



**58<sup>th</sup> Annual Best Practices Conference: October 10, 2025**

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## **Annual Best Practices Conference**

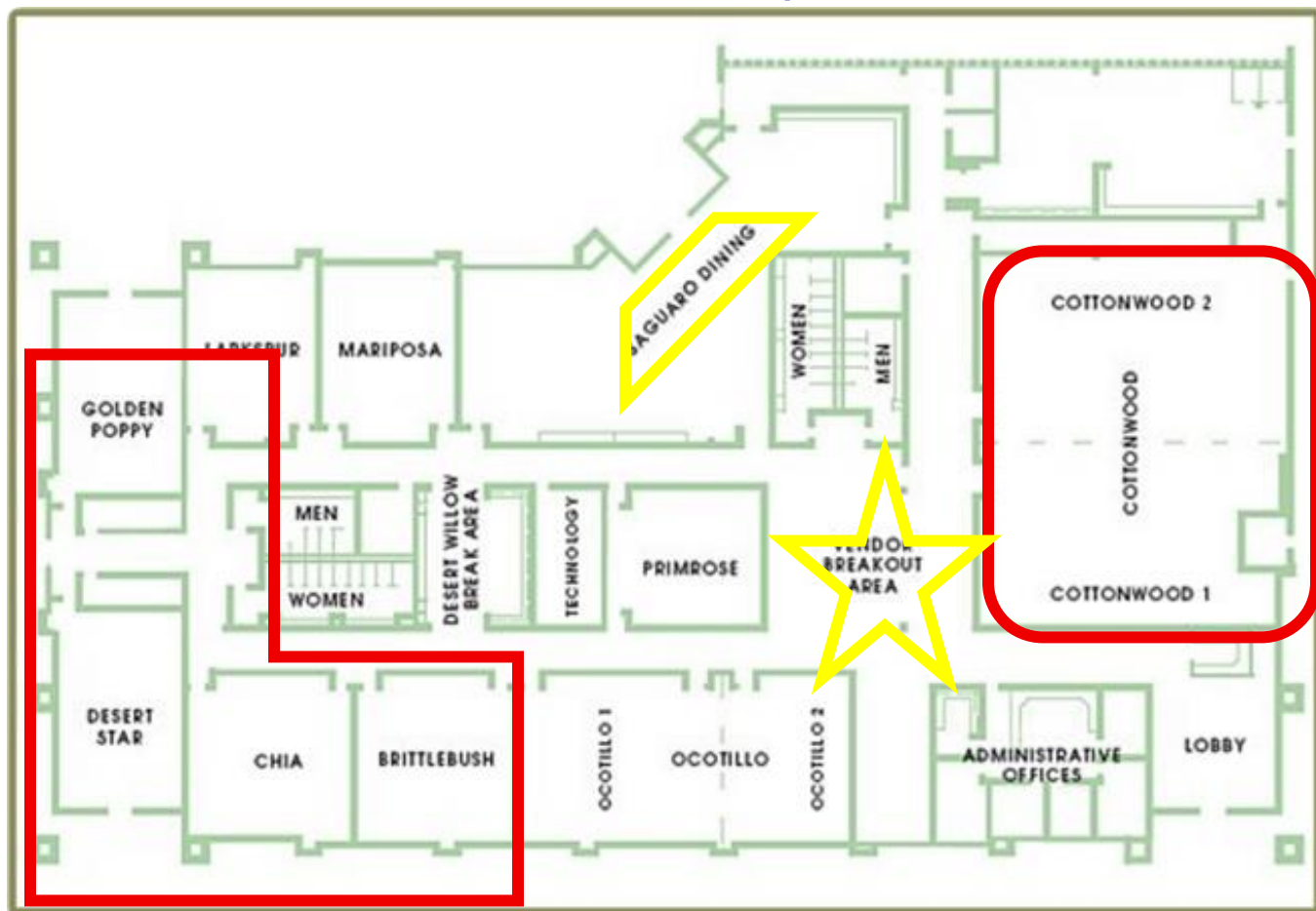
**October 10, 2025**

# **SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE**

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<b>8:15am – 9:15am</b>	Registration and Breakfast with Exhibitors
<b>9:15am – 9:45am</b>	Opening Session
<b>9:45am – 10:45am</b>	Breakout Sessions
<b>10:45am – 11:00am</b>	Break with Exhibitors
<b>11:00am – Noon</b>	Breakout Sessions
<b>12:15pm – 1:45pm</b>	Lunch w/LLL Scholarship Awards
<b>1:45pm – 2:00pm</b>	Break with Exhibitors
<b>2:00pm – 3:00pm</b>	Breakout Sessions
<b>3:15pm – 3:45pm</b>	Refreshments/Raffle with Exhibitors

## How to find the Sessions and Sponsors



Main entrance --^



**APSA Annual Best Practices Conference**  
**October 10, 2025**  
**Breakout Rooms at a Glance**

9:15 – 9:45	Morning Keynote: Washington Update with Tom Netting, CSPEN			
<b>By Room:</b>	<b>Brittlebrush</b>	<b>Chia</b>	<b>Desert Star</b>	<b>Golden Poppy</b>
9:45 – 10:45	WIOA HIT Programs	Career Services on AI	Eliminate the Hate at Work	Legal Hot Topics
11:00 – 12:00	Partnerships: Educational Institutions and ARIZONA @WORK	Scholarships and Wraparound Support for Students	Building Narratives That Inspire Purpose and Belonging	AZPPSE and AI for Regulatory Processes
12:15 – 1:45	Lunchtime Keynote: Leadership and Teacher of the Year Award Life Long Learning Awards Luncheon			
2:00 – 3:00	Data Driven Audience Strategy at Every Stage	Beyond the Crisis: Private Lending Opportunities Amid Rising Student Loan Defaults	Stakeholder Strategies for Stellar Performance	Working with Accreditors: (ABHES, ACCET, ACCSC, COE, DEAC) moderated by Tom Netting, CSPEN



## APSA Annual Best Practices Conference

# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

**7:15 – 8:15 AM**

- Exhibitor Setup

**8:15 AM**

- Conference Registration Opens

**8:15 – 9:15 AM**

- Breakfast with Exhibitors Sponsored by CONEXT



**9:15 – 9:45 AM**

- Morning Keynote:
  - Washington Update - CSPEN/ Tom Netting
    - Location: Cottonwood Ballroom

**9:45 – 10:45 AM - SESSIONS**

- **BRITTLEBRUSH**
  - WIOA HIT Programs
    - *Rachael Tashbook, Office of Economic Opportunity with Tina Landavazo, Nancy Meeden, and Irasema Olvera, AZ DES*
- **CHIA**
  - Career Services on AI
    - *Jessica Pierce, Career Connectors*
- **DESERT STAR**
  - Eliminate the Hate at Work
    - *Jeri Prochaska, Conext*
- **GOLDEN POPPY**
  - Legal Hot Topics
    - *Jessica High, Duane Morris and Tom Netting, TEN Government Strategies*

**10:45 – 11:00 AM**

- Morning Break with Exhibitors - Sponsored by: Alvarez & Mendoza

## APSA Annual Best Practices Conference CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

### 11:00 – 12:00 PM - SESSIONS

- **BRITTLEBRUSH**
  - Partnerships: Educational Institutions and ARIZONA@WORK
    - Gina Castleberry, Ancora HS
- **CHIA**
  - Scholarships and Wraparound Support for Students
    - Kate Hoffman and Courtney Fauss, Earn to Learn
- **DESERT STAR**
  - Building Narratives That Inspire Purpose and Belonging
    - *Chase Lane and Mitchell Sauve, LT*
- **GOLDEN POPPY**
  - AZPPSE and AI for Regulatory Processes
    - *Kevin LaMountain and Jacqueline Rome, AZPPSE*

### 12:00 – 12:15 PM

- Transition Break

### 12:15 – 1:45 pm

- **LUNCH Keynote: Leadership and Teacher of the Year Award**
  - Life Long Learning Awards Luncheon (Cottonwood Ballroom)
    - Lunch Sponsored by: Verif-Y



### 1:45 – 2:00 PM

- Break with Exhibitors

### 2:00 – 3:00 PM - SESSIONS

- **BRITTLEBRUSH**
  - Data Driven Audience Strategy at Every Stage
    - *Jordan Schuster, Tyler Fridley, Colling Media*

## APSA Annual Best Practices Conference CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

- CHIA
  - Beyond the Crisis: Private Lending Opportunities Amid Rising Student Loan Defaults
    - *Norman Rodriguez, Yrefy*
- DESERT STAR
  - Stakeholder Strategies for Stellar Performance
    - *Dr. Mal Owen*
- GOLDEN POPPY
  - Working with Accreditors: (ABHES, ACCET, ACCSC, COE, DEAC) moderated by Tom Netting, CSPEN

3:00 – 3:15 pm

- Afternoon Break with Exhibitors -Sponsored by van Rijn &Associates



3:15 – 3:45 pm

- Refreshments/Raffle with Exhibitors in the Cottonwood Ballroom

**SESSION SURVEYS:** Please click this link and complete for each session

**[SURVEY LINK](#)**







## Annual Best Practices Conference

# DETAIL OF BREAKOUT SESSIONS

**9:45-10:45**

### **Brittlebrush: WIOA: High Impact Training: The Next Step in Empowering Participant Choice for WIOA Title I-B Adult Training Programs**

*Rachael Tashbook, Office of Economic Opportunity with Tina Landavazo, Nancy Meeden, and Irasema Olvera, AZ DES*

This session will explore the WIOA Title I-B Adult program's new High Impact Training (HIT) analysis. Attendees will be equipped with knowledge of this new resource to help enhance Title I-B adult participant decision-making. The presenter will showcase two innovative tools designed to streamline data discovery and utilization for informed decision-making. If you are a training provider on the ETPL serving Title I-B Adult participants, this will be a useful session for you!

### **Chia: Career Services on AI**

*Jessica Pierce, Career Connectors*

The future of career services is here, and it's powered by AI, automation, and data-driven insights. For career services professionals supporting students in education, the challenge is clear: how do we harness these tools to better serve learners without losing the human connection that makes our work transformational? In this engaging and practical session, you'll discover how to integrate AI into career services strategies while staying true to your mission of guiding students with empathy, purpose, and impact.

You'll learn how to:

- Leverage AI tools to support resume writing, interview prep, and job matching at scale
- Personalize career pathways for diverse student populations with greater accuracy and efficiency
- Enhance employer engagement and job placement strategies using data and automation

- Navigate the ethical considerations of AI use in education and career coaching
- Empower your team to stay relevant and confident in a rapidly evolving job market.

Through real-world examples from higher ed and workforce settings, interactive demonstrations, and inspiring stories, this session will leave you energized, equipped, and future-ready. Because at the end of the day, AI can support your students, but you are the difference-maker.

### **Desert Star: Eliminate the Hate at Work with AI**

*Jeri Prochaska, Conext*

One of the biggest challenges since 2020 is talent retention and recruitment. The Great Resignation has challenged all of us to reflect and rethink our strategies for staffing. Employee expectations have shifted dramatically, and the competitive environment to replace them has pushed even the most seasoned recruiters to frustration and beyond. This presentation will dive into the main reasons why employees leave, which conversely are the same outcomes that attract top talent. We will explore technology that eliminates the tasks employees hate, and techniques to make them stay, that you will love.

If you are navigating a tough retention and recruitment climate and need some tangible takeaways to improve your outlook, this session is for you!

### **Golden Poppy: Legal Hot Topics**

*Jessica High, Duane Morris with Tom Netting, TEN Government Strategies*

This session will provide an overview of pertinent legal and compliance issues facing institutions of higher education, including Title IX under the 2020 rule, use of AI, accommodations for students with disabilities, and any follow up from AM General Session.

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**11:00-12:00**

**Brittlebrush: Partnerships: Educational Institutions and ARIZONA@WORK**

*Gina Castleberry and Tony Comstock, Ancora HS*

Ready to shatter silos and build bridges? This session will unleash the power of partnerships between educational institutions and Arizona@Work offices. Imagine a world where information flows seamlessly, student/client needs are anticipated and met, and both educators and workforce professionals find their jobs becoming more efficient. Through real-life case studies, you will learn how to: - Create streamlined pathways for individuals wanting to complete their high school or post-secondary education. - Enhance communication and information sharing between institutions and workforce offices. - Leverage technology to expand awareness and maximize partnership effectiveness. - Build sustainable relationships that drive long-term success for students/clients and organizations. This presentation isn't just about theory; it's about practical strategies that you can implement quickly. Leave this session energized, equipped, and ready to transform the way you work, creating brighter futures for Arizona's students and workforce.

**Chia: Scholarships and Wraparound Support for Students**

*Kate Hoffman and Courtney Fauss, Earn to Learn*

Earn to Learn has developed a nationally recognized model that goes beyond scholarships to provide students with comprehensive support on their journey to and through post-secondary education. This session will highlight how the program combines matched savings, financial literacy, near-peer coaching, and strong partnerships with educational institutions to address both the financial and non-financial barriers that often prevent students from persisting and completing their postsecondary goals. Participants will learn how Earn to Learn's holistic approach increases college access and success for low- to moderate-income students, while also creating sustainable pathways to upward mobility. The session will include insights into program design, strategies for engaging educational partners, and real-world outcomes that demonstrate the power of combining financial empowerment with student support services. By the end of the session, attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of how collaborative, wraparound models can

transform student success and equity in higher education—and how these practices can be adapted within their own institutions or organizations.

### **Desert Star: Building Narratives That Inspire Purpose and Belonging**

*Chase Lane and Mitchell Sauve, LT*

“Skills-first” has become a rallying cry in workforce development. While it’s the right strategy, it’s the wrong story. As traditional institutions face cultural and structural erosion, students and workers want more than credentials. They want responsibility, purpose, and belonging. So, how can institutions treat their students as nation-builders rather than just job-fillers? This session challenges education leaders to move beyond transactional language and embrace deeper, purpose-driven narratives. Chase Lane, CEO of Arizona-based agency LT and a former professor at the U.S. Air Force Academy, brings agency and educational insight alongside Lauren Hillery, VP of Strategy at LT. Together, they’ll discuss what it takes to build brands and messages that foster trust, responsibility, and belonging. From veteran pipelines to advanced manufacturing tracks, they’ll explore how reframing your message can turn passive prospects into committed partners in their own future.

### **Golden Poppy: AZPPSE and AI for Regulatory Processes**

*Kevin LaMountain and Jacqueline Rome, AZPPSE*

This session will provide an in-depth look at how the Arizona State Board is pioneering the use of artificial intelligence to streamline regulatory processes. We'll specifically highlight our adoption of Google's Gemini and NotebookLM, demonstrating their application in the comprehensive review of applications for initial, renewal, and supplemental private school licensure. Attendees will see firsthand how these AI tools are revolutionizing our analysis of critical documents, including financial statements, catalogs, handbooks, and enrollment agreements, ensuring greater efficiency and accuracy in our regulatory oversight. We will also explore how private schools themselves might leverage these same powerful tools to better review their own regulatory obligations and ensure compliance. Join us to learn how AI is helping the board more effectively serve the private school community through enhanced operational reviews.

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**2:00-3:00**

**Brittlebrush: Data Driven Audience Strategy at Every Stage**

*Jordan Schuster and Tyler Fridley, Colling Media*

In today's competitive education landscape, reaching the right student at the right time requires more than just awareness — it requires a data-driven audience strategy that aligns with every stage of the student lifecycle. This presentation will show we leverage 1st, 2nd, and 3rd party data to: Build precision audience segments that drive more qualified inquiries and enrollments Integrate cross-channel targeting (paid search, social, programmatic, and traditional) with CRM data for greater personalization Use predictive modeling and partner data to expand reach without sacrificing lead quality Apply nurture strategies at every stage — from awareness to application to enrollment — ensuring prospects receive relevant, timely messaging that moves them closer to a decision Measure success with clear KPIs tied to cost per acquisition, enrollment yield, and lifecycle ROI Attendees will leave with a framework to activate data across channels, enhance student journey touchpoints, and increase enrollment efficiency in a way that balances scale with quality.

**Chia: Beyond the Crisis: Private Lending Opportunities Amid Rising Student Loan Defaults**

*Norman Rodriguez, CEO of Elevate and Director of School Lending at Yrefy*

This session offers a timely and eye-opening presentation for schools navigating financial uncertainty in a time of rising student loan defaults and shrinking access to private lending. Led by Norman Rodriguez, a seasoned leader with firsthand experience managing a vocational school through lending volatility, this session explores the dramatic shifts in the private lending landscape—from lender bankruptcies and enrollment declines to the emergence of innovative models that are doubling and even quadrupling enrollment by offering subprime students market-low interest rates. With real data, personal insights, and actionable strategies, this presentation is a must-

attend for institutions seeking sustainable growth and financial resilience in today's challenging environment.

### **Desert Star: Stakeholder Strategies for Stellar Performance**

*Dr. Mal Owen, eBrite*

Whether you're in leadership, support, operations, or innovation, your success hinges on the people around you. Every role requires a set of specialized skills — but it's your ability to connect, collaborate, and communicate with your stakeholders that truly drives results. This session offers practical, specific strategies to strengthen how you relate, enhance mutual performance, and foster a culture of shared success. You'll leave with actionable insights to build trust, navigate challenges, and create outcomes that benefit everyone involved.

### **Golden Poppy: Working with Accreditors**

(ABHES, ACCET, ACCSC, COE, DEAC) *moderator: Tom Netting, CSPEN*

Have you ever considered applying for (or changing) institutional accreditation? With the new administration's focus on accreditation reform comes the possibility of significant and lasting change to the accreditation process. Join us for a panel discussion from the perspective of 5 accrediting agencies, on how best to work with accreditors and what changes to anticipate in the near future.

## **APSA Best Practices Conference 2025**

### **Get to Know the Speakers**

#### **MATT CALHOUN**

Matt Calhoun has been working in higher education for more than 25 years,— which he swears was just a few years ago. For the past 23 years, he’s devoted himself to the students at Arizona College, where he currently serves as Senior Vice President. Over the years, Matt has been responsible for just about every department on campus, including Financial Aid, Career Services, IT, Finance, Academics, Compliance, and Facilities. Matt has also spent much of his career working with the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES), serving in various roles since 2017. He’s currently finishing his final year on the commission as Past Chair — a position he describes as “the person who explains all his questionable decisions to the new chair.”

#### **GINA CASTLEBERRY**

Gina Castleberry is a Certified Workforce Development Professional (CWDP) and has 20 years of experience in education, operations, and political campaign sectors. She currently serves as the Senior Director of Product Partnerships and Head of School at Ancora High School. Gina is dedicated to helping adults achieve a high school diploma and gain access to technical training, college programs, and career advancement, among other opportunities.

#### **TONY COMSTOCK**

Tony Comstock is Vice President for Funding Solutions at Ancora and a seasoned leader in student finance with over 15 years of experience in managing student finance operations, developing high-performing teams, and ensuring regulatory compliance in higher education. Throughout his career, Tony has demonstrated a deep commitment to providing leadership and strategic direction, focusing on both process efficiency and customer satisfaction. Recently he collaborated with personnel in workforce offices, higher education, and Dynamic Works Institute to empower staff to understand, interact and create communication tools that have positive



impacts on the workflow and more importantly with their customers and students.

### **ALICIA DE MARTINI**

Alicia DeMartini joined the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (“ACCSC”) in April 2010 as a Senior Analyst. In her current position as the Associate Executive Director, Alicia is charged with overseeing the operations for the Accreditation Department of ACCSC. This primarily includes the management of the application for accreditation processes, the execution of on-site evaluations, and all of the reporting and responses the Commission will need as a result. Prior to joining ACCSC, Alicia worked for eight years at a postsecondary higher education provider working at both the corporate and school level holding various positions in academics and compliance and, prior to that, for two years as a Home/Hospital Teacher for Anne Arundel County Public Schools. Alicia earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Old Dominion University and a Masters of Art in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Argosy University.

### **COURTNEY FAUSS**

Courtney Fauss is the Senior Director of Programs and Engagement at Earn to Learn, where she leads partnerships and initiatives that expand access to higher education for students across Arizona. Since joining the organization in 2019 as a Success Coach, she has played a key role in growing Earn to Learn’s reach, including expanding support to students pursuing two-year degrees, certificates, and short-term credentials. Courtney began her career in higher education as a Senior Academic Advisor at Northern Arizona University after earning her bachelor’s degree from Arizona State University. Based in Flagstaff, she is passionate about student success, community collaboration, and creating opportunities that help all learners thrive.

### **TYLER FRIDLEY**

Tyler Fridley is Director of Client Services at Colling Media.

### **JESSICA HIGH**

Jessica High is an attorney at Duane Morris, LLP. Her practice focuses on counseling private sector colleges and universities in matters of state and federal regulation, accreditation compliance and advocacy, and student and

employee disputes and concerns. Ms. High was previously a Campus Director and founder of a private allied health college branch campus location. She has close to 20 years of experience in this sector, 10 years of which she spent employed by private sector colleges in their financial aid, admissions, accounting, student services, and human resources departments. Ms. High regularly speaks at higher education conferences on emerging and on-going regulatory issues impacting postsecondary educational institutions.

### **KATE HOFFMAN**

Kate Hoffman is the Founder and CEO of Earn to Learn, a pioneering nonprofit that empowers students to pursue higher education through matched savings accounts and financial capability training. What began at her kitchen table in 2008 has grown into one of the nation's most innovative scholarship models, partnering with nearly every post-secondary institution in Arizona and expanding nationally. A tireless advocate for affordable college access, Kate has shared Earn to Learn's impact with leaders across the country, including testifying before Congress. Her vision and leadership continue to shape the future of education financing.

### **KEVIN LAMOUNTAIN**

Kevin LaMountain currently holds the position of Executive Director at the Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education. He brings over 30 years of experience in the private postsecondary education sector, having served in various roles ranging from career services, student services, financial aid, Dean of Student Affairs, and culminating in a Divisional President position for a large postsecondary institution.

Kevin's passion for education has been a driving force throughout his career, and he is dedicated to serving individuals who seek to achieve their goals through higher education. He holds a graduate degree in educational leadership from Northern Arizona University and advocates for doing the right thing for students, faculty, and staff in these institutions.

In addition to his role at the Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education, Kevin has served as the past president of the Arizona Private School Association and currently serves on the board of EdKey, a large charter school system based in Arizona. He also served as President for 2024-25 on the NASASPS board.

**TINA LANDAVAZO**

Tina Landavazo is the Eligible Training Provider Manager, Arizona Department of Economic Security- Division of Employment & Rehabilitation Services, ETPL Manager. She brings over 10 years of experience in workforce development with the State of Arizona. As the Eligible Training Provider Manager for the Arizona Department of Economic Security - Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services, Tina ensures the effective streamlining, development, and implementation of the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) policy across the state.

Tina's expertise in program management and her commitment to achieving successful outcomes have been demonstrated throughout her career. Before her current role, she worked as a Business Service Representative, assisting local employers with their hiring needs. She also served as a Reentry Employer Coordinator, working with the Second Chance Centers to connect employers with individuals overcoming background barriers to secure employment. In her role as an Apprenticeship Training Representative, she played a key part in establishing Registered Apprenticeship Programs across Arizona, expanding training opportunities for the state's workforce.

**CHASE LANE**

Chase Lane, MBA, is the CEO of LT, a full-service advertising agency in Phoenix, Arizona. A graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy and the University of Notre Dame, Chase previously served as an assistant professor at the Air Force Academy's business school, where he advised on marketing and communications as Chief of Staff. Chase brings over a decade of strategic leadership across sectors, including higher education, government, and private enterprise, giving him a unique lens on how institutions communicate trust, purpose, and impact.

**SHELIA LUKE**

Shelia Luke serves as Vice President of Compliance at the Council on Occupational Education. With over 21 years of experience in academic administration and higher education accreditation, she has held numerous leadership positions. Most recently, she was the Coordinator of Commission Support at the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on

Colleges (SACSCOC), where she developed peer review teams and facilitated training to committee chairs. She also directed complex initiatives involving committee review processes, institutional appeals, and arbitration, making significant contributions to the enhancement and streamlining of accreditation procedures across diverse institution types. Her areas of expertise include accreditation compliance, policy development, and strategic planning. She holds a Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Georgia Tech and a master's in systems and Reliability Engineering from the University of Maryland. Outside of her professional endeavors, she enjoys cooking, traveling, and spending time at the beach with her husband and two children.

### **DR. LEAH MATTHEWS**

Dr. Leah Matthews serves as the Executive Director of the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC), a position she has held since April 2013. The DEAC, established in 1926, holds recognition from both the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), underscoring its commitment to upholding rigorous educational standards in distance learning.

Prior to her leadership at the DEAC, Dr. Matthews served for three years as the Vice President for Recognition Services at CHEA. In this capacity, she oversaw the recognition process for sixty accreditors across the spectrum of regional, national, and programmatic accreditation within the U.S. higher education landscape. Her collaborative efforts with higher education associations focus on addressing key areas such as institutional effectiveness & accountability, student achievement, outcomes assessment, transparency, and quality assurance-related issues.

### **PETER MIKHAIL**

Peter Mikhail Peter Mikhail is the President/CEO of Mikhail Education Corporation (MEC) and was born and raised in the private-post secondary education industry. He is a second-generation school operator following his father, Mike Mikhail and holds a B.S. in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance from California State University San Jose. Following the passing of their father in 2010, Peter and his sister assumed the operation of MEC. Today, MEC operates 6 locations across three states and offers programs in trades, healthcare, nursing, and business. Peter joined the ACCET Commission in 2016 and is the current Chair of the Commission.

**TOM NETTING**

As CSPEN Co-Executive Director, Tom Netting advocates before congress, federal agencies, and state governments on behalf of entities seeking to inform and influence the legislative and regulatory process.

With more than 30 years of experience working in government relations and public policy, Tom has established himself as a leader in strategic policy development and advocacy in the fields of higher education and workforce development, elementary and secondary education, healthcare, veterans affairs, and the procurement of federal appropriations.

Prior to the formulation of TEN Government Strategies, LLC, Tom previously held positions as: Public Policy Advisor/Lobbyist within two Washington, D.C.-based government relations firms; directed the government relations activities of several associations and higher education organizations.

**IRASEMA OLVERA**

Irasema Olvera is a dedicated professional with over 20 years of experience in public social services, workforce development, youth education, and program management. As the Title I-B Policy Manager for the Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services (DES-DERS), she leads the WIOA Title I-B Policy team, ensuring the effective development and implementation of policies across the state.

Irasema has a strong background in creating community collaborations, managing diverse teams, and ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations. Her leadership is pivotal in interpreting and executing complex policies, forming strategic partnerships, and representing her department at federal, state, and local levels.

Before her current role, Irasema served as the Workforce Development Director for Santa Cruz County, where she led job training, economic development, and community outreach initiatives. She brings expertise in budgeting, policy compliance, performance monitoring, and building strong relationships with stakeholders, including WIOA partners, government agencies, and educational institutions.

**MALLARD OWEN, PHD**

Dr. Mal Owen has 30+ years guiding startups, nonprofits & turnarounds — building strong teams, cultures & high-performing, employer-of-choice organizations. See his profile here:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mallardowen/>

**JESSICA PIERCE**

Jessica Pierce, a transformative force in community collaboration and an advocate for underserved individuals, has dedicated over 15 years to empowering those in need. As the Founder and CEO of Career Connectors, she's overseen the organization's growth, impacting over 62,000 individuals by providing crucial job resources, high-quality job connections, and she has been a beacon of hope.

Jessica's profound impact has been recognized on national platforms, including speaking engagements at The White House's Forum on Job Clubs in the United States. Her achievements have been acknowledged through honors such as Phoenix Business Journal's Outstanding Women in Business, Arizona Foothill's Women Who Move the Valley, and Phoenix's 40 Under Forty.

**JERI PROCHASKA**

Jeri Prochaska is Vice President of Business Development at Conext.me, responsible for leading efforts to increase partnerships with schools and universities. Jeri has a deep understanding of the education industry through her extensive knowledge of admissions, accreditation and compliance accumulated over a period of two decades of working within the higher education sector.

**NORMAN RODRIGUEZ**

**Norman Rodriguez** has dedicated his career to transforming workforce development and financial access for underserved communities. As Director of School Lending at Ignyte by Yrefy, Norman leads the Ignyte team to Revitalize the American Workforce by expanding educational financing options for students and families. Through strategic partnerships with institutions and municipalities, he is helping redefine how private student loans are structured and serviced—especially for borrowers underserved by the current lending landscape.

Previously, as **CEO of Elevate**, Norman spearheaded the school's journey to equip over 1,000 individuals from under-resourced backgrounds with the skills needed to secure roles in the skilled and technology trades, earning \$50,000 or more. Under his leadership, Elevate forged groundbreaking partnerships with over 53 major employers—including T-Mobile, ZipRecruiter, and Outreach.io—and nearly a dozen Arizona municipalities, generating over \$70 million in new income for its graduates.

### **JACQUELINE ROME**

Jacqueline Rome, M.Ed., is the Program Director for the Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education, where she has served for over four years. With a career in education spanning over two decades, she brings a wealth of experience from both K-12 and higher education, including roles as a junior high math teacher and an instructor for pre-service teachers with a focus on classroom management, math methods, and math coaching. In her current role, Jacqueline guides new institutions through the application and licensure process and oversees the financial review of new and renewal applications. She is also responsible for preparing and evaluating financial reports for institutions that require quarterly reporting to the Finance Committee.

### **MITCHELL SAUVE**

Mitchell is a quick-witted, creative content marketing manager who enjoys working with brands to bolster their digital presence. As a member of the content team at LT, Mitchell has worked on a variety of content projects from social media campaigns and influencer marketing work to web content strategy and copywriting. Mitchell has an insatiable curiosity that motivates him to learn about new industries, strategies and techniques that elevate our clients' marketing and help them achieve their goals. He has been with the agency for four years and has worked on accounts like TruGreen Lawn, Denova Collaborative Health, The Phoenix Zoo, Catellus, Four Peaks, Barro's Pizza, Phoenix Children's Hospital and more.

### **JORDAN SCHUSTER**

Jordan Schuster is Chief Operating Officer at Colling Media , an innovative thought leader with 15+ years of advertising and strategic growth experience, with a track record of driving successful relationships, while offering and supporting marketing and transformation practices, with a primary focus on

digital channels. In his spare time, he enjoys watching Arizona sports, especially the Arizona Cardinals and Phoenix Suns, along with spending time with his family and three kids.

### **RACHEL TASHBOOK**

Rachael Tashbook is an economist and research administrator with the Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). She is passionate about the applied aspects of economic analysis and works with local and state agencies to ensure OEO's research is available in actionable formats. Rachael does this by providing analysis, technical assistance, training, and resources to partner organizations seeking to utilize labor market data. Currently, she supports the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and high school Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs at the state and local level. She has served in state government since 2016, serving in both policy development and research roles. She holds a masters degree from West Texas A&M university in Economics and Finance.

### **NANCY MEEDEN**

Nancy Meeden began her career with workforce development in the 1980s, serving two local areas in Georgia, developing local plans and policies under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). In 1998, she became the State Welfare-to-Work (WtW) Coordinator with the Georgia Department of Labor. She continued to serve various roles at the Georgia Department of Labor, eventually serving as General Counsel to the Commissioner of the Department. In 2019, she relocated to Arizona, to be closer to family, and transitioned to the Arizona Department of Economic Security, where she currently serves as a Senior Policy Manager, overseeing three teams which provide policy and support to the agency's various workforce development teams. During her career, Nancy has been extensively involved in the development of policies for the various workforce development programs, including JTPA, WtW, and the multiple funding sources under both the Workforce Investment Act and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, with an eye on keeping policies flexible and useful for both State and local staff. Her goal is to ensure policies are clear and unambiguous, yet flexible so that services are provided to the public in the manner as intended by the enacting legislation. Nancy has a BS in Political Science, a Masters of Public Administration from Georgia Southern University, and a Juris Doctorate from



the College of Law at Georgia State University. In her free time, Nancy enjoys being with her family, specifically her granddaughter, and watching the Atlanta Braves in the summer, and Georgia Bulldogs in the fall.

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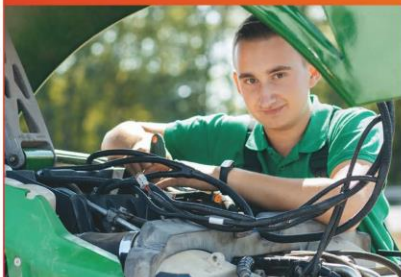
Aparna Gupta, Phoenix Computer Academy

Jessica High (Associate), Duane Morris LLP

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**Yrefy® IGNYTE** empowers trade schools to enroll students without financial barriers holding them back. Students can now pursue the in-demand skills and careers that America urgently needs.

By partnering together, we're **reigniting** the workforce and **rebuilding** the American Dream.

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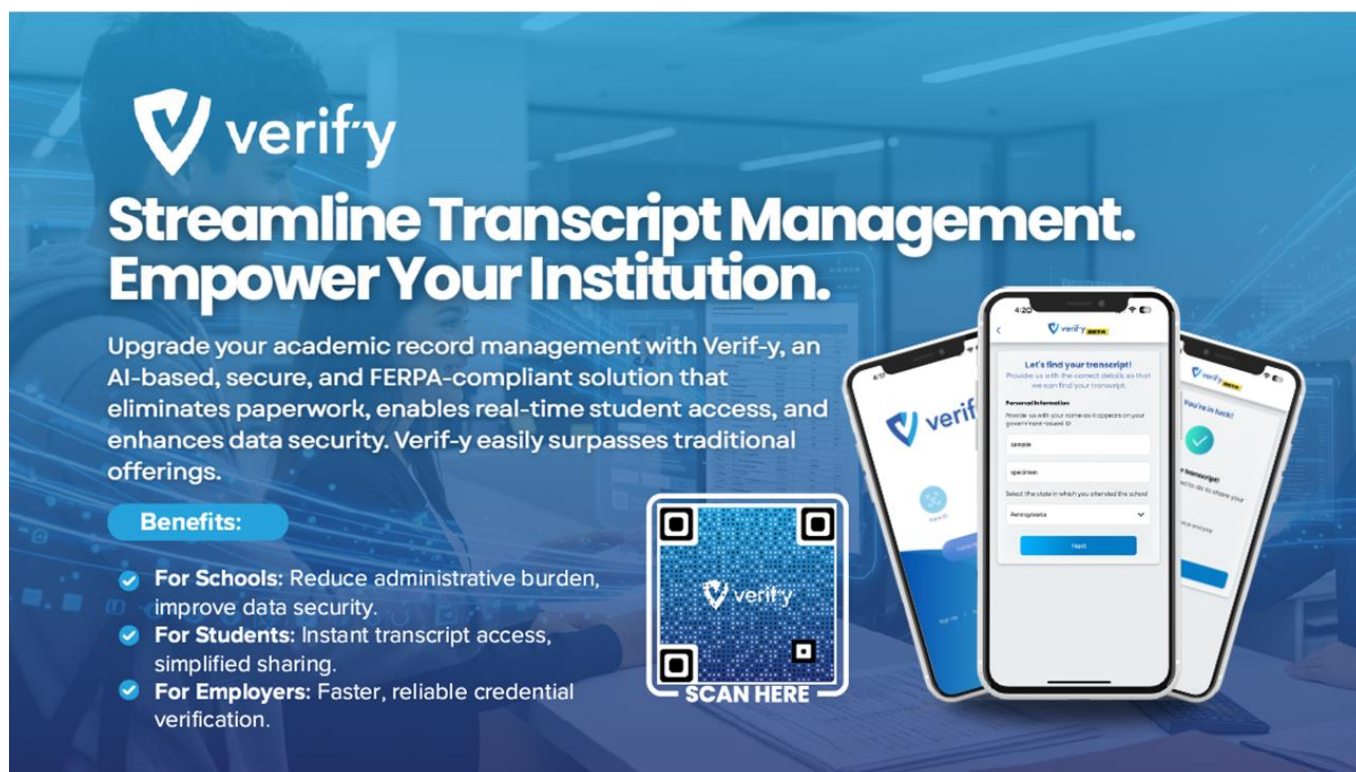
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- **FAST APPROVALS:** Yrefy underwrites the student's loan directly and pays the school on their behalf, streamlining the application and funding process.
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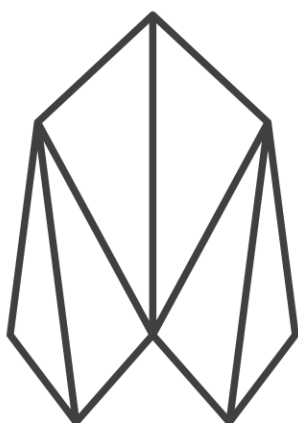
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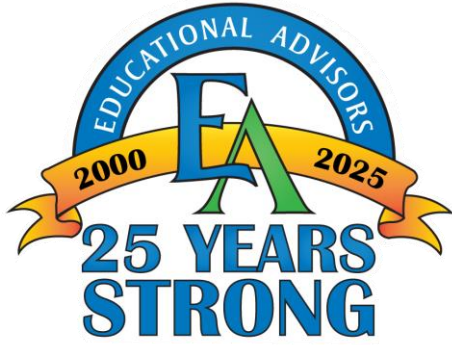


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