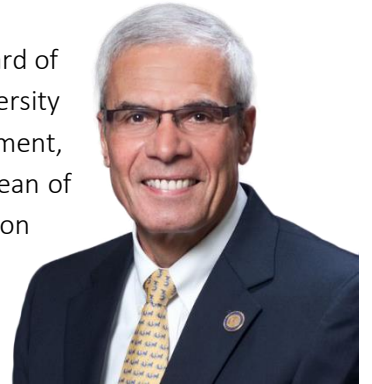


# Spring Forum ~ Day 1 Speakers

Dr. Joseph C. Rallo serves as the 8th Commissioner of Higher Education for the Louisiana Board of Regents. Dr. Rallo served as the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for the Texas Tech University System. Dr. Rallo is also the Past-President of Angelo State University. Prior to that appointment, he served as Provost and Academic Vice President at Western Illinois University, and was Dean of the College of Business and Administration and the Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs.



[Dr. Joseph C. Rallo](#)  
[joseph.rallo@la.gov](mailto:joseph.rallo@la.gov)



Dr. Dhanfu E. Elston serves as Complete College America's Vice President for Alliance State Relations where he utilizes his campus expertise for practical application, implementation, and scaling of CCA strategies at institutions throughout the nation. He also provides oversight of CCA's 15-To-Finish strategy and coordinates relationships with Governor's Offices and higher education state-wide systems in their college completion efforts. Over two decades of his higher education career in academic and student affairs, Elston has created and implemented comprehensive success and retention programs that have garnered national attention.

[Dr. Dhanfu E. Elston](#)  
[delston@completecollege.org](mailto:delston@completecollege.org)

Blake Johnson manages Complete College America's media and communications strategy, including the development and implementation of all external communications such as publications, digital and social media, and stakeholder outreach. He oversees a national portfolio of reporters, bloggers and influencers who cover higher education, state government and public policy. In addition to his work in communications, Blake manages a policy portfolio in a number of CCA Alliance States and co-leads the organization's 15 to Finish initiative.



[Mr. Blake Johnson](#)  
[bjohnson@completecollege.org](mailto:bjohnson@completecollege.org)

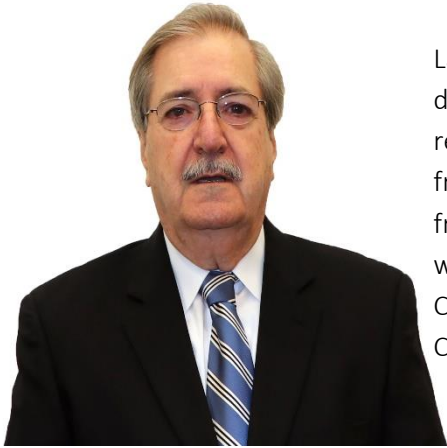


Dr. Nia Woods Haydel is the Director of the Academic Center for Excellence, the Thompson/Cook Honors Program and Assistant Professor of Urban Studies and Public Policy at Dillard University. Dr. Haydel has been a higher educational professional for over 18 years working in Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, Academic Affairs and Intercultural Relations. In her current role, she oversees the University's retention initiatives, as well as, academic advising, progression and academic enrichment initiatives and service learning for first-year students, and coordinates initiatives for Honors students. Additionally, she is responsible for assessment initiatives within the first-year experience.

[Dr. Nia Woods Haydel](#)  
[nhaydel@dillard.edu](mailto:nhaydel@dillard.edu)

Rajni Soharu has worked at UNO since 2003, in the capacity of a Graduate Assistant (Bursar's Office and Financial Aid Office), Assistant Registrar for Technology, Associate Registrar for Technology, Director of Catalog and Curriculum and now Interim Registrar. She has a B.S. in Telecommunication Engineering (Bangalore University, India), M.S. in Engineering Management (UNO), M.B.A. with Management of Information Systems Concentration (UNO) and currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Engineering Management. She is married to a UNO graduate for the past 7 years, and together they have a 5 year old daughter and 1 year old son.

[Ms. Rajni Soharu](mailto:rsoharu@uno.edu)  
rsoharu@uno.edu



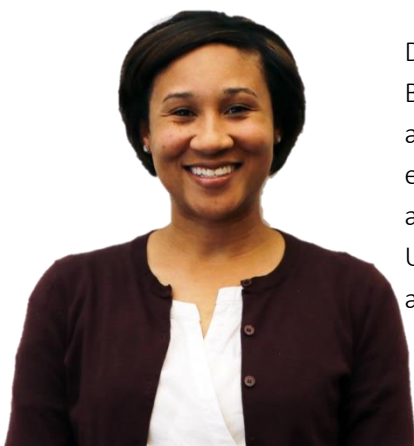
Larry Tremblay was born and raised in the Boston area. He received his undergraduate degree in economics from the University of Massachusetts - Boston. From there he relocated to Nashville, Tennessee where he earned a Masters of Management degree from Vanderbilt University. In 1975, he earned a Ph.D. in higher education administration from Florida State University. Dr. Tremblay joined the Louisiana Board of Regents in 1976 where he has remained holding a variety of positions. Following many years as Associate Commissioner for Planning and Research, today Dr. Tremblay serves as Deputy Commissioner for Planning, Research and Academic Affairs.

[Dr. Larry Tremblay](mailto:larry.tremblay@la.gov)  
larry.tremblay@la.gov

Richard A. Lipsey, Louisiana State University graduate, 1961; Harvard Business School OPM 1987. Married to Susan Haspel Lipsey; has two daughters and three grandchildren, all who reside in Baton Rouge. While in the Army (1962-64), he served as Aide to the Commanding General of the Military District of Washington and was intensely involved with the funeral of President John F. Kennedy (the only military officer to witness the entire autopsy of the President). Richard returned to Baton Rouge and entered the family business, Steinberg Sports Centers. In 1977, he purchased S & S Wholesale Sporting Goods (now Lipsey's) and grew it into the nation's largest firearms distributor. He and his family own Haspel, a major line of men's tailored clothing that originated in New Orleans in 1909. He is founder and partner in Lipsey Communications, a chain of over 100 wireless phone stores. Richard was appointed to serve on the Louisiana State Board of Commerce and Industry and subsequently on the State Board of Regents by former Governor Jindal. He served as a co-chair for the transition team for Governor John Bel Edwards. Richard is a longtime higher education leader and has served on the Louisiana Board of Regents since 2013 and currently is serving his second term as its Chair.



[Mr. Richard Lipsey](mailto:bor.chairman@la.gov)  
bor.chairman@la.gov



Dr. Claire Norris serves as the Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs at the Louisiana Board of Regents. In that role, she reviews existing and proposed degree programs and administrative units of Louisiana's public colleges and universities. She has also worked extensively with higher education leaders to advance policies that increase college access and success. Prior to joining the Board of Regents, Dr. Norris served as faculty at Xavier University in New Orleans. During her tenure at Xavier University, she enjoyed teaching and mentoring students.

[Dr. Claire Norris](mailto:claire.norris@la.gov)  
claire.norris@la.gov

State Representative Nancy Landry (R - Lafayette), is a leading Republican voice on issues facing Louisiana families and children. She is also a leading proponent of student-centric education reform, working to ensure that every child has the opportunity to receive a quality education. Representative Landry represents District 31 in the Louisiana House of Representatives. District 31 includes portions of Lafayette and Vermilion Parishes. Nancy was elected to the House in 2008 and re-elected without opposition in 2011.

[Rep. Nancy Landry](#)  
[landryn@legis.la.gov](mailto:landryn@legis.la.gov)

