KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

LELAND MELVIN
Leland Melvin is an engineer, educator, former NASA astronaut and NFL wide receiver. He served on board the Space Shuttle Atlantis as a mission specialist on mission STS-122 (2008) and STS-129 (2009), helping to construct the International Space Station. Upon hanging up his space boots, he led NASA Education and co-chaired the White House’s Federal Coordination in STEM Education Task Force, developing the nation’s 5-year STEM education plan.

After 24 years with NASA as a researcher, astronaut and Senior Executive Service leader, he shares his life story as an athlete, astronaut, scientist, engineer, photographer, and musician to help inspire the next generation of explorers to pursue STEAM careers.

In May 2017, Leland released his memoir, "Chasing Space: An Astronaut's Story of Grit, Grace, and Second Chances." In "Chasing Space," Leland shares his personal journey from the gridiron to the stars, and examine the intersecting roles of community, perseverance, and grace that align to create the opportunities for success.

ELOY ORTIZ OAKLEY
Eloy Ortiz Oakley is an American educator and a leading voice on improving equity in higher education. Growing up in the Mexican American neighborhoods of South East Los Angeles, Oakley’s experiences would shape his belief that quality education opportunities are a critical ingredient in achieving social and economic mobility.

Oakley was appointed Chancellor of the California Community Colleges in December, 2016. He leads the nation’s largest and most diverse system of higher education consisting of 116 colleges which serve more than 2.1-million students. Under his leadership the California community colleges are positioned as a vital source for maintaining global competitiveness of the California workforce. Through the implementation of innovative practices and policies the California Community Colleges have begun to close education attainment gaps and have prepared more Californians for the 21st Century economy. Oakley's work includes the establishment of the California College Promise, the design and implementation of the systems’ strategic vision, the Vision for Success, the elimination of standardized testing, the reform of remedial education, the adoption of a student-centered funding formula and the launch of California’s first public fully online competency-based education college.

Before becoming chancellor, Oakley served as the Superintendent & President of the Long
Beach Community College District. While in Long Beach he co-founded the nationally recognized Long Beach College Promise. In 2014, Governor Jerry Brown appointed Oakley to the University of California Board of Regents.

For his leadership, Oakley has been recognized with the 2014 James Irvine Foundation Leadership Award, as a 2016 President Barack Obama White House Champion of Change, and with the 2018 Roybal Foundation Medal of Courage in Education Award. He currently serves on the boards of the American Council on Education, the UC Board of Regents, the College Futures Foundation, and the CalChamber. He is also a member of Governor Gavin Newsom’s Council for Post-Secondary Education, the Markle Foundation Rework America Taskforce, the Bill & Melinda Gates Post-Secondary Value Commission and the Public Policy Institute of California Higher Education Institute.

Oakley is a proud father of four, grandfather to two boys and lives in Orange County with his fiancée’ Terri.