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State Higher Education Commission Welcomes Five New Members

Kathy Cabello, Samantha Fleischacker, Larry Garatoni, Molly Kitchell, and Kent Kramer join 14-member coordinating board

(INDIANAPOLIS) – Five Hoosiers have been appointed to the [Indiana Commission for Higher Education](https://www.che.in.gov/), as recently announced by Governor Eric J. Holcomb.

The 14-person higher education coordinating board is comprised of one faculty member, one student member, a representative from each of the state’s nine congressional districts, and three at-large members. The new members represent the 2nd, 4th, and 5th Congressional Districts. An at-large member and student representative were also appointed.

Kathy Cabello of Indianapolis serves as the Commission’s at-large representative. Cabello co-founded her own consulting firm, Cabello Associates, Inc., and served as its President and CEO for more than 20 years. She leads the firm’s efforts to provide strategic marketing and advertising solutions in the healthcare, banking, life sciences, and higher education industries. Prior to starting Cabello Associates, she held leadership roles at Dow Chemical and Central Power & Light.

Cabello also served on the board of trustees at Indiana State University for 10 years. She served as the board’s chair from 2021 to 2024. Outside of her service to Indiana State, Cabello is a member of the Fifth Third Bank board of directors.

Cabello is involved with multiple philanthropic organizations. She is the program director of Project Stepping Stone of Indiana, a program that helps Indiana Latino students prepare for college, as well as a member of the executive leadership team at the American Heart Association of Indianapolis, the advisory board of the Indiana Latino Scholarship Fund, chair of the Escala Foundation, and past president of the National Association of Women Business Owners – Indianapolis.

Cabello earned her bachelor’s degree from Eastern Michigan University and her master’s degree from the University of Notre Dame. She is also a graduate of the Minority Business Executive Program at Dartmouth University.



“I am honored to be appointed to the Commission by Governor Holcomb and look forward to serving alongside my fellow Commission members and Commissioner Lowery,” Cabello said. “As a first-generation college student and first-generation American, I have seen how one student’s postsecondary education can improve an entire family’s social and economic mobility. This has instilled my passion for civic service in higher education over the past 25 years, and I’m

eager to support the work of the Commission to ensure that higher education remains accessible and attainable for all Hoosier students.”

Cabello’s term runs through June 30, 2026.

Samantha Fleischaker of Celestine is the Commission’s student representative. She is currently a third-year honors student at the University of Southern Indiana (USI) studying political science and philosophy.

Fleischaker currently serves as the president of USI’s Political Science Society and the attorney general for the university’s student government. In addition, Fleischaker is a member of Pi Sigma Alpha, a national political science honor society; Alpha Mu Gamma, a national foreign language honor society; and the Asian Student Union.

Outside of her student involvement, Fleischaker is a member of the outreach team at the Westwood Church and volunteers her time in Vanderburgh County.

“I am deeply honored to be the Student Representative position for the Indiana Commission for Higher Education,” Fleischaker said. “Taking this role means I represent students’ needs and propagate their successes in pursuit of higher education. I look forward to working with the Commission and its endeavors to improve opportunities for students as well as supporting Indiana as a whole.”



Fleischaker’s term ends on June 30, 2026.

Larry Garatoni of South Bend represents Indiana’s 2nd Congressional District. Garatoni has owned and operated many businesses since his graduation from Purdue University in 1961. Most recently, Garatoni founded the Garatoni-Smith Family Foundation with his wife. This foundation donated \$2.5 million to Ivy Tech, which is naming its Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Automation in South Bend for him and his wife. He also founded HQ Investments, a company that manages various publicly traded and private investments.

Prior to this, he built and operated long-term-care facilities as a part of Health Quest Group. After selling those companies, he acquired software and internet sales companies Achieve Healthcare Technology, FurnitureFind.com, and Winesource.com. He sold these companies in 2007.



Garatoni is a staunch advocate for charter schools. He founded both the Career Academy and the Success Academy charter schools in South Bend where he serves as board chair.

Garatoni will serve until June 30, 2026.

Molly Kitchell of Zionsville is representing Indiana’s 4th Congressional District. Kitchell spent the last decade occupying several philanthropic and public service roles. Currently, Kitchell serves on the Judicial Nominating / Qualifying Commission. She was first appointed by Gov. Mitch Daniels and subsequently reappointed by Govs. Mike Pence and Eric Holcomb. In this role, Kitchell is tasked with slating judicial candidates for vacancies in the Indiana Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and tax court. In 2021, she was named chair of the Indiana Supreme Court Disciplinary Commission.

In addition to her work in Indiana's court system, Kitchell served on multiple philanthropic boards including the Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities, the Indiana Real Estate Commission, the Junior League of Indianapolis board of directors, the Children's Museum Guild, the Zionsville Parent Teacher Organization, and the Zionsville Educational Foundation's Grant Committee.

Kitchell holds a bachelor's degree from Purdue University and a master's degree from the University of Indianapolis.

"I am looking forward to working with the higher education system in Indiana as we navigate the challenges ahead, especially with regards to making post-secondary education more attainable," Kitchell said. "Higher education has the potential to transform individual lives as well as drive the Indiana economy. I am excited to be a part of the effort to enable greater student success both in school and beyond."

Kitchell's term will run through June 30, 2025.



Kent Kramer of Pendleton represents Indiana's 5th Congressional District. Kramer is the Chief Operating Officer of Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana. He leads a team of 5,000 employees to provide direct services to more than 3,000 low-income Hoosier families. In 2019, Kramer was elected to serve on the Goodwill International Board of Directors. He also graduated from the Goodwill Industries International Executive Development Program. Kramer came to Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana in 2002, originally serving as the Vice President of Retail Operations.

Active in Indiana's higher education landscape, Kramer serves on the Indiana State University's Foundation Board. He also is on the School of Business and Information Technology Advisory Board for Purdue University Global.

Kramer earned a bachelor's degree from Indiana State University and a master's degree from Anderson University.

"It is quite an honor to be appointed to Indiana's Commission for Higher Education," Kramer said. "I am excited to join a very talented and passionate group of leaders focused on supporting the good work of the Commission."

Kramer's term runs through June 30, 2025.



Gov. Holcomb also reappointed two Commission members to serve terms through 2028:

- **Dennis Bland** of Indianapolis, president of the Center for Leadership Development
- **Dan Peterson** of Bloomington, vice president of industry and government affairs for Cook Group, Inc.

Additionally, a new slate of Commission leadership was appointed:

- Chair: **Dan Peterson** (9th Congressional District)
- Vice Chair: **Nancy Jordan** (3rd Congressional District)
- Secretary: **Chad Lochmiller** (Faculty Representative)

See the full list of Commission members at che.in.gov.

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About the Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Created in 1971, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education plans, coordinates and defines Indiana's postsecondary education system to align higher learning with the needs of students and the state. The Commission also administers Indiana's financial aid programs, including the [21st Century Scholars](#) early college promise scholarship, which celebrated 30 years in 2020.