

WELCOME

Creating a Pathway for Leadership and a Network for the Future



BROTHERHOOD SISTERHOOD LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

March 29, 2025 | 9:00am - 3:00pm

Multipurpose Gymnasium, Gene J. and Julianne DeFeudis Wellness Center
Worcester State University, 486 Chandler Street, Worcester, MA 01602

Sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs



Message from Worcester State University President Barry Maloney

Dear Participants,

Welcome to the 2025 Brotherhood and Sisterhood Leadership Conference!

A collaborative effort between the Young Men's Group and the Women's Circle of Worcester State University's Office of Multicultural Affairs, the conference offers a supportive and inclusive environment that fosters personal growth and community engagement.

We leverage the diversity of the vibrant city of Worcester in order to provide a unique and enriching experience. Through various workshops and activities, the goal is to empower all attendees, particularly first-generation and ALANA/BIPOC high school and college students, on their educational journeys.

Many have found inspiration in this experience and insights from successful community and university members. As an attendee of this conference, you will find practical skills and mentorship opportunities, which will motivate and guide you towards your own personal and professional achievements.

Here at Worcester State University, programs such as Alternatives for Individual Development and Upward Bound support first-generation and historically underserved students on their academic journeys. In addition, a large percentage of our students receive federal and state financial aid, and we offer additional financial assistance through many scholarships. We also provide academic excellence at an affordable price compared to many other universities. Under our new ValuePlus program, we are free for families earning \$75,000 or less. Additionally, our graduates have found that our signature MajorPlus academic framework, which entails earning two majors or a major and a minor, helps them compete in the job market or further their education.

Whether Worcester State is part of your personal plan or not, this conference will support you on your collegiate journey and help you lead with confidence and compassion. We look forward to seeing the impact you will have!

Sincerely,



President Barry Maloney





Office of Multicultural Affairs' Mission:

Our mission is to provide access, retention services, and graduate first generation, low income, and/or ALANA/BIPOC (African-American, Latinx, Asian, Native American, Black Indigenous, and People of Color) students. By taking a comprehensive and holistic approach, our focus is on our students' academic, personal, social, and financial adjustment and development. To learn more about our programs such as the Alternatives for Individual Development, Upward Bound Program, Multicultural Programming, Young Men's Group, Women's Circle, Brotherhood/Sisterhood Leadership Conference, and more, visit our website at www.worcester.edu/oma

Brotherhood Sisterhood Leadership Conference Purpose:

Our mission is to uplift and empower our high school students, college students, professionals, educators, and community leaders by affirming their experiences, engaging in team building workshops, building upon their own identity and knowledge of self, and enhancing their connection to a network of first generation and/or ALANA/BIPOC community.

Our overall goal is to increase our network to assist in access, retention, and graduation of our first-generation, low income, and/or ALANA/BIPOC students in their journey to higher learning.

Together we can examine, model, and transform this experience into a stronger brotherhood and sisterhood of excellence.



Thank You to our Fiscal Co-Sponsor

The Multicultural Wellness Center is a fiscal cosponsor of the Brotherhood/Sisterhood Leadership Conference through funding by the Department of Public Health.

Multicultural Wellness Center's Mission:

The Multicultural Wellness Center (MWC) is a mental health clinic founded in 2005 by Dr. Debra Maddox, Psy., D., WSU Class of '82. The mission of MWC is to provide mental health services to diverse communities who have historically been underserved and underrepresented in the mental health field.

The Department of Public Health - DVIP's Mission:

The Department of Public Health's Division of Violence and Injury Prevention programs and initiatives focuses on preventing youth violence overall with an emphasis on preventing specific type of violence that include identity-motivated violence, weapon-related violence, bullying and harassment, suicide and self harm, and the high-risk individual and community factors associated with youth violence.



Thank You to the Worcester State University's Brotherhood Sisterhood Leadership Conference Committee

Laxmi Bissoondial, Office of Multicultural Affairs

Dr. Alex Briesacher, Department of Sociology

Kirsh Donis, Admissions Office

Telese Forbes, Graduate Admissions

Dr. Aldo Garcia-Guevara, Department of History
and Political Science and
Department of Interdisciplinary Studies

Robert Jennings, Office of Multicultural Affairs

Ian Juarez, Upward Bound Program, Office of
Multicultural Affairs

Eriberto Mora Carrera, Office of Multicultural
Affairs

Dr. Edgar Moros, Office of Inclusive Excellence
and Belonging

Thuong Nguyen, Office of Multicultural Affairs

Dr. Alison Okuda, Department of History and
Political Science

Carla Orellana, Gambling Prevention Program,
Office of University and Community Engagement

Dr. Naida Saavedra, Department of World
Languages

Dr. Marc Wagoner, Department of Psychology

Tayla Weeden, Office of Multicultural Affairs

Kafiya Abdirahman, Office of Multicultural
Affairs
Psychology Major, Class of 2027

Jacari Allen Daniels, Office of Multicultural
Affairs
Computer Science Major, Class of 2028

Ahlani Cummings, Office of Multicultural
Affairs
Nursing Major, Class of 2028

Sarah Da Silva, Office of Multicultural Affairs
Psychology Major, Class of 2027

Eva Diaz, Office of Multicultural Affairs
Sociology and Urban Studies Major, Class of 2027

Zahra Foladi, Office of Multicultural Affairs
Business Administration Major, Class of 2027

Disha Khanna, Student Conference Chair, Office
of Multicultural Affairs
Biology Major, Class of 2025

Victoria Nascimento, Office of Multicultural
Affairs
Psychology Major, Class of 2026



Thank You to our Co-Sponsors

Office of the President

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Undergraduate Admissions

Graduate Admissions

Multicultural Affairs Alumni Council

Alumni Association's Advisory Board

Office of Development and Alumni Relations

Office of Inclusive Excellence and Belonging

History and Political Science Department

Sociology Department

World Languages Department

Biology Department

Visual and Performing Arts Department

Interdisciplinary Studies Department

Office of University and Community Engagement

Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Problem Gambling Services

The Multicultural Wellness Center





Conference Agenda

8:00am - 9:00am	Registration and Continental Breakfast <i>Multipurpose Gymnasium, Wellness Center</i>
9:10am	Opening Address: Manasseh Konadu, Esq. Assistant Attorney General, Illinois State Attorney General's Office, (WSU Class 2019) Guest Speakers: Lamont Robinson , Alderman for the 4th Ward in Chicago City Council Paul A. McAllister , DMin, PhD, Founder/President-Global Leaders in Unity and Evolvment (GLUE)
10:00am - 11:00am	Workshop Session I <i>Sullivan Academic Center, First Floor</i>
11:10am - 12:10pm	Workshop Session II <i>Sullivan Academic Center, First Floor</i>
12:10pm - 12:15pm	Visit THE SNACK SHACK <i>Sullivan Academic Center, First Floor, Sullivan Commons</i>
12:25pm - 1:25pm	Workshop Session III <i>Sullivan Academic Center, First Floor</i>
1:30pm - 3:00pm	Luncheon and Alumni Panel Presentation (starts at 2pm) <i>Multipurpose Gymnasium, Wellness Center</i> <u>Alumni Panel Moderated by: Kimberly Salmon</u> , Assistant Vice President, The Hanover Insurance Group <u>Guest Speakers:</u> Melanie Bonsu , Community Relations Manager, Saint-Gobain Abrasives Sheldon Hollins , Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, Community Health Center Joseph Corazzini , Vice President for Government and Community Affairs, Clark University Nana Darkwa, Esq. , Associate, ArentFox Schiff Cynthia Romero, Esq. , Co-Founder/Managing Partner, Heirloom Law
3:00pm.	Closing Remarks <i>Multipurpose Gymnasium, Wellness Center</i>

Opening Address: Visions of Progress 9:00am - 9:50am

Mistress of Ceremony: **Jeromah Kamara**, Mistress of Ceremony

Moderator: **Manasseh Konadu, Esq.** Assistant Attorney General, Illinois State

Guest Speakers: **Lamont Robinson**, Alderman for the 4th Ward in Chicago City Council

Paul A. McAllister, DMin, PhD, Founder/President-Global Leaders in Unity and Evolvment (GLUE)

Mistress of Ceremony: Jermoh Kamara



Jermoh Kamara is a public health practitioner, City of Worcester 2024 Woman of Consequence awardee, and former elected official who served on the Worcester School Committee. She is also the proud Co-founder and President of the Massachusetts Organization of African Descendants (MOAD). In her role at MOAD, Jermoh works to bring all members of the African community, the business,

non-profit, ethnic organizations, religious institution, individuals, documented or undocumented, together as a collective coalition to build a strong advocacy platform, to build our economic and social capacities, thereby advancing the agenda of the African community in Massachusetts to prosper.

Jermoh has taught courses in Social Science Research for project-based learning at Worcester Polytechnic Institute and a course in Special Topics: Behavioral and Social Factors in Public Health at Clark University. Jermoh earned her BS in Health Policy and Management with a BA in Community Health; and Master's in Public Health, and is a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES).

Moderator: Manasseh Konadu Esq.



Manasseh Konadu is a Worcester, Massachusetts' native, a 2019 graduate of Worcester State University, and a 2021 graduate of the University of Massachusetts-School of Law School. Additionally, he secured a certificate in Entrepreneurship in 2020 from the Harvard Business School. Mr. Konadu is a tireless advocate for social justice and is dedicated to the betterment of all communities.

Manasseh Konadu is an accomplished legal professional serving as an Assistant Attorney General in Chicago, Illinois. In this role, he is dedicated to upholding justice and advocating for the public interest.

Before his tenure with the Attorney General's office, Manasseh gained valuable experience as an Assistant State Attorney in Cook County, Illinois, where he honed his skills in legal analysis and prosecution.

Manasseh's academic journey includes a notable athletic career at Worcester State University in Massachusetts. As a sprinter for the university's track and field team, he demonstrated discipline and commitment, achieving personal bests in events such as the 100 meters and 200 meters.

Beyond his professional and athletic endeavors, he is actively engaged in community initiatives and thought leadership including his role as Wellness Chair within the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. and many more community and organizational engagements.

At this conference, he brings a wealth of legal expertise, a history of public service, and a passion for fostering meaningful discussions.



Lamont J. Robinson Jr., a lifelong Chicagoan, has dedicated his career to public service, business, education, and youth mentorship. In May 2023, he was elected as the Alderman of Chicago's 4th Ward, which encompasses parts of the Douglas, Kenwood, and Near South Side neighborhoods. In this role, Alderman Robinson is committed to enhancing public safety, promoting responsible economic

development, and ensuring responsive city services for all residents.

Before his tenure as Alderman, Robinson served as the State Representative for Illinois' 5th District from January 2019 to May 2023. During this period, he was a tireless advocate for his constituents, securing funding for critical infrastructure projects and social services. His legislative work included chairing committees on Cybersecurity, Data Analytics, and IT, as well as Tourism.

Robinson's professional background is rooted in entrepreneurship and education. He is the owner of two Allstate insurance agencies and has served as an adjunct professor at various City Colleges of Chicago campuses. Additionally, he was the Executive Director of the Kappa Leadership Institute Chicago, a program dedicated to preparing young men for collegiate success and beyond.

A proud product of Chicago's educational system, Robinson earned his bachelor's degree in business marketing from Clark Atlanta University in 2004 and an MBA from National Louis University. In 2019, he furthered his education by completing Harvard Kennedy School's program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government as a David Bohnett Leadership Fellow.

Robinson's commitment to community extends beyond his professional endeavors. He has been an active member of several boards, including the Quad Communities Development Corporation and the Urban League Metro Board. Notably, he made history as the first openly LGBTQ African-American individual to serve in the Illinois legislature, reflecting his dedication to representation and inclusivity.

Residing in Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood, Alderman Robinson continues to champion the needs of his community, focusing on creating safer neighborhoods, fostering economic growth, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents.



Rev. Dr. Paul A. McAllister (DMin, PhD) is Founder and President of Global Leaders in Unity and Evolvement (GLUE), a think tank established in 2016 that develops and advocates policy solutions on matters related to global economic disparity, emerging technologies, conflict and war, and trends towards nationalism in international governments. He has traveled extensively, and he has

published multiple policy briefs in the areas of Peace, Governance, and Security, and Science and Digitalization, and Artificial Intelligence as a member of global task forces for the Think7 and Think20, the official policy engagements organizations for the G7 and G20, and spoken at think tank summits in Africa, South America, the Middle East, Europe, and the United States.

A former commissioned officer in the United States Army, from 1996 to 2014, he was an electrical engineering adjunct professor, and managed numerous projects as a systems research and development engineer within the Fortune 100 automotive, military defense and transportation sectors with the federal government. Also an ordained minister in the Church of God (HQ: Anderson, Indiana), he has served as senior pastor of three congregations in Boston, MA ('96); Richmond, VA (2010-'12); and Chapel Hill, NC (2014-'16), and is a member of the Theology Task Force of the Inter-religious Convening Table and also the Faith and Order Convening Table of the National Council of Churches. His recent scholarship includes having written two separate NCC book chapters, "White Supremacy and Ongoing Violence," and "The Council of Nicaea in an Age of Ceasefire." As state chair of the NC Democratic Party Interfaith Caucus, he is a member of the State Executive Committee, and is a member of the cohort of Bonhoeffer Senior Fellows in the Miller Center of Inter-religious Learning and Leadership of Hebrew College in Newton, Massachusetts.



Getting Out of 25K of Debt: The Concepción Story

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*104

Workshop Description: Are you ready to take control of your debt without the stress and overwhelm? In this workshop, we'll explore effective, smart strategies for becoming debt-free—without working harder or sacrificing more than necessary. Drawing from personal experience, I'll share the debt resolution methods that worked for my family and me, and the positive impact becoming debt-free has had on our lives. You'll hear real stories and gain practical tools that will empower you to manage debt confidently today, while avoiding common mistakes that can keep you stuck in the future.

Theme(s): Financial Skills, Knowledge, Prosperity & Development

Type of Workshop: Workshop Presentation, Interactive/Experiential

Target Audience: College/University Students, Educators/Professionals/Community

Benjamin Concepción

Career Development Staff, Worcester State University



Ben is a first-generation Dominican-American. His hustle is to learn how to build wealth and teach it as much as possible. He has supported his parents to get rid of \$25k in debt, bought his first multifamily investment home after a patient 2 years of saving/searching. Additionally, he has coached and taught workshops on personal money management ever since!

Information he can apply to

achieve his goals is his driver. Effective feedback is his love language. Let's connect, build, and get this money.

Rooted for Greatness: Embracing Identity and Purpose

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*103

Workshop Description: This reflective and interactive workshop invites participants to explore the power of identity and purpose as cornerstones for success. Attendees will delve into the connection between self-awareness and personal growth, discovering how their unique stories, values, and experiences shape their path forward. Through guided discussions, activities, and real-world examples, participants will learn how to embrace their authenticity while staying rooted in their community. The session emphasizes the importance of purpose-driven leadership, fostering resilience, and building meaningful connections to navigate challenges and achieve greatness.

Theme(s): Spirituality

Type of Workshop: Workshop Presentation

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience

Jordan Bankston

Founder and CEO, Forever Kings Inc.



Jordan A. Bankston is a Cincinnati, Ohio native. As the Founder and CEO of Forever Kings Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Jordan identified a critical gap in resources and support for young men of color. His transformative work has garnered widespread recognition, including the prestigious Cincinnati Business Courier's "40 Under 40" award in 2021, along with numerous other accolades.

In addition to his nonprofit work, Jordan leads Bankston Enterprises LLC, a family-owned business that operates a successful Menchie's Frozen Yogurt franchise in Fairfield, Ohio. Before launching Forever Kings, Jordan spent over a decade working with youth in urban environments, holding leadership positions with the Cincinnati Recreation Commission and The Greater Cincinnati Boys & Girls Club. Jordan's educational background includes a degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Cincinnati, and he is currently pursuing a graduate degree in Educational Leadership and Administration. Jordan's academic pursuits, leadership, vision, and unwavering commitment to serving others continue to leave an indelible mark on his community.

Journey to Health

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*106

Workshop Description: Journey to Health explores the transformative path toward holistic well-being for future leaders. This session offers practical tools and strategies for nurturing mindset, physical, and spiritual health, empowering participants to lead with authenticity, purpose, and confidence while fostering strength in themselves and their communities.

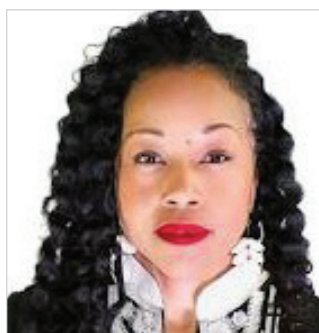
Theme(s): Wellness and Mental Health, Skills and Mindset, Spirituality

Type of Workshop: Workshop Presentation

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

Athena Callender, MBA

Founder and Creator, Restoring Wealth and Wellness



Athena Callender, MBA is a Visionary Leader, Certified Holistic Lifestyle & Business Strategist, wife, mother and grandmother. She is a Plant-Based Expert & Member of the Hassanamisco Nipmuc Tribe. She is the Founder of Restoring Wealth & Wellness and Licensed Agent with Globe Life. She has over 25-years of corporate sales executive leadership experience spanning multiple industries in retail banking, insurance, investments & HIT. Athena has earned multiple 6-figures and has a track record of leading, inspiring and training world class teams. Athena is on a soul-inspired mission to help aspiring leaders reach their zenith potential & create wholistic freedom based legacies. She works within the BIPOC community providing transformational programs, seminars, retreats & workshops to build generational wealth.

Favorite Quote: If you feed a man a fish you feed him for a day. If you Teach a Man to Fish you Feed him for a Lifetime – Lao Tzu

Drumming for Health and Healing: How Music Teaches Community-Building Skills

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*126

Workshop Description: This workshop explores global drumming traditions as a means of fostering community, mutual respect, and collaboration. Through theoretical discussion and hands-on bucket drumming exercises, participants will develop skills in teamwork, adaptability, and interpersonal fluency, gaining insight into how music-making strengthens relationships and promotes harmony in both personal and professional settings.

Theme(s): Wellness and Mental Health, Skills and Mindset

Type of Workshop: Workshop Presentation, Interactive/Experiential

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

Dr. Carlos Odria, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Music and Interdisciplinary Arts, Worcester State University



Carlos Odria, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Music and Interdisciplinary Arts at Worcester State University. He specializes in modern guitar performance, world music, jazz, and ethnomusicology and is the founder of Musica!, WSU's first Latin American ensemble. His research examines the intersections of music-making, innovation, and bodily practice, with publications in Ethnomusicology, Latin American Music Review, and Ethnomusicology Forum, among others. He has also contributed a chapter to The Oxford Handbook of Musical Repatriation. Odria has been a guest speaker at institutions including Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas, Middlebury College, and the University of Oregon.



Overcoming The Savior Complex and Working “With” Communities

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*105

Workshop Description: How do you become a leader while being a part of the community? How can you work ‘with’ people as opposed to work ‘for’ people? How do you overcome the savior complex and engage in solidarity building?

Theme(s): Leadership, Social Justice

Type of Workshop: Interactive/Experiential

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

Dr. Nafisa Nipun Tanjeem Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Worcester State University



Nafisa Nipun Tanjeem (she/her) is an educator, researcher, writer, and activist. Nafisa’s research and teaching interests include transnational, postcolonial, and decolonial feminisms; critical race theory; globalization and feminist politics; and transnational social justice movements with a specific focus on the United States and South Asia. Nafisa has been actively involved in community organiz-

ing and social justice activism. She is an organizer of the Meye (“Woman” in Bangla) network and the Feminist Alliance of Bangladesh – both of whom are voluntary, grassroots, and organic networks advocating for feminist solidarity and organizing in Bangladesh. Nafisa recognizes the value of public scholarship and contributes to many local and international platforms, such as Common Dreams, Jamhoo, the Daily Star, New Age, Prothom Alo, Thotkata, and Bama.

Crossing the Chasm: Navigating Growth as an Entrepreneur

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*101

Workshop Description: Emmanuel Larbi will share his journey of scaling Akra LLC from a startup to a thriving business. He explores key challenges in moving from early adopters to the mainstream market, overcoming financial and operational hurdles, and building a lasting brand. This presentation will offer actionable insights for aspiring en-trepreneurs.

Theme(s): Leadership, Career Exploration and Development, Financial Skills, Knowledge, Prosperity and Development.

Type of Workshop: Lecture Style

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

Emmanuel Larbi



Emmanuel Larbi is a Worcester-based entrepreneur and founder of Ākra LLC, which operates Ākra Eatery & Juice Bar at the Worcester Public Market. Born in Accra, Ghana, he immigrated to the U.S. in 2002 and later earned a biology degree from Assumption University before completing Harvard’s business analytics program. He initially worked as a cancer researcher at Tufts Medical Center

before transitioning into the food industry. Through Ākra LLC, Emmanuel blends West African flavors with modern dining, creating a cultural and culinary hub. Committed to community development, he collaborates with Worcester State University, and serves on the boards of the Edward M. Kennedy Health Center and Assumption University. Recognized in Worcester Business Journal’s 40 Under Forty, Emmanuel is passionate about fostering entrepreneurship and cultural exchange. His work continues to shape Worcester’s business and food landscape while supporting local economic growth and inclusivity.



From Microaggressions to Microresistance: A Restorative Practice

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*108

Workshop Description: This workshop will explore concepts from the Microaggression Triangle Model, a model that was developed to support BIPOC medical students experiencing microaggressions at their medical school. This model looks at acts of microaggressions from 3 varying perspectives: the Recipient, the Source and the By-stander. Participants will also learn and discuss restorative and resistant practices they can use to de-escalate microaggressions from the 3 perspectives.

Theme(s): Wellness and Mental Health

Type of Workshop: Lecture, Interactive/Experiential

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

Lisa Maddox

Director of Business Development and Community Outreach, Multicultural Wellness Center (MWC)



Lisa Maddox joined MWC in August of 2019. She comes to MWC with 16 years of working experience in the Worcester Public Schools as a School Adjustment and Guidance Counselor, Community Liaison and Social Emotional Learning district trainer. Lisa has a B.S. in Urban Studies (concentration: Health and Human Services), a M.A. in Social Rehabilitation and Counseling

and a C.A.G.S. in Special Education from Assumption (College) University. In addition, Lisa coordinates and facilitates a black-identity, social emotional youth development group for BIPOC youth between the ages of 13-17 utilizing culture as a protective factor. She has facilitated various trainings for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health regarding the following topics: Healing in the Discomfort of Racial Trauma, Identity-based Biases, Trauma and Healing and Using Micro-resistance to Combat Microaggressions.

Elevate Your Lifestyle on a Budget: from Population Health to Personal Health

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*107

Workshop Description: This workshop will review the multicultural Population Health work funded by UMass Memorial HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital that SproutChange has developed addressing chronic diseases, mental health, healthy aging, and more! Thanks to this social impact work, SproutChange attendees experienced an 82.7% increase in knowledge. We will also have an opportunity to experience in this presentation, highlights of SproutChange's most popular Population Health workshop – DIY ("Do It Yourself") Cultured Vegetables: Increase Immunity, Mitigate Stress, & Support a Healthy Gut-Brain Connection!

Theme(s): Wellness and Mental Health, Knowledge

Type of Workshop: Lecture, Interactive/Experiential

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

Priscila Espinosa

President and CEO, SproutChange



Priscila Espinosa, from Clinton, Massachusetts, is a 2nd generation Population Health Educator, Coach, Project Manager, Inventor, Herbalist, and Speaker whose emerging Nonprofit, SproutChange, Inc., started as a hashtag in February 2016 to influence a grassroots advocacy movement in consumer education around Alternative Medicine, Organic Agriculture, Sustainability, and Social/Food Justice.

Priscila is a graduate of Worcester State University with a degree in Sociology, French Minor, and Concentrations in Spanish and Italian, certified in Lifestyle Coaching in Food as Medicine, Herbs, Massage Therapy, & Organic Farming from Eden Valley Institute, Permaculture Design from Daniel Garcia International, Nonprofit Lobbying & Advocacy from the University of Notre Dame: Mendoza College of Business, and a scholarship awardee for dual MBA/MS degree in Human Factors in Information Design from Bentley University.



The Mask We Wear: Exploring Identity and Emotional Expression

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*110

Workshop Description: A hands-on workshop where participants create and reflect on symbolic masks to explore their public and private selves. Through creative activities, group sharing, and discussions, the workshop fosters self-awareness, vulnerability, and connection, encouraging participants to embrace authenticity and emotional expression.

Theme(s): Wellness and Mental Health

Type of Workshop: Interactive/Experiential

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

Dejour Hollins

Coordinator of Student Engagement, Identity & Belonging, Massachusetts Bay Community College



Dejour Hollins was Born in Dorchester Massachusetts and is a graduate of Worcester State University. During his time at Worcester State, he held several leadership positions including being a Resident Assistant, Upward Bound Residential Counselor and President of TWA (now known as the Intercultural Student Alliance). Since graduating in 2020, Dejour has dedicated his professional life

to empowering students at a variety of different levels including working as a 7th grade ELA teacher and career counselor for high school students. Currently Dejour is the Coordinator of Student Engagement, Identity & Belonging at Massachusetts Bay Community College where he continues to support students through advocacy, empowerment and social events related to diversity, equity & Inclusion. Dejour will be completed with his M.E.d. in Community Engagement this upcoming May.

Moving Out & Living on Your Own

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*106

Workshop Description: The session covers renting essentials, budgeting, savings planning, credit profiles, and insurance types. It emphasizes understanding expenses, creating a budget and savings plan, tracking financial health, and maintaining good credit.

Theme(s): Financial Skills, Knowledge, Prosperity and Development

Type of Workshop: Workshop Presentation, Interactive/Experiential

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

MAJ(Retired) Ellis J. Cropper MBA, ChFC, CLTC

Founder of Financial Education Advocacy



Retired Army Major and MFEC Advisory Board Member Ellis Cropper, earned an MBA from Nichols College in 2024, and holds the Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC®) and Certified Long-Term Care (CLTC®) designators. He has worked as a financial professional for New York Life since 2018. Originally hailing from Louisiana, Ellis earned his BS in Biology with concentrations in Nuclear

Medicine Technology from Worcester State University in 1996. His 34-year career in the U.S. Army included 20 years of active service plus the honor of serving as an Assistant Professor of Military Science at Widener and Villanova Universities. My passion for teaching financial literacy is born out of that concept of freedom. Empowering financial well-being for all.

Exploring Career Options in the Life Sciences

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*101

Workshop Description: In this session, the Chair of the Worcester State University Biology Department will discuss the many possible careers in the life sciences (including healthcare) and the educational paths leading to those careers. The session will be highly interactive, guided by the interests and questions of the attendees.

Theme(s): Career Exploration and Development

Type of Workshop: Workshop Presentation

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience

Dr. Jennifer Hood-DeGrenier, Ph.D.

Professor and Chair, Worcester State Biology Department



Dr. Jennifer Hood-DeGrenier, Ph.D. is a professor in and the chair of the Biology Department at Worcester State University. Dr. Hood-DeGrenier earned her B.A. in Chemistry at Williams College with a concentration in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. She earned her Ph.D. at Harvard University, studying the mechanisms by which proteins move in and out of the nucleus of cells and has subsequently

conducted research on the role of subcellular localization in control of the cell division cycle and in regulatory changes that promote cancer metastasis. Dr. Hood-DeGrenier teaches courses in introductory cell and molecular biology, genetics, and cancer biology, among others, and has advised students interested in pursuing life sciences and healthcare-related careers for over 20 years.

Strength Within: Cultivating Wellness for a Brighter Tomorrow

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*103

Workshop Description: “Strength Within: Cultivating Wellness for a Brighter Tomorrow” explores practical strategies to prioritize mental wellness, manage stress, and build resilience. Participants will engage in reflective exercises and develop a personalized wellness toolkit to thrive academically, professionally, and personally while fostering a supportive community.

Theme(s): Wellness and Mental Health

Type of Workshop: Workshop Presentation, Lecture, Panel

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

Jordan Bankston

Founder and CEO, Forever Kings Inc.



Jordan A. Bankston is a Cincinnati, Ohio native. As the Founder and CEO of Forever Kings Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Jordan identified a critical gap in resources and support for young men of color. His transformative work has garnered widespread recognition, including the prestigious Cincinnati Business Courier’s “40 Under 40” award in 2021, along with numerous other accolades.

In addition to his nonprofit work, Jordan leads Bankston Enterprises LLC, a family-owned business that operates a successful Menchie’s Frozen Yogurt franchise in Fairfield, Ohio. Before launching Forever Kings, Jordan spent over a decade working with youth in urban environments, holding leadership positions with the Cincinnati Recreation Commission and The Greater Cincinnati Boys & Girls Club. Jordan’s educational background includes a degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Cincinnati, and he is currently pursuing a graduate degree in Educational Leadership and Administration. Jordan’s academic pursuits, leadership, vision, and unwavering commitment to serving others continue to leave an indelible mark on his community.



Community Building Through the Power of Storytelling

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*105

Workshop Description: Storytelling is a powerful tool for building trust, fostering connection, and making sense of shared struggles. Rooted in African, Asian, and Indigenous traditions, storytelling creates space for reflection and healing. Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice embraces this practice to deepen understanding, strengthen community bonds, and inspire collective action against systemic oppression.

Theme(s): Social Justice

Type of Workshop: Interactive/Experiential

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

Anna Johnson

SCIJ's Program Coordinator



Anna Johnson is originally from Liberia. Anna was introduced to SCIJ in 2020 when, as an undergraduate student, she joined SCIJ's first-ever cohort. After completing SCIJ's training, Anna worked with SCIJ's partner attorneys to prepare Country Condition Reports, Affidavits, and I-589s for asylum seekers.

After graduating from Worcester State University where she earned her BA in Sociology and political science, Anna returned to SCIJ as the first-ever Trainer for students at Worcester State University. She then transitioned into the role of Program Coordinator where she has been leading SCIJ's programming work since early 2024.

Jonathan Goldman

Executive Director of the Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice (SCIJ)



Jonathan Goldman was born in Denmark and raised in the U.S., his immigration experience shapes his leadership. Through SCIJ, he has trained 150+ students, 80% of whom are immigrants or first-generation Americans, who have represented 250+ asylum seekers and led organizing campaigns. Previously, he co-founded a Brandeis University program training undergraduates in immigration law, serving 120+ immigrants and accrediting seven students with the Department of Justice. With 10+ years in advocacy, Jonathan has led campaigns across Massachusetts and raised hundreds of thousands for SCIJ, TRII, the Northampton Arts Council, and political initiatives. His expertise spans student recruitment, training, immigration law, organizing, coalition-building, and fundraising. Recognized with awards like Davis Projects for Peace, he is a multilingual, dual-citizen committed to empowering communities and creating systemic change.

Sadia Mansoor

SCIJ Community Organizer



Sadia Mansoor is a community organizer and immigrant justice advocate committed to fostering inclusive spaces. Originally from Pakistan, she taught in Karachi before pursuing a PhD in Economics at Clark University in 2020. Her experiences as an international student fuel her dedication to immigration justice.

From 2021 to 2024, Sadia organized with Worcester Interfaith, leading civic engagement efforts and campaigns on the Driver's License ballot question, Fair Share Act, and MCAS graduation requirement. Trained by Worcester Interfaith and MCAN, she honed skills in relationship-building and inclusive co-training.

Now SCIJ's Lead Community Organizer, she empowers immigrant communities, especially students, to navigate systems and step into leadership. Her PhD dissertation explores the political and social transformations of pre- and post-Columbian North America. Through activism and research, she challenges systems that benefit the few while neglecting marginalized communities, working toward fair and just policies.



Are You Really Winning? A Workshop About Gambling Prevention

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*104

Workshop Description: This workshop will equip youth with the necessary information and skills to understand the risks of gambling, recognize the signs of problem gambling, and develop strategies to make informed decisions to promote their health and well-being. This workshop is part of the Youth Leaders in Gambling Prevention Program, sponsored by the Massachusetts Office of Problem Gambling Services.

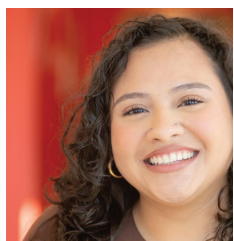
Theme(s): Leadership, Wellness and Mental Health, Financial Skills, Knowledge, Prosperity and Development

Type of Workshop: Workshop Presentation

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

Carla Orellana

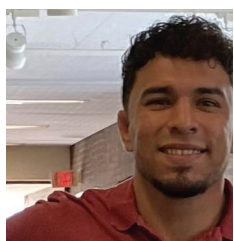
*Director/Project Manager, Gambling Prevention Program,
Worcester State University*



Carla is an experienced community engagement and education professional with expertise in youth development, community-engaged learning, and culturally responsive programming. Carla holds a Master of Education in English as a Second Language and a Bachelor of Science in Public Health from Worcester State University. While at WSU, she worked for the Latino Education Institute developing and implementing programs for youth. She is passionate about educational and health equity and empowering the city's youth, and has been recognized with the City of Worcester's Service to Youth Award.

Walter Ordoñez

Program Coordinator, ENLACE Program, Latino Education Institute



Walter is a passionate advocate for youth development in Worcester, with years of experience working to uplift and empower the next generation. He is the current Program Coordinator for the ENLACE program at the Latino Education Institute, a program with the goal to inspire and transform 7th and 8th grade boys into scholars through life skills, personal development, educational and cultural enrichment, career exploration and early college awareness. Walter also works with youth as a wrestling coach and has provided a free wrestling program dedicated to providing accessible training to the youth in the city of Worcester.

Street Smart and Book Smart: Race-Trust-Police

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*109

Workshop Description: This session will give a brief overview of the 1st, 4th, and 5th Constitutional Amendments in regards to police interaction

Theme(s): Student Success, Empowerment and Development, Wellness and Mental Health, Social Justice

Type of Workshop: Workshop Presentation, Lecture

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

Manasseh Konadu Esq.

Assistant Attorney General, Illinois Attorney General's Office



Manasseh Konadu is a Worcester native and a graduate of Worcester State University. Mr. Konadu is an advocate for social justice and is dedicated to the betterment of all communities.



Healthy Communication & Relationship

Sullivan Academic Center Room: S*126

Workshop Description: This interactive workshop aims to help young people develop strong communication skills and recognize the qualities of healthy relationships. Participants will learn how to express themselves effectively, set boundaries, and build positive connections through discussions, activities, and real-life scenarios.

Theme(s): Wellness and Mental Health

Type of Workshop: Workshop Presentation

Target Audience: High School Audience

Bailiner Cruz

Assistant Director of Education



Bailiner Cruz has been in Pathways for Change for 11 years, specializing in youth education programming. With a strong commitment to raising awareness about consent and healthy relationships, she works tirelessly to empower young people with the knowledge and skills they need to build respectful and safe connections.

Passionate about making a meaningful impact in her community, Bailiner focuses on educating and advocating for youth, ensuring they have the tools to navigate relationships with confidence and respect. Through her work, she strives to foster a culture of understanding, empowerment, and positive change.

Humble Leadership

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*110

Workshop Description: How can we better lead with empathy? The goal of this workshop is to guide participants through the concept of Cultural Humility, and how to apply it to your own leadership, professional practices, and activism. Learn how through ongoing self-reflection and a self-critique, one can become both a more effective leader and genuine ally.

Theme(s): Leadership, Skills and Mindset, Social Justice

Type of Workshop: Workshop Presentation, Interactive/Experiential

Target Audience: College/University Students, Educators/Professionals/Community

Amina V.O. Bristol

Assistant Director of Student Inclusion and Belonging, JEBI, College of the Holy Cross



Amina V.O. Bristol is an Assistant Director of Student Inclusion and Belonging for the Office of Justice, Equity, Belonging, and Identity (JEBI) at the College of the Holy Cross. She graduated from Holy Cross in 2016 and is enriched by working with a diverse population of students at her alma mater. Passionate about social justice and equitable access, Amina is proud to guide students to campus resources and help them with their personal identity and professional development.

Higher Education Financial Planning

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*106

Workshop Description: We will outline steps to pursue a dream job, discuss education cost-benefit analysis, budgeting, funding options, and highlight the significance of lifelong learning and career planning.

Theme(s): Student Success, Empowerment & Development, Career Exploration & Development, Financial Skills, Knowledge, Prosperity & Development, Identification of Resources, Tools, and Strategies

Type of Workshop: Workshop Presentation

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

MAJ(Retired) Ellis J. Cropper MBA, ChFC, CLTC

Founder of Financial Education Advocacy



Retired Army Major and MFEC Advisory Board Member Ellis Cropper, earned an MBA from Nichols College in 2024, and holds the Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC®) and Certified Long-Term Care (CLTC®) designators. He has worked as a financial professional for New York Life since 2018. Originally hailing from Louisiana, Ellis earned his BS in Biology with concentrations in Nuclear Medicine Technology

from Worcester State University in 1996. His 34-year career in the U.S. Army included 20 years of active service plus the honor of serving as an Assistant Professor of Military Science at Widener and Villanova Universities. My passion for teaching financial literacy is born out of that concept of freedom. Empowering financial well-being for all.

Social Justice at the Local Level

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*105

Workshop Description: This workshop delves into the concept of social justice and why the pursuit of equality benefits all within a community. The facilitators will discuss City of Worcester immigrant experiences, in addition to findings from a recent Department of Justice report that found local police engaged in misconduct while on duty.

Theme(s): Wellness and Mental Health, Social Justice

Type of Workshop: Roundtable

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

Dr. Trinidad Morales, Ph.D.

Visiting Professor of Sociology, Worcester State University



Dr. Morales, PhD: Dr. Morales is a recent transplant to the New England region, but was born and raised in El Paso, Texas, a southwestern city bordering Mexico and New Mexico. He has taught classes in sociology, criminology, and demography at several academic institutions over the last 14 years. He most enjoys sharing his academic journey with students interested in the social sciences.

During his personal time, he enjoys traveling and attending sporting events and music concerts with his family.

Dr. Alex Briesacher, Ph.D.

Professor of Sociology, Worcester State University



Dr. Briesacher's research hovers around the intersection of sociological social psychology and psychological social psychology with specific applications primarily focused on racialized experiences in different educational settings. He has worked within a department with a focus on public sociology and social justice, which provided him opportunities to fuse more traditional scholarship approaches

with the application of his research to both the University community and Worcester at large.



Amplifying Voices: Leadership and Advocacy in Speech-Language Pathology

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*101

Workshop Description: Rooted in the mission of fostering access, retention, and success in higher education, this session will explore the critical role of speech-language pathology (SLP) in communication access, equity, and advocacy. This workshop will highlight the importance of leadership and advocacy in the field of SLP, particularly for professionals from underrepresented backgrounds. Through interactive discussions and team-building activities, participants will examine the challenges and opportunities in speech-language pathology, including addressing cultural and linguistic diversity, advocating for inclusive practices and developing leadership skills to drive systemic change. Attendees will gain insights into the pathways to becoming an SLP, mentorship opportunities, and strategies for fostering a more diverse and inclusive profession. Join us to explore how speech-language pathology can serve as a platform for empowerment, social justice, and meaningful impact within historically marginalized communities. This workshop will serve as a call to action for current and aspiring leaders to use their voices and expertise to create a more equitable future in communication healthcare.

Theme(s): Career Exploration and Development

Type of Workshop: Workshop Presentation

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

Athena Reese, M.S.

CCC/SLP Outside Placement Coordinator, Clinical Instructor, Worcester State University



Athena has been a speech language pathologist (SLP) for over 27 years and has made a tremendous impact on the lives of patients in adult neurological rehab. She has worked in a number of rehabilitative settings including acute care hospitals, outpatient rehabilitation clinics, and home health care. Athena received her bachelor's degree from the University of

Louisville, and her master's degree from the University of North Texas. She is currently a student at Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professions speech-language pathology doctoral program with a focus on sociopolitical advocacy particularly for people living in underserved communities. She is also a mentor in the National Black Association for Speech Language and Hearing (NBASLH) Power to Empower Mentorship Program. Athena enjoys the outdoors, hiking with her two standard poodles, Josie and Wyatt.

Andrea Quinn

Director of Clinical Education, Worcester State University

Andrea Quinn is a dedicated and highly skilled speech-language pathologist with extensive experience in clinical supervision, education, and direct client care. She holds a Master of Science from MGH Institute of Health Professions and a Bachelor of Science from Northeastern University. With a passion for supporting fellow SLPs, Andrea has held various leadership roles throughout her career. She currently serves



as the Director of Clinical Education at Worcester State University's Speech-Language-Hearing Center, where she coordinates the center's operations while overseeing clinical education for graduate students. Andrea's expertise extends to providing direct therapy services to pediatric clients with a variety of speech and language needs; her areas of interest include autism,

apraxia, speech sound disorders and various receptive and expressive language disorders. She has experience working in diverse settings, including private practices, schools, early intervention facilities and rehabilitation centers. Andrea is passionate about making a positive impact in the lives of her clients and students and is committed to promoting excellence in clinical practice and education.

Shenaé Saunders

Graduate Student, Speech-Language Pathology



Shenaé Saunders is a current graduate student at Worcester State University in the Speech-Language Pathology program. She is a first-generation graduate from St. Andrews, Jamaica. She received her associate degree from Massachusetts Bay Community College and her bachelor's degree from Worcester State University. She has worked as a Teaching Assistant and as a

Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA) in several districts in Massachusetts for 7 years. Shenaé has worked with a variety of children with complex communication needs. After graduation, she would like to work with either children or adults who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) to communicate. Shenaé aspires to bring awareness, knowledge, and experience in Speech-Language Pathology back to her home country; to help individuals with communication difficulties. Shenaé enjoys traveling and spending time with her family. She especially enjoys being a mom to her 9-month-old daughter.

Julienette Rivera

Graduate Student, Speech-Language Pathology



Julienette Rivera is a culturally and linguistically diverse bilingual (Spanish-English) graduate student clinician in speech-language pathology at Worcester State University (WSU), where she is pursuing her Master's degree. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders with minors in Spanish and Psychology from WSU in December 2022. Ju-

lienette's passion for speech-language pathology stems from her personal experience supporting her grandfather after open-heart surgery. Witnessing her mother advocate for him and the positive impact of the SLP's care inspired her to pursue the field. As a student clinician, she is deeply committed to advocating for clients and families in underserved communities and aims to inspire others who look like her and share similar backgrounds to pursue their goals without limits. Outside of her academic and clinical work, Julienette enjoys dancing, painting, hiking, traveling, and spending time with her family and teacup poodles.



How to Reframe Privilege: Exploring Community Culture Wealth

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*104

Workshop Description: In this workshop, participants will explore Dr. Tara Yosso's ideology of Community Cultural Wealth. This framework can empower participants, especially marginalized communities by acknowledging their lived experiences through a strength-based perspective to navigate and survive oppressive institutions.

Theme(s): Student Success, Empowerment and Development, Skills and Mindset, Identification of Resources, Tools, and Strategies

Type of Workshop: Workshop Presentation, Interactive/Experiential

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

Mendrick Banzuela

*Access and Opportunity Program Administrator,
Quinsigamond Community College*



Mendrick Banzuela was born and raised in the "Heart of the Commonwealth" known as Worcester. Mendrick was blessed to be a part of a diverse community rich with unique stories and identities. With this, he experienced the beauty and importance of community building. As a first gen student, he graduated from Worcester State University in 2020 with a B.S. in Sociology where he developed a

deep passion for social justice and social theories. As an alumnus, Mendrick's work with the Bruce Wells Scholars Upward Bound program has strengthened his networks and deepened his commitment to using education as a tool for empowerment within marginalized communities. Now, he continues to empower and support diversity and inclusivity initiatives within Quinsigamond Community College as the DEI Program Administrator. Mendrick dedicates his time outside of work to volunteering, advocating, and serving his people. He is an educator at heart and believes that there is power through knowledge.

Healing in The Discomfort of Racial Trauma

Sullivan Academic Center, Room: S*108

Workshop Description: This workshop will explore concepts from various racial identity models and the psychological impact of persistent racial stress and trauma. This workshop is designed for participants to learn how to self-assess and identify symptomology of racial stress/trauma and to develop their own racial trauma toolbox that provides healing strategies.

Theme(s): Wellness and Mental Health

Type of Workshop: Lecture, Interactive/Experiential

Target Audience: College/University Students, High School Audience, Educators/Professionals/Community

Lisa Maddox

*Director of Business Development and Community Outreach,
Multicultural Wellness Center (MWC)*



Lisa Maddox joined MWC in August of 2019. She comes to MWC with 16 years of working experience in the Worcester Public Schools as a School Adjustment and Guidance Counselor, Community Liaison and Social Emotional Learning district trainer. Lisa has a B.S. in Urban Studies (concentration: Health and Human Services), a M.A. in Social Rehabilitation and Counseling

and a C.A.G.S. in Special Education from Assumption (College) University. In addition, Lisa coordinates and facilitates a black-identity, social emotional youth development group for BIPOC youth between the ages of 13-17 utilizing culture as a protective factor. She has facilitated various trainings for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health regarding the following topics: Healing in the Discomfort of Racial Trauma, Identity-based Biases, Trauma and Healing and Using Micro-resistance to Combat Microaggressions.



Luncheon and Alumni Panel Presentation 1:30pm - 3:00pm Multipurpose Gymnasium, Wellness Center

Moderator **Kimberly Salmon**, *Assistant Vice President, The Hanover Insurance Group*

Panelists include: **Melanie Bonsu**, *'05 Community Relations Manager, Saint Gobain*

Sheldon Hollins, *'98 Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, Community Health Center*

Joseph Corazzini, *'06 Vice President for Government and Community Affairs, Clark University*

Nana Darkwa, Esq., *19' Associate, ArentFox Schiff*

Cynthia Romero, Esq., *'14 Co-Founder/Managing Partner, Heirloom Law*

Moderator: Kimberly Salmon



Kimberly Salmon joined The Hanover as Assistant Vice President of Community Relations and President of the foundation in May of 2020. In this role, Kim leads the strategy and execution of the company's charitable foundation and community relations programs. Kim is also responsible for driving key strategic employee engagement initiatives that align with The Hanover's mission and CARE values.

Kim joined The Hanover from Fallon Health, where she served as director of community relations and engagement. She also led Fallon's corporate giving, community outreach, volunteerism and engagement. With over 30 plus professional years, Kim has also played a leadership role in several other nonprofit organizations, including YMCA of Central Massachusetts, American Heart Association, Two Ten Footwear Foundation and the Walker School.

Kim is a passionate volunteer in the Worcester community, proudly serving on several boards and leadership committees, including Greater Worcester Community Foundation, Worcester State Foundation, Worcester Educational Collaborative and the Worcester Together Task Force. She served nine years as chair of the Worcester Women's Leadership Conference. And since the onset of the pandemic, she has led

the Mayor's Mental Health Taskforce – Community Response efforts. Her most recent commitments included, serving as the co-chair of the very successful Worcester Tercentennial and completing the Worcester Public Schools search for a new superintendent.

Kim was recently recognized as one of the 2022 Worcester Business Journal's (WBJ) Power 50. She was also the recipient of the 2021 WBJ Outstanding Women in Business, and the 2019 Katharine F. Erskine Award for health, science, and technology, in honor of her work for community health equity. As a lifelong advocate of change, Kim continues to raise awareness and funds for vulnerable and underserved children, families and populations across Massachusetts.

Alumni Panelists:



Melanie Bonsu is the Community Relations Manager for Saint-Gobain Abrasives North America. With over a decade of experience in fundraising and marketing within the non-profit sector, Melanie has honed her skills in cultivating relationships and driving successful campaigns. Her passion for making a positive impact on the community has been a driving force throughout her career. Her

community involvement includes being on the Executive Committee for the Worcester Regional Research Bureau, a Corporator for Webster Five, the Boys & Girls Club, and the Greater Worcester Community Foundation; a board member for the Worcester Educational Collaborative, Notre Dame Academy and Worcester State Foundation. She is on the Planning Committee for the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce's Worcester Women's Leadership Conference, and co-chairs the YWCA's Erskine Awards and Meryl's Safe Haven's Rent Party Fundraiser. Melanie was named to Worcester Business Journal's 40 under Forty Class of 2015, Worcester Magazine's 2016 Leading Ladies in Worcester, Pulse Magazine's People to Watch in 2017, and is a 2020 Worcester Historical Museum Harvey Ball Honoree.

Melanie's journey, which began by earning a BA in English from Worcester State University, reflects her unwavering dedication to community development, education, and the principles of responsible corporate citizenship. Her ability to combine her fundraising experience with a strategic public relations mindset sets her apart as a dynamic professional committed to creating lasting and meaningful change.

She is a lifelong Worcester resident with a passionate commitment to serving her community through her volunteer involvement in numerous initiatives. Melanie resides in Worcester with her two sons.



Dr. Sheldon Hollins is a dedicated healthcare professional serving as both a medical and psychiatric provider with a passion for improving health access within underserved communities. He is the founder of Helpful Hand, an independent practice located in East Hartford, Connecticut. Dr. Hollins holds a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree from the University of South Alabama, which he com-

pleted in 2018. He also received his graduate training at the University of Massachusetts Worcester in 2009 and earned a Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Massachusetts Boston in 2013. His academic journey began at Worcester State University, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1998.

Throughout his career, Dr. Hollins has worked extensively with diverse populations, providing essential healthcare services and demonstrating a commitment to health equity. His expertise encompasses mental health care, primary care services, and community health advocacy, making him a respected leader in nursing practice.

In addition to his clinical work, Dr. Hollins is actively involved in outreach programs aimed at improving health access for marginalized groups. He believes in the importance of fostering leadership among nursing professionals and advocating for systemic changes that promote wellbeing across communities.

With a strong foundation in education and a wealth of experience, Dr. Hollins continues to make a meaningful impact in the field of healthcare.





Joseph Corazzini is in his 4th year serving as the Vice President of Government and Community Affairs for Clark University located in Worcester, Massachusetts. There he oversees federal, state and city government relations while serving as liaison between the institution and the community. Prior to this work he served in senior leadership positions in the public and nonprofit sector championing issues related to education, community development, and diversity and inclusion.



Attorney Nana Darkwa, Esq. is a corporate and securities associate at ArentFox Schiff LLP, focusing on mergers and acquisitions, private funds, and private equity, with involvement in the fashion and sports sectors. She advises fashion and design houses, apparel manufacturers, retailers, and luxury goods companies on corporate transactional matters. Nana graduated from Suffolk University Law

School, earning her JD. Before joining ArentFox Schiff, she interned for The Honorable Judge Valerie Yarashus of the Massachusetts Superior Court and the De Novo Center for Justice and Healing. During law school, she was a Member of the Suffolk Transnational Law Review, recognized on the Supreme Judicial Court Adams Pro Bono Honor Roll, and served as a SJC 3:03 student attorney for the Family Advocacy Clinic, representing indigent survivors of domestic violence. In college at Worcester State University, she was a Presidential Student Ambassador, an orientation leader, and a member of the women's volleyball team, and she also studied abroad in Athens, Greece. She was awarded the "29 Who Shine" award by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, recognizing her as one of 29 outstanding public college and university students for her academic achievements and contributions to her community.



Attorney Cynthia Romero, Esq. is the founder of Heirloom Law, a firm providing Estate Planning, Probate, and Real Estate services, with offices in Peabody and Methuen, Massachusetts. She is an experienced attorney with a strong background in these areas and has handled a wide range of legal matters, including trust administration, conservatorships, guardianships, Medicaid proceedings, and

landlord-tenant eviction cases.

Cynthia takes a client-centered approach, always prioritizing the best interests of those she represents. Her compassionate and empathetic demeanor helps clients feel at ease during what can often be emotionally challenging times.

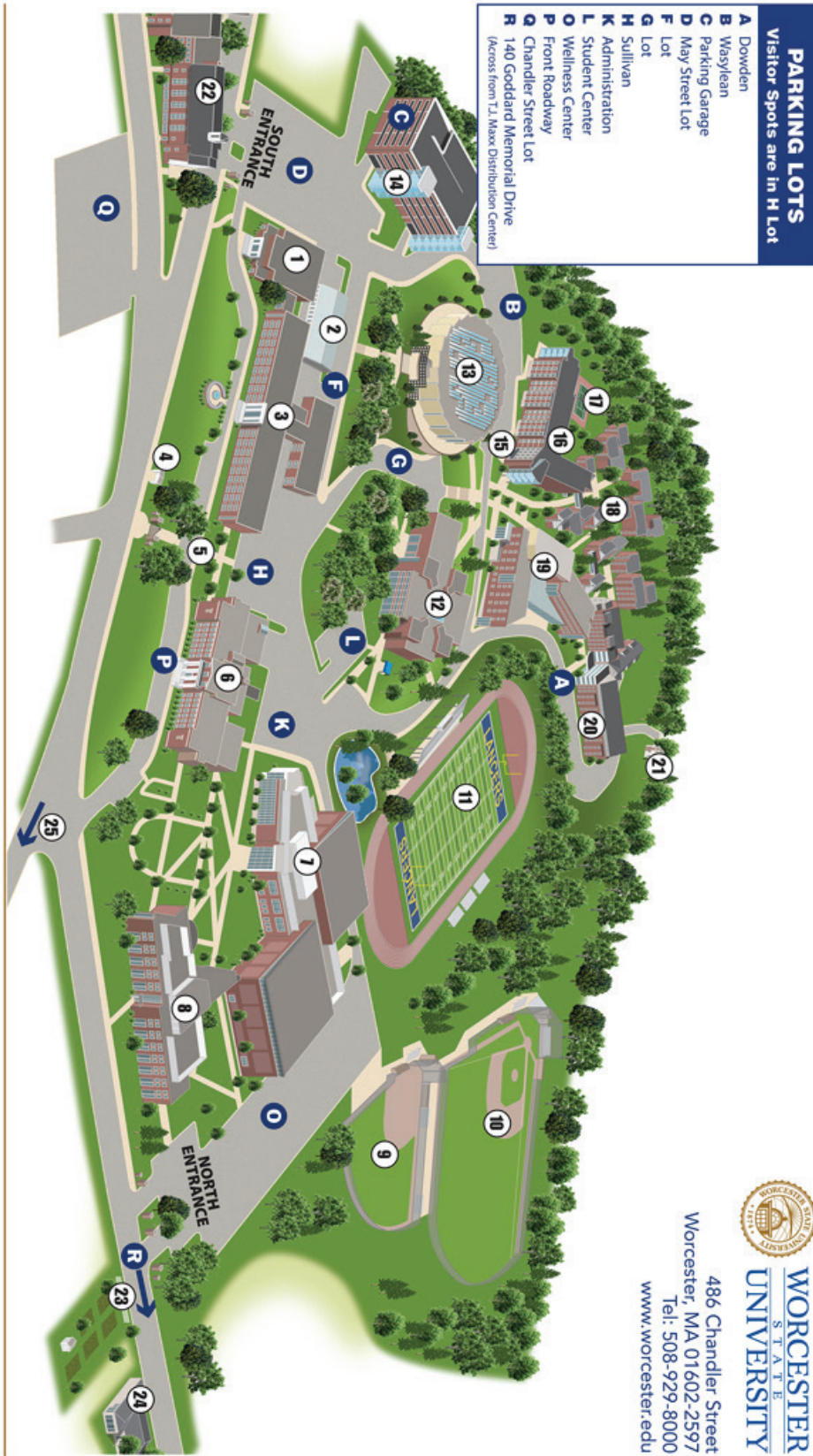
Cynthia earned her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a minor in Sociology from Worcester State University before obtaining her Juris Doctorate from the Massachusetts School of Law. She also holds certification as a licensed Mediator.





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486 Chandler Street
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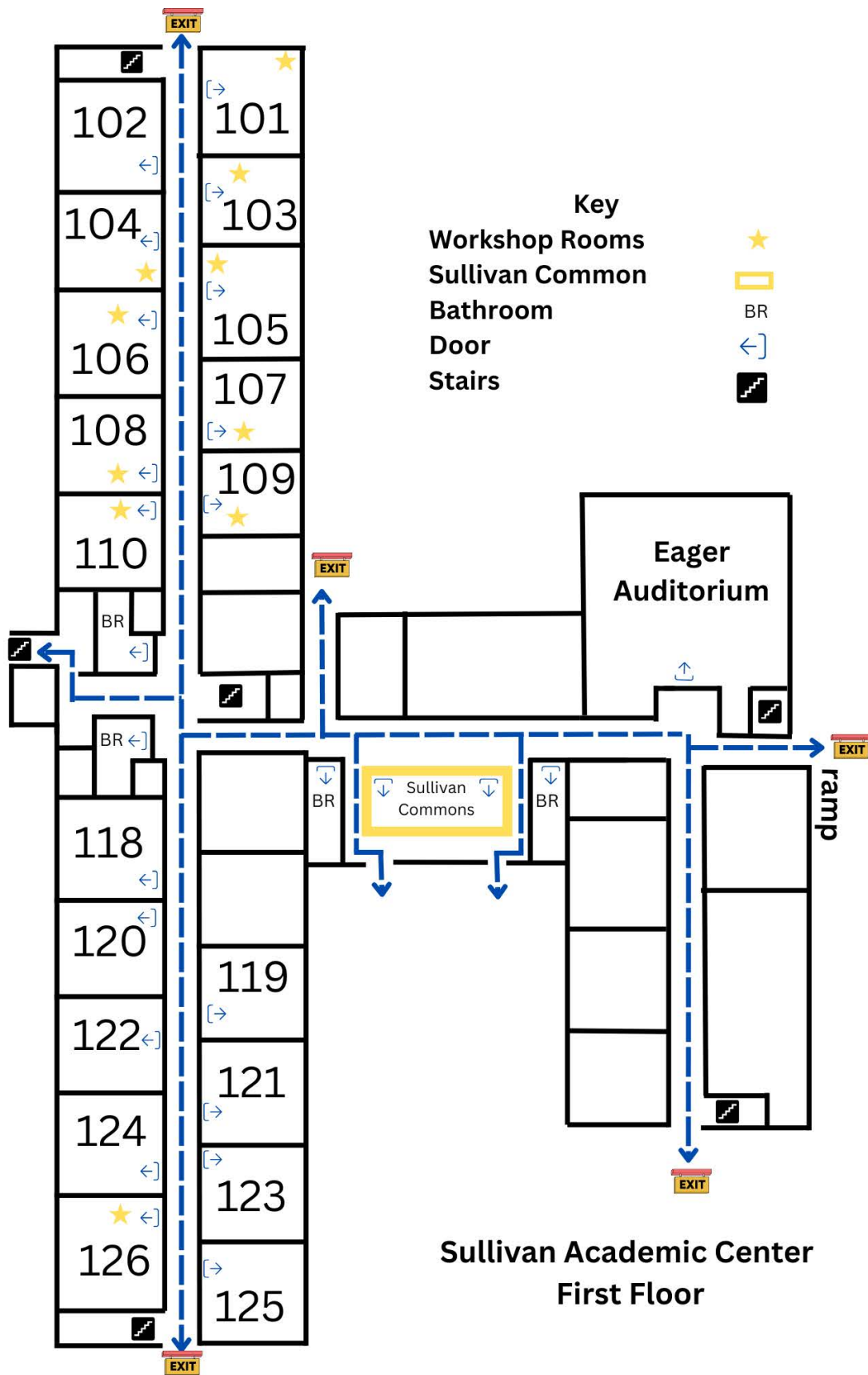


PARKING LOTS Visitor Spots are in H Lot

- A Dowden
- B Wasylean
- C Parking Garage
- D May Street Lot
- F Lot
- G Lot
- H Sullivan
- K Administration
- L Student Center
- O Wellness Center
- P Front Roadway
- Q Chandler Street Lot
- R 140 Goddard Memorial Drive (across from T.J. Maxx Distribution Center)

- 1 Sullivan Auditorium
- 2 Facilities (TA)
- 3 Sullivan Academic Center (S)
Egger Auditorium—1st floor
Sullivan Commons Woo Cafe—1st floor
- 4 WRTA Bus Shelter
- 5 Sagamore Road Studios Shuttle Stop
- 6 Shaughnessy Administration Bldg. (A)
Admissions, Fuller Theater—2nd floor
Academic Mall (various services)—1st floor
- 7 Wellness Center (WELL)
Chandler's Juice and Smoothies
- 8 Ghosh Science & Technology Center (ST)
102 Auditorium—1st floor
Mary Cosgrove Dolphin Gallery—1st floor
- 9 Rockwood Softball Field
- 10 Kevin Lyons Baseball Diamond
- 11 Coughlin Athletic Field
- 12 Student Center (SC)
Bookstore, Food Court, Blue Lounge—1st floor
Lancet's Loft, Fallon & Foster Rooms—3rd floor
- 13 Learning Resource Center (LRC)
Mail Center—1st floor (student package pickup)
Multicultural Affairs—1st floor
Library—2nd & 3rd floors
Starbucks Cafe—2nd floor
Information Technology Services—3rd floor
- 14 Parking Garage
- 15 Goddard Lot Shuttle Stop
- 16 Wasylean Hall—Residence (W)
Woo Scoops, University Police—1st floor
- 17 Tennis Courts
- 18 Chandler Village—Residence (CV)
- 19 Sheehan Hall—Residence (SRH)
Pulse On Dining (POD)—1st floor
Health Services—Lower Level
- 20 Dowden Hall—Residence (DH)
C-Store—Lobby
- 21 Campus Ministry
- 22 May Street Building & Auditorium (M)
- 23 IU Garden for All Ages
- 24 Latino Education Institute (LEI)
- 25 Sagamore Road Studios
Worcester Center for Crafts

Bus and Shuttle Stops: 4, 5 and 15



THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Thank you for participating in the conference. You are a vision of knowledge and strength today and tomorrow. We hope you carry the power of connection you experienced today into the future as we build a better world.

Please take a moment to complete these surveys at each benchmark during our conference. Individuals who complete all five surveys will be entered into a raffle to win a \$50 amazon gift card.

Conference Survey:

This survey should be completed 5 times during your time at the conference:

- a) 8:00am - 9:00am (during registration and continental breakfast)
- b) 11:00am (after Workshop Session 1)
- c) 12:10pm (after Workshop Session 2)
- d) 1:25pm (after Workshop Session 3)
- e) 3:00pm (after lunch and conference finishes)

Completing the evaluations at each stage will give us feedback on each conference component.



Additionally, for those who complete the survey 5 times based on the above schedule, you will be entered into a raffle for a \$50 Amazon gift card.