

PRESIDENTS REPORT

# Presidents Convene to Discuss Merit in Higher Ed.

In October 2015, The Posse Foundation's biennial Presidents Conference on Higher Education assembled presidents and chancellors from some of the nation's top colleges and universities. The conference, titled "Thinking about Merit and Who Deserves To Be on Our Campuses," explored conceptions of merit and their impact on diversity, inclusion and equity at the most selective institutes of higher education.

#### THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE AWAY FROM COMPETITIVE INDIVIDUALISM TOWARD COOPERATIVE COMMITMENT

Hosted by The New York Public Library (NYPL) and Deloitte, the conference opened with remarks from Dr. Anthony W. Marx, the NYPL president and former president of Amherst College, and David Williams, the managing principal in public policy, government affairs and corporate citizenship at Deloitte.

The Spencer Foundation President Michael McPherson, co-author of *Crossing the Finish Line: Completing College at America's Public Universities*, spoke about the challenges of addressing unequal opportunity in higher education, especially at selective institutions. "We really can only justify operating these selective [colleges] if in the end they wind up benefiting those who don't get to go to those places, if they contribute to making the whole society better, and if the people who are the most disadvantaged actually have better lives because of the way these selective places do their work." said McPherson.

In a conversation moderated by University of Richmond President Ronald Crutcher, Williams College President Adam Falk and Harvard Law School Professor Lani Guinier, author of *Tyranny of the Meritocracy*, discussed the role colleges play in assessing merit, creating inclusive campus communities, and developing diverse leaders.

"This is an opportunity to move away from competitive individualism to a kind of cooperative commitment to challenge problems, to really work through problems with a group of people who are each bringing something different but nevertheless useful to the conversation," said Guinier.

In addition, Posse President and Founder Deborah Bial moderated a panel discussion among four high school administrators: Rosanna Almanzar of City College Academy of the Arts High School, Lillian de Jesus-Martinez of University Heights High School, Posse alumna Veronica Rivera Savage of City-



These 10 Posse Scholars are among thousands whose potential and accomplishments are helping Posse's college and university partners redefine conceptions of merit in higher education.

As-School High School, and Brett Roer of Queens Metropolitan High School. Each shared their perspectives on the characteristics and accomplishments, beyond test scores, that best demonstrate student potential.

Nancy Cantor, the chancellor of Rutgers University–Newark, delivered a powerful closing keynote address stressing the responsibility of universities to be institutions that equitably serve individuals, communities, society and the world.

"All of us, whether leading highly selective or more broadly inclusive

institutions, have a responsibility to play a better role in reopening the doors and bolstering the legitimacy of our institutions," said Cantor. "Cross-sector, cross-institutional, educational pathway partnerships not only work to increase high school graduation and postsecondary attainment rates, they also, as importantly, build faith among otherwise marginalized and forgotten communities in the legitimacy of our institutions. [We need] to retake the progressive mantel of higher education, to right the course of educational opportunity, societal property and democratic inclusion." **\*** 

2016

# Five New Partners Recruit First Posses Dartmouth, GWU, Notre Dame, Puget Sound, UMich Become Newest Schools to Partner with Posse

In 2015, five new college and university partners of The Posse Foundation recruited their first classes of Scholars. Dartmouth College, The George Washington University, University of Michigan, University of Notre Dame and University of Puget Sound will welcome their inaugural Posses to campus this fall.

"Posse is very excited to have these prestigious institutions join the program," says Posse President and Founder Deborah Bial. "We have a shared goal to connect outstanding students who have drive, passion and intelligence with the best schools in the country where they can become our next generation of leaders." In response to a challenge from President Obama and the First Lady, The Posse Foundation will expand its Veterans Program to include a total of 12 top colleges and universities as partners over the next five years. As part of this expansion commitment, Dartmouth joined Vassar College and Wesleyan University in the Posse Veterans Program. A member of the Ivy League, Dartmouth is a private, liberal arts institution with more than 40 departments and programs for its 4,200 undergraduates. George Washington is the sixth recruiting partner for Posse Atlanta. The university serves approximately 10,000 undergraduate students, who can access hands-on learning experiences in government, policy, law, science, technology, media and the arts that are uniquely available in the nation's capital.







Dartmouth College President Philip J. Hanlon.

Michigan selected Scholars from Chicago who will major in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. The 10th Posse STEM Program partner, Michigan has more than 28,000 undergraduates, worldrenown faculty, hundreds of clubs and organizations, and is located in the thriving city of Ann Arbor.

Notre Dame joins Grinnell College and Tulane University in recruiting Scholars from Posse's New Orleans chapter, which was established in 2011. The university offers its more than 12,000 students, including 8,745 undergraduates, rigorous academic programs while also highly valuing the importance of community involvement and service.

Nationally recognized liberal arts institution Puget Sound recruited the first Scholars from Posse Bay Area, the Foundation's newly launched 10th The George Washington University President Steven Knapp.



University of Notre Dame President Rev. John I. Jenkins.

chapter. Puget Sound's approximately 2,600 students enrolled each year have access to more than 50 academic degree fields and more than 100 student-run organizations on campus.

University of Michigan President Mark S. Schlissel.



University of Puget Sound President Ronald R. Thomas.

# Highlights from The Posse Foundation Presidents Conference on Higher Education

# Excerpted Remarks from Featured Speakers



#### **OPENING REMARKS**

**DEBORAH BIAL** President + Founder The Posse Foundation

Today is about who we should be thinking about most when we are admitting students, who deserves to be on our college campuses in general, and, as we get to the elite schools, who deserves to be there.

We all know the current demographics of the United States. We know that by 2050, they're going to change a lot; they're already changing. In most of our major cities, non-Hispanic whites are no longer the majority. When you look at who's graduating from the top four-year colleges, it's still mostly white kids.

Black and Latino students are still going to college at lower rates than white and Asian students. For those of you who are following all this, you know that Latino students are now going to college at the same or higher rates than majority students—but not at the top colleges and universities, which is really important for this conversation.

The Posse Foundation hired consultants to do an analysis for us. We asked the question: How many black and Latino students would the top hundred colleges and universities in the United States need if their student bodies were going to reflect the same percentage of blacks and Latinos that exist in the American population? We found that they would need almost 50,000 black students going into their freshman class every year. And they would need almost 60,000 Latino students. We then asked, how many black and Latino students scored 1200 or above on the math and reading sections of the SAT? We didn't pick a super high number, but we picked a respectable number. The College Board gave us this data: In 2014, only 9,700 black students scored 1200 or above. Yet, we need 50,000. In the case of Latino students, only 22,000 scored 1200 or above—but we need almost 60,000.

I think the point is clear: if we continue to rely too heavily on test scores, we will have a difficult time getting representational diversity on our campuses.

A degree from your institution, I think we would all agree, is like a golden ticket to opportunity. Yours are amazing institutions.

Today, in 2015, the U.S. Senate is 93 percent white. The CEOs of the Fortune 500 companies are also overwhelmingly white. We did a study looking at the Section 16 executives of these companies as well. We thought, maybe there is more diversity among the C-level executives. Sadly, we found that there was not much difference there either: 91 percent are white.

# IF WE CONTINUE TO RELY TOO HEAVILY ON TEST SCORES, WE WILL STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE REPRESENTATIONAL DIVERSITY ON OUR CAMPUSES

We looked at law firms. The partners in the top law firms are 93 percent white. We looked at sports. In the NBA, 98 percent of the owners are white, yet who are the players? In the NFL, 97 percent of the owners are white, yet who are the players? In baseball, 98 percent of the owners are white, yet who are the players?

Eighty-eight percent of presidents at four-year colleges are white. By the way, only 22 percent are women. And your chief academic officers are 93 percent white.

So today, we're going to talk about the critical role we all play in trying to move the needle, in trying to change this so that we can have leadership in America that's more representative of the voices of all Americans. \*



#### MUSINGS ON MERIT & DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**MICHAEL MCPHERSON** *President The Spencer Foundation* 

Who should we think about when we're thinking about admitting students to highly selective colleges? The answer I want to give to that question is, we should be thinking about the people who don't get in.

We spend more money on and give more support in other ways to people who are better prepared, even though we know that the chance to become better prepared is highly unequally distributed in this country. What can possibly justify us doing that, particularly when we know that much of the burden of restricted opportunity lands on people with low incomes and on people of color?

Fundamentally, I think, nothing can justify this. We live in a society that's highly unjust. The injustice goes quite deep and has, as we know, deep historical roots. We are in a situation of trying to figure out what's the best thing to do in a situation of great injustice? What's the best thing to do with our colleges in these circumstances?

I think we need to recognize that the deepest injustices here don't lie within the higher education system by itself. They lie in a society which gives people less opportunities from the day they're born, depending on their backgrounds, and on the deeply unequal elementary schools, preschools, high schools, neighborhoods, police, et cetera they experience. We are in what the philosopher John Rawls called, rather antiseptically, a non-ideal situation.

## WE CAN ONLY JUSTIFY THESE SELECTIVE INSTITUTIONS IF IN THE END THEY BENEFIT THOSE WHO DON'T GET TO GO TO THEM

What do you do, what's the right thing to do, in an unjust situation? I think that's a profound question for us to ask ourselves. In this non-ideal, unjust situation, how can we make the case for selective colleges and universities?

Now, what I would argue-and I have really adopted this argument from Harry Brighouse, who is a wonderful philosopher of education at the University of Wisconsin-is that we really can only justify operating these selective places if in the end they wind up benefiting those who don't get to go to those places. If they contribute to making the whole society better, and if the people who are the most disadvantaged actually have better lives because of the way these selective places do their work; if, for example, they get much better at putting persons who are more broadly representative of our society into leadership positions in business, and in government, and in the legal system, to take one example, that may offer some justification.

Now here is a case, I think a good case, to be made that our society should devote more resources to the education of those most able to use those resources (even if that ability derives from unequal treatment earlier in life), provided that ultimately this extra investment serves the common good.

I think we do have to acknowledge that the privilege extended to those of us who have attended, worked at, and in some cases, led these institutions is enormous. I don't think there's a good way to say that it's deserved in a society like this. But it is a privilege that we have, in one way or another, been granted. We can't forget that we are holders of a tremendous privilege and that it's a hard struggle to justify it. And we need to work hard to make what we do justified. **#** 



I would argue that the question we have to ask today is guite literally,

those ghosts when we don't mix in the course of daily life, sharing so few closed for, rather than designed to embrace, a growing proportion of our

#### DIVERSITY OR BUST: WHY INCLUSIVITY MUST BECOME A TOP PRIORITY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

NANCY CANTOR Chancellor Rutgers University – Newark how long can American institutions, educational and beyond, maintain our legitimacy with a public whose diversity is, according to demographer Bill Frey's analysis, remaking the face of America while so few make it to our door no less through and up the ladder? I don't think it's exaggerating to call this a national crisis.

The last several decades have seen an alarming re-segregation of the nation's schools, prisons and neighborhoods reminiscent of a precivil rights era and a retrenchment on many of the key rights, voting in particular, and the progressive housing employment and educational policies enacted to ensure some leveling of an equal playing field.

Is it surprising then that we see an emergence on all of our college campuses of what psychologist Rupert Nacoste calls our "hibernating bigotry"? For how can we banish fundamental aspects of democratic living, neither schooling, nor worshipping nor voting together.

## ALL OF US HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO REOPEN THOSE DOORS AND BOLSTER THE LEGITIMACY OF OUR INSTITUTIONS

So framed in the light of both access and democratic engagement then the compelling interest of diversity in higher education is at the core of the presumed social contract that we have with the public. All of us, whether leading public or private, highly selective, or more broadly inclusive institutions have a responsibility to reopen those doors and bolster the legitimacy of our institutions.

What indeed is merit if it reproduces the very same disparities that reinforce the view that the pathways to opportunity in this country are visibly public?

Can we take a step back from the obsession with rankings and redefine merit as legal theorist Lani Guinier is suggesting? Aren't the lessons of Posse precisely those we need to heed as we identify and honor the talent in new broader ways: create cohorts that can have some critical mass and presence on our campuses, bringing together the local intelligence from one city or town that can mix in ways that change lives for everyone in every place.

We have to show some courage on par with the resilience, grit, leadership and stunning perseverance that is apparent in the youth of our time. There's a piece of me that just asks, when are we going to retake the mantel, the progressive mantel of higher education, to right the course of educational opportunity, societal property and democratic inclusion? **\*** 

# Highlights from The Posse Foundation Presidents Conference on Higher Education

**Excerpted Remarks from Featured Speakers Continued** 



#### EXCERPT TAKEN FROM THE TYRANNY OF THE MERITOCRACY

LANI GUINIER Professor Harvard Law School

The term meritocracy was coined by British sociologist Michael Young as a spoof. In his 1958 satire, The Rise of *Meritocracy*, Young gave an imaginary account of a smug elite: instead of ancestry, ability had determined their social position. The Best would rise to the top using this simple equation: intelligence (or aptitude) + effort = merit. In Young's hypothetical meritocracy, test scores would matter the most; because those who had risen in status hierarchy would have attained their status through talent and effort, they would also be immune to criticism. Those at the top of this status hierarchy would be able to justify their continued rule because they had earned it.

To Young such a testocracy would not be a shining vision but rather a nightmare. He intended to warn society about what might happen if, in assigning social status, we continue to place gaining formal educational qualifications over all other considerations. In Young's fictional world, anyone unable to jump through educational hoops, including many from the working class, would be barred from a new, exclusive social class as discriminatory as older ones based on inheritance.

## DEMOCRATIC MERIT PROVIDES EDUCATIONAL ACCESS TO THOSE WHO SERVE THE GOALS OF A THRIVING DEMOCRACY

And that is exactly what has happened. Just as Young anticipated, merit as defined by test-based admissions has harnessed "schools and universities to the task of sieving people" according to a "narrow band of values." Those values, as it turns out, are the production and reproduction of privilege, but without obligation or shame. The rise of the testocratic meritocracy has enabled those already at the top of the heap to continue to preside without a sense of moral or political accountability.

But this is not the only possible definition of merit. The term merit originally meant "earned by service." Giving good service, such as working for the benefit of community rather than simply for personal advantage, is what made someone worthy of entitlements, such as admission to topranked colleges and plum internships and job opportunities. Democratic merit revives this notion by providing educational access to those who serve the goals and contribute to the conditions of a thriving democracy. It does what our current meritocracy fails to do: it creates an incentive system that emphasizes not just the possession of individual talent and related personal success but also the ability to collaborate and the commitment to building a better society for more people. Our nation has always prided itself on overthrowing tyranny. We now have a new one in our midst: the tyranny of our current understanding of meritocracy. 🖊

# Quotes from The Posse Foundation Presidents Conference on Higher Education



into your midst, allow them to change your culture, to change you, who you are as an institution. To me, that ought to be the higher cause for why we want to be committed to diversity, as well as for social justice reasons." Ronald Crutcher

"You miss an opportunity to grow and

develop and change if you do not, when you invite the unknown brother and sister

President, University of Richmond

"One of the things that I appreciate about Posse is they're part of an effort to associate prestige with diversity, to say being a good institution also means being a diverse institution. If we're going to be in a world of lists and rankings and judgments about our institutions, I like the idea of setting a standard where diversity is an important part of what it means to be a top-notch institution."

> Alison Byerly President, Lafayette College

"Since the beginning, Posse has helped our nation's best schools not miss out on the non-traditional brilliance of students. Posse advocates for qualities like grit, courage and resilience, alongside intelligence in its many forms."





"The question is not who deserves to be on our campus, but who do you get the privilege to teach? I think we need to look at young people as a resource that we get the privilege to engage with and develop and teach."

Rosanna Almanzar Guidance Counselor, City College Academy of the Arts High School

"We work with a great number of organizations that we think have cracked the code; we are pleased and honored to say that Posse is one of them. What Debbie and her team do is noble and outstanding. So Posse is an organization that we believe in tremendously."

David Williams Managing Principal, Public Policy, Government Affairs and Corporate Citizenship, Deloitte LLP

"If you want to be on the frontier of new knowledge generation that's going to challenge conventional wisdom, you have





Veronica Rivera Savage Social Worker, City-As-School High School Vanderbilt University Posse Alumna



to change who's doing the research, who's having the conversation, and who's in the room. If you don't have the full range of views, you are never going to know the full extent and nature of those problems in society you want to address." Lisa Lynch President, Brandeis University

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"We know that students learn as much from each other in and out of the classroom as they learn from faculty. And if they come from more varied backgrounds and experiences and views, they learn infinitely more than if they all come from the same kinds of backgrounds, experiences and views."

Anthony W. Marx President, The New York Public Library Former President, Amherst College



"Our campuses can only be relevant to our students if they are diverse. We have to work to create an environment, both an educational and a social environment, where everyone can thrive. We're successful when we create small communities in which students can work with each other and support each other."

Adam Falk President, Williams College

# **Annual Posse Gala Honors Northwestern President**

Event Raises \$2.1 Million To Support Scholar Success and Sting, Debbie Harry, Chris Botti Perform



Northwestern University President Morton O. Schapiro.

The Posse Foundation's annual gala, held on Wednesday, May 20, 2015, was a star-studded affair featuring performances by world-renowned artists Sting, Debbie Harry and Chris Botti. Close to 600 guests filled Cipriani Wall Street in downtown Manhattan to honor the 2015 Posse Stars in recognition of their leadership and commitment to improving the lives of others. The event raised \$2.1 million to support Posse's programs and Scholars.

The first Posse Star of the evening was presented to State Street Corporation by Posse alumni and State Street employees Yasser El Hamouni and Lisa Hixon and accepted by CEO Joseph L. Hooley. State Street provides financial support,



Sting performing at the Posse gala.

event space, volunteers, board members, career and writing coaches, and career building opportunities for Scholars and alumni.

The enthusiastic leadership of Northwestern University President Morton O. Schapiro, who is among the nation's leading authorities on the economics of higher education, was acknowledged with a Posse Star presented by Northwestern Posse Scholars London Edwards-Johnson and Jourdan Dorrell.

Garrett Moran, a Posse life director and former national board member, and his wife, Mary, have helped thousands of Scholars attend top colleges and become leaders in the workforce. Their

incredible generosity was recognized by former Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, Posse national board member and Ropes & Gray Co-Managing Partner Diane Patrick, and Posse New York's newest Middlebury College Posse.

The final Posse Star was awarded to Middlebury College Posse alumna Antoinette Rangel, the special assistant and advisor to the press secretary at the White House. Recognized by Univision as one the 15 most influential Latinos in the executive branch, Antoinette is an inspiration to the Scholars who follow in her footsteps, especially those interested in public service, politics and governance. 🗯

# 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

#### **10TH POSSE CHAPTER OPENS IN** SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

Posse Bay Area, the Foundation's 10th chapter, launched with the University of Puget Sound as its first recruiting partner. Vanderbilt University Posse alumnus Leroy Foster is the first program alumnus to become a director of one of Posse's chapters.

#### **90 PERCENT PERSISTENCE** AND GRADUATION RATES

Hundreds of Posse Scholars graduated from Posse partner institutions, joining an elite network of more than 3,100 alumni as the next generation of leaders in a broad range of professional fields.

#### SCHOLARS WIN FULL-TUITION **COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS**

Selected from an extremely competitive pool of more than 17,000, more than 700 new Scholars in 10 cities were selected by Posse Posse's partner institutions to receive four-year, full-tuition leadership scholarships.

#### **SCHOLARS, ALUMNI WIN PRESTIGIOUS FELLOWSHIPS**

More than 50 Posse Scholars and alumni won major national and international fellowship awards, including Fulbright, Gilman, Mellon Mays, Watson, Humanity In Action, Peace Corps and the National Science Foundation, among others. For a complete list of winners, visit www.ow.ly/QSflu.

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# THE **COSSE** FOUNDATION, INC.

Founded in 1989, The Posse Foundation identifies public high school students with extraordinary academic and leadership potential who may be overlooked by traditional college selection processes. The Foundation extends to these students the opportunity to pursue personal and academic excellence by placing them in supportive, multicultural teams-Possesof 10 students. The Foundation's partner colleges and universities award Posse Scholars four-year, full-tuition leadership scholarships.

#### **POSSE NATIONAL OFFICE**

14 Wall Street, Suite 8A-60 New York, NY 10005 Tel: (212) 405-1691 Fax: (212) 405-1697 info@possefoundation.org

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