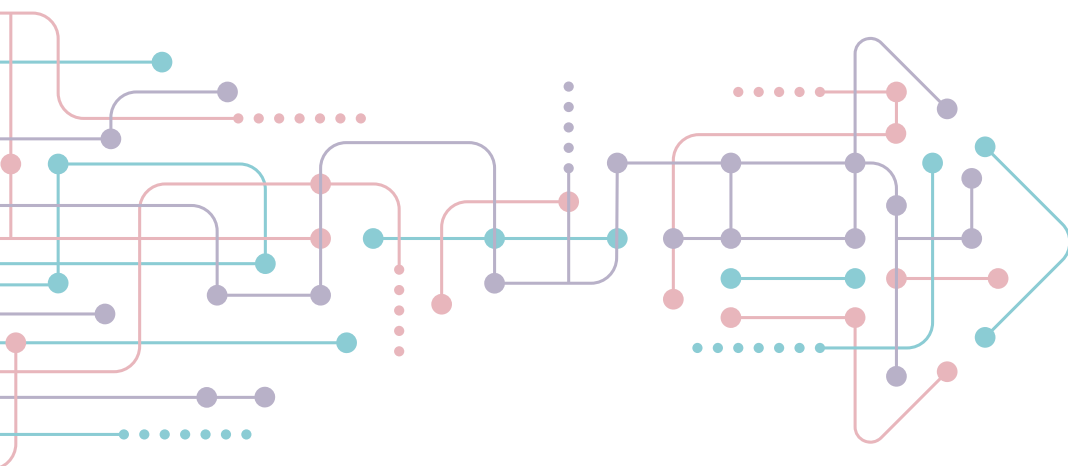


**COMPLETE
COLLEGE
AMERICA**

SCALING COMPLETION



**2023
PROGRESS
REPORT**

APRIL 2024

COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA

Complete College America (CCA) builds movements for scaled change and transforms institutions. Specifically, CCA drives systemic change that leads to better college completion rates; more equitable outcomes; and greater economic and social mobility, especially for historically excluded students. CCA operates at the federal, state, and institutional levels and works with its national network of forward-thinking state and higher education leaders. Since its founding in 2009, CCA and its network have introduced bold initiatives that help states and institutions implement data-driven policies, student-centered perspectives, and equity-driven practices.

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Citation: Complete College America. *Scaling Completion: 2023 Progress Report*. (2024). <https://completeclege.org/ScalingCompletion>

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Letter from the PRESIDENT



It has been 15 years since the founding of Complete College America (CCA). In this report, we not only highlight the progress we have made in the past year but also reflect on the remarkable scaling of the college completion movement over the past decade and a half. Together, our Alliance members and partners, our network of Fellows and staff, our Board members, and our funders have built a movement and worked to transform institutions, improving outcomes for millions of students across the nation.

From the original group of 17 states, **our Alliance has grown to 51 members**. In 2023, the State University of New York and the state of New Jersey joined our group of impatient reformers that are boosting completion rates and closing institutional performance gaps. We also forged new partnerships with organizations such as T3 Advisory and The Ada Center, and we welcomed three new board members and eight new staff members to broaden our expertise and support for campus, system, state, and federal leaders. Through the CCA Alliance of states and postsecondary systems and our nationwide network of funders and other like-minded organizations, we can scale our strategies and impact. We are both a nationwide strategy lab and a respected voice to amplify the value of college completion.

The launch of the **Complete College Accelerator** in August marked a new phase in the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's ambitious Intermediaries for Scale initiative. With more than 80 institutions across 11 states participating in this four-year project, we have an opportunity to build capacity to implement, sustain, and scale statewide evidence-based practices that will improve college completion rates for all students.

During the past year we also released several new resources that build on our learning from the past 15 years and set the stage for the next steps in this work. Highlights include two landmark CCA publications:

- ***Ending Unfunded Mandates in Higher Education: Using Completion-Goals Funding to Improve Accountability and Outcomes*** outlines a bold new approach to funding higher education—one that provides essential funding for the transformational change required to increase college completion rates up front rather than after the improvements have had an impact.
- ***Attainment with AI: Making a Real Difference in College Completion with Artificial Intelligence*** and its companion policy paper provide concrete actions institutions and policymakers can take to harness the power of this technology to improve outcomes for students.

As we look to the next 15 years, we are proud of the work that has been done and excited about the future. The incredible energy and commitment we saw at this year's Annual Convening in Las Vegas was palpable. More than 1,000 people registered for **Future Ready**—the largest number ever for a CCA gathering. We look forward to continue building on this enthusiasm next year when we bring our Annual Convening home to Indianapolis, where Complete College America started.

We know more work needs to be done to continue to build on this momentum, but we would be remiss if we did not pause to acknowledge how far we collectively have come. And we want to thank those who are doing the hard work: our Alliance members, our network of Fellows and staff, our dedicated Board, and our generous funders. Without you, none of this would be possible. Together, we can and will achieve our goal of ensuring that every student gets the education they need to succeed in college, the career of their choice, and life.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, belonging to Yolanda Watson Spiva.

Yolanda Watson Spiva, Ph.D.
President

SHIFTING

Policy, Perspective, and Practice

Complete College America envisions a nation in which postsecondary institutions, policymakers, and systems of higher education welcome, invest in, and support students through and to on-time completion so that every student—regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or familial educational achievement—has equal opportunity to access and complete a college education or credential of value. To turn this vision into reality, we work to shift policy, perspective, and practice through both systemic and institutional change.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

7

MAJOR
PUBLICATIONS

1,987

MEDIA
MENTIONS

2,200

PARTICIPANTS
in 30+ technical assistance events



CCA's annual convening featured the Future Ready Hub, where attendees tried different artificial intelligence (AI) prompts, talked to students about their experiences with AI, and received one-on-one support for using AI in their college completion work.

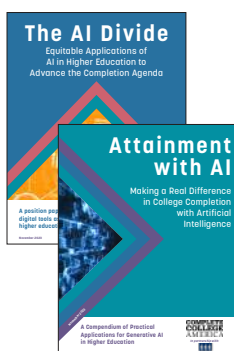
LEADING the Field

For 15 years, CCA has been at the forefront of improving college completion rates, particularly for historically excluded students. The organization has not veered from the laser-focused mission laid out by founder Stan Jones, which complements and elevates aligned work from education partners across the field. This deep expertise and experience give us a unique viewpoint to build on what we have learned to evolve strategy and plan for new innovations that will shape postsecondary education and the college completion movement in the years to come. To help drive the field forward, in 2023 we released:



Ending Unfunded Mandates in Higher Education: Using Completion-Goals Funding to Improve Accountability and Outcomes

Today's performance-based funding models require colleges to increase completion rates, but they do not provide colleges essential funding until after improvements make an impact. This report outlines a three-step plan to implement a new approach—known as completion-goals funding—that enables colleges to receive funds up front. In turn, colleges then must meet completion targets. The accompanying modeling tool includes baseline data for every college in the country. States, systems, and colleges can view the data and run different funding scenarios to see how various choices affect outcomes.



Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Equity Paper and Playbook

With more than 30 percent of students already using AI in the classroom, the technology is here to stay. This set of resources, co-authored with T3 Advisory, is designed to help institutions embrace the positives of AI. Our [paper](#) on AI and equity in higher education lays out the potential of using AI to equalize and scale access to a college degree and the accompanying individual, economic, and societal benefits. The [playbook](#) then offers specific steps that institutions and policymakers can take to use the technology to scale proven strategies that increase college attainment while closing racial and socioeconomic institutional performance gaps.



ENGAGING

and Bringing Together Leaders

We work with leaders at the federal, state, and institutional levels to eliminate institutional performance gaps and ensure that more students, particularly students who have been historically excluded, complete college on time with a degree or credential of value. In 2023, highlights of this work included:

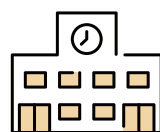
CCA Day on the Hill

In May, we held our first annual event on Capitol Hill, bringing together members of Congress and leaders from 24 Alliance members to discuss federal policy priorities such as increasing funding for college completion; requiring a student unit record data system; and reauthorizing the Higher Education Act to support CCA's Pillars of Transformation (Purpose, Structure, Momentum, and Support).



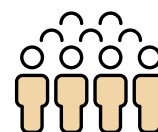
Intermediaries for Scale Sensemaking Sessions

As part of the Intermediaries for Scale initiative, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, CCA brought together leaders on 20 campuses for Sensemaking sessions. During the sessions, leaders discussed results from their Institutional Transformation Assessment and other institutional data. The Sensemaking sessions are continuing in 2024.



20

institutions



350

campus leaders



120

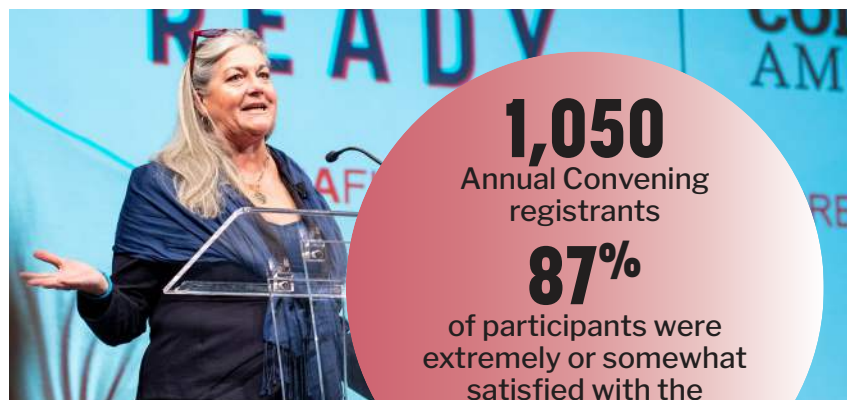
hours dedicated to institutional transformation



Jane Swift, president of Education at Work and former governor of Massachusetts, leads a plenary session at CCA's Annual Convening.

Future Ready

A record number of leaders from institutions, states, like-minded organizations, funders, and offices of elected officials attended our Annual Convening in Las Vegas in December. Participants heard from presidents of institutions that are poised to meet the needs of students now and in the future. They also participated in sessions on creating coalitions and partnerships, equity and inclusion, college cost and affordability, technological innovation, scheduling and placement, student-centered campus culture, career-focused programs and workforce alignment, policy, and advising and coaching.



1,050
Annual Convening
registrants

87%
of participants were
extremely or somewhat
satisfied with the
main stage panels
and presentations

“ Very engaging session—the speaker added humor, and the presentation had actual tangible steps, as opposed to simply opining about a topic. Action, action, action!

—Annual Convening participant”

“ I loved how this conversation remained positive despite discussing a difficult topic.

—Annual Convening participant”

“ Excellent research and best practice base and impressive example of a specific institution. I'm from a four-year [institution] and found much to bring back to my own institution.

—Annual Convening participant”

Stan Jones Legacy Award

Created in 2016 to honor CCA's founder and first president, the Stan Jones Legacy Award recognizes an individual, organization, or state that has consistently embodied the vision of CCA and worked to increase the number of students who earn credentials of value and equitably close institutional performance gaps.

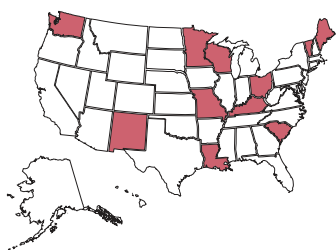
This year's recipient, the **Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education**, has implemented numerous CCA strategies that have resulted in increased retention at two- and four-year institutions and a 9.8 percent year-over-year increase in degree production in 2022. The state has also seen gains in completion that stand out against national averages, with a six-year completion rate of 47.8 percent for students initially enrolling in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, compared to a national average of 43.4 percent.





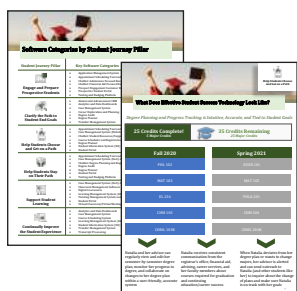
BUILDING Capacity

Since our founding in 2009, CCA has worked with state, system, and institutional leaders to create and implement data-informed transformative policies and practices. Highlights of our work in this area in 2023 included:



Complete College Accelerator

In August, we launched the Complete College Accelerator with 80-plus colleges across 11 states as part of our Foundations for Institutional Transformation. Through the four-year project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Intermediaries for Scale initiative, we are working with colleges to eliminate barriers and build their capacity to scale, implement, and sustain evidence-based practices that improve college completion rates for all students statewide.



Navigating Student Success Technology

This five-part curriculum builds on six years of insight to help institutions establish and maintain a technology ecosystem that supports their broader student success and equity goals. Developed in partnership with The Ada Center and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the resource is focused primarily on Minority-Serving Institutions but can be adapted by others.



Using a Measurement System to Strengthen Student Success Reforms

This guidebook and tools help faculty, staff, college leadership, and policymakers understand and use measurement systems—and specifically use data to improve completion rates, close institutional performance gaps, and facilitate economic mobility for historically excluded students.



Predominantly Black and Historically Black Community Colleges Network

CCA continued our work building a network of Predominantly Black Community Colleges and Historically Black Community Colleges, a first-of-its-kind collaborative of institutions supporting students of color nationwide. In recognition of this work, CCA was included in the October announcement of a new Congressional Caucus focused on uplifting Predominantly Black Institutions.

Building Internal Capacity

As CCA's work to scale the college completion movement and help states, higher education systems, and campuses build their capacity continues to expand, we are also working to improve our own capacity. In 2023, we hired eight new staff members with diverse backgrounds and expertise to support our work. We also welcomed six new CCA Fellows.

CCA Staff



Dorothy Styles, B.A.
Vice President
for Operations &
Organizational
Development



Kate Derrick, M.Ed.
Communications
Director



**F. Janelle Hannah
Jefferson, Ph.D.**
Alliance Engagement
Director



Nichole Mann, M.A.
Alliance Engagement
Director



Akilah Martin, Ed.D.
Strategy Director



Grace Mukupa, Ph.D.
Policy Director



Cassie Walizer, M.Ed.
Strategy Director



Hallie Schachinger, M.A.
Data Analyst

CCA Fellows



Nicola Blake, Ph.D.
Interim Provost and
Vice President of
Academic Affairs, Stella
and Charles Guttman
Community College



Lance Bolton, Ph.D.
President, Pikes Peak
Community College



Susan Elkins, Ed.D.
Chancellor, University
of South Carolina
Palmetto College



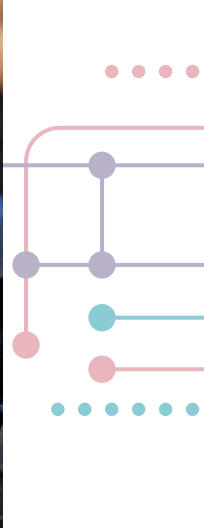
**Margaret Montgomery-
Richard, Ph.D.**
Retired Chancellor,
Louisiana Technical
College



Jose Luis Santos, Ph.D.
Senior Deputy
Commissioner,
Massachusetts
Department of Higher
Education



Mary Lee Vance, Ph.D.
Director, Disability
Access Center, CSU
Sacramento



CCA Then and Now

2024 marks CCA's 15th anniversary. What started as a bold idea that we must see—and count—every student and that access to college alone was not enough to improve student success has grown into a national movement. Together with our Alliance members and partners, we are scaling highly effective structural reforms and implementing policies so all students, no matter their lived experiences, can earn a degree or credential of value on time.

Our Impact Is Growing ...

STUDENTS RECEIVING DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES

Nationwide, the movement led by CCA is supporting completion of postsecondary credentials by more students at public institutions:



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

STUDENTS SERVED

Far more students are benefiting from policies, strategies, and practices to close institutional performance gaps and increase college completion rates:



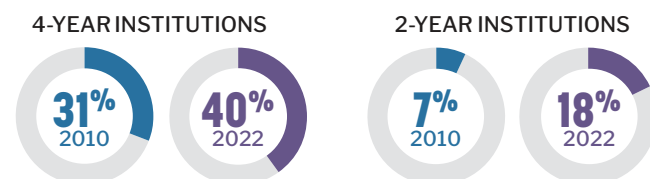
Alliance members gather at a Completion Academy in 2011.



Alliance members discuss the Game Changers at a Completion Academy in 2014.

GRADUATION RATE*

Even as the Alliance has expanded, graduation rates among members have increased:



*100% time; four-year data includes bachelor's degrees only

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

ANNUAL CONVENING PARTICIPATION

Participation in our Annual Convening has grown more than fivefold:



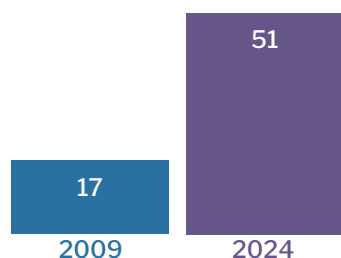
CCA THROUGH THE YEARS



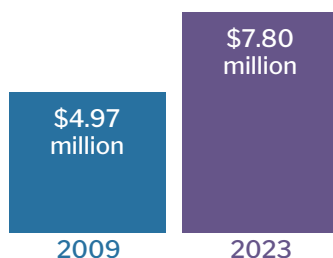
CCA President Yolanda Watson Spiva speaks at the 2019 Annual Convening.

... And So Is Our Organization

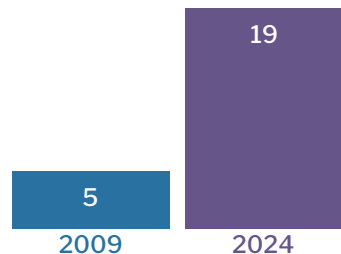
ALLIANCE MEMBERS



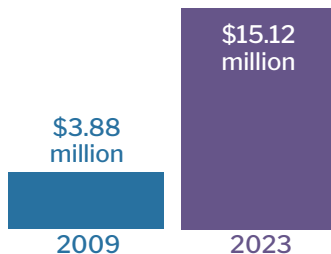
REVENUE



STAFF



NET ASSETS



CCA THROUGH THE YEARS



Indiana joins the inaugural CCA Alliance in 2009.



Colorado joins the CCA Alliance in 2011.



Montana joins the CCA Alliance in 2013.

What's Next

In the coming year, we will build on this progress. Our work will include:



Convening the new **Complete College America Council on Equitable AI in Higher Education**, which will include a diverse group of higher education stakeholders who have been historically excluded from conversations about postsecondary policy and funding decisions. The Council will consult with large technology companies to foster partnerships with institutions that are often overlooked when rolling out new technologies.



Releasing two reports that build on *Ending Unfunded Mandates*. Upcoming reports on **strategic budgeting** and **strategic enrollment management** will help colleges better connect these processes to completion goals.



Highlighting the need for increased capital funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) as part of the **HBCU Digital Learning Infrastructure Initiative**. This funding will allow HBCUs to invest in technology to maintain the structured, supported, superior student experience that leads to graduation rates for Black students that are 11 percentage points higher than at other colleges and universities.



Strengthening the connection between college completion and **civic learning for democracy engagement (CLDE)** by integrating CLDE into credential programs and investigating whether specific educational attainment goals can bolster democracy and civic learning. This research will lead to clear CLDE objectives for broad educational attainment and help stakeholders advocate for necessary support from state and federal entities. It will also clarify the current state of the CLDE movement within the context of student success while breaking down the false dichotomy between workforce and democratic postsecondary education aims.



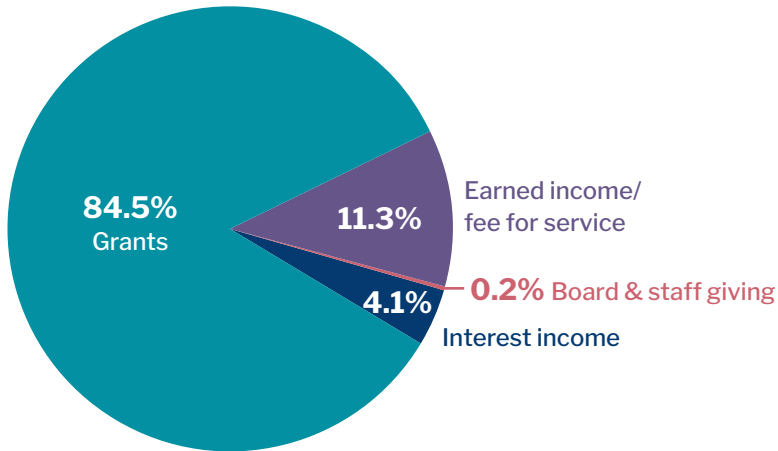
Outlining the next steps that institutions need to take to build on the work they have done to implement **math pathways** and ensure that all students, particularly students interested in the science, technology, engineering, and math fields, have access to and are provided the necessary support to succeed in designated gateway courses.



Expanding and strengthening the **Predominantly Black and Historically Black Community Colleges network**. In addition to the groundbreaking convening in early 2024, CCA will elevate the resources and support for these Minority-Serving Institutions.

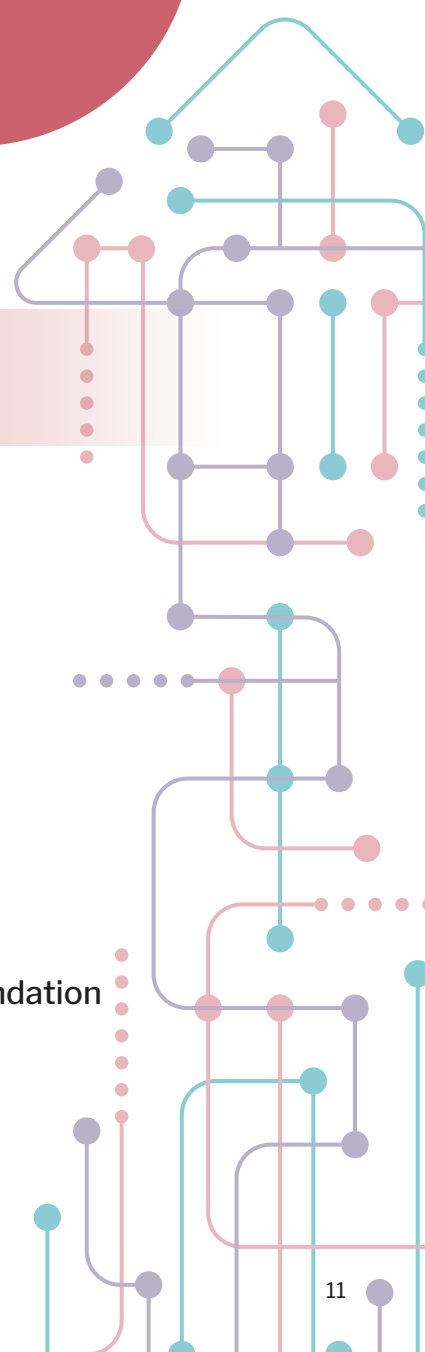
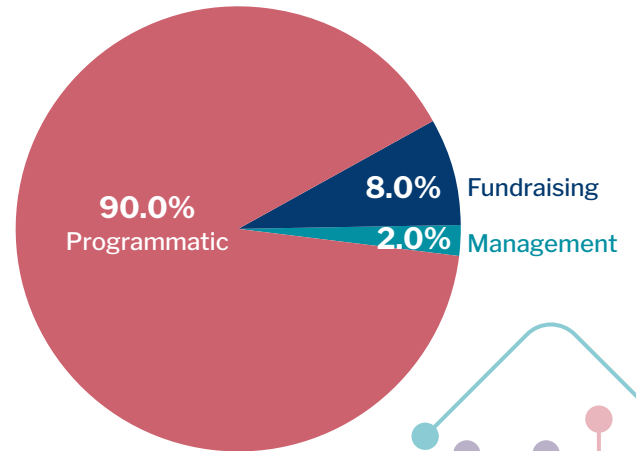
FINANCIALS

Percentage of revenue



Note: May not add to 100% due to rounding.

Percentage of expenses



FUNDERS

We thank our generous funders for their support and commitment to the college completion agenda.

Annie E. Casey Foundation

Ascendium Education Group

Barr Foundation

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Carnegie Corporation of New York

Endeavor Foundation

Hewlett Foundation

Kresge Foundation

Lumina Foundation

M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust

Powell Foundation

Silicon Valley Community Foundation



BOARD

2022-23

CCA's Board members provide a wide range of perspectives; lived experience; and professional expertise across the education, government, and nonprofit sectors to guide our work.

Robert L. Bauman

Board Secretary and General Counsel
Attorney and founding member of Gambbs, Mucker & Bauman

Estela Mara Bensimon, Ph.D.

University professor emeritus at the University of Southern California and founding director of the Center for Urban Education

Barbara Damron, Ph.D.

Chief government relations officer and associate professor at the College of Nursing and School at The University of New Mexico

Joe Garcia, J.D.

Chancellor of the Colorado Community College System

Maggie George, Ph.D.

Owner of education consulting firm Indigenous Research Associations and past president of Diné College

Jim Geringer*

Director of policy and public sector strategies for Environmental Systems Research Institute and former governor of Wyoming

Adrian K. Haugabrook, Ed.D.

Executive vice president and managing director for the Social Impact Collective at Southern New Hampshire University

Vistasp M. Karbhari, Ph.D.

Professor and immediate past president of the University of Texas at Arlington

Robin Martin, Ph.D.

Board Chairman
Former deputy director of strategy, planning and management for the Postsecondary Success team at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Gary McGaha, Ph.D.

Past president of Atlanta Metropolitan State College

Edward Smith, Ph.D.

Senior policy advisor of Education Counsel

Yolanda Watson Spiva, Ph.D.

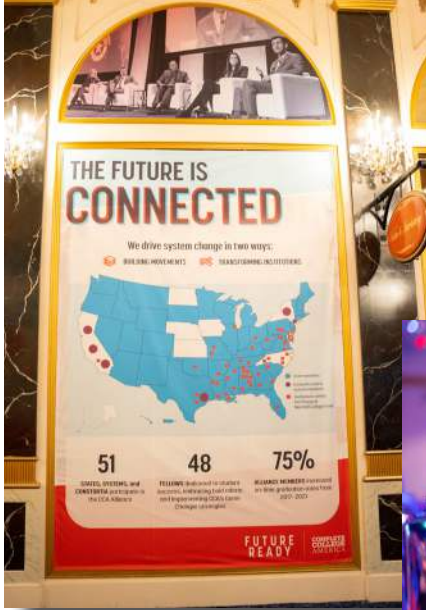
President of Complete College America

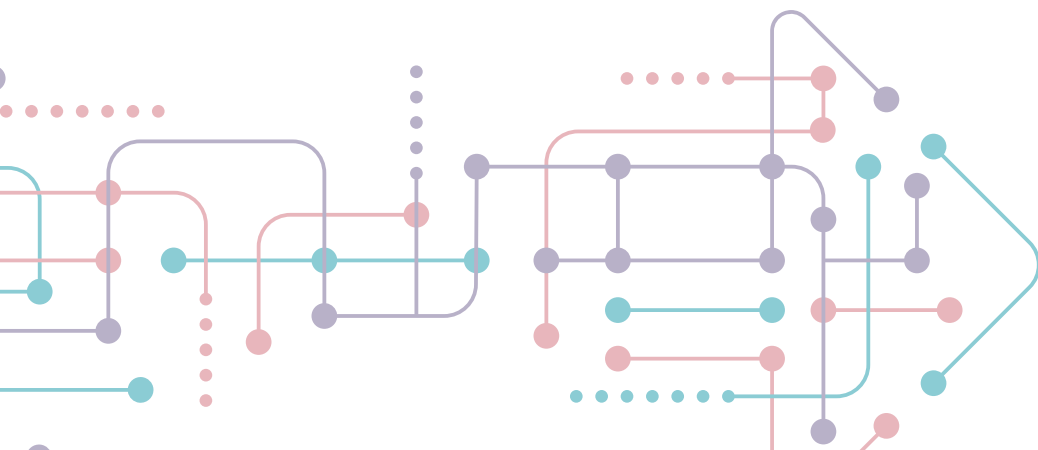
**Board member emeritus*



In Memoriam

Latrisha Stewart Jemison, who served as senior vice president/regional community development manager for Regions Bank, was a champion of higher education and relentless community advocate. During her time as a member of the CCA Board, we valued her insight and will miss her commitment to the mission of increasing college completion rates and ensuring equitable outcomes.





COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA

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ON SOCIAL:



@CompleteCollege