

# Utah NASPA Drive-In Conference



**UTAH NASPA**  
BETTER TOGETHER

**Host Campus:  
Salt Lake Community College  
May 14, 2026**

IN COLLABORATION WITH



# Welcome to the Utah NASPA Drive-In Conference!

On behalf of the planning committee, Vanessa Ruelas and I (Daniel DeWitt) would like to thank you for taking the time to attend this year's Utah NASPA Drive-In Conference at Salt Lake Community College. We are grateful for your continued contributions to higher education, student affairs, and—most importantly—the students we serve.

NASPA is proud to bring student affairs professionals together from across functional areas and institutions to learn from one another, grow professionally, and build meaningful connections through conferences held nationwide. We were honored to collaborate with dedicated teams from across the state to plan this event and demonstrate what it truly means to be Better Together.

We recognize that our work is demanding and that each of us balances full schedules, quick turnarounds, and busy lives beyond the workplace. We selected this year's conference theme to reflect the collective nature of our profession—our work is strengthened through collaboration, mutual support, and shared purpose, both professionally and personally.

Throughout the day, we encourage you to connect with colleagues—meet someone new, introduce yourself, and share how you support the mission, vision, and values of your institution and the students you serve. While we hope today is informative, our greatest goal is for you to leave feeling seen, heard, and affirmed as a professional through the connections you build.

We are also excited to celebrate a significant milestone this year: we more than doubled last year's number of program proposals. This achievement would not have been possible without the dedication and generosity of the teams who supported the planning and implementation of this conference. We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who made today possible.

We hope you enjoy the conference and the opportunity to learn, connect, and grow together.



*Daniel DeWitt*  
*NASPA Co-Chair*



*Vanessa Ruelas*  
*NASPA Co-Chair*

### **NASPA Planning/Implementation Team:**

Rachel Lund (UVU)

Tino Diaz (WGU)

Portia Anderson (UofU)

Madison McBride (SUU)

Jatara Greenidge (UofU)

Krystin Deschamps (USU)

Richard Duncan (UofU)

Bryce Williams (UofU)

### **SLCC Logistics Team**

Charity Maeda

Renée Mixco

Lyenna Kemp

Patricio Dominguez

Richard Diaz

Samantha Faupula

Kenny Quintanilla

Shelly Edwards

Pam Wallace

Connie Lemon

Shanalee Sadler

Christina Souknarong

Bonnie Ogden

Bracken Coons

# AGENDA



THURSDAY 05.14.2026  
4600 S REDWOOD RD,  
TAYLORSVILLE, UT 84123

**STC 201  
OAK ROOM**

8:30–9:00 AM Networking Breakfast  
9:00–9:20 AM Conference Opening & Welcome  
9:20–10:10 AM Keynote Address

**10:20–11:05 AM Breakout Session I**

**STC 207 & 213**

From Volume to Value: A Better Together Approach  
to Redesigning Career Fairs  
*Sharifa Harrigan*

Better Together: A Candid Discussion with Utah's  
Vice Presidents

***Moderator: Rachel Aho–University of Utah***  
***Panelists: Lori McDonald–University of Utah***  
***Kris Winter–Utah State University***  
***Jared Tippets–Southern Utah University***  
***Cody Branch–Snow College***  
***Ali Threet–Weber State University***

**STC 130C/A**

**STC 023  
(DEN 1)**

Fostering a Conflict – Positive Work Culture  
*Michael Blake*

**STC 025  
(DEN 2)**

Building Campus Partnerships with Financial Aid:  
A Bridge to Student Success  
*Jodi Chowen & Sarah Christoffersen*

**Navigating New Realities in Higher Education: Adapting to Organizational  
Changes and Maintaining a Focus on Student Support Amidst Evolving  
Landscapes.**

**STC 207 & 213** Better Together: Cultivating Student Wellbeing Through Community and Food Recovery  
*R. Giselle Bandley*

**STC 130C/A** Better Together: How a Cross–Campus Behavioral Intervention Team Strengthens Student Care  
*Moderator: Jose Rodriguez Hernandez–Director of Student Support & Assistant Dean of Students, SLCC*  
*Panelists: Jody Katz–Director of Accessibility and Disability Services, SLCC*  
*Anastasia Morgan– General Counsel, SLCC*  
*Andy Campbell– Deputy Director for Public Safety, SLCC*

**STC 023 (DEN 1)** From Idea to Impact: A Collaborative Framework for Workforce–Aligned Program Development  
*Tino Diaz & Joel Greenup*

**STC 025 (DEN 2)** Curiosity Creates Connection: Building Stronger Partnerships Together  
*McKade Christensen*

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**STC 201 OAK ROOM** 12:20–1:30 PM Lunch

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Information on Knowledge Communities will be provided during lunch.

**STC 207 & 213**      The Darkside of Mentorship: Research and Tips to Adequately Support Staff for Meaningful Mentorship  
***Ammon Hoike Harris***

**STC 130C/A**      Student Affairs Professionals' Experiences with Anti-DEI Legislation in Utah  
***Chris Linder–University of Utah***  
***Paul Rubin–University of Utah***  
***Cassie Zamora Cathcart–University of Utah***  
***Tanasia Valdez–University of Utah***

**STC 023**      Yes and...  
**(DEN 1)**      ***Spencer Bitner***

**STC 025**      SLCC Student Success Pipeline: Engaging Students From Access to Post-Graduation  
**(DEN 2)**      ***Josh Samson–SLCC Bridge Coordinator***  
***Lisa Molina–SLCC High School PACE Program***  
***Erin Stirling–SLCC Student Success Program Director***

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**STC 201**      2:45–3:30 pm Closing Remarks and  
**Oak Room**      **NASPA Drawing**

# OUR KEYNOTE

## Dr. Jessica Darnell Brazell-Brayboy

*Vice President for Student Affairs and Athletics*

*Westminster University*

Dr. Jessica Darnell Brazell-Brayboy is a seasoned university administrator with a robust portfolio in student affairs administration, experiential learning, global education partnerships, and university operations. Before higher education, she began her career doing conflict zone work in Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo in 2001. There, African college students, and hopefuls, graciously became the Socratic teachers who challenged her to question how culture, relationships, resources, and events contribute to the university student experience.

As Vice President of Student Affairs and Athletics at Westminster University, Jessica's work approach is decidedly student-centered and practical. It must support student success, and it must further the great experiment of democracy. Her leadership style has been shaped by working with university students and higher education professionals in the US, east Africa, and Haiti.

Jessica believes in the power of becoming. It is becoming that draws students to our institutions. It is the good work and joyful work we support students through. And it is what ties us as individuals to the greater story arc of humanity. It is evolution. And evolution is mandatory.



**WESTMINSTER  
UNIVERSITY**

# PRESENTERS

## Breakout Session I

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**Sharifa Harrigan,**  
Salt Lake  
Communiticy  
College

### **From Volume to Value: A Better Together Approach to Redesigning Career Fairs**

This session explores the shift from large scale career fairs to smaller, and more intentional events that better align with students academic and career goals. The goal is to learn how a Better Together approach to collaboration can create more meaningful connections and improves student outcomes.

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Moderator: Rachel Aho  
University of Utah

### **Better Together: A Candid Discussion with Utha's Vice Presidents**

Panelists:

Lori McDonald,  
University of Utah  
Kris Winter, Utah State  
University  
Jared Tippets, Southern  
Utah University,  
Cody Brand, Snow  
College  
Ali Threet, Weber State  
University

Join us for a candid panel conversation among Utah Vice Presidents for Student Affairs. Panelists will discuss current trends, leadership challenges, career pathways, collaboration, and innovation opportunities in our state. The session includes audience Q&A and highlights how partnership and collegiality help leaders navigate change and advance student success together.

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**Michael Blake,**  
Southern Utah  
University

### **Fostering a Conflict - Positive Work Culture**

This interactive workshop helps attendees approach conflict with confidence and clarity. Learn how to create a team culture where open dialogue is encouraged, trust is built, and disagreement leads to better collaboration. Discover practical tools to turn everyday tension into opportunities for growth, stronger relationships, and more effective teamwork.

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**Jodi Chown &  
Sarah  
Christofferson,**  
Ensign College

### **Building Campus Partnerships with Financial Aid: A Bridge to Student Success**

Explores how financial aid offices can expand their impact by partnering with departments and faculty who have historically had limited interactions with aid services, to reach more students and strengthen retention, persistence, and graduation.

# PRESENTERS

## Breakout Session II

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**R. Giselle Bandley,**  
Utah State University

### **Better Together: Cultivating Student Wellbeing Through Community and Food Recovery**

Explore how Utah State's Christensen Office of Service and Sustainability (COSAS), within the Center for Community Engagement, engages students through six initiatives—featuring Harvest Rescue—to foster wellbeing, community connection, and lifelong active citizenship while addressing food waste and food access.

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**Moderator:** Jose Rodriguez Hernandez—Director of Student Support & Assistant Dean of Students, SLCC

**Panelists:** Jody Katz—Director of Accessibility and Disability Services, SLCC, Anastasia Morgan—General Counsel, SLCC, Andy Campbell—Deputy Director for Public Safety, SLCC

### **Better Together: How a Cross-Campus Behavioral Intervention Team Strengthens Student Care**

At SLCC, the Behavioral Intervention Team is a living example of collaboration in practice. This panel highlights how cross-functional partnerships within BIT allow professionals to respond thoughtfully and effectively to students of concern while balancing care, accountability, and institutional responsibility.

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**Tino Diaz & Joel Greenup**  
Western Governors University

### **From Idea to Impact: A Collaborative Framework for Workforce-Aligned Program Development**

Student affairs programs should reflect real workforce needs — but building them often lacks structure and cross-functional alignment. This session introduces a tested governance framework for co-iterating with partners and capturing workforce demand signals, giving practitioners a practical, collaborative model for designing programs that are relevant, responsive, and strategically aligned.

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**McKade Christensen,**  
Utah Valley University

### **Curiosity Creates Connection: Building Stronger Partnerships Together**

This interactive session explores curiosity as a learnable skill that strengthens collaboration and connection. Participants will practice using names, asking thoughtful questions, and listening with intention to build stronger partnerships and enhance collective impact in student affairs work.

# PRESENTERS

## Breakout Session III

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**Ammon Hoike  
Harris,  
Southern Utah  
University**

### **The Darkside of Mentorship: Research and Tips to Adequately Support Staff for Meaningful Mentorship**

Mentorship is paramount to everything we do, but without proper training, it can do more harm than good. This session uses Kram's Mentor Role Theory and Chickering's 7 Vectors to map the mentorship arc, expose the ego traps staff fall into, and offer practical skills to mentor students more effectively.

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**Chris Linder-  
University of Utah,  
Paul Rubin-  
University of Utah,  
Cassie Zamora  
Cathcart-  
University of Utah,  
Tanasia Valdez-  
University of Utah**

### **Student Affairs Professionals' Experiences with Anti-DEI Legislation in Utah**

In this session, we examine how institutional compliance with anti-DEI legislation impacted student services professionals in Utah. Through 29 interviews with impacted professionals, participants highlighted experiencing institutional gas-lighting, including managing up and fearing losing their jobs, and engaging in unpaid labor to fill gaps left by the discontinuation of DEI programming. We will explore implications for administrators and student affairs professionals facing similar efforts to thwart DEI efforts on their campuses.

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**Spencer Bitner,  
Utah State  
University**

### **Yes, and...**

Yes, and... Student success on campus usually boils down to one thing, relationships. Don't get caught in silo-building or stuck on an island within your work group. This is a riff on how using the first rule of improv comedy. "Yes, and..." will help you become engaging and empowering when working with campus partners.

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**Josh Samson-SLCC  
Bridge Coordinator,  
Lisa Molina-SLCC  
High School PACE  
Program,  
Erin Stirling-SLCC  
Studnet Success  
Program Director**

### **SLCC Student Success Pipeline: Engaging Students From Access to Post-Graduation**

The SLCC Student Success Pipeline is a cross-functional program coordinating support at key transition points from high school through completion. Participants will learn the pathway, strategies, successes, challenges, and next steps, leaving with actionable insights on leveraging existing programs into a student-centered powerhouse through collaboration.

# PARTICIPATING UNIVERSITIES

2026 NASPA UT Drive-In Conference

SLCC | TAYLORSVILLE, UTAH | May 14, 2026



UtahStateUniversity



NIGHTINGALE  
COLLEGE

UVU UTAH VALLEY  
UNIVERSITY.

Salt Lake  
Community College



WEBER STATE  
UNIVERSITY

THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF UTAH®



SUU SOUTHERN  
UTAH  
UNIVERSITY



SNOW COLLEGE



Joyce  
UNIVERSITY



WESTMINSTER  
UNIVERSITY

WGU WESTERN GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY

