



INDIANA COMMISSION for  
HIGHER EDUCATION



# INDIANA PARTNERSHIP PENTAGON

MEETING FIVE | PROGRAM BOOK

# OBJECTIVE

Participation in the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (the Commission) Partnership Pentagon will allow the Commission to develop and expand critically important collaboration with thought leaders from five key sectors of society, including business, government, education (K-12 and higher education), non-profits (community- and faith-based organizations) and philanthropy. A group of leaders throughout Indiana, the Partners, will be working in concert with the Commission over 18 months to better understand and propose solutions around Indiana's challenges and opportunities related to higher education. The intent of this work will be to maximize the collective impact of the five sectors amongst one another as multiplicative, rather than simply additive. The Hunt Institute will work alongside the Partners and Commission staff to provide support in the form of facilitation, research and design thinking to fully develop ideas for policies and programs and deepen partnerships.

The Commission is currently setting long-term goals to address higher education trends, such as reversing the declining college-going rates for youth and adults, continuing to improve student persistence and completion, and increasing graduate retention in Indiana. These strategic areas are part and parcel of improving, and reevaluating overall college attainment rates for Indiana. The Ultimate goal is to create a culture where Hoosiers, individually and together:

- Place great value on education, specifically opportunities beyond a high school diploma.
- Recognize and embrace the fact that this is a fundamental for individuals to be locally and globally competitive.
- Reverse declines in and robustly improve in measurable areas such as college going-rates, completions, and graduate retention.
- Individually commit to continuously increasing their own degree of preparedness in the workforce and more broadly civil society.
- Challenge the belief – some may even say culture – that casts doubt on the value of education and training beyond high school as a pathway to prosperity and lift up the virtues of education, predicated on facts that offer clear evidence of return on investment and economic and social mobility.

Since the state began tracking postsecondary attainment in 2009, over two-thirds of Indiana's growth has come from sub-associate degree credentials (technical certificates, certificates and industry certifications) while growth stagnated for associate degrees and higher. When examining attainment with bachelor's degrees and above, Indiana lost ground in national rankings moving from 39th to 43rd.

The guiding principles of the Partnership Pentagon will be to increase opportunities to access economic and social mobility and prosperity for all Hoosiers. For employers, these principles yield a robust and future-oriented talent pipeline and more stable and thriving communities throughout Indiana. While the Commission team has begun to pursue a historic agenda during the current legislative session at the Statehouse to reverse noted trends and catalyze opportunities, Commissioner Lowery believes that deep and long-term improvements will require collaborative and concerted work by the five key sectors of society for truly transformational change. Thus, the creation of the Partnership Pentagon.

By the end of the 18-month period, which will include six meetings of the Partners, the expectation is to have a comprehensive set of policy and budget recommendations that can be taken to the full Commission, the Governor and the Indiana General Assembly for action in the 2025 biennial budget session.



# MONDAY. MARCH 25, 2024

9:00 - 9:10 AM

## WELCOME REMARKS

**Chris Lowery**, Commissioner | Indiana Commission for Higher Education

@ChrisLoweryIN // @HigherEdIN

**Dr. Madeline Smith**, Managing Director | The Hunt Institute

@Hunt\_Institute

9:10 - 10:10 AM

## ENGAGING INDUSTRIES AND EMPLOYERS IN ATTAINMENT EFFORTS

In an era where the demand for skilled workers is ever-growing, collaboration between academia and industry is paramount. These partnerships not only benefit employers by cultivating a skilled workforce but also encourage individuals to pursue higher education, ultimately driving economic and social mobility and prosperity. This session will explore innovative approaches, from tuition reimbursement programs to tailored training initiatives, aimed at fostering a symbiotic relationship between employers and educational institutions.

MODERATOR

**Dan Peterson**, Vice President, Industry and Government Affairs | Cook Group Incorporated

@CookMedical

**De'Niece Harrison-Hudson**, Community Affairs Director | OneAmerica

@OneAmerica

**Heather Jackson**, CEO | iXplore

RESOURCE  
EXPERTS

10:10 - 10:20 AM

## BREAK



10:20 – 11:20 AM

### UNDERSTANDING HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE NEEDS

Studies show that connecting students to career pathways prior to high school graduation is integral in ensuring those students go on to find success in the workforce – especially first-generation students and students from marginalized communities. This session will focus on how state leaders can foster connections between institutions of higher education, school districts, and business leaders to promote career-relevant pathways for students.

#### MODERATOR

 **Josh Garrison**, Senior Associate Commissioner and Chief of Staff | Indiana Commission for Higher Education

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#### RESOURCE EXPERTS

 **Jason Bearce**, Vice President, Education and Workforce Development | Indiana Chamber of Commerce

 @IndianaChamber

 **Molly Dodge**, Senior Vice President, Workforce and Careers | Ivy Tech Community College

 @IvyTechCC

11:20 – 12:00 PM

### REFLECTION SESSION

12:00 PM

### CLOSING REMARKS & NETWORKING LUNCH

 **Chris Lowery**, Commission | Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education

 @ChrisLoweryIN // @HigherEdIN



## RESOURCE EXPERTS



@IndianaChamber

### Jason Bearce

*Vice President, Education and Workforce Development | Indiana Chamber of Commerce*

Jason joined the Indiana Chamber in September 2018. In addition to his lobbying duties at the Statehouse, he will coordinate the Indiana Chamber's newly-created Institute for Workforce Excellence and serve as the management liaison with the board of Indiana INTERNnet, the statewide resource for internship opportunities. Jason previously held senior leadership positions at the Indiana Department of Education and Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE); he most recently held the title of senior associate commissioner at CHE.

Jason has contributed to the state's significant education policy changes during his career. Among the efforts: establishing high school graduation pathways aligned with the state's workforce needs, reforming Indiana's 21st Century Scholars program to increase college completion and career readiness, and launching Governor Holcomb's Next Level Jobs initiative.



@IvyTechCC

### Molly Dodge

*Senior Vice President, Workforce and Careers | Ivy Tech Community College*

Molly Dodge serves as Senior Vice President of Workforce and Careers at Ivy Tech Community College. In her role, Molly owns the college "big goal" of 50,000 completions aligned with Indiana's workforce including measuring certifications that earn above median wage. She partners with campus leadership across the state to ensure the College has the programs and capacity to fill the State's employer workforce pipeline.



@HigherEdIN

### Josh Garrison

*Senior Associate Commissioner and Chief of Staff | Indiana Commission for Higher Education*

Josh Garrison is responsible for the administration of Indiana's state financial aid programs, including the 21st Century Scholarship, the Frank O'Bannon Grant and the Workforce Ready Grant. Garrison oversees the Commission's legislative agenda and the implementation of new programs created by the Indiana General Assembly. Prior to joining the Commission, he held positions with Iowa State University and the Michigan Department of Human Services.

Garrison holds a B.S. in Politics and Government from Illinois State University and a Juris Doctor from the Southern Illinois University School of Law.

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@OneAmerica

**De’Niece Harrison-Hudson**

*Community Affairs Director | OneAmerica*

De’Niece Harrison Hudson is a community-minded, innovative leader. With a background in actuarial science and a passion for helping youth and young adults discover and pursue career opportunities, she leads OneAmerica’s groundbreaking Pathways program. The Pathways program was introduced in 2018 in response to the shortage of good jobs in Central Indiana. The program is focused on taking steps to reverse that trend by building and strengthening the local workforce through tackling barriers and creating opportunities for entry. Prior to joining OneAmerica in 2015, De’Niece held many roles in which she focused on improving the outcomes for youth and adults in the spaces of education and workforce development. Her previous roles included a database administrator and then social worker within Shepherd Community Center, and an Education Specialist within the Indiana Department of Corrections.



**Heather Jackson**

*CEO | iXplore*

Heather Jackson is a seasoned entrepreneur, brand strategist, public speaker, mentor, and educator with over 25 years’ experience and passion for innovating programs and curriculum to help students and young adults better navigate their life and career journeys. She received her bachelor’s degree in Secondary Education from Purdue University and completed Master’s work in New Media at the IUPUI School of Informatics. Heather’s brand strategy and marketing firm opened in 2007 and rebranded as iXplore in 2023. For the past 5 years, Heather and her team at iXplore have focused their work on redefining and broadening the reach and inclusiveness of career exploration for multi-generational learners through their human-centered, creative approach to storytelling and immersive tech.



@CookMedical

**Dan Peterson**

*Vice President, Industry and Government Affairs | Cook Group Incorporated*

Dan Peterson is Vice President, Industry and Government Affairs for Cook Group Incorporated based in Bloomington, Indiana. Since joining Cook in 1989, he has held a variety of leadership roles in the areas of operations, finance/accounting and human resources. Peterson’s current responsibilities involve industry, government and external affairs. His primary areas of focus center on policies and programs in healthcare delivery as well as education, economic and workforce development.

He currently serves as a Commissioner with the Indiana Commission for Higher Education and is a board member of BioCrossroads, the Indiana Biosciences Research Institute, the Indiana Health Industry Forum, the Regional Opportunities Initiative and the Bloomington Economic Development Corporation.

Peterson holds both a Bachelor of Science degree in biology and an MBA in finance from Indiana University.



## ABOUT THE PARTNERS

### THE HUNT INSTITUTE | <https://hunt-institute.org/about/>

Established in 2001, The Hunt Institute honors the legacy of James B. Hunt, Jr., the former governor of North Carolina who distinguished himself as an ardent champion of education. The Hunt Institute brings together people and resources to inspire and inform elected officials and policymakers about key issues in education, resulting in visionary leaders who are prepared to take strategic action for greater educational outcomes and student success. Our mission is to provide unbiased research, technical expertise, and learning opportunities that equip and empower educators and policymakers to drive equitable reforms and become audacious champions for education.

### INDIANA COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION | <https://www.in.gov/che/>

Created in 1971 by an act of the General Assembly and signed into law by then Governor Edgar Whitcomb, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education is now in its fifth decade of service to the State of Indiana. The Commission is a fourteen-member public body created to:

- Define the educational missions of public colleges and universities;
- Plan and to coordinate Indiana's state-supported system of post-high school education, taking into account the plans and interests of independent colleges and universities;
- Review both operating budget and capital budget appropriation requests from public institutions;
- Approve or disapprove for public institutions the establishment of any new branches, campuses, extension centers, colleges or schools;
- Approve or disapprove for public institutions the offering of any additional associate, baccalaureate or graduate degree or certificate program of two semesters or more in duration;
- Review all programs of public institutions and make recommendations to the governing board of the institution, the Governor, and the General Assembly concerning the funding and the disposition of these programs; and,
- Distribute student financial aid from state aid programs.

The Commission is not a governing board, but a coordinating agency that works closely with Indiana's public and independent colleges. In addition, The Commission has strong working relationships with many other State agencies, including: Department of Education, the Department of Workforce Development and the Independent Colleges of Indiana.



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## THE HUNT INSTITUTE LEADERSHIP & STAFF



### The Honorable Arne Duncan

*U.S. Secretary of Education, 2009-2016 | Chair, Board of Directors*

After serving as a cabinet member under President Barack Obama, Arne Duncan returned home to Chicago in 2016, committed to trying to dramatically reduce the amount of gun violence in our city and allow children on the South and West sides to grow up free of fear and trauma.

[View full bio on our website](#) ➔



### The Honorable Susana Martinez

*Governor of New Mexico, 2011-2018 | Vice Chair, Board of Directors*

In 2010, Susana Martinez was elected governor of the State of New Mexico. She became New Mexico's first female governor and the first Hispanic female governor in the history of the United States. Prior to being elected governor, Martinez was a prosecutor for 25 years along the nation's southern border and served as Doña Ana County's elected district attorney for over half that time. As governor, she prioritized keeping New Mexico's communities safe, ensuring all students receive a high-quality education, and diversifying and growing the state's economy.

[View full bio on our website](#) ➔



### Javaid E. Siddiqi, Ph.D.

*President & CEO*

Former Virginia Secretary of Education Dr. Javaid Siddiqi is the President and CEO of The Hunt Institute. During his tenure The Institute has more than tripled its staff and has expanded its scope of work beyond K-12 to include the entire education continuum from early childhood to postsecondary and the workforce. Javaid works with the leadership team to guide the strategic plan for The Institute and develops The Institute's relationships with partners and funders across the nation. He works with senior-level elected officials across the political aisle to help design strategy, shape policy, and drive educational improvements on the national and state levels.

[View full bio on our website](#) ➔

To view a full listing of our staff, please scan the QR code to the right, or visit [bit.ly/THIStaff](https://bit.ly/THIStaff)



SCAN ME



Established in 2001, [The Hunt Institute](#) honors the legacy of James B. Hunt, Jr., the former governor of North Carolina who distinguished himself as an ardent champion of education.

The Hunt Institute brings together people and resources to inspire and inform elected officials and policymakers about key issues in education, resulting in visionary leaders who are prepared to take strategic action for greater educational outcomes and student success.

In 2016, The Hunt Institute became an independent, nonprofit entity and joined forces with Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy to pursue research, educational partnerships, and events related to improving education policy.

*Learn more at [www.hunt-institute.org](http://www.hunt-institute.org).*



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