

IBHE Tenth Annual Public University Trustee Training Leadership Conference Speaker Bios



Jennifer Barnett

Associate Director, Workforce Analytics
IBHE

Jennifer Barnett is the Associate Director of Workforce Analytics at IBHE. With more than 20 years in workforce development, she has worked at the intersection of education and business to align programs with employer needs. Today, she will share insights on the top ten occupations most in demand across Illinois, and how understanding workforce trends can help guide academic planning and strengthen the state's talent pipeline.

Colleen Sexton

Assistant Director, Transfer Initiatives
IBHE

Colleen M. Sexton, Ph.D., serves as Assistant Director of Transfer Initiatives for the Illinois Board of Higher Education, managing the state's Direct Admission initiative, One Click College Admit. Prior to joining IBHE part-time in 2023, Colleen served for eight years as the Associate Provost and Associate Vice-President of Academic Affairs and the university liaison for the Higher Learning Commission at Governors State University (GSU), retiring from GSU in 2022. In her last 6 months at GSU she served as Interim Provost. At GSU since 2004, Colleen also held positions as a Professor of Science Education and Chair of the Division of Education, where she led the division through a successful National Accreditation visit. Colleen provided leadership in curriculum development, national accreditation, program assessment, and technology integration at state, national, and international levels. Colleen served as a peer reviewer for the Higher Learning Commission for thirteen years and chaired HLC Peer reviews for five of those years. Dr. Sexton serves on the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council International Evaluator Group. Colleen has co-authored three science methods textbooks, Teaching Science for All Children (Allyn and Bacon, 1st – 5th eds., 1994-2009), Science for All Children – Methods for Constructing Understanding (1st- 4th eds., 2009), and Science for All Children – Lessons for Constructing Understanding (1st - 3rd eds., 2005). Prior to GSU, she was an Associate Professor and Secondary Education Coordinator at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. Dr. Sexton also served for four years as the Program Manager for the Ohio SchoolNet Plus Initiative. This \$495M initiative was considered innovative in the 1990's as it moved computers from computer labs and into the classrooms for Ohio's elementary children. The initiative provided one interactive workstation for every five children throughout Ohio's K- 6 classrooms.



Thomas L. Harnisch, Ed.D.

Vice President for Government Relations

State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO)

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Tom Harnisch joined SHEEO in 2020 as Vice President for Government Relations. Dr. Harnisch leads the planning, implementation, and coordination of SHEEO's portfolio of federal relations, policy, communication, and advocacy work.

Prior to joining SHEEO, Dr. Harnisch worked in a series of roles at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) since 2007, including as Director of State Relations and Policy Analysis. His roles included policy research, analysis, and communication to the AASCU membership and other external stakeholder groups. He helped craft the AASCU Public Policy Agenda and planned the Higher Education Government Relations Conference. His research interests and commentary on higher education finance, access, affordability, and other topics have been cited in over 300 articles, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Politico*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. He is also an adjunct faculty member at Georgetown University and The George Washington University.

Dr. Harnisch earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a master's from the University of Minnesota, and a doctorate from The George Washington University.



Kwame Raoul

Attorney General of Illinois

Attorney General Kwame Raoul was sworn in as the 42nd Attorney General of Illinois in January 2019. Born in Chicago to Haitian immigrants, Kwame brings a lifetime of legal experience and public service to his work as the people's champion. Under his leadership in Illinois and nationwide, Kwame defends and upholds the law, protects access to health care and reproductive rights, and fights for equal rights.

To fight the prevalence of gun violence, Kwame works in partnership with the U.S. Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center to conduct trainings to prevent mass shooting threats in schools, places of worship, and other public places. Kwame also sued to revoke the license of a rogue gun manufacturer that produced cheap guns criminals use in carjackings and other crimes. Kwame is committed to reducing the number of illegal guns on our streets as he created a state-of-the-art gun tracing database, Crime Gun Connect, for Illinois law enforcement. Kwame's dedication to reducing gun violence is unwavering as he continues to defend Illinois' assault weapons ban in the courts.

Before his election to Attorney General in November 2018, Kwame was a state senator for 14 years and a leading voice for equal rights. Kwame began his legal career as a prosecutor in the Cook County State's Attorney's office; he previously served as a senior staff attorney for the City Colleges of Chicago and was a partner at two national law firms. He is a graduate of DePaul University and earned his law degree from Chicago-Kent College of Law.



Pranav G. Kothari

Chair
IBHE

Pranav is the Founder & CEO of Revolution Impact, LLC and an Adjunct Lecturer of Social Enterprise at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. He teaches both MBA and executive education courses on the education sector, social sector performance measurement, and board governance. He speaks nationally on measuring social impact, education data, education philanthropy, and nonprofit effectiveness. He holds an A.B. in Economics from Washington University in St. Louis and an MBA in Corporate Strategy and Organizational Behavior from the Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. In August 2019, Pranav was appointed to the Illinois Board of Higher Education and in October 2023 was appointed Chair by Governor JB Pritzker. Pranav is an Illinois Commissioner to the Midwestern Higher Education Compact.



Scott Rice

General Counsel
University of Illinois System

Scott Rice is the general counsel of the University of Illinois System and leads the Office of University Counsel. The Office of University Counsel is a System unit embedded at each of the University's three campuses (Urbana-Champaign, Springfield and Chicago), providing comprehensive legal services and managing all legal matters pertaining to the University and seven of its University Related Organizations. In so doing, the office provides advice and counsel to the board, president, chancellors, vice presidents and all other university administrators. As a general officer of the University of Illinois Board of Trustees and the Board's parliamentarian, Scott has a dual report to the Board of Trustees and to the President.

Scott joined the Office of University Counsel in 2005 and was named Campus Legal Counsel for the Urbana-Champaign university in 2011, serving in that role through 2020 and again on an interim basis in 2022. He was named Deputy University Counsel in 2019 and University Counsel in 2024. In addition to his administrative duties, Scott maintains an active legal practice on a broad range of topics. Scott is a leader or member of numerous organizations, including the National Association of College and University Attorneys, Big Ten general counsels' roundtable, Sports Lawyers Association and Illinois State Bar Association.

Prior to joining the University, Scott had significant experience working in all three branches of Illinois state government and at a national architecture and engineering corporation. Scott is a graduate of the University of Illinois Urbana -Champaign College of Liberal Arts & Sciences and earned his law degree at Southern Illinois University.