

AGENDA

October 7-9, 2025
Austin, TX

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2025

2:30 - 9:00 p.m.	Registration Open <i>Onyx Foyer</i>
4:30 - 5:30 p.m.	Individual Fellowship Time <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACTE, Michael Connet<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ <i>Topaz 3</i>• Institute for Citizens & Scholars, Arianna Gordon<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ <i>Topaz 1</i>• Jobs for the Future, Cassie Garita<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ <i>Jasper Living Room</i>• NCSU/ODU, Dr. Michelle and James Bartlett<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ <i>Topaz 2</i>• Advance CTE, Jomarie Coloriano<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ <i>Opal Boardroom</i>• Harvard, Nichole Fehrenbach<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ <i>Mica Boardroom</i>
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.	Welcome Reception <i>P6 Rooftop Bar</i>
7:30 - 9:00 p.m.	Dinner & Keynote Meeting the Moment: Leadership in Times of Restricted Resources <i>Onyx Ballroom</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome: Anna Fontus, Program Officer, ECMC Foundation• Keynote: Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette, CEO, Waterloo Greenway

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2025

8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast Buffet <i>Topaz Foyer</i>
8:30 - 9:30 a.m.	Opening Remarks & Keynote Postsecondary CTE as a Way to Power Positive Impact <i>Onyx Ballroom</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening Remarks: Jacob Fraire, President, ECMC Foundation• Keynote: Wynn Rosser, PhD, Commissioner, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
9:45 - 10:45 a.m.	BREAKOUT SESSIONS (4 simultaneous) Federal Policy Update with ACTE <i>Topaz 3</i>

It has been an eventful year in education and workforce development policy around the country, particularly at the federal level.

This session will explore the federal policy activities that have impacted CTE, covering both Congress and the Administration. Attendees will take a deep dive into the federal budget and appropriations process, implementation of key provisions of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, activities of the Departments of Education and Labor and other key secondary and postsecondary policy issues.

- Jimmy Koch, Government Relations Manager, Association for Career and Technical Education

Learning That Pays: The Changing Role of Apprenticeship in Traditional Higher Education

Topaz 1

As the cost of college rises and employer demand for job-ready talent grows, apprenticeships are emerging as a powerful tool to reimagine traditional higher education pathways. In this session, Dr. Nicholas D'Antonio will explore the evolving role of apprenticeship in the postsecondary space, with a particular focus on degree-based models that integrate paid work experience with academic credit.

Drawing on national examples, emerging state strategies, and firsthand work designing and scaling these pathways, Nick will provide a candid look at where the U.S. currently stands, what's coming next and what actually works when it comes to building sustainable, high-quality apprenticeship degrees. Whether in policy, education or workforce development, this session will offer participants grounded insights and forward-looking ideas to support the future of earn-and-learn.

- Nick D'Antonio, Fellow, Old Dominion University and Program Manager, Lockheed Martin

Practical AI Tools for Postsecondary CTE Leaders and Innovators

Topaz 2

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming how postsecondary CTE professionals work—well beyond instruction. This session explores practical, real-world applications of AI for administrators, researchers, journalists and state education officials.

Through live demonstrations and case examples, participants will discover accessible tools that can elevate their work, from automating reports to generating insights from complex datasets.

Whether shaping policy, managing programs or telling the story of CTE, this session will help participants harness AI to do it smarter and faster.

- Michael Connet, Associate Deputy Executive Director, Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE)

Now, What? Equity in CTE in 2025

Jasper Living Room

**this session takes place twice*

An energizing and enriching discussion exploring the current state of equity in CTE, including an exploration of how language and approaches may need to shift to support all postsecondary learners. Participants will leave with clear ideas and strategies to advocate for learners within the parameters of our current landscape.

- Brittany Brady, CEO, National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)

10:45 - 11:00 a.m.

Break, snacks will be served

11:00 - 12:00 p.m.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS (4 simultaneous)

From Classroom to Career: Talent Pipelines that Deliver Value for All
Topaz 2

Adult learners often juggle multiple responsibilities—family, work and school—while seeking skills that lead to stability and advancement. At the same time, employers face pressing needs for a trained, reliable workforce that contributes directly to their return on investment (ROI).

Using Memphis as a case study, participants will leave with practical insights on how technical programs and local employers can collaborate to ensure that adult learners not only graduate but also thrive in sustainable, family-supporting careers.

- Dr. Shelanda Simmons, Instructor, Tennessee College of Applied Technology

Charting a Future Postsecondary CTE Research Agenda
Topaz 3

Research on postsecondary CTE has grown considerably, but much remains to be known about the design, delivery and impact of postsecondary CTE programs and supports. This session will provide a review of prior literature on postsecondary CTE, identify gaps in the literature and generate novel ideas about how to address these gaps. Participants will brainstorm key postsecondary CTE research questions, identify common research themes and discuss opportunities to address priority questions.

- Matt Giani, Research Associate Professor, The University of Texas at Austin

Reporters' Roundtable
Topaz 1

Struggling with a challenge in your CTE reporting, or your work in general? Bring it to this participatory session facilitated by an experienced higher-ed journalist and bolstered by a room full of colleagues. Expect solutions and commiseration. For Fellows in other disciplines can look forward to a lively introduction to the hurdles to writing about CTE and the higher-ed issues of the day.

- Lee Gardner, Senior Writer, The Chronicle of Higher Education

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12:00 - 1:15 p.m.**Programmed Lunch****Activating the Employer Mindset to Support Postsecondary CTE Programs**
Onyx Ballroom

A panel will discuss challenges and opportunities pertaining to community colleges building meaningful partnerships with employers and talent pipelines.

- Moderator: Archie Cubarrubia, Vice President, Grants, ECMC Foundation
- Jacqueline Martinez, Senior Talent Acquisition Partner, Walmart
- Christina Cook, Global Talent Development Manager, Google Operations Center
- Cory Christmas, Sr. Director, Training & Development, Highline Warren

1:30 - 2:30 p.m.**WORKSHOPS (4 simultaneous)****Cultivate Community, Remember Possibility***Jasper Living Room*

Many across the landscape are feeling exhausted, defeated and depleted. This session is designed to reconnect you with your body and mind while grounding all participants in shared community and care. We will explore methods of self-care and maintaining a rest practice with the intention of energizing participants to return to their important work with renewed energy. As a community, we will embrace a futurist lens to imaginatively explore solving complex challenges.

- Brittany Brady, CEO, National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)

From the Front Lines to Systems Change: Leading with Purpose in CTE
Topaz 2

What does it take to transform classroom passion into large-scale change? For many educators, the call to teach begins with a deep sense of purpose. But too often, the insights and innovations that educators cultivate on the front

lines stay contained within their classrooms, disconnected from the systems that shape education and workforce development at scale.

This session will be equal parts story and strategy. Attendees will explore session leader Carlos Vazquez's powerful journey from educator to entrepreneur to systems-level leader. They will also leave with practical tools to apply in their own contexts, whether leading a nonprofit, designing a new CTE initiative or simply bringing a systems-thinking mindset to their current role, this workshop will equip participants with a framework for action.

- Carlos Vazquez, President & CEO, Miami EdTech

Leadership Presence for Influence & Impact *Topaz 3*

When you're in the room and all eyes are on you, whether it's a critical meeting, a high-stakes discussion, a presentation or a pivotal conversation, how do you ensure your message lands, your expertise shines and your leadership presence is felt? Influence is less about titles and more about being heard, respected, trusted and remembered.

Especially in education and workforce development contexts, what you say, how you say it and when you choose to speak shapes not just your personal trajectory, but the future of your programs, people and communities. In this interactive workshop, participants will learn how to own their space and communicate with clarity, discovering new ways to share the unique value they bring and convert it into a narrative that resonates with leaders, partners and peers.

- Salvatore Manzi, Communications Coach, Leadership Communications

Building a Postsecondary CTE Research Agenda *Topaz 1*

Research on postsecondary CTE has grown considerably, but much remains to be known about the design, delivery and impact of postsecondary CTE programs and supports. This session will provide a review of prior literature on postsecondary CTE, identify gaps in the literature and generate novel ideas about how to address these gaps. Participants will brainstorm key postsecondary CTE research questions, identify common research themes and discuss opportunities to address priority questions.

- Matt Giani, Research Associate Professor, The University of Texas at Austin

2:30 - 3:00 p.m.

Bus Loading & Transit to Off-site

Lobby, The Line

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Offsite at Austin Community College

5:00 - 5:45 p.m.

Bus Loading & Transit to The Line

7:00 - 9:30 p.m.

Offsite Reception & Dinner

800 Congress

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2025

8:30 a.m.

Breakfast Buffet
Topaz Foyer

9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

Morning Panel Discussion
Pathways to Possibility: Youth Voices on Apprenticeship and Career Growth
Onyx Ballroom

Join us for an inspiring panel discussion featuring three dynamic CareerWise DC youth apprentices who will share their personal journeys into apprenticeship, the challenges and triumphs they've encountered, and how these hands-on learning experiences have shaped their career paths. From discovering their passions to gaining real-world skills, these young professionals will offer candid insights into the transformative power of apprenticeship. Whether you're an educator, employer, policymaker, or student, this conversation will illuminate the value of investing in youth talent and the future of workforce development.

- Moderator: Jubei Brown-Weaver, Accenture
- Maegan Godoy, New America
- Axel Orellana, Limbic Systems

10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

What's Next for Postsecondary CTE?
Onyx Ballroom

Please join us for an interactive session where all fellowships will collectively discuss the future of postsecondary CTE and systems change.

- Anna Fontus, Program Officer, ECMC Foundation

11:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Closing Remarks & Reflections
Onyx Ballroom

- Anna Fontus, Program Officer, ECMC Foundation