

EAD 967: Policy Development and Analysis in Postsecondary Education

Fall 2015 Washington, DC. Trip

Speaker Bios

(listed in alphabetical order by last name)

Ann Austin, Program Director, Division of Undergraduate Education (DUE), Directorate for Education and Human Resources, National Science Foundation; Professor, HALE, Michigan State University

Ann E. Austin is a Program Director in the Division of Undergraduate Education at the National Science Foundation in Washington, D.C., on leave from her position as Professor of Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education at Michigan State University. Her research concerns faculty careers and professional development, teaching and learning in higher education, the academic workplace, organizational change in higher education, doctoral education, and reform in science, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. She is a Fellow of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and Past-President of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), and she was a Fulbright Fellow in South Africa (1998). She also served for a decade as a co-leader of the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL), a collaboration among more than 20 universities to prepare doctoral students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as excellent teachers, and she has been the Principal Investigator of a National Science Foundation-funded grant to study organizational change strategies that support the success of women scholars in STEM fields. Her work is widely published, including *Rethinking Faculty Work: Higher Education's Strategic Imperative* (2007) and *Educating Integrated Professionals: Theory and Practice on Preparation for the Professoriate* (2008), as well as other books, articles, chapters, and monographs concerning higher education issues in the United States and in international contexts. She has worked with colleagues at the national and institutional levels on higher education issues in a number of countries outside the U.S., including Australia, China, Egypt, Finland, Malaysia, Oman, Thailand, the Philippines, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, and Vietnam.

Margarita Benitez, Interim Assistant Vice President, Emerging Leaders Group, Leadership Division, ACE

Margarita Benitez is an independent consultant on education topics, and Acting AVP of the American Council on Education's Emerging Leaders Programs, which includes the renowned ACE Fellows Program. Benítez's lifelong involvement with higher education began at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR). At UPR, she was a professor of Literature and Humanities, as well as President of UPR's Cayey Campus, and Acting President of the Humacao Campus. She has held various senior positions at the Office of Postsecondary Education in the U.S. Dept. of Education. She directed the launching of the GEAR UP and the Title V Institutional Development for Hispanic-Serving Institutions programs, and headed all other development programs related to minority-serving institutions of higher education. She also headed the Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Educational Opportunity programs in TRIO. From 2004 to 2007, Margarita Benítez was a Senior Associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), where she directed the BEAMS Project (Building Engagement and Attainment for Minority Students), and

the National Articulation and Transfer Network. After that, Benítez was Director of Higher Education for The Education Trust. In 2013, Lumina Foundation for Education selected Dr. Benítez as one of four Lumina Fellows in the United States, in recognition of her work for access and success in higher education. In the international arena, she serves as Co-Director of Women's Knowledge International, a network of universities and feminist organizations across the world, dedicated to promoting and acknowledging the contributions women make to the construction of cultures of peace. Dr. Benítez holds degrees from Vassar College (BA), Middlebury College (MA), and Columbia University (PhD).

Kim Bobby, Director, Inclusive Excellence Group, Leadership Programs, ACE

Kim Bobby became the director of the Inclusive Excellence Group (IEG) at ACE in July 2012. The goals of IEG include advancing women and people of color into senior leadership roles in higher education and ultimately the college presidency. IEG programs include efforts to create global citizens through exploring internationalization efforts at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and working to foster collaboration between internationalization efforts and diversity/multicultural education. Before joining ACE, Bobby was chief diversity officer and associate professor in the School of Education at the University of Puget Sound (WA). As the first chief diversity officer for Puget Sound, she held the primary responsibility for coordinating and implementing the university's strategic plan for diversity and directing early college access and achievement programs. Bobby also has served in higher education and K–12 leadership roles focused on promoting access and equity in education. This includes being appointed by the chancellor of the New York City public school system to a senior-level cabinet post to research, advise, and provide support for initiatives aimed toward systemic educational reform for the New York City Public Schools. She has also served as a consultant to the College Board, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the College Success Foundation focusing on leadership development, college access, and organizational transformation. Born in Los Angeles, California, Bobby received her B.A. in business administration management from California State University, Fresno; her master's in educational administration from California State University, Sacramento; and her doctorate in educational administration and policy studies from the University of Washington in Seattle.

Lucia Brajkovic, Senior Research Associate, Center for Policy Research and Strategy, ACE

Lucia Brajkovic joined the American Council on Education (ACE) in May 2014 as a summer graduate research associate and later as a consultant in ACE's Center for Policy Research and Strategy and Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE). Brajkovic recently completed her doctoral degree at the Institute of Higher Education, University of Georgia (UGA). Her dissertation research focuses on political economy and higher education systems in post-transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe. She is also exploring the connections of elite U.S. universities with the industry and corporate world, particularly with transnational corporations. During the course of her doctoral program she served as a Fulbright Fellow at the Institute of Higher Education, a graduate research assistant at UGA's Carl Vinson Institute of Government and a doctoral intern at the Higher Education Initiative for Southeastern Europe (HEISEE). She presented multiple research papers at the Association for the Study of Higher Education, the American Educational Research Association, and the International

Network for Social Network Analysis annual meetings. She has an article on Croatian tuition system published in *International Higher Education*, the quarterly publication of the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College. Brajkovic holds a master's degree in philosophy and sociology from the University of Zagreb and a diploma in public relations management. Prior to coming to the United States she worked as a public relations officer at the University of Zagreb, Croatia.

Leticia Tomas Bustillos, Associate Director, Education Policy Project, Office of Research, Advocacy and Legislation, National Council of La Raza

Dr. Leticia Tomas Bustillos guides the National Council of La Raza's (NCLR) education policy work at the federal and state levels on issues important for Latino students in K–12 and higher education. Her expertise includes the role college and career readiness initiatives play in helping to close the achievement gap and put more Hispanic students on the path to higher education. Prior to joining NCLR, Dr. Bustillos was the Associate Director of the Los Angeles County Education Foundation, taught at Montebello Unified School District and Loyola Marymount University and was an adjunct faculty member at the University of Southern California and Whittier College. As co-director of the Policy Research on Preparation, Access and Remedial Education (PRePARE) Project at the University of Massachusetts Boston, Dr. Bustillos engaged in education research that examined developmental education policies and practices on a national scale. She consulted on the MSI-Models of Success Initiative, a three-year initiative led by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) to elevate the presence and relevance of Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) as an important and unique sector within higher education. Dr. Bustillos is a co-author of "The State of Developmental Education: Higher Education and Public Policy Priorities," a book published in December 2014 by Palgrave Macmillan and in 2013, was selected as a Fellow for Innovation and Change by the Southern Education Foundation. A first generation college student, Dr. Bustillos earned a bachelor's degree in English from Columbia University, a master's degree in education from Whittier College, and a PhD in education policy from the University of Southern California.

Hollie M. Chessman, CPRS Graduate Research Associate, ACE (George Mason University)

Hollie Chessman is a graduate research associate for ACE's Center for Policy Research and Strategy for the 2015-2016 term. She is working on a variety of projects that involve analyzing data including minority serving institutions (MSIs), post-traditional students, and the Minority Opportunity in Higher Education report for the academic year. With over 15 years in higher education administration in various student affairs roles, Chessman used her doctoral program at George Mason University as an opportunity to take on a graduate research assistantship under Dr. Jaime Lester where she is completing research on graduate student choice. Prior to this role, she served as Associate Director of Distributed Campus projects at Mason assisting in the construction, operation and policy development for new residence halls on satellite campuses. In addition, she served on the Coordinating Team for the Vice President of University Life, which was charged with creating a competency based co-curricular transcript program for all Mason students. Chessman recently completed her PhD in Education focused on higher education at George Mason University. She did a quantitative analysis on the factors that impact the well-being of student affairs professionals. She holds a master's degree in education and a bachelor's of science in education from Kent State University.

Mollie Benz Flounlacker, Associate Vice President for Federal Relations, Association of American Universities

Mollie Benz Flounlacker, Associate Vice President for Federal Relations at the Association of American Universities, is responsible for higher education policy and funding issues. She is also responsible for humanities policy and funding issues. Prior to working at AAU, she was a legislative aide for Maryland State Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. She received a B.A. in government at The College of William and Mary and an M.A. in higher education administration and public policy from The George Washington University.

Jon Groteboer, Associate Director of Federal Relations, Harvard University, Washington, DC Office

Jon Groteboer serves as Associate Director in Harvard University's Office of Federal Relations. In that role, he focuses on the federal budget and appropriations, as well as issues related to science and research, international education, immigration policy and intellectual property. Jon first joined the office in 2003 and, prior to attending graduate school, served as Legislative Analyst, a role in which he provided legislative tracking, research and writing support for senior staff. A 2002 graduate of Carleton College, Jon also holds a Master's degree in International Affairs from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

Wendell D. Hall, Ph.D., Senior Director, The College Board

Wendell D. Hall, Ph.D., is the senior director, policy advocacy, in the College Board's Global Policy & Advocacy (GPA) division, located in Washington, DC. Within GPA, Hall works with the policy team to develop and advocate for policy positions that deliver opportunity to students.

Prior to coming to the College Board, Hall was deputy director at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), where he was a senior member of the staff and played an instrumental role in the overall management and development of IHEP's research and policy analysis. Hall has also served as director of student success and research at the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities and director of policy research for the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, an independent federal committee that advises Congress on student financial aid policy.

Hall earned his Ph.D. in education policy with a concentration in higher education from the University of Maryland, College Park. He received his master's degree in secondary science education from The George Washington University, and a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from Hampton University. Hall has also co-authored several articles and book chapters for higher education publications.

Hall, also a former high school science teacher, is well versed in issues around college access and success, institutional diversity initiatives, financial aid and K-16 STEM initiatives.

Anne T. Hickey, Director, Government Relations, Office of Government Relations, ACE

As director of Government Relations, Anne T. Hickey represents ACE's positions on matters related to student aid, the federal budget and appropriations process, and other higher education-related policy issues to members of Congress and the administration. She also helps formulate strategies designed to attain the legislative goals and policy objectives of the higher education community. Hickey came to ACE in 2007 from the office of Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME), where she began as a legislative assistant before moving to the position of counsel in 2004. She advised the senator on education and judiciary issues, including college access and financial aid, student loan programs, Pell Grants, campus-based aid and No Child Left Behind. In 2002, she served as a staff member for the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. Prior to her work on Capitol Hill, Hickey was an associate with the Washington, DC-based law firm Akin Gump. Hickey earned her AB degree from Kenyon College (OH) in 1993 and her JD from the Duke University School of Law in 1998.

Gigi Jones, Education Research Scientist, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education

Gigi Jones joined the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS) office, which is part of the U.S. Department of Education's National Center of Education Statistics (NCES). Prior to coming on board, Gigi had worked in a research capacity at several DC higher education associations: the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), and American Council on Education (ACE). She received her Ph.D. and M.A. in education from UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Sciences and earned her B.A. in Cognitive Sciences from the University of California, Irvine. As one of the IPEDS survey directors, she oversees the data collection and release of "Graduation Rates" and "Outcome Measures" survey components. In addition, she provides IPEDS trainings; manages the Data Feedback Reports, which provide institutions benchmark information in comparison to peer Institutions; and oversees the new redesign of the IPEDS website.

Christine M. Keller, Vice President, Research & Policy Analysis, Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU)

Christine Keller is the Vice President of Research & Policy Analysis at the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) where she has provided leadership in the development and application of research, policy, and strategic analysis since 2007. She directs the Voluntary System of Accountability on behalf of APLU and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), and oversees the cross-sector Student Achievement Measure project on behalf of APLU and AASCU as well as four other higher education associations. Her current areas of focus include the design and application of models for tracking student progress and completion, the measurement and reporting of student learning and post-collegiate outcomes, and the development and application of strategic finance models within public universities.

Before joining APLU, Christine was the Assistant Director of Institutional Research and Planning at the University of Kansas and the Associate Dean of Continuing Education at Sterling College. Christine holds a Ph.D. in Educational Policy and Leadership from the

University of Kansas, a MBA from the University of Missouri, and a bachelor's degree in marketing research from Missouri State University.

Christine is a member of the U.S. Department of Education National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) panel, participates in IPEDS Technical Review Panels, and is a member of several national committees including the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Advisory Board, the Multistate Longitudinal Data Exchange Advisory Council, the Gardner Institute's Gateways to Completion Advisory Committee, and the College Educational Quality Advisory Board. She is a past board member of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR).

Karen Lanning, Senior Director, Federal Relations, The College Board

As Senior Director of Federal Relations, Karen Lanning manages the College Board's policy and outreach efforts with the Department of Education, the White House and Congress. She leads federal initiatives committed to increasing college preparation, access and success, and provides guidance and support on College Board policy research and recommendations in the areas of: access to rigorous coursework; college affordability and financial aid; and college admission and completion.

In addition, Karen directs the College Board's federal relations strategies, including expanding the Board's role and participation in the development of federal education policy—in both elementary/secondary education and higher education. Karen advocates for increased access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses for low-income students. Prior to joining the College Board, Karen was Vice President of Communications and Research at the National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs (NCHELP), where she led the association's College Access Initiative and promoted awareness about member programs on financial aid, college awareness and financial literacy.

Karen has a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Queen's University in Ontario, Canada and a Master's degree in journalism and public policy from Indiana University.

Luis Maldonado, Chief Advocacy Officer, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)

Luis Maldonado is the Chief Advocacy Officer (CAO) at the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). The CAO has a significant role in addressing, developing and evaluating legislation affecting Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Hispanic higher education, as well as serving as HACU's direct liaison with government officials, federal agencies and other educational organizations to develop policies and positions that support the educational success of Hispanic students.

Luis has 20 years of combined experience in government relations and advocacy efforts with various organizations in the Washington, D.C. region. He has worked in advocacy for three non-profit organizations: HACU, in a former position from 2002-05 that included serving in a legislative affairs capacity on behalf of HSIs; and in senior advocacy positions with the Council on Foundations and the American Diabetes Association.

His government relations experience includes working at two corporations, TOSCO and Laureate Education, and in policy at the George Washington University Medical Center.

He began his career in the early nineties at the Washington, D.C. Office of the Governor of Puerto Rico. Luis has a master's degree from the University of Puerto Rico, Medical Sciences Campus and a bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland at College Park.

Tia Brown McNair, Associate Vice President, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Student Success, American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)

Dr. Tia Brown McNair is the Associate Vice President in the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Student Success at AAC&U. She takes a leading role in advancing AAC&U projects and meetings on student success and making excellence inclusive. McNair directs AAC&U's project, "Advancing Roadmaps for Community College Leadership to Improve Student Learning and Success." She is the project director on a newly funded LEAP project "Committing to Equity and Inclusive Excellence: Campus-Based Strategies for Student Success," and a co-PI on another project "Advancing Underserved Student Success Through Faculty Intentionality in Problem-Centered Learning." McNair chairs AAC&U's Equity Working Group that is part of the General Education Maps and Markers (GEMs) project that represents a large-scale, systematic effort to provide "design principles" for 21st-century learning and long-term student success. She is a co-author on the publication *Assessing Underserved Students' Engagement in High-Impact Practices*. Prior to joining AAC&U, McNair served as the Assistant Director of the National College Access Network (NCAN) in Washington, DC. McNair's previous experience also includes serving as a Social Scientist/Assistant Program Director in the Directorate for Education and Human Resources at the National Science Foundation (NSF), Director of University Relations at the University of Charleston in Charleston, West Virginia; the Statewide Coordinator for the Educational Talent Search Project at the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission; and the Interim Associate Director of Admissions and Recruitment Services at West Virginia State University. She has served as an adjunct faculty member at several institutions. McNair earned her bachelor's degree in political science and English at James Madison University and holds an M.A. in English from Radford University and a doctorate in higher education administration from George Washington University.

Jim Sirianni, Director, Executive Leadership Group, Leadership Division, ACE

Jim Sirianni is the director of the Executive Leadership Group. He oversees ACE's programs for presidents, chief academic officers, and other senior administrators. Additionally, he tracks patterns that affect institutional strategy and management practices and shares findings with ACE members. Previously Sirianni served as an academic affairs research consultant at The Education Advisory Board. His portfolio included responsibility for uncovering best practices in academic affairs, managing a University Leadership Council research team, and presenting findings to clients across the country. Sirianni's topic areas included academic program review, programmatic cost accounting, and advising. His signature projects leveraged predictive analytics to inform day-to-day practices. As an assistant dean and director of Stanford University's summer programs earlier in his career, Sirianni oversaw academic offerings for 2,500 matriculated and visiting students during the summer term. Sirianni consulted for the Provost's office on accreditation topics and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education on advising and summer bridge projects. Before joining Stanford, Sirianni served as a researcher at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. His research for Carnegie's Business, Entrepreneurship, and Liberal Learning study

resulted in the AAC&U award-winning Rethinking Undergraduate Business Education: Liberal Learning for the Profession.

Louis Soares, Vice President, Center for Policy Research and Strategy, ACE

Louis Soares joined ACE in June 2013 as vice president for policy research and strategy and head of the Council's Center for Policy Research and Strategy. With more than 20 years of experience in postsecondary education policy and practice, he is responsible for further positioning ACE as a thought leader on emerging trends in higher education. Soares most recently served as the director of the postsecondary education program and fellow at the Center for American Progress (CAP). Prior to CAP, he served as director of business development under Rhode Island Gov. Donald L. Carcieri and as director of education and training for the Rhode Island Technology Council. Additionally, he was a small business consultant with the U.S. Peace Corps in Romania. Soares was appointed by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to serve on the National Board of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education in November 2011. He holds a master's in public administration from Harvard University (MPA) and a bachelor's in business economics from Brown University (RI).

Melissa (Missy) Soto, Director of Undergraduate STEM Education, AAC&U; MSU HALE Alumna

Dr. Melissa Soto received her Ph.D. from Michigan State University (MSU) in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education (HALE) from the Department of Educational Administration in July 2014. Her dissertation focused on the successful career development of women of color tenure-track faculty in the academic fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). During her time in the HALE program, Melissa held an internship position at the National Science Foundation where she gained governmental experience and provided programmatic assistance to the ADVANCE program office, a multi-million dollar federal program initiative aimed at examining institutional structures that may differentially affect women faculty. Dr. Soto has long been committed to issues related to the successful educational and career advancement of underrepresented populations, particularly in the STEM fields. She received her BS degree in Biology from the University of California, Davis and an MS degree in Environmental Science and Management from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Currently, Dr. Soto serves as the Director of Undergraduate STEM Education at the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and warmly welcomes the visiting group from MSU HALE!

Steven Taylor, Associate Director, Special Initiatives, Center for Education Attainment and Innovation

Steven Taylor is the associate director, special initiatives at the American Council on Education (ACE). In this role he manages the \$2.1 million Alternative Credit Project™, including a \$1.89M Gates Foundation grant, to establish quality guidelines and a framework around acceptance of alternative credit for college-level coursework. Prior to this, Taylor was senior program manager of hybrid learning in ACE's leadership division where he led the expansion of ACE's multilateral leadership development programs for higher education professionals and helped develop an aligned, written, world-class curriculum. In addition to his work at ACE, Taylor teaches in the Human Resource Management program at Wilmington

University. Prior to joining ACE, Taylor managed the development of over 40 professional development and training courses for an online corporate university in the regulatory affairs industry. Taylor has a decade of experience designing and delivering training programs in the higher education and nonprofit sectors. His experience spans nonprofit and higher education institutions to include: Regulatory Affairs Professionals Society, American Academy of Audiology, University of North Texas, and the Dallas County Community College District. Taylor earned his master's in training and development and his bachelor's in health education, both from Texas A&M University–Commerce, and he is currently pursuing a doctor of education in higher education leadership and innovation.

Sarah Walter, Associate Vice President, Governmental Affairs, Michigan State University, Washington, DC Office

Sarah Walter is the Associate Vice President for Governmental Affairs for Michigan State University (MSU). In this capacity, she manages the university's Washington, DC, office, works with faculty and staff to strengthen MSU's profile in Washington, and oversees the federal strategy for the physical sciences and other issues important to MSU. Walter also advises and briefs faculty and administrators on federal legislative activities, regulatory changes and policy developments.

Prior to MSU, Walter was the director of federal relations for research for the University of Michigan (U-M). She coordinated the University's interactions with Congress and the executive branch on research-related issues and coordinated liaison activities on such issues for U-M's president, vice president for research and executive officers with the legislative and executive branches, educational associations, research organizations, professional societies and public policy organizations.

Walter came to U-M from Vanderbilt University, where she served as associate director of the D.C. office for four years. In this role, she coordinated the annual appropriations and legislative campaigns for Vanderbilt and worked closely with deans, public affairs staff and community leaders to develop strategies on numerous topics, such as nanotechnology, energy research and deemed export control policies.

Prior to Vanderbilt, Walter served as the senior legislative assistant to Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., from 1997-2002. In this capacity she advised the Congresswoman on defense appropriations and on federal policies that affect research universities and the business communities surrounding them. She also served on the staff of the Select Committee to create the Department of Homeland Security. Prior to that she worked as a senior analyst with the Arms Control Association where she focused on conventional arms control and sat on the Steering Committee for the Campaign to Ban Landmines. From 1993-1994, she was an analyst at the Science Applications International Corp. where she tracked arms control treaty implementation.

She graduated from the University of Chicago with a Master of Arts degree in international relations and from Cornell University with a Bachelor of Arts in history.

Heather H. Ward, Senior Program Specialist, Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement, ACE

Heather H. Ward joined CIGE in 2014 as senior program specialist to develop programs that support U.S. and international institutions' strategic goals for comprehensive internationalization. Heather previously served as associate director for internationalization and outreach at George Mason University and as director of international programs at Mary Baldwin College. Heather's prior experience in international affairs and public policy involved work with the Vera Institute of Justice, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library, U.S. Department of Justice, Americas Society, and U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In 2012, she was selected to participate in the Fulbright-Nehru International Education Administrators seminar in India. Heather holds a BA in Latin American Studies and Spanish from Vanderbilt University and an MA in international affairs from Columbia University. She has lived in Ecuador and participated in education abroad programs in Guatemala and Spain; she speaks fluent Spanish and conversational Portuguese.

Lindsay K. Wayt, CPRS Graduate Research Associate, ACE (University of Nebraska-Lincoln)

Lindsay Wayt is a graduate research associate for the American Council on Education's (ACE) Center for Policy Research and Strategy (CPRS) for the 2015-2016 term. Wayt recently completed a PhD in Educational Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her dissertation focused on organizational change efforts for student success at four-year institutions in states with performance-based funding policies. In addition, she served as a graduate assistant whose roles included serving as a teaching assistant for education finance courses and assisting in planning the Educational Administration's annual Women in Educational Leadership Conference. Prior to pursuing a doctoral degree, Wayt worked in both higher education and secondary education. After teaching high school English for seven years, she worked for the William H. Thompson Scholars Learning Community at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The W.H. Thompson Scholars is a scholarship-based learning community focused on the success of Nebraska students, many of whom were first-generation, low-income, and/or minority students. Wayt holds both a master of arts in educational administration and a bachelor of science in education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.