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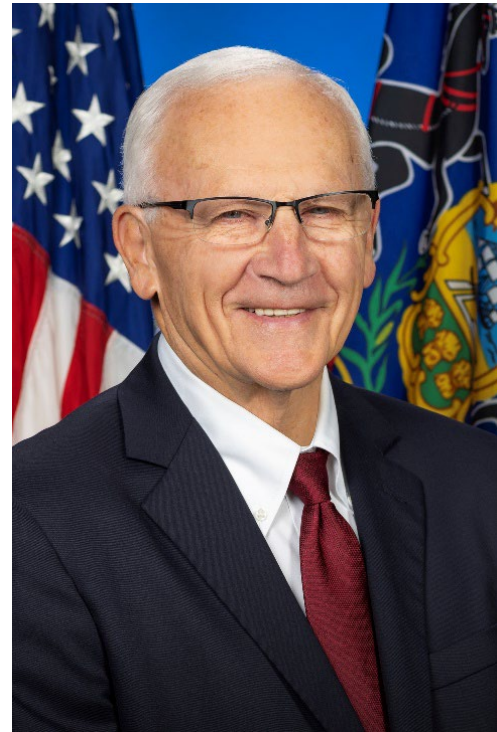
Global Pathways for a Thriving Rural Workforce

2024 Rural Policy Symposium Speakers



**State Senator Gene Yaw, 23rd District, Bradford,
Lycoming, Sullivan, Tioga, and Union Counties,
Chairman, Center for Rural Pennsylvania
Board of Directors**

Senator Gene Yaw was elected to represent the 23rd Senatorial District in Bradford, Lycoming, Sullivan, Tioga, and Union Counties in November 2008. Prior to running for the Senate, Sen. Yaw served as Lycoming County solicitor for 17 years and was named County Solicitor of the Year in 2004. He has also served as general counsel to the Pennsylvania College of Technology for more than 20 years. In 2013, he was elected Chairman of the Pennsylvania College of Technology Board of Directors. Sen. Yaw serves as Chairman of the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee. He is also Vice Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and a member of the Agriculture & Rural Affairs, Banking & Insurance, Community, Economic & Recreational Development, Rules & Executive Nominations, and the Majority Policy Committees. Sen. Yaw serves on a number of Boards and Commissions including as Chairman of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, a member of the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a member of the Environmental Quality Board, a member of the Pennsylvania Aggregate Advisory Board, and a member of the Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority. Sen. Yaw is a member of the Lycoming Law Association and Pennsylvania Bar Association, Pennsylvania Association for Justice, and a former member of the Board of Directors of Susquehanna Legal Services. He serves as “Of Counsel” with the McCormick Law Firm in Williamsport, a prominent firm that has been in continuous existence for 150 years. A U.S. Army veteran, Sen. Yaw enlisted and went on to graduate from the United States Artillery and Missile Officer Candidate School in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He served an overseas tour of duty as an artillery officer and was honorably discharged as a 1st Lieutenant. He graduated from Montoursville High School, attended Bucknell University, and earned degrees from Lycoming College and the American University School of Law in Washington, D.C. Sen. Yaw has coached Little League Baseball and coached and refereed for the American Youth Soccer Organization. He is a member of the National Rifle Association, Ducks Unlimited, the Nittany Lion Club, and the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce. He received the 2010 Distinguished Citizen of the Year Award from the Susquehanna Council, Boy Scouts of America, the 2011 Lycoming College Alumni of the Year Award, the 2011 CAPP Community Partner Award, the Central Pennsylvania State of Israel Bonds 2012 Israel Unity Award, the 2013 Pennsylvania Winery Association Industry Supporter Award, the 2014 Pennsylvania College of Technology Centennial Leadership Award, the 2015 Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health Legislator of the Year Award, the 2019 Pennsylvania Water Environment Association Public Official of the Year Award and the 2021 Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts Legislator Leadership Award. Most recently, Sen. Yaw received the 2023 WVIA Good Neighbor Award, the 2023 Marcellus Shale Coalition Shale Gas Advocate Award, and was selected as the 2023 Clean Water Champion by the Choose Clean Water Coalition. Sen. Yaw has also been recognized by the National Federation of Independent Business as a Guardian of Small Business for several legislative sessions and by Americans for Prosperity – Pennsylvania for his consistent conservative legislative voting record. In May 2023, Sen. Yaw was named to the City and State Pennsylvania 2023 Energy and Environment Power 100 list. A Loyalsock Township resident, Sen. Yaw is married to Ann S. Pepperman, Esquire. Together they have two children, Scott and Mackenzie, and three grandchildren with the fourth arriving in Spring, 2024.





**Dr. Michael J. Reed, President,
Pennsylvania College of Technology**

Dr. Michael J. Reed is the President of the Pennsylvania College of Technology. Penn College, a special mission campus of Penn State, is a national leader in applied technology education. Dr. Reed became the eighth president of Pennsylvania College of Technology on July 1, 2022. A native of Glenshaw, a Pittsburgh suburb, Dr. Reed is one of 10 siblings and a first-generation college student. He has extensive experience in higher education and secondary education. Before being named vice president for academic affairs and provost – the chief academic officer for Penn College, responsible for overseeing the delivery of 100-plus academic programs and leading more than 600 employees in the college’s Academic Affairs Division –



Dr. Reed served as vice president for academic operations and associate provost; dean of the former School of Sciences, Humanities & Visual Communications; and assistant dean of liberal arts and sciences. Previously, he served as head principal at Williamsport Area High School and as principal at the SciTech Campus of Harrisburg High School, which offers an honors-level college preparatory experience to a select group of highly motivated students. He also was principal of the former William Penn Alternative School, which served high-risk students in the Harrisburg area. Prior to that, he was a school counselor in the Upper Dauphin Area School District and a teacher and counselor for Abraxas Youth & Family Services, Marienville. Dr. Reed holds a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from Drexel University, a Master of Education in Counseling and Education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from Clarion University of Pennsylvania. He also earned a Post-Master Certificate in School Administration from Penn State. Dr. Reed’s past and present community affiliations include Academic Advisory Board member for the PA Interscholastic Esports Associates; the Salvation Army of Williamsport, Advisory Board; and the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

**Dr. Kyle C. Kopko, Executive Director,
Center for Rural Pennsylvania**

Dr. Kyle C. Kopko is the Executive Director of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania. He joined the Center in July 2020. Prior to joining the Center, Dr. Kopko served as Associate Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning, and Associate Professor of Political Science at Elizabethtown College. Dr. Kopko holds a law degree from the University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law, a Ph.D. and M.A. in political science from The Ohio State University, and a B.A. in political science from Elizabethtown College. Dr. Kopko has authored or co-authored more than 50 publications, including two university press books. His research has received national and international media attention in outlets such as The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, The New York Times, CNN, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and Fox News Channel.





**Alena Klimas, Advisor, Philanthropic Services,
Tides Foundation**

Alena Klimas is an Advisor of Philanthropic Services at the Tides Foundation where she provides insight and expertise in fund implementation, impact analysis, and community development in the US and abroad. Prior to joining Tides, Alena engaged with philanthropic partners, managed regranting programs, and supported a 43-state network of policy and advocacy partners for a major tax & budget research firm in Washington, DC. She holds leadership experience with grassroots LGBTQ+ rights organizations, regional philanthropic networks, and environmental/outdoor recreation organizations with an eye toward organizational effectiveness and equity. She is a US Department of State program alumni completing her Peace Corps Service in Morocco in 2019, the Critical Language Scholarship for Arabic in Morocco in 2016, and the Benjamin Gilman Scholarship Program in Jordan in 2015. More recently, she worked with the High Atlas Foundation in Morocco on an award-winning Citizen Diplomacy Action Fund project and USAID exchanges. Alena is based in Asheville, North Carolina.



**Zoe Swarzenski, Project Manager,
Reimagining Rural Policy initiative**

Zoe Swarzenski is the project manager for the [Reimagining Rural Policy](#) initiative at the Brookings Institution. She has experience working on place-based policy and sustainable development at the local level and began her career with the Boston City Council. Zoe received a master’s in public policy from Carnegie Mellon University from the Heinz College of Public Policy and Management and majored in Russian at Wellesley College. A native of Baton Rouge, LA, she currently lives in Washington, D.C.





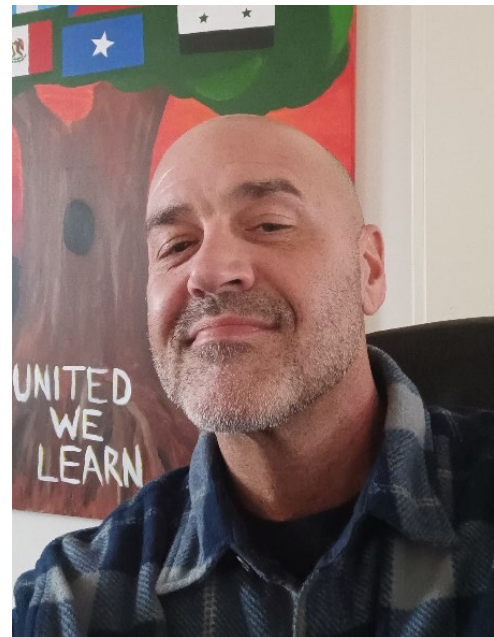
Dr. Theodore R. Alter, Professor of Agricultural, Environmental, and Regional Economics and Co-Director, Center for Economic and Community Development, Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education, Penn State University

Dr. Ted Alter is a professor of agricultural, environmental, and regional economics and co-director of the Center for Economic and Community Development in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education at Penn State University. He is also an adjunct research fellow at the Australian Center for Agriculture and Law at the University of New England, Australia, and is a former co-editor of the *Entrepreneurship Research Journal* (2018-21). Dr. Alter served from 2012-2017 as one of the lead researchers for the institutional analysis and community-led action initiative of Australia’s Invasive Animal Cooperative Research Centre. Dr. Alter’s research, teaching, and community engagement work focuses on community and rural development, regional economics, entrepreneurship, resource and environmental economics, community engagement for natural resource management, and behavioral and public sector economics. He served on the Board of Directors of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania from 2008 to 2016.



David Baird, Director, Pennsylvania Migrant Education Program, Millersville University

David Baird currently serves as Director of the Migrant Education Program at Millersville University in Lancaster County, PA, which provides supplemental educational services to more than 2,500 eligible Pre-K through 12th-grade students in Lancaster, Lebanon, Reading, and Allentown each year. David previously served in the same capacity at the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit in Milton, PA, serving eligible migrant, immigrant, refugee, and English as a Second Language students in 27 central and northeastern Pennsylvania counties. David commenced a career in the Pennsylvania Migrant Education Program with an initial assignment of five years in duration as Statewide Recruitment Coordinator at the Center for Schools and Communities in Camp Hill, PA. David enjoys family, reading, travel, snowboarding, and guitars in his downtime to relax and enjoy.





**Alex Beck, Welcoming Communities Manager,
and Initiative Director, Southern Vermont Working
Communities Initiative**

Alex Beck (he/him) is a Brattleboro resident and holds an MA in Service, Leadership, and Management from SIT Graduate Institute. He has extensive experience in community development, youth engagement, and social entrepreneurship in rural economies in the U.S. and abroad. Alex has resided in Windham County since 2012 and has been at BDCC since 2015. He helped establish the Southern Vermont Workforce Center of Excellence and facilitated the creation, organization, and distribution of regional workforce and education opportunities for Vermonters throughout the Windham region.



**Luis Beltran, Regional Recruitment Coordinator,
Pennsylvania Migrant Education Program,
Millersville University**

Luis E. Beltran is a Regional Recruitment Coordinator for the Pennsylvania Migrant Education Program through the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit/Millersville University. Mr. Beltran earned his B.S. degree in Professional Studies with a concentration in Art Education and Psychology from the Kutztown University of Pennsylvania and a Masters in Applied Biblical Studies from Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois. Luis has worked for the PA Migrant Education Program for 10 years, where he began as a Student Support Specialist providing academic support to migrant children in the Reading School District. As a migrant student himself, who came from Colombia 23 years ago, he is passionate about providing that same support to struggling migrant children who are on the move with their parents. In the past five years, he has provided that support to migrant families as the coordinator by training recruiters in five counties to recruit migrant families for support. Part of Beltran’s goals is to build leadership among his recruiters and educate school districts and agricultural industries on the impact that they can have on the migrant families in the area. Outside of his work duties, Luis also coordinates Christian education and trains people for teaching and leadership roles at his local church. He is also the husband and father of two young boys, which motivates him to be a good role model.





**David Briel, Deputy Secretary,
Office of International Business Development,
Pennsylvania Department of Community and
Economic Development**

David Briel currently serves as Deputy Secretary of the Office of International Business Development (OIBD). He oversees a team of 12 economic development specialists and a network of 18 overseas authorized representatives, whose mission is to assist Pennsylvania companies with their export strategies and execution as well as attract foreign direct investment to locate in the Commonwealth. He also works closely with the Regional Export Network and other economic development organizations throughout Pennsylvania to help create and retain employment brought forth by international trade and investment, a key component of Pennsylvania’s economy under Gov. Shapiro.



**Daniel Cervan-Gil, Associate Director,
Employer Initiatives, World Education Services
(WES)**

Daniel Cervan-Gil is the Associate Director of Employer Initiatives at WES. In this role, Daniel leads WES’s work with employers, employer-facing organizations, and municipal and regional actors, to create and socialize solutions, strategies, and new tools related to the recruitment, retention, and reskilling of immigrants and refugees. For over 15 years, Daniel has held various roles in international organizations, including the United Nations, forging strategic partnerships, and building coalitions, not only within Canada but internationally. He has extensively worked on migration and integration, engaging with civil society, government stakeholders, and businesses in exploring the competitive advantage of diverse workforces and in projects aimed at countering misinformation and online hate speech.





**Nic Cervantes, Director, U.S. Commercial Service
Harrisburg, U.S. Department of Commerce**

Nic Cervantes joined the U.S. Commercial Service in January 2023. In this role, he assists companies in Central and South-Central PA to grow their export capabilities. This includes collaborating with local educational institutions to support their international student recruitment. He brings a wealth of public and private sector experience and knowledge to the role, including direct experience with U.S. export facilitation and counseling U.S. firms to meet their export development objectives. Nic also has broad experience in international exchange, having worked with various NGOs to implement the Department of State’s International Visitor Leadership Program.



**Sloane Davidson, Founder/CEO, Hello Neighbor
Network (Pittsburgh)**

Sloane Davidson is the Founder and CEO of [Hello Neighbor](#), a nonprofit organization that works to improve the lives of recently resettled refugee families by matching them with dedicated neighbors to guide and support them in their new lives. Prior to starting Hello Neighbor, Sloane worked for fifteen years across the intersection of philanthropy and digital marketing. She has worked with nonprofits, NGOs, and for-profit businesses in a wide range of capacities including branding, business development, capacity building, communications, corporate social responsibility partnerships and campaigns, event production, and fundraising. For eight years, she created and led one of the leading cause blogs on the Internet called The Causemopolitan. She currently sits on the Board of Resolve Network, an NGO based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, that focuses on jobs for women in post-conflict countries through microfinance, and the prestigious Indiana University’s Lilly School of Philanthropy Women’s Philanthropy Institute. She was a 2009 Kiva Fellow in the Philippines and has been invited to speak on her activism at The Clinton Global Initiative and The World Economic Forum. At a dinner party Sloane would talk about her love of presidential libraries and their impact on today’s society, the rise of urban agriculture and what we can learn from agrarian communities, criminal justice reform and in particular bond reform, her rotation of favorite podcasts and her most recent baking project that is probably still cooling in her kitchen. After fifteen years in cities including Burlington, Boston, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Manila, and New York City, Sloane was thrilled to return to her hometown of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the fall of 2015 where she currently resides with her entrepreneurial husband, two sons and overly affectionate dog.





**Dr. Deborah Diamond, Director, Anchor Economy,
Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia**

Dr. Deborah Daimond leads the [Anchor Economy initiative](#) at the Philadelphia Federal Reserve Bank. This high-priority initiative explores the impact “eds and meds” have on their regional economies. Through research and practitioner partnerships, the Anchor Economy initiative advances the goal of creating equitable economic opportunity in communities. Prior to joining the Federal Reserve in June 2021, Deborah led the nonprofit organization, Campus Philly, the national model for college student engagement and retention in cities. In this role, Deborah helped cities across the country launch similar talent retention initiatives. She has led projects for Richmond, Rochester, Tulsa, Norfolk, and Hartford, among others, and co-founded [Young Smart and Local](#), the learning network and conference for talent retention. Deborah received her PhD in political science from the University of Chicago, followed by a Mellon Post-Doctoral fellowship in the Society of Fellows at Columbia University and teaching at Bryn Mawr College, where she received her undergraduate degree.



**Jason Fink, President/CEO,
Williamsport/Lycoming County Chamber of Commerce**

Jason Fink, President/CEO, handles economic development programming. Jason oversees and is involved with the travel and tourism initiatives for Lycoming County. He works with educators, business and industry, elected leaders, and workforce development partners in advancing programs to enhance and build the future labor force in his community.





Anuj Gupta, President/CEO, The Welcoming Center (Philadelphia)

Anuj Gupta is a proven leader in Philadelphia’s government, non-profit, and private sector communities, with a professional track record of achieving impactful results. Anuj now serves as President and CEO of The Welcoming Center, an organization he helped start with his graduate school research in 2003. The Welcoming Center strives to move immigrants across Greater Philadelphia towards upward economic opportunity through entrepreneurship, workforce training, English language acquisition, and leadership development and has become a national model for inclusive economic development. Prior to this, Anuj served as Chief of Staff to Congressman Dwight Evans (PA-03). In this role, he oversaw the Congressman’s legislative and policy agenda, the communications strategy, and constituent service delivery and managed the Philadelphia and Washington offices. In addition to building a team across two offices, Anuj led successful legislative strategies toward passage, such as the \$1B Reconnecting Communities Fund in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act. Prior to this, Anuj served as the general manager of the historic Reading Terminal Market for five years. Anuj has a law degree and a master’s in government from the University of Pennsylvania and lives with his wife and two children in Philadelphia’s Mt. Airy neighborhood.



Michael Hackett, Foreign Service Officer, U.S. Department of State

Michael Hackett is a career Foreign Service Officer, who has served assignments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Canada, Ukraine, and the Bureau of African Affairs in Washington, D.C. He is currently a resident master’s student in Strategic Studies at the Army War College in Carlisle, PA, where his independent research is concentrated on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and Arctic security considerations. Immediately prior to the War College, Michael served as the Global Alumni Coordinator for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, where he oversaw the digital platforms and outreach initiatives aimed at engaging the millions-strong global exchange alumni community, including over 450,000 Americans. Before joining the Foreign Service, Michael worked as a Policy Fellow for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and as director of the Yekaterinburg, Russia office of the American Councils for International Education (ACIE/ACCELS). He is an alumnus of two ECA-supported exchange programs, the U.S.-Russia Young Leaders Program (Russia, 2002) and the Critical Language Scholarship for Arabic (Egypt, 2006). He holds a bachelor’s degree in Russian and East European Studies from Connecticut College and a master’s in international relations from Yale University.





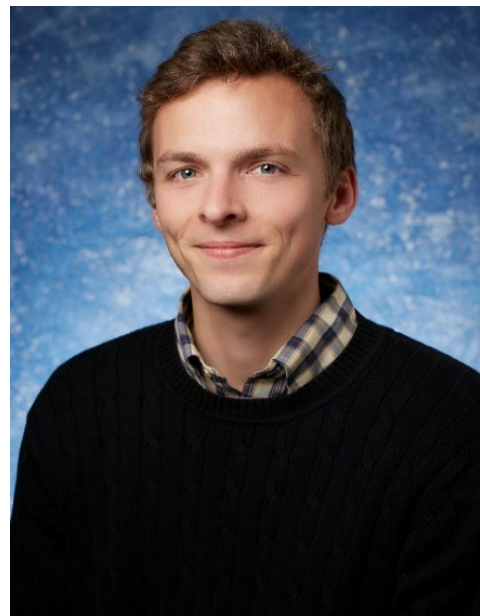
**Dagmara Karnowski, Interim Manager,
Commonwealth International Student
Advisers, International Student and Scholar
Advising (ISSA), Penn State University**

Born and raised in Wroclaw, Poland, Dagmara Karnowski moved to the U.S. in 2008. She has been working in the international education field for over 15 years now. At the time Dagmara joined Penn State, she already had over five years of combined experience in international student advising from California State University, Bakersfield, and the University of Houston-Downtown. Dagmara has expertise in building strategies to enhance the enrollment, retention, and overall success of international students. She serves as a liaison between Penn State Global and PSU Commonwealth campuses located in Southeast Pennsylvania. Dagmara is a strong advocate for hiring international students as they bring unique perspectives and global fluency to the workplace. She believes that through collaboration with various stakeholders, we can educate employers on the benefits of bringing international students to the workforce. To that end, Dagmara offers professional development opportunities and works on educating employers on employment types available to international students.



**Bill Keyes, Program Director
International House Philadelphia (IHP)**

Bill Keyes is the Program Director for International House Philadelphia (IHP), a nonprofit organization that aids in the success of international students at colleges and universities across the Greater Philadelphia region. Bill, an immigrant to the US himself, has spent the last seven years working with international students and scholars in various roles. Prior to joining IHP, Bill managed International Student and Scholar Services at the University of the Sciences, serving as the PDSO/RO and advising students and scholars on immigration and their immigration needs. He also serves as secretary on the board of Study Pennsylvania, a consortium of PA higher education institutions that collaborate on initiatives to bring more international students to the keystone state.





**Dave Lanzer, Director of Operations,
West Pharmaceutical Services**

Dave Lanzer joined West in 1986 and has over 38 years of experience in the custom injection molding and assembly industry. He has served as the Director of Operations for West Pharmaceutical Services since January 2008. Dave has held positions of increasing responsibility within West Pharmaceutical Services, such as Manufacturing Engineering Manager and Staff Engineer. Dave holds a Six Sigma Green Belt and an A.A.S.E.T. from the Pennsylvania College of Technology.



Dr. Whitfield Lewis, Physician, UPMC

Dr. Whitfield Lewis was born on the tropical island of Antigua. The first two decades of his life were spent in Antigua. Dr. Lewis completed elementary school and high school education on the island. He then ventured to Halifax, Nova Scotia, in the northeastern region of Canada. There, Lewis completed his college degree. After Canada, he returned to Antigua and attended the American University of Antigua for medical education. After residency training in neurology, Lewis attended UPMC in Pittsburgh for fellowship training in stroke and vascular neurology. Lewis has now settled in Altoona, PA, where he is currently a stroke attending physician. Lewis is currently married with three kids. His family is with him in Altoona. His interests include going on family trips, spending time with my family, and playing basketball.





Craig Livermore, Co-Director, Midstate C.O.S.H. (Council for Occupational Safety and Health)

Craig Livermore is a Co-Director at Midstate COSH (the Council for Occupational Safety and Health) in Ithaca, NY. Midstate COSH provides health and safety training and advocacy and recruits and trains immigrant workers to join the apprentice program of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, District Council #4. Craig has studied workers' rights and labor law and has extensive experience leading programs for diverse working-class populations. Craig has a law degree from Columbia Law School, where he studied labor and employment law and worked for the New York City labor law firm Gladstein, Reif, & Meginnis. He also holds a B.A. from Franklin and Marshall College and a Master's of Theology from Harvard. He has taught courses on education, labor, and race at Seton Hall Law School, and he was the founding board chair of the Newark Legacy Charter School. He also started and oversaw a G.E.D. and workforce training program for youth in Jersey City who were involved with the criminal justice system. In addition, he founded the Newark non-profit NJ LEEP [New Jersey Law and Education Empowerment Project], where he served as the Executive Director for eight years. NJ LEEP is a college access program for low-income youth that has won national awards for its impact and success. Craig grew up in rural Lycoming County, Pennsylvania, working on dairy farms, and he served for five years as a Pastor in Sullivan County, Pennsylvania. In addition to working at Midstate COSH, he currently lives in rural Tioga County, New York, where he and his wife have an organic farm business called Loving Farms.



Carl Marrara, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association

Carl A. Marrara is the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association (PMA), the statewide business organization representing the interests of manufacturers in Pennsylvania's public policy process since 1909. Carl oversees the government affairs, external communications, and political strategy of the association. In addition, he acts as a writer, producer, and reporter for PMA Perspective, a weekly half-hour news program on Pennsylvania business, government, and politics; and as an editor of the PMA Bulletin, a premier in-depth analysis of current issues facing Pennsylvania's businesses. As the chief lobbyist for the association, he focuses on legislative advocacy, bill tracking, and grassroots activation. He maintains the PMA partnership with the Business Industry PAC in Washington, DC, by deploying the "Pennsylvania Prosperity Project;" a toolkit for employers to engage their employees in voter registration and legislative issue education. To better advocate pro-growth policies, Carl focuses on building coalitions with allied stakeholders such as regional manufacturing associations, trade groups, and national think tanks. He also directs the strategy of PMA PAC, the affiliated political action committee of PMA. With a tenure of more than a decade at PMA, Carl graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Elizabethtown College in 2009 and obtained a Master of Arts in Public Policy from New England College in 2012, where he now serves as a part-time lecturer. As a lifelong Pennsylvanian hailing from Danville, Carl now calls Mechanicsburg home with his wife and two daughters.





Rachel Mauer, President, German American Chamber of Commerce, Pittsburgh Chapter

Rachel Mauer is the Co-Founder and President of the Pittsburgh Chapter of the German American Chamber of Commerce (GACC Pittsburgh Chapter), whose mission is to foster trade with Germany and grow the regional economy. The German American Chamber of Commerce (GACC) provides educational and networking opportunities, hosts international delegations, promotes the establishment of supportive trade infrastructure, and organizes formal events such as its annual Ice Gala and White Asparagus Dinner. Rachel and her team launched and continue to manage the German Dual Apprenticeship program in the region. The registered apprenticeships are industry-led, currently with over forty companies in the focus areas of Mechatronics, Polymer Technician (plastics), Sales Engineering (technical sales), and CAD/CAM Technical Designer. The apprenticeship program has grown since the pilot in 2016 to over forty companies, and five community colleges, and has a strong focus in rural Western Pennsylvania due to the heavy manufacturing industry. In the summer of 2024, the German American Chamber of Commerce, Pittsburgh Chapter, will launch the Electric Vehicle Technician apprenticeship program, the first in the U.S. but based on the successful German apprenticeship program. Rachel works closely with the local community colleges, universities, local high schools and CTCs, government entities (e.g., Dept. of Labor & Industry, Dept. of Community of Economic Development, Dept. of Labor, US Commercial Services), legislators, philanthropic organizations, and the German organizations such as the GACC New York, DiHK (Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce), and Germany’s diplomatic missions. A graduate of Cornell University with a degree in Government, Modern European Concentration. Rachel serves as the Co-Director of the American Council on Germany’s Pittsburgh Warburg Chapter and is also a proud member of the Western Pennsylvania District Export Council.



Bob Morgan, Pennsylvania State Director, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development

Bob Morgan’s 25-year career spans from a bank teller in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, to the current State Director of USDA Rural Development. Morgan, a native of Mountain Top, Luzerne County, PA, has proven experience in the investment, insurance, and banking sectors, assisting fellow Pennsylvanians in making decisions that impact and improve lives. He also worked for 8 years as Deputy Chief of Staff and District Director for Congressman Matthew A. Cartwright (PA-08), working with community leaders on several major economic development initiatives designed to enhance the communities of the northeastern corner of the state. As State Director, he will use his leadership experience to oversee Rural Development programs to provide greater economic opportunities throughout the Commonwealth. As a lifelong Pennsylvanian and a resident of a rural community, he is committed to extending greater access to programs designed to upgrade the economic engine driving investment in our rural communities. Morgan is a 1985 graduate of King’s College, where he earned his bachelor’s degree in government. In addition, he is the former President of the Board of Directors for the Wyoming Valley Children’s Association.





**Dr. Edward Naugle, Director, Primary Care Office,
Pennsylvania Department of Health**

Dr. Ed Naugle is the director of the Pennsylvania Primary Care Office, located in the Department of Health. Ed has been with the Primary Care Office since 2014. In his position, Ed directs the activity to identify medically underserved areas in Pennsylvania and to operate programs to help alleviate some of the shortages. Before taking his current position, Ed worked in the Children’s Health Insurance Program as the chief of the Operations Support Division. Ed also spent 19 years in the private sector in a variety of positions before entering state service. He received a bachelor’s degree from the University of Pittsburgh, a master’s degree from Shippensburg University, and a PhD from Northcentral University.



**Morgan O’Brien, Industry Liaison,
U.S. Department of State Bureau of
Consular Affairs**

Morgan O’Brien is the Industry Liaison for the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Consular Affairs. In this role, he works with U.S. businesses to facilitate safe, legitimate global mobility. He is a native of Long Island, New York, an Air Force veteran, and has served overseas tours in Congo and Malaysia.





**Dr. Jody Pritt, Assistant Vice Provost,
International Student and Scholar Advising (ISSA),
Penn State University**

Dr. Jody Pritt is the Assistant Vice Provost for International Student & Scholar Advising (ISSA) at Penn State. This role maintains responsibility for the over 10,000 international students, scholars, and faculty on all PSU campuses. Previously, she held various leadership roles in international student and scholar services at other U.S. universities where she led by emphasizing intentional services designed for student success. In 2022, she was named Harold Josephson Awardee for Professional Promise in International Education from the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), and in 2020, she was awarded the Marjorie Peace Lenn International Student Mobility Research Awardee from the American International Recruitment Council (AIRC). She has also held various leadership volunteer positions in international education professional development organizations and, in 2012, she received a Fulbright grant to South Korea to participate in the U.S.-Korea International Education Administrator Program.



**Tim Rivera, Senior Advisor,
Innovation and Strategy, World Learning**

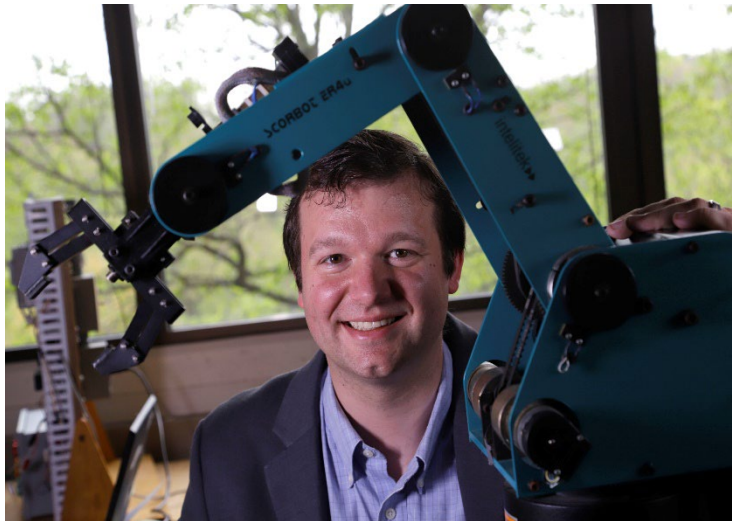
Tim Rivera is Senior Advisor for Innovation & Strategy at World Learning where he leads the coordination of organizational strategy and the development, incubation, and implementation of innovative programming. Before joining World Learning, he worked at the European Union's Delegation to the United States, overseeing a portfolio of public-facing initiatives spanning the transatlantic agenda, including trade, security, climate change, the digital economy, gender equality, and educational exchange. Over three years at the British Council, he contributed to programs on religion and international affairs, intercultural dialogue, and common European cultural relations initiatives. In addition to his work at World Learning, Tim is concurrently an Affiliate of the Transatlantic Policy Center at American University, a Security Fellow at the Truman National Security Project, and a Fellow of the British-American Project. He received his master's degree in international relations from King's College London and a bachelor's degree in political science from Yale University.





**Dr. Justin Starr, Endowed Professor,
Advanced Technology, and
Mechatronics Program Coordinator,
Community College of Allegheny
County (CCAC)**

Justin Starr, Ph.D., is CCAC's Endowed Professor of Advanced Technology and the Mechatronics Program Coordinator. He works to integrate advanced technology into CCAC's course offerings including augmented reality, electron microscopy, and collaborative robots, and serves as PI or Co-PI on 14 federal and state grants supporting research into effective credit-



noncredit collaboration. Previously, Dr. Starr served as CTO of RedZone Robotics, a manufacturer of water and wastewater inspection robots, and a fractional COO for a number of private equity-backed firms in the high-tech space. Dr. Starr holds 14 U.S. patents for inventions in robotics, artificial intelligence, and automation, and was named an Engineering Unleashed Fellow and Hi-TEC Fellow for his work with high-impact technologies. Justin earned his A.S. in General Studies from CCAC, his B.S. in Engineering Science from the University of Virginia, and his M.S. and Ph.D. in Materials Engineering from the University of Florida. He is the author of *Water and Wastewater Pipeline Assessment Technologies*, a leading text on underground inspection.

**Lisa Stevenson, Esq., Senior Associate Counsel,
Corporate Legal Department, UPMC**

Lisa (Claypool) Stevenson is Senior Associate Counsel, Corporate Legal Department, with UPMC, a multi-national integrated health system headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Lisa initiated the in-house immigration law department at UPMC in 2005 and manages all immigration law and related matters for the 90,000+ employee organization. She has been a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association since 1994, and the International Medical Graduate Taskforce since 1998, and has written, published, and presented nationally and internationally for numerous organizations on a variety of employment-based immigration topics. She earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law (1993) and is admitted to practice in Pennsylvania and Michigan.





**Steven Stumbris, Director, Small Business
Development Center, Bucknell University**

Steven Stumbris serves as the Director of the Bucknell University Small Business Development Center. Under his leadership, the center has been recognized by the U.S. Small Business Administration with the SBDC Excellence and Innovation Award for Pennsylvania and has helped thousands of small businesses to start, grow, and prosper. Stumbris is the moderator for WVIA's Keystone Edition Business television program and an organizer of One Million Cups Susquehanna Valley, a regional initiative that empowers entrepreneurs. He founded BizPitch: Bucknell's student startup competition and helped to launch the university's rural business incubators in Lewisburg and Danville. He serves on the boards of the Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corporation, Greater Susquehanna Valley Chamber of Commerce, and Lewisburg Downtown Partnership. Stumbris holds a Master of Professional Studies in Community and Economic Development from Penn State University and a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Cornell University.



**Dr. Douglas Swanson, State Specialist,
Labor and Workforce Development,
University of Missouri Extension**

Dr. Douglas Swanson joined the University of Missouri in February of 2017 after nearly three decades working in the labor movement and a career as a bridge and highway construction project manager for the Illinois Department of Transportation before that. He is a State Specialist in Labor and Workforce Development with the University of Missouri Extension, as well as the coordinator and instructional staff with the UMSL Labor Studies Certificate Program, for which he and his program have won several awards. Doug earned an EdD in the pursuit of Social Justice at the UMSL College of Education, an MS in Labor Studies from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, a BA in Union Leadership and Administration from the National Labor College, and an AAS in Management from Sauk Valley Community College. Doug is a FOCUS St. Louis 2019-2020 Impact Fellow, where he co-authored the *Just Talent Playbook* to help employers better understand the benefits of hiring Justice-Involved Individuals (JII) as well as help JII workers better navigate the reemployment process. Swanson has also written and published several articles related to the challenges facing the workforce today. His work experience and background have led Doug to study elements of society that create barriers to full and meaningful employment for all aspects of the workforce. Especially those who have been on the fringe of employment. Doug's efforts have led to the formation of a working group that created the Recovery Friendly Workplace initiative in the State of Missouri by destigmatizing addiction as an impediment to retention or reemployment.





Dana Wucinski, Esq., Board Counsel,
**Pennsylvania Department of State Boards of
Medicine and Osteopathic Medicine**

Dana Wucinski has been an attorney with the Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs, since May of 2014. In her current role as Board Counsel, she provides legal representation to the State Boards of Medicine and Osteopathic Medicine to assist the Board members in various disciplinary, application, and regulatory matters. Dana is tasked with writing all final adjudications of the Boards, drafting regulations, responding to legislative inquiries, providing bill analysis on healthcare bills that affect the Board, and identifying legal issues that impact the medical profession. Prior to working for the Department of State, Dana was employed as a public defender in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania. Dana is a 2003 graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a 2006 graduate of Widener University School of Law. She currently resides in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, with her husband and children.



Dr. Elizabeth J. Wright, Chancellor,
Penn State Hazleton

Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer Elizabeth J. Wright has led Penn State Hazleton since 2022 following a career that began at the campus in 2000 and included roles in leadership and as a tenured faculty member. In her leadership roles, Wright has championed enhanced student access and engagement, faculty development, and curriculum improvement while presiding over several multi-million-dollar campus renovations and the expansion of degree offerings. With an additional focus on strong community relationships, she pioneered a partnership between Penn State Hazleton and Amazon that helps its employees pay for college. She serves on numerous boards of directors, including Lehigh Valley Hospital – Hazleton, AllOne Charities, and Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress. A native western New Yorker, Wright is an avid skier and recently spent several Sundays teaching the activity to area high school students from the Hazleton Integration Project, many of whom were skiing or snowboarding for the first time.





Taka Yamauchi, President/CEO, SEKISUI KYDEX

Taka Yamauchi was born in Fukuoka, Japan, and educated at the University of California Berkeley with a degree in Business Administration and Finance. He has been a part of the esteemed SEKISUI CHEMICAL Group (corporate ownership of SEKISUI KYDEX) since 2004 before joining SEKISUI KYDEX in 2022 as the President and CEO. With over two decades of experience across multiple cultures and countries, he knows business practices and brings greater focus to efforts on enhanced quality, product diversification, and sustainability initiatives. He believes success is achieved by championing diversity, weaving a tapestry of ideas paved through a multicultural and hybrid work culture while integrating global best practices within his company’s daily operations. Together, headquartered in Bloomsburg, PA, Taka and his team are crafting a future where SEKISUI KYDEX is a beacon of global success.



Brad Zdenek, Director, Economic Development and Student Programs, Penn State University

Brad Zdenek, as the Director of Economic Development and Student Programs at Penn State University, strives to advance the university's land-grant mission, leveraging Penn State's vast resources, expertise, and expansive reach to catalyze the translation of innovative ideas into action. This commitment is not just about spurring job creation; it's a dedicated effort to imbue all Pennsylvanians with the entrepreneurial skills and mindset essential for conceptualizing new ideas and supporting the ventures that bring these innovations to life. Brad's diverse background began with teaching 6th and 7th-grade social studies and technology, where he specialized in evidence-based instructional techniques and explored the impacts of emerging technologies. Since coming to Penn State to pursue his Doctorate in Education, Brad has focused on the development of engagement and innovation programs for his fellow Penn Staters as well as for rural Pennsylvanians through his work with the Center on Rural Education and Communities. More recently, he focused specifically on leveraging artificial intelligence for enhanced educational experiences and addressing the big challenges facing our world. Brad's commitment to economic development and startup support is underpinned by his lifelong dedication to mentorship and empowering others to achieve their fullest potential. Outside of his professional pursuits, Brad is a devoted father who finds solace and inspiration in travel and the outdoors.

