

The White House: President Biden announces key appointments to boards and commissions

Posted on Friday, Jul 15, 2022

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

WASHINGTON – Today, President Biden announced his intent to appoint the following individuals to serve in key roles:

- Margaret Aitken Haggerty, Member and Chair, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Jennifer D. Bishop, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Kenneth Vernon Brittingham, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Clifford K. Chiu, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Mary Quinn Delaney, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Ryan D. Easterly, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Peter Van D. Emerson, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Antonio Farias, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Neil J. Horgan, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Frank F. Islam, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Cynthia Jackson Hammond, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Dan J. Kessler, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Domenika Lynch, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Sarah McBride, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Rodin A. Mehrbani, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Brian O'Dwyer, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Stephanie Robinson, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Kurt Russell, Sr., Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Juan Antonio Sepúlveda, Jr., Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Terrance Blackman Stroud, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars
- Jason Sung Won Yoon, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

The Commission on Presidential Scholars is a group of eminent private citizens appointed by the President to select and honor the Presidential Scholars. Commissioners are selected from across the country, representing the fields of education, medicine, law, social services, business, and other professions. The Commissioners make the final selection of the 161 Presidential Scholars. The Scholars demonstrate exceptional accomplishments in academics, the arts, career and technical education and an outstanding commitment to public service.

Margaret Aitken Haggerty, Member and Chair, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Margaret Aitken Haggerty is a seasoned communications professional who works with local, national, and international businesses and nonprofit organizations, providing them with strategic communication counsel, crisis communication planning, messaging strategy, and media intervention. Prior to founding her own firm, for more than a decade Aitken served as the Spokesperson and Press Secretary for then-Senator, now President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. Throughout her career, she has collaborated with and advised top government officials, political candidates, and business executives and has served on the boards of several philanthropic organizations.

Aitken is a native Delawarean and resides in Wilmington with her husband Chris, and sons Ronan and Cullen. She is a graduate of the University of Delaware and holds a master's degree in Communication and Media Studies from Johns Hopkins University.

Jennifer D. Bishop, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Born in Chicago, Illinois and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, Dr. Jennifer Bishop has wide-ranging experience as an entrepreneur, author, speaker, philanthropist, and faith and community leader. In addition to serving as Chief Executive Officer for the Savannah Communications Group, BishopSpeaks, and Grace Academy Child Development Center, Bishop also serves in the non-profit sector as Chief Executive Officer for RARE Leaders and the APEX Institute. She is currently seated as the Chairwoman for the City of Columbia Commercial Revolving Loan Fund Committee. Bishop earned her Bachelor of Arts in History and Master of Public Administration at Savannah State University and her Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership from Columbia International University. Bishop has committed herself to expanding educational opportunities through her professional activity as well as working with organizations like the Children's Trust of South Carolina, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and Jack & Jill of America. Making her home in Columbia, South Carolina,

Bishop is married to Dr. Aaron Bishop, and they are the proud parents of one son, Peyton.

Kenneth Vernon Brittingham, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Ken Brittingham is a leader in learning whose working life has been devoted to improving the quality of education for children, youth, families, and adult learners. As a counselor, school psychologist, principal, school superintendent, state education director, and technical college board Vice Chairman and Board President, Brittingham has provided leadership at the elementary, middle school, high school, higher education, and state education department levels. His lifetime work has centered on creating the conditions where all learners achieve at high levels. At the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, he served as the State Director of the Bureau of Exceptional Children and co-authored a statewide distributed book on improving career development programs in local schools. He has a bachelor's degree in Industrial Technology, a masters in school counseling, and a masters in school psychology. His Doctorate of Philosophy was earned at the University of Wisconsin, and he was invited to the American Association of Educational Research annual convention to present his dissertation on improving school community relationships.

Clifford K. Chiu, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Clifford K. Chiu serves as a senior adviser to Vista Equity Partners and its executive committee. Chiu sits as a corporate director on the boards of Aquia, Allvue Systems, Apptio, Finastra, Fusion Risk Management, Logic Monitor, Securonix, and TIBCO, as well as a senior adviser to Neuberger Berman in Hong Kong. He is a member of the National Committee on United States-China Relations and a public appointee on the advisory panel of Cyberport Hong Kong. With a career spanning over four decades, Chiu was a partner of Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. where he founded and led capital raising and investor relations for the Asia Pacific region. He was previously at JP Morgan Asset Management and at Salomon Smith Barney/Citigroup and its predecessors based in New York, Hong Kong, and Tokyo.

Chiu is a director or trustee of the Seton Fund, Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce, Health Alliance for Austin Musicians, and St. James Settlement. A lifelong champion of education and healthcare, Chiu has served on the global advisory boards of the Weingarten Learning Resources Center at the University of Pennsylvania and of the University of Chicago Booth School of Business where in 2015 he was appointed the first "distinguished executive-in-residence" at its Hong

Kong campus. Through the Clinton Global Initiative, Chiu launched a 2015 commitment to action, “K-12 Learning Through Global Connectivity” in language arts and STEM skills. Chiu also endowed annual scholarships at his alma maters Chicago Booth and the University of Pennsylvania as well as the Hong Kong University Medical School, Pomona College, and the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth. Chiu has partnered with Dell Seton and Ascension Seton Medical Centers in student mental health, underinsured COVID-19 pandemic patients, and maternal morbidity. Chiu proudly underwrote Stop AAPI Hate’s first-ever impact report (“Turning a Moment into a Movement”) that was released in January 2022.

Mary Quinn Delaney, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Quinn Delaney is the Founder and Board Chair of Akonadi Foundation, located in Oakland, California, which supports the development of powerful social change movements to eliminate structural racism and create a racially just society. Delaney has spent over thirty-five years working in social change philanthropy.

In addition to Akonadi Foundation, she currently serves on the boards of East Bay Community Foundation, the Oakland Museum of California, Planned Parenthood Action Fund, Women Donors Network Action, and Smart Justice California, which works on criminal justice reform. Over the years, she has served on many other boards, including the ACLU of Northern California, Community Change, the Democracy Alliance, Tides Foundation, and Pitzer College. In 2019, Delaney was appointed to the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls where she continues to serve as a Commissioner championing the power and strength of women and girls. She is married to Wayne Jordan and has two adult sons and two grandchildren.

Ryan D. Easterly, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Ryan Easterly serves as executive director of the WITH Foundation. An experienced grantmaker, strategist, and advocate, Easterly lives and works at the intersections of race, class, disability, and sexual orientation and is driven by a desire to effect meaningful change. Before joining WITH, he served on its Board of Directors, which advanced his commitment to disability justice and the need for broader access to comprehensive healthcare for adults with developmental disabilities. Easterly has worked in the federal sector and within community outreach and advocacy efforts. He is a co-founder and previous director of Northern California Community Relations at MySupport, Inc. As manager of the National Youth Transitions Initiative for The HSC Foundation, a Washington, DC operating foundation of a health system for children and young adults with complex medical needs, he provided funding and

programmatic support for a grantee and collaborative network serving young people with disabilities and young veterans. Easterly also worked at the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

Easterly regularly advises on issues such as community participatory grantmaking, inclusive philanthropy, leadership development, employment, and healthcare impacting communities of color, the foster care system, and the LGBTQ+ community. He is a member of the Presidents' Council on Disability Inclusion in Philanthropy, the Disability & Philanthropy Forum Steering Committee, and co-chairs Exponent Philanthropy's Disability Funders Peer Circle. Easterly hails from Alabama, and after moving to the West Coast, often wonders when he will find his next glass of sweet tea.

Peter Van D. Emerson, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Peter Van D. Emerson is an entrepreneur in business and public policy. He is co-founder of KAPE International, LLC, a global strategic communications firm, an Advisor on Policy for the Division on Addiction, Cambridge Health Alliance, a teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School, and Chairman, College Task Force on College Gambling and Alcohol Policies. As a teaching assistant at Harvard College, he was twice awarded a Certificate of Distinction in Teaching. Emerson works with students on the critical challenges of addiction and mental health.

Emerson has served on the Board of Visitors for the University of North Carolina-Wilmington. He was elected to the American Academy of Underwater Sciences and The Explorers Club. Emerson served on the Ocean Futures' Board and the Advisory Committee for the NY Aquarium, part of the Wildlife Conservation Society. His previous public service includes the National Advisory Committee on Oceans and Atmosphere and the President's Commission on White House Fellowships. Emerson received a BA from New York University, *magna cum laude*, and a MPA from the Harvard Kennedy School.

Antonio Farias, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Antonio Farias serves as the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion responsible for driving and developing initiatives that build on and advance CU Denver's commitment to equity and justice. Farias joined CU Denver from the University of Florida, where he served as its inaugural Chief Diversity Officer and Senior Advisor to the President. There he oversaw university-wide efforts to advance The Big I.D.E.A! – Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Access. Farias worked closely with cabinet members, deans, and a network of campus diversity liaisons

embedded in the leadership teams of each college and business unit, who advanced I.D.E.A. within their respective micro cultures. Farias was previously Vice President for Equity and Inclusion at Wesleyan University and, before that, the inaugural Chief Diversity Officer for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. He has bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of California, Berkeley and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of California, Riverside. He worships his daughter, reenergizes through a plant-based diet, runs ultra-marathons to test the limits of WHY, fly fishes to commune with the divine, and believes failure is the greatest teacher. He is currently failing to publish his first novel.

Neil J. Horgan, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Horgan was born in Chester, Pennsylvania and raised in Wilmington, Delaware, and is a graduate of Archmere Academy. He earned a Bachelor's of Science in Business Administration from Georgetown University with a major in Accounting and a Master of Taxation from Villanova University. Horgan is presently the Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer at Villanova University. He lives in Havertown, PA with his wife Kathryn and their two children. Horgan previously served on the Board of Directors of the Mercy Health System of Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Frank F. Islam, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Frank Islam is an entrepreneur, philanthropist, and civic leader with a special commitment to civic, educational, and artistic causes. He currently heads the FI Investment Group, a private investment holding company that he founded after he sold his information technology firm, the QSS Group, in 2007. Islam serves and has served on numerous boards and advisory councils including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the U.N. Foundation, the U.S. Institute of Peace, and the Woodrow Wilson Center. He has also served or serves on boards and councils at several universities including John Hopkins, American University, George Mason University, the University of Maryland, and Harvard University.

Islam has written two well-regarded books on the American condition: *Working the Pivot Points: To Make America Work Again* and *Renewing the American Dream: A Citizen's Guide for Restoring Our Competitive Advantage*. He blogs regularly on Medium and was a contributor to the Huffington Post for nearly a decade. In 2018, Islam established the Frank Islam Institute for 21st Century Citizenship which maintains a website and publishes a monthly newsletter featuring articles and other material directed at addressing the civic engagement deficit and challenges to democracy in the U.S. and internationally. Islam received his B.S. and M.S. in Computer Science from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Cynthia Jackson Hammond, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Dr. Cynthia Jackson Hammond is President of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). As President, she has led several initiatives including the development and adoption of CHEA's value statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion and an enhanced focus on service to CHEA's over 1,900 member institutions. Jackson Hammond has been a member of the higher education community for more than 30 years. Her professional career has included tenured and administrative positions at universities throughout the United States, including the University of Louisiana Monroe, California State University Dominguez Hills, Delaware State University, the University of North Carolina Charlotte, Winston-Salem State University, and Coppin State University. Most recently, she completed her tenure as President of Central State University in Ohio. She holds graduate degrees in Communications, Counseling Education, Student Personnel Services, and Higher Education Administration.

Jackson Hammond has served on many national boards including the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, NCAA Division II Presidents Council, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. She has appeared several times on Capitol Hill providing testimony regarding the status of 1890 Land-Grant institutions. Throughout her career, Jackson Hammond has been committed to advancing college success, equity, and integrity in higher education. She is an ardent advocate for quality assurance and transparency in higher education.

Dan J. Kessler, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Dan Kessler is the Co-Founder and Managing Partner of K2 Developers, a company developing and repurposing existing buildings into dignified, economical housing for essential workers in ski, sand, and entertainment destinations across the United States. Working with K2, a public REIT and an investment fund, Kessler has worked to close \$4 billion and 10 million square feet of real estate transactions. Prior to co-founding K2 Developers, Kessler worked in hospitality in executive leadership programs at Marriott International and MGM Resorts International in Las Vegas.

Kessler's civic activity began with his days as a White House Intern for President Obama. He is currently a Political Partner with the Truman National Security Project and a New Leaders Council Fellow. Kessler has received various awards and recognitions, including a 40Under40 Award from both the Philadelphia Business Journal and City & State Pennsylvania, and received a 30Under30 Award from Politics PA. Kessler was invited by The Council of Europe and delivered a speech at

the World Forum for Democracy in Strasbourg, France, where his grassroots engagement strategy placed second amongst thousands for the “Democracy Innovation Award” and was published in MIT Sloan Experts. Kessler graduated with his MBA from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Sloan School of Management and BBA, *summa cum laude*, from The George Washington University School of Business.

Domenika Lynch, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Domenika Lynch is the Executive Director of the Aspen Institute Latinos and Society Program, with the mission of empowering Latino communities and promoting long-term economic growth and resiliency. Over the course of two decades in leadership roles, Lynch has overseen strategic planning, policy advocacy, and public affairs campaigns for nonprofits and corporations, increasing donor and stakeholder support and raising millions of dollars for organizational endowments.

Prior to joining the Aspen Institute, Lynch served as president and CEO of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, the preeminent Latino Leadership Institute founded by Hispanic members of Congress in Washington, DC. She previously spent more than a decade as executive director of the Latino Alumni Association at the University of Southern California. Her professional breadth extends into the corporate sector, with previous leadership positions at Bank of America and Univision. Lynch currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Congressional Management Foundation and serves on Bank of America’s National Community Advisory Council, which advises the bank on community development, environmental, and consumer policy issues. She also serves on the Council on Underserved Communities, which provides the U.S. Small Business Administration with input, advice, and recommendations on strategies to help strengthen competitiveness and sustainability for small businesses in underserved communities. A graduate of the USC Price School of Public Policy, Lynch holds a master’s degree from the USC Rossier School of Education. She is the proud parent of her son Jacob, also a USC alumnus.

Sarah McBride, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Senator Sarah McBride represents the First Senate District in the Delaware Senate. McBride serves as the chair of the Health and Social Services Committee, where she has championed health care reforms that lower costs, expand access, and improve quality. In just her first term, McBride successfully passed paid family and medical leave in the First State, marking the largest expansion of Delaware’s social safety net in decades. Prior to her service in the state senate, McBride was a national

leader in the fight for LGBTQ equality and served as the spokesperson for the Human Rights Campaign. When she was elected, McBride became the first openly transgender state senator in American history.

Rodin A. Mehrbani, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Rudy Mehrbani is the senior director of the Governance Program at Democracy Fund, an independent foundation. Mehrbani is also a senior practitioner fellow at the University of Chicago's Center for Effective Government. He was previously a senior fellow and senior counsel at the Brennan Center for Justice, a nonpartisan law and policy center, where he worked to protect voting rights and directed the National Task Force on Rule of Law and Democracy. From 2016 to 2021, he was a member of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, where he served as the Board's vice chair from 2019 to 2020.

Mehrbani served in a variety of senior roles in the Obama-Biden Administration. From 2016 to 2017, he was an Assistant to the President and Director of the Presidential Personnel Office in the White House. In that role, he was also a member of the White House Transition Coordinating Council. He was the General Counsel of the Peace Corps from 2014 to 2016, serving as the principal legal officer and a senior advisor to the Director of the Peace Corps. Before that, he served as an Associate Counsel and Special Assistant to the President in the White House Counsel's Office. Earlier in his career, Mehrbani was a litigation associate at Kirkland & Ellis LLP. He received a BA from Emory University and a JD from the University of Virginia School of Law.

Brian O'Dwyer, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Brian O'Dwyer has distinguished himself in the law and education. He is a founder of the Emerald Isle Immigration Center dedicated to providing assistance to all immigrants. His work in promoting peace in Ireland was acknowledged when he was named Grand Marshall of the New York Saint Patrick's Day Parade. A longtime advocate for equal access to higher education, he has served as Chair of the CUNY Law School Foundation, Chair of the Advisory Council of the George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management, and Board Member of Dublin City University Educational Trust.

O'Dwyer has earned an AB and LLM from the George Washington University, a JD from Georgetown University, and an MA from Middlebury College. He is a member of Sigma Delta Pi national Spanish honorary and has been awarded the honorary degrees of Doctor of Philosophy from Dublin City University and Doctor of Humane

Letters from Middlebury College.

Stephanie Robinson, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Stephanie Robinson is a Board Member and advisor to educational, healthcare, and cultural organizations. She currently serves as a publicly-elected Trustee for the Ross School District in California, a position she has held since 2015, and as a Director and Vice Chair of the MarinHealth Foundation. Previously, Robinson worked as a Vice President in Health Care Investment Banking at Bankers Trust and as a management consultant at the Boston Consulting Group. She is active in local, state, and national politics as a fundraiser, community organizer, and voter protection volunteer. She holds an MBA from Harvard Business School, a JD from Harvard Law School, and a BA from UC Berkeley in Economics.

Kurt Russell, Sr., Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Kurt Russell, the 2022 National Teacher of the Year, is a veteran teacher at Oberlin High School in the Oberlin City Schools district who believes education can transform students' lives. For the past twenty-five years, Russell has included cultural relevance in the curriculum for the 9th-12th grade classes he teaches: African American History, U.S. History, IB History of the Americas, and Race, Gender, and Oppression. Russell received the teacher of the year awards from the Oberlin Heritage Center and the Oberlin Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In addition to teaching history classes, Russell also serves as a lead teacher at Oberlin High School and advisor for the Black Student Union, Student Council, and Junior Class.

Juan Antonio Sepúlveda, Jr., Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Sepúlveda currently serves as the President's Special Advisor for Inclusive Excellence and the Ron Calgaard Distinguished Professor of Practice in the Political Science Department at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. Prior to Trinity, he was Senior Vice President of Station Services at PBS, where he collaborated with more than 160 PBS stations across the country to strengthen their connections to their local communities and to each other as a national public media network. Sepúlveda joined PBS from the Democratic National Committee, where he was Senior Advisor for Hispanic Affairs helping re-elect President Barack Obama with record-level Hispanic support. In 2008, Sepúlveda served as the Texas State Director for the Obama for America campaign.

In the Obama-Biden Administration, Sepúlveda served as Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, where he designed

and led the first-ever White House Hispanic Policy Conference along with a series of White House Hispanic Community Action Summits. His national strategy consulting organization, the Common Enterprise, which grew out of a national Rockefeller Foundation initiative, took him to more than 35 states where he worked with communities in urban and rural settings. Sepúlveda was the third Latino awarded a Rhodes Scholarship. He graduated from Harvard College with a Bachelor of Arts in Government. He also holds a Master of Arts in Politics, Philosophy & Economics from The Queen's College, Oxford University, a Juris Doctorate from Stanford Law School, and has been admitted to the Texas Bar.

Terrance Blackman Stroud, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Terrance Blackman Stroud is a Deputy Commissioner at the New York City Department of Social Services leading the Office of Training & Workforce Development, which manages the development and implementation of the agency's learning strategy. Stroud serves on the National Staff Development Training Association's Executive Advisory Council and the Public Sector Network's Leadership Advisory Board. He is also one of the Tri-chairs of the American Public Human Services Association's Equity Diversity and Inclusion Peer Community.

Stroud is a fourth-generation educator whose focus is on the intersection of academic institutions and the global workforce. He is a New York-based adjunct faculty member at Indiana University Bloomington. He is the inaugural Global Affairs Fellow at the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies where he leads the Global Leaders and Professionals Program. In addition, Stroud is an Adjunct Professor of Law overseeing the Maurer School of Law's New York Externship Program and is the first Black recipient of the Adjunct Faculty Teaching Award. Stroud is a graduate of Brooklyn Technical High School, Brooklyn College, and Indiana Maurer School of Law.

Jason Sung Won Yoon, Member, Commission on Presidential Scholars

Jason Yoon has dedicated much of his career to supporting the talent and creativity of America's young people. He has served as the executive director of New Urban Arts, a nationally recognized nonprofit youth arts studio (winner of a 2009 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award); the Director of Education at the Queens Museum, a museum renowned for its commitment to art, education, and social justice; and the executive director of Atlas: DIY, a nonprofit that worked with immigrant youth through legal services, educational programs, and leadership development. For several years, he also taught art and social change in Goucher College's MA program in Cultural Sustainability. Currently, Yoon is working on

several personal creative writing projects and as the interim development manager for Sakhi for South Asian Women, a groundbreaking gender justice organization. Yoon has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Rhode Island School of Design and a Masters in Public Administration from NYU's Wagner School of Public Service.