a challenging and rewarding career by providing reality teaching to individuals with disabilities and the community. From the start of his career in educating children with disabilities and children that demonstrate school dependence, his personal motto has been for them to *Own the Knowledge*.

Williams earned his bachelor's degree from Bethune-Cookman University, master's degree from the University of South Florida, and a Doctor of Philosophy degree, with distinction, from the University of New Mexico.