



PNPI

POSTSECONDARY NATIONAL POLICY INSTITUTE

Leadership Development Program

2019 - 2020



Participant Bios



Nathan Arnold

EducationCounsel

Nathan Arnold is a senior policy advisor at EducationCounsel, providing strategic expertise on issues of higher education policy to institutions, foundations, nonprofits, and states. He previously served as chief of staff to the Acting Under Secretary and as senior policy advisor in the Office of Postsecondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education. In those capacities he directed high-stakes policy initiatives, providing guidance to the Under Secretary and Secretary of Education in the Obama and Trump administrations. He helped lead the most recent administration transition in the Department, ensuring the continued delivery of Department services to the higher education community and briefing incoming officials on time-sensitive decisions. He began his career at the Department in the Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs, preparing senior Department officials for congressional hearings and building relationships with legislative staff to advance Department policy. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Juris Doctor from the University of Virginia.



Lexi Barrett

Jobs for the Future

Lexi Barrett is an associate vice president at Jobs for the Future (JFF). She leads JFF's state and federal policy efforts. Lexi's work focuses on advancing nonpartisan, practice-informed public policy that supports economic advancement. Lexi leads a team of policy experts who synthesize research, evidence, and input from practitioners and policymakers at the local, regional, and state level to inform critical national policy debates. Prior to joining JFF, Lexi spent nearly a decade in federal public service. She served for six years on Capitol Hill as a legislative assistant to Sen. Richard Durbin, working on a variety of education policy issues. Lexi also worked as a policy advisor at the U.S. Department of Education in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education before serving as senior policy advisor at the White House on the Domestic Policy Council, helping to shape and advance President Obama's early education and K-12 education agenda.

Participant Bios



Robyn Hiestand

College Promise Campaign

Robyn Hiestand is the director of research and policy at the College Promise Campaign, providing strategic direction on research, policy, and outreach. Prior to joining the College Promise

Campaign, she was a consultant where she provided strategic advice for clients on education finance, data, and policy, as well as the federal budget and appropriations process. Robyn spent over eight years at the U.S. Senate Budget Committee where she drafted key pieces of legislation — including Senator Sanders' "College for All" Act and Senator Murray's "In-STATE for DREAMERS" Act — and she took a lead role in drafting and developing the 2013 Bipartisan Budget Act (the "Murray-Ryan" budget agreement). In addition, Robyn worked directly on the education titles of two reconciliation bills: the 2010 Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act and the 2007 College Cost Reduction Act.

Before her time in the Senate, Robyn worked on higher education issues for tribal colleges, where she managed a comprehensive data collection project. A native of Duluth, Minnesota, Robyn holds a B.A. from Augsburg College and a master's in public policy from the London School of Economics.



Tamara Hiler

Third Way

As director of education, Tamara leads Third Way's efforts to create demand for a comprehensive college quality agenda by helping change the national conversation

about higher education from cost to value. This includes advocating for policies that promote greater institutional accountability, establish stronger protections for students and families, and guarantee a meaningful return on investment for students and taxpayers. Since joining Third Way in 2013, she has laid out a comprehensive policy platform to modernize the teaching profession, pushed Congress to maintain strong testing and accountability provisions in the rewrite of No Child Left Behind, and amplified the college quality crisis through a series of reports, videos, and public opinion analyses.

Prior to her time at Third Way, Tamara worked as a network coordinator for Teach Plus Los Angeles, where she helped to mobilize a network of teachers working to elevate the teaching profession. She also proudly taught 7th grade science and health at Johnnie Cochran Jr. Middle School as a Teach for America corps member in Los Angeles. She graduated with a B.S. in health promotion and disease prevention studies from the University of Southern California and holds a master's in public policy and administration from Northwestern University.

Participant Bios



Laura Keane

uAspire

Laura Keane is passionate about closing the college achievement gap and sees affordability as a key lever to get there. As chief policy officer, Laura leads uAspire's policy team to drive systemic change that will result in more degrees and less debt for low-income and first-generation young adults. She leverages front-line expertise to put students at the center of institutional, state, and federal policies to make financial aid more equitable and efficient.

Laura is a thought leader who has testified before the Senate HELP Committee on financial aid simplification and authored reports on college affordability. She serves on national advisory boards and presents at national conferences to promote needed systems change to reduce barriers for underrepresented students to complete their degrees. Previously Laura designed and developed the uAspire national Training Program, led College Initiatives for 10,000+ students at Mastery Charter Schools, and taught high school history for six years. Laura earned her B.A. at the University of Notre Dame and Ed.M. at Harvard University. Laura resides in Philadelphia where her three kids attend Philly public schools.



Amanda Fuchs Miller

Seventh Street Strategies

Amanda Fuchs Miller has 25 years of advocacy, policy, research, and communications experience inside and outside of government. As president of Seventh Street Strategies, Amanda consults with nonprofits and foundations to provide advocacy, policy and communications support. She spent three years as Vice President of Government Affairs at Teach For America. Amanda previously worked on the Hill and in the Obama and Clinton administrations, and has done research and policy work for political campaigns. She graduated with a joint degree from Northwestern University School of Law (J.D.) and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government (M.P.A.). She serves as an adjunct faculty member at American University and Loyola University Chicago School of Law, where she teaches advocacy and education policy courses.



Julie Peller

Higher Learning Advocates

Julie Peller is the executive director of Higher Learning Advocates and a recognized leader on a wide range of postsecondary education issues including student attainment, federal policy, and student financial aid. Prior to joining Higher Learning Advocates, Julie served as the director of federal policy at Lumina Foundation and served as a senior policy advisor and the deputy staff director for the Committee on Education and the Workforce in the U.S. House of Representatives, where she led significant legislative efforts to reform the Higher Education Act, federal student aid programs, and other higher education policies. Her writing and commentary has been featured by NPR, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and *The Hill*, among others.

Participant Bios



Sarah Schultz

Young Invincibles

Sarah Schultz is the managing director of Young Invincibles (YI), a research and advocacy organization working to expand economic opportunity for young adults ages 18–34, and ensuring that their voices are heard in the political process. In her current role, Sarah oversees the day-to-day workflow of the organization across the national headquarters and five state offices. She previously served as the organization's communications director and press secretary. Prior to YI, Sarah worked in public relations at Ruder Finn, a global agency, developing and implementing strategic communications campaigns for clients across a number of industries with a special focus on nonprofit organizations in the health care space.



Reid Setzer

The Education Trust

Reid serves as The Education Trust's director of government affairs, working to leverage policy analysis as well as legislative tactics and strategies to advance the organization's equity agenda, message, and policy proposals at both the federal and state levels. In this position, he works alongside members of the education, civil rights, disability, and business communities to push for policies that improve the educational outcomes of our nation's most vulnerable youth. Prior to joining The Education Trust, Reid served as the director of public policy for Young Invincibles, where he managed all aspects of policy and legislative affairs, among other positions during his nearly six-year tenure there. Before that, Reid interned in the Education Office of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

A native of New Jersey, Reid holds a Juris Doctor degree from Georgetown University Law Center and a bachelor's degree in history and political science from the University of Pittsburgh.

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Carrie Wofford

Veterans Education Success

Prior to founding Veterans Education Success in 2013, Carrie served at the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions (HELP) Committee as senior counsel, where she was described by

The National Journal as someone who “wins high marks.” Carrie was awarded the 2012 Freedom Award, the 2012 Congressional Staffer of the Year Award, and the 2012 Legislative Proponent Award.

Previously, Carrie served Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, running an in-house think tank for the Democratic Caucus. During the Clinton administration, Carrie held a number of White House and agency posts, where she developed policy, organized public engagement campaigns, and crafted message events for the president, the first lady, the vice president, Mrs. Gore, and Labor Secretary Bob Reich.

Educated at Bryn Mawr College and Yale Law School, Carrie practiced law for seven years — clerking on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit and serving as a senior associate at WilmerHale, LLP, where she helped lead several investigations into managed earnings cases and authored the whistleblower section of the ABA's Treatise, *The Practitioner's Guide to the Sarbanes-Oxley Act*.



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