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Presenter Biographies

Frank Ballmann
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Frank Ballmann has worked with HESC since 2008, initially as a consultant; he came on board as an employee in October 2009. He has over 27 years of experience in the education finance industry; he also was fortunate enough to pay for college with a combination of Pell, Perkins, Work-Study, and Stafford, as well as institutional aid (don't tell anyone, but the program names were different back then and he doesn't want to date himself!).

Prior to HESC, Mr. Ballmann worked for a variety of organizations, ranging from start-ups to Fortune 500 companies to a variety of not-for-profits. He has provided advisory services to agencies or authorities in Alaska, California, Rhode Island, Texas, and Virginia as well as the U.S. Department of Education and the College Board.

Mr. Ballmann has spoken about education finance topics on CNBC and for Forbes, Business Week, the Wall Street Journal, and Marketwatch, among other organizations. Mr. Ballmann holds a degree in Accounting and Political Science from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and earned his CPA certificate.

Michele Brown
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Ms. Brown is the Director, Applicant Products and Customer Service Division, U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid. She is currently responsible for managing the customer requirements for the development of products that are used by applicants to complete the federal student aid application process, including the FAFSA, FAFSA on the Web and PIN site. In addition, she provides oversight for the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) or better known as 1-800-4FED-AID.

Michele has over 20 years of federal service, primarily with the Department of Education and the Department of Energy.

Stephanie Butler
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Stephanie Butler first joined the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education in 1997 as the Institutional Authorization Program Coordinator. In 1998, she was promoted to Director of Institutional Relations, and, in 2001, was appointed by the Executive Director to her current post. Prior to joining the Commission, Ms. Butler worked for the University of Alaska Anchorage as information/support services manager from 1990 to 1992, and was administrative manager from 1992 to 1997. Ms. Butler is a Certified Internal Auditor and a Certified Government Auditing Professional. Her education credentials also include a Master of Science in business administration and management from Boston University and a Bachelor of Arts in English from Barry University.

Ms. Butler leads the loan servicing operations, the largest single operational unit of ACPE, and assists with the development and implementation of statewide outreach services. Ms. Butler's staff delivers high-level centralized service to the agency's borrowers from the servicing center in Juneau, from loan originations to loan repayment. Ms. Butler assists with program development, and coordinates program operations internally, with borrowers, and with the various institutions.

Greg Darnieder
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Mr. Darnieder began his career in Education as a junior high school teacher. He holds a BA in Sociology, a K-8 Teaching Certificate from St. Louis University and a MA in Christian Education from Wheaton College.

From the mid-nineties until recently, Greg had acted as President for The Center for Impact Research and Treasurer of The Albert Pick, Jr. Fund. He was also on the Board of the Steans Family Foundation, The Roberta Bachmann Lewis Scholarship Fund, Scholarship Chicago, The Illinois Education Foundation and The North Lawndale College Prep Charter High School.

Greg was the Executive Director of the I Have a Dream Foundation which grew from a single program to twelve throughout the Chicago area. He was the founding Executive Director of the LaSalle St. Community Youth Creative Learning Experience (CYCLE), an after-school and summer youth academic and career exploration program for kindergarten through college-aged students in the Cabrini Green Public Housing Development. While serving as CYCLE's Executive Director, he created numerous scholarship programs providing financial support for over 225 students.

In 1992, he was named Executive Director for the Chicago Cluster Initiative. He coordinated a multi-agency public/private response to the academic achievement needs of students from four neighborhood high schools. In 1994, he became the Executive Director of the Steans Family Foundation. He designed and implemented a comprehensive initiative in the North Lawndale community in partnership with numerous community-based organizations. He leveraged governmental, philanthropic and business resources to improve and/or develop educational programs, affordable housing, economic development, health and human services, and youth development and employment goals and oversaw the organizational capacity building strategies of over 50 non-profit agencies.

Greg was responsible for the establishment of the Department of Postsecondary Education and Student Development and for designing and implementing an assortment of postsecondary, academic, financial,

and social support programs. These duties included enhancing the Chicago Public Schools' infrastructure around postsecondary education and establishing supportive services at every CPS high school. In addition, he was responsible for building university, corporate and civic partnerships to enhance college access. As such, he was named the director of the Department of College and Career Preparation with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), a newly formed department that consists of the Department of Postsecondary Education and Student Development and the Department of Education To Careers.

In 2009, U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, named Greg the Special Assistant to the Secretary for College Access at the U.S. Department of Education, where he currently serves.

Pam Fowler

Chair Elect

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Pamela Fowler has been at the University of Michigan since 1997 and has over 25 years of experience in the financial aid profession. Over the years she has been very active in state, regional, and national professional associations as a trainer, speaker, and committee chair. She has been the recipient of several awards including the MSFAA Distinguished Service award and the MASFAA Meritorious Service award. She is a former MASFAA President and has also served on NASFAA's Board of Directors as both a regional representative and a representative-at-large. Some of her other accomplishments include helping to create the NASFAA Standards of Excellence Program which is designed to assist financial aid officers by conducting a thorough review of office policies and operations. She is a five time participant on the Department of Education's Negotiated Rulemaking committee, past National Chair of the Coalition of State and University Aid Administrators, and is an active member of The College Board.

Gregory Alan Gerrans

LEAP Program Manager

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Mr. Gregory Gerrans began his career in government upon graduation from high school in 1987 by enlisting in the United States Navy. After serving his country for four years, Mr. Gerrans came to work at the U. S. Department of Education in the Office of Student Financial Assistance. He has worked in the areas of student financial aid program policy and regulation development, primarily with such Title IV programs as the Federal Pell Grant Program, GEAR-UP's predecessor NEISP, and the SSIG Program. Mr. Gerrans is currently responsible for administering the LEAP, SLEAP and GAP Programs, including development of operations and funding procedures.

Heather Gingerich
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As College Spark Washington's Senior Program Officer, Heather Gingerich oversees the foundations initiative investments and advocacy strategies. She joined College Spark in 2006 with nearly 20 years experience in non-profit administration and program evaluation. Her prior professional experience includes working as Director of Capacity Building and Social Justice Initiatives for the YWCA, Grants Manager for the United Way, and Director of Programs for Washington Women's Employment & Education. She earned her Juris Doctor, cum laude, from Seattle University School of Law and Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Policy from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. Heather is currently facilitating College Spark Washington's participation in several public/private partnerships including thewashboard.org, a scholarship matching site for Washington students and scholarship providers; Navigation 101, and advising program designed to help middle and high school students learn about and prepare for post secondary education; and *Achieving the Dream*, a national initiative focused on the capacity of two-year colleges to use data to drive improvements that result in increased student success, retention, and completion.

Lois Hollis
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Lois has worked in financial aid for over 25 years. From 2001–2007 she was the Assistant Commissioner for Student Services at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board where she oversaw all State financial aid programs, tuition exemptions and waivers as well as State residency issues and the ApplyTexas Common Admission Application. In September 2007, Lois became the Special Assistant to the Deputy Commissioner. In that role she advises the Deputy Commissioner and the Commissioner of Higher Education on State and federal financial aid policy, tuition and fee issues, assists in overseeing the State financial aid programs and handles special projects. In addition, Lois works closely with the State Legislature on affordability issues pertaining to college students.

Lois serves on various State committees dealing with financial aid, admissions, outreach and other higher education issues.

James Kvaal
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James Kvaal is Deputy Under Secretary at the U.S. Department of Education. He assists the Under Secretary in her responsibilities overseeing policies, programs, and activities related to postsecondary education, vocational and adult education, and federal student aid.

In 2009 and 2010, Kvaal was a special assistant to President Obama for economic policy. At the White House, Kvaal worked on community college reform, simplifying the student aid application, and student debt, as well as other labor and retirement issues. Before joining the Administration, Kvaal was a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and the policy director on John Edwards' presidential campaign, where he coordinated the development of the candidate's domestic policy platform including plans to create universal health care, fight poverty, and address climate change. He has also worked on higher education policy in the Clinton White House and for the House Committee on Education and Labor and a member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

His writings on domestic policy have appeared in The New Republic, The American Prospect, Tax Notes, and other publications. He holds degrees earned with honors from Stanford University and Harvard Law School and lives in Washington, DC.

John Klacik
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John Klacik has been active in higher education and the student aid profession for over 37 years. He is currently the Director of Student Financial Assistance at the state of Washington's Higher Education Coordinating Board where he has also worked for the past 25 years.

Prior to coming to the Board John has been the Director of Student Aid at Western Washington University and Illinois Valley Community College.

John served as President of NASSGAP in 2003-2004.

Kathleen Little
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Kathleen Little has worked at the College Board since June 1986, and is currently the Senior Adviser, Student Aid Policy. In this position, she provides staff support to the College Board's Rethinking Student Aid project and the Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid publications. Prior to her current position, she served as Executive Director, Financial Aid Services. In that role, she was responsible for the design and management of all College Board financial aid services as well as for communications with and training of college and university financial aid administrators. In addition, she had primary staff responsibility for maintenance of and improvements to the Institutional Methodology of need analysis. Ms. Little came to the College Board from her position as Director of Financial Aid at the University of California, Santa Cruz, a position she held from 1977 to 1986. During these years she served as President of both the California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators and the Western Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. Ms. Little holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in French from the College of William and Mary and a Master of Arts degree in Higher Education Administration from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Irala K. Magee
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Irala Magee has been working in Higher Education for nearly 25 years. Her experience includes Student Records, Information Technology, and Financial Aid. Ms. Magee is currently Director of Scholarship and Grant Administration for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

Cheryl Maplethorpe
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Cheryl Maplethorpe has worked in the student financial aid for 35 years. She has been the Director of the Division of Student Financial Aid for the Minnesota Office of Higher Education since 1991 and has worked for that agency since 1980. She oversees 16 financial aid programs with a budget that totals more than \$360 million annually.

She has also managed statewide projects such as staffing the Rochester Higher Education committee that resulted in the creation of the University of Minnesota – Rochester campus and managing the Tuning Project funded by the Lumina Foundation. She serves on several statewide boards and committees and task forces for Minnesota including the ISEEK Board, the MN FAST TRAC project and the College Goal Sunday Task Force. She has also organized interagency all educational sector teams to better use the skills and talents of immigrants in the state, better serve homeless and foster youth in college, and promote more scholarship funds for students at all institutions.

She has an undergraduate degree in Science and a Masters in Counseling from the University of Iowa and a Ph. D. in Policy and Administration in Higher Education from the University of Minnesota.

Elizabeth McDuffie
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Elizabeth McDuffie has been the director for Grants, Training and Outreach at the NC State Education Assistance Authority for twelve years. In her current role, she oversees the administration and policy development for 40 scholarship, loan and grant programs, the training development for financial aid administrators and school counselors and the outreach activities for high school students and the general public.

Prior to joining the Authority, Elizabeth worked in the financial aid offices at Meredith College, NC State University, Louisburg College and St. Mary's College.

Elizabeth earned an MBA from Meredith College and a BS in industrial relations and psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is married to another financial aid administrator and has two sons, a college sophomore and an 8th grader.

Vicki Merkel
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Vicki Merkel began work at the Oregon Student Assistance Commission in 1998. She was hired to design and implement the ASPIRE program that now trains more than 1,500 volunteers to serve as one-on-one mentors to more than 9,000 high school students statewide. In January 2004, Vicki was promoted to the position of Scholarship and Access Programs Director and oversees ASPIRE, outreach efforts including College Goal Oregon, and the administration of more than 400 privately funded Scholarship Program.

Vicki joined the Oregon Student Assistance Commission after working for 24 years in Social Services. Her work in social services, personal experience as a first-generation college graduate, and spending five years traveling the state to implement ASPIRE has led to a passion for increasing college access.

Demarée K. Michelau
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Demarée K. Michelau is Director of Policy Analysis at WICHE. The author of numerous education reports and magazine articles, she has experience in higher education policy on issues such as college affordability and access, K-16 reform, postsecondary remedial education, dual/concurrent enrollment, and affirmative action. Previously, she worked for the National Conference of State Legislatures as a policy specialist. Michelau received her bachelor's degree in public law from Northern Illinois University and her master's degree in political science from the University of Colorado at Boulder where she is currently a Ph.D. candidate.

Ann Person
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Dr. Ann Person joined the Gates Foundation's Postsecondary Success strategy in September 2009 as Senior Program Officer for Research and Data. She manages grants and contracts focused on developing, assessing, and using evidence about programs and policies that promote postsecondary success. Dr. Person also supports other members of the Postsecondary team, consulting with them on how best to align investments with the evidence base and to exploit investments, as appropriate, for research purposes. Prior to joining the Foundation, Dr. Person was a researcher at Mathematica Policy Research in Washington, DC, where she worked on multi-method evaluations of a variety of social programs. She holds a Ph.D. in Human Development and Social Policy from Northwestern University and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Wyoming. Her dissertation was a comparative study of community colleges and their private for- and non-profit counterparts that grant Associate degrees in career and technical fields. She is author of numerous articles on two-year colleges and the school-to-work transition and is co-author of the book *After Admission: From College Access to College Success*, published in 2006 by the Russell Sage Foundation.

Rachelle Sharpe
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Rachelle Sharpe is Associate Director in the Student Financial Assistance division at the Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board. Among her assignments, she helps manage the College Bound Scholarship and Passport to College for foster youth programs. Rachelle has worked in higher education for over 20 years including admissions and financial aid offices, as well as with the federal TRIO college access program.

Mike Soloman
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Mike Soloman has a Bachelor's Degree from Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, Iowa, and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Washington, Seattle. He originally intended to work in city management and worked for a number of cities (Kingsport, TN; Kansas City, Mo; St. Joseph, Mo; Decatur, IL;) before joining the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) in 1997.

Mike works in the Research, Planning, and Policy Analysis section of ISAC as a policy analyst. He works on a wide variety of projects including contract survey work for NASSGAP, monitoring tuition and fees, building databases and interfaces for agency data, completing ad-hoc reports, and "other duties as assigned." Mike lives in Springfield, Illinois.