



ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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About the Foundation

Trellis Foundation is a grant-making public charitable organization focused on improving postsecondary attainment for low-income students and students of color in Texas. Our approach is highly collaborative and prioritizes catalytic investments focused on changing or informing change to policy, practice, and systems.

In 2017, Trellis Foundation was established by Trellis Company (formerly TG), a company with over 40 years of experience in supporting students and families in Texas who are pursuing their educational and career dreams. From 2006 to 2016, Trellis Company committed more than \$400 million to help nonprofit organizations and higher education institutions improve the rates of postsecondary completion. Our priorities are guided by the experience and expertise of Trellis Company's prior funding efforts, as well as its institutional knowledge gained from work in student debt and financial wellness.



Trellis Foundation leadership, Jenny Achilles and Kristin Boyer

Letter from the Board Chair & Executive Director



To our collaborators, partners, and friends –

We are delighted to share this annual report outlining Trellis Foundation's activities from October 2021 through September 2022. Over the course of the past year, two themes consistently emerged in our conversations, conferences, and the work we supported: postsecondary value and human connection.

With the return to in-person meetings signaled by our Texas Postsecondary Education Summit in March 2022, we chose to focus on the question of value in higher education. We were fortunate to follow on the work of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Institute for Higher Education Policy to localize the impact of these questions for Texas institutions, students, and systems. The highlights of the rich conversations from the Summit are included on page 5, but we are still wrestling with philanthropy's role in measuring the value of a postsecondary education. In many ways, it seems easy to correlate wages to degrees earned, but the complexities of a value proposition that includes increased civic engagement, personal enrichment, and a better understanding of the world in general can be difficult to quantify. We welcome the continued discussion with you about the greater good of higher education.



Similarly, we have been reminded in multiple ways that personal connections play an outsized role in student success outcomes. Our efforts to streamline processes and clarify policies rarely matter if students can't identify at least one other person on campus who could greet them by name. We have more data, more sophisticated ways to collect information, and amazing technological tools at our disposal, but it still comes down to our ability to recognize the humanity in others and to care about their successes as much as our own.

To that end, we celebrate the good work of our grantees, colleagues, and friends captured in this annual report for 2022. We know there is still much to do, and we welcome the opportunity to connect with you and all those who share this mission with us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark D. Milliron'.

Mark D. Milliron

Chair, Trellis Foundation Board of Directors
President, National University

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kristin J. Boyer'.

Kristin J. Boyer, Executive Director
Trellis Foundation

Programming Highlights

After years of reduced social and professional connection, Trellis Foundation joined colleagues in a renewed appreciation for the power of in-person connections. As we share highlights from 2022, we are pleased to have re-introduced convenings as a key component of our work. These conversations with our community, coupled with published learnings from the Foundation and our grantees, have accelerated our understanding of the partners and practices advancing outcomes for students across the state.

Biannual Summit

During our biannual Summit, *Value[ED]: Centering Higher Education in the Quest for Equitable Outcomes for Texans*, national, state, and regional leaders shared their perspectives on the value of postsecondary education both for direct-to-college students and for working adult students. Our key learnings from the day's discussions included:

- Despite current debates on the importance of postsecondary education, college is valuable, but we must transform educational opportunities to be responsive to the needs and challenges of today's students and employers.
- Students are deciding to pursue postsecondary education because they view it as leverage to change their lives, but they need increased coaching on opportunities and elimination of process and logistical barriers in order to access education in the midst of work and family obligations.
- We are experiencing a change in employer needs across the country; this offers a pivotal opportunity for postsecondary systems to partner with employers for the economic prosperity of students, businesses, various industries, and local communities.

Upskilling Convening

Members of the 2021 Upskilling and Reskilling Grantee Learning Community, along with partners from across the state, convened in September, with JFF serving as the community lead and technical assistance provider. Highlights included a panel discussion with three additional regional initiatives and cross-region sharing of career pathways. In addition, the opportunity to problem solve and break bread together led to several themes of learning:

- Hire staff specifically for recruiting, particularly individuals from the communities you're seeking to engage

- Increase visibility in the community through community events and hosting mobile "expos"
- Build and leverage relationships with local chambers, judges, wrap-around support organizations, and faith-based organizations to support recruitment efforts in target communities
- Put the adult learner at the center of marketing design and strategy (e.g., project website in Spanish, personalized emails, utilizing a text messaging platform, including up-to-date program and labor market information, and clear next steps for getting connected to a program)

NCAN conference reception

As more and more colleagues felt comfortable attending conferences this year, the Foundation partnered with the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) to host a reception for more than 100 Texas attendees at their annual conference. This opportunity to network allowed the Foundation and our colleagues to meet new partners for increased collaboration in the years to come.

Publications

In addition to the event summaries highlighted in the previous sections, the Foundation collaborated with partners on additional publications. We were pleased to co-author a [guide](#) for organizations considering implementation of a student policy fellows program.

In collaboration with other members of Grantmakers for Education, the Foundation served as a client for a summer research project through the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE). "[Emerging and Best Practice Strategies to Center Equity in Philanthropic Evaluation Practices](#)," was authored by fellow Vianney Gavilanes, University of California, Berkeley.

2022 Summary of Grant Commitments

ORGANIZATION/PROJECT	AMOUNT	FOCUS AREA
Alamo Colleges Foundation <i>Alamo Thrive</i> To develop more culturally aware and effectively supportive faculty and staff, more culturally responsive counseling, and improved coping skills and help-seeking behaviors of Alamo students.	\$199,755	Holistic Support
Amarillo College <i>Panhandle Partnership: Communities of Caring and Love</i> To develop a collaborative and comprehensive mental health services project impacting all four rural higher education institutions in the Texas Panhandle.	\$199,531	Holistic Support
American YouthWorks <i>American YouthWorks Discretionary Grant: General Operating Bridge Funding</i> To maintain staff support of students as the organization evaluates revenue opportunities and pivots as needed in response to the COVID shut-downs.	\$25,000	Holistic Support
Angelo State University <i>Removing the Stigma of "Crazy" and Restoring Humanity: Improving student mental health and wellbeing through education, primary prevention, and connection</i> To promote mental health and well-being among students by debunking mental health myths and revealing the humanity in seeking out resources when facing difficulties.	\$113,292	Holistic Support
Austin Community College District <i>ACC Holistic Health Ecosystem for Marginalized Students</i> To partner ACC with community organizations to promote existing counseling services, provide holistic health resources, and connect underserved students, particularly uninsured and underinsured BIPOC men, to mental health evaluations to ensure they have access to the wellness tools they need to complete their degree program and access continuous care.	\$179,584	Holistic Support
Austin Community College Foundation <i>Discretionary Grant</i> This discretionary grant approved by the Foundation's Board of Directors supports scholarships for ACC students, in honor of Dr. Rhodes' service as founding board chair.	\$5,000	Holistic Support
Communities Foundation Of Texas <i>Educate Texas Higher Education, Workforce, Policy & Advocacy Support</i> To provide ongoing support for Educate Texas' higher education strategy, policymaker education initiative, and capacity-building technical assistance for Alamo Colleges.	\$200,000	Streamlined Pathways
CREED <i>Increasing Postsecondary Success in the El Paso Region Through Improved Access to High Quality Counseling and Student-Centered Support</i> To ensure that every student in the region has access to highly effective counseling and support so that they are successful in high school and ensure matriculation into and completion from a postsecondary institution.	\$100,000	Streamlined Pathways
Education Trust <i>Equity in Higher Ed: focus on Justice Impacted Students & Emergency Aid Distribution</i> To advance equitable justice policy in Texas and surface promising practices and challenges related to the equitable distribution of emergency aid to Texas students.	\$101,000	Holistic Support/ Reconnecting Learners
Higher Learning Advocates <i>The Today's Students Coalition Student Ambassadors Program</i> The Today's Students Coalition (TSC) will launch a Student Ambassadors Program for postsecondary students to participate in advocacy and educational training on discrete higher education policy issues to advance student voice in the national conversation around the changing demographics and needs of today's students.	\$71,000	Holistic Support

2022 Summary of Grant Commitments

ORGANIZATION/PROJECT	AMOUNT	FOCUS AREA
Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute <i>Lead Convener and Technical Assistance Provider for Trellis Foundation's "Mental Wellbeing: A Basic Need for Postsecondary Students" Cohort</i> To serve as lead technical assistance provider and learning community intermediary for the postsecondary "Mental Health and Wellbeing" grant cohort.	\$350,000	Holistic Support
Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute <i>Supplemental: Technical Assistance Pass-through Support for "Mental Wellbeing: A Basic Need for Postsecondary Students" Cohort</i> To allow Meadows Institute to determine cohort TA needs and braid services together to maximize support and minimize cost; dollars will pass through to Active Minds, JED Foundation and the Steve Fund.	\$300,000	Holistic Support
National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) <i>Sustainable Student Success through Strategic Finance</i> NACUBO will bring together 26 higher education Chief Business Officers who will lead a small institutional working group to develop and implement strategic financial frameworks and tools that model how to prioritize and sustain equitable student success initiatives.	\$299,057	Streamlined Pathways
National College Attainment Network <i>2022 NCAN Conference Support</i> 2022 NCAN national conference sponsorship will ensure that a critical mass of college access and success professionals in Texas will be able to attend the conference in Atlanta, participate in professional development, and share their effective practices with colleagues from across the country.	\$99,500	Holistic Support
Paul Quinn College <i>Strengthening the Mental Health and Wellness Program @ Paul Quinn College</i> To provide initial mental health assessments, counseling referrals and a variety of campus-based services to all incoming (on-campus) students in order to support continued wellness, prevent further victimization or trauma, and to support retention and graduation from Paul Quinn.	\$199,870	Holistic Support
PelotonU <i>PelotonU General Operating Support</i> To provide general operating support for PelotonU while they undergo review and revision of their financial, strategic, and compensation systems to better reflect their values of equity and inclusion as they expand statewide to offer working adults a pathway and the support to graduate from college.	\$101,420	Holistic Support/ Reconnecting Learners
Project MALES/Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color <i>Improving the educational outcomes of male students of color in Texas Border postsecondary institutions during the Pandemic Era</i> To develop and implement a research-in-action partnership between Project MALES and new and current Consortium partners to address and respond to the ongoing Covid-19 related barriers that have contributed to enrollment declines for male students of color within South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley.	\$200,000	Holistic Support
Sam Houston State University <i>Preparing students for the challenges of higher education</i> To provide effective and comprehensive support and guidance to every incoming SHSU student, through peer-led learning communities over the course of the week before classes begin, so that each is adequately prepared for the academic, mental, and social challenges of higher education.	\$199,986	Holistic Support
San Jacinto Community College Foundation <i>AIMS – Assess and Improve Mental Health Services at San Jacinto Community</i> AIMS – Assess and Improve Mental Health Services, will expand student support services at San Jacinto College by supporting peer-to-peer mentoring focused on the mental wellbeing of specific student populations, providing training to faculty on mental health issues, and increasing awareness of campus resources, and availability of mental health counseling through expanded, non-traditional hours.	\$195,775	Holistic Support
Texas 2036 <i>Support for Texas 2036's Aim Hire Texas Initiative in 2022</i> Aim Hire Texas will identify strategies to align education and workforce training to boost more Texans into successful careers through research, analysis, and subsequent recommended interventions in order to reduce unemployment, increase the percentage of workers earning a living wage, improve living wage equity, and improve Texas employers' ability to access the trained labor force they require to meet their growing workforce needs.	\$75,000	Streamlined Pathways

2022 Summary of Grant Commitments

ORGANIZATION/PROJECT	AMOUNT	FOCUS AREA
Texas Appleseed <i>Expanding the Second Chance Pell Grant Program in Texas</i> To steer the implementation of Pell grant reinstatement for incarcerated Texans toward the principles of access, quality, and equity, through research, advocacy, and coalition building.	\$94,000	Reconnecting Learners
Texas Tribune <i>Nonpartisan journalism and events on equity issues in postsecondary education in Texas</i> To provide nonpartisan coverage of higher education that will inform the Texas public and policymakers on issues regarding education access and completion for students from communities of color and low-income communities.	\$100,000	Holistic Support/ Reconnecting Learners/ Streamlined Pathways
United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County <i>United with Uvalde Discretionary Grant</i> To support immediate and long-term mental health services. The funds will also address any emerging needs that develop in the future. 100% of the fund will support the students, teachers and families in Uvalde.	\$10,000	Situational Priority
University of Houston-Downtown <i>UHD Partnership For Wellness</i> To promote mental health and well-being among students by debunking mental health myths and revealing the humanity in seeking out resources when facing difficulties.	\$197,996	Holistic Support
University of Texas at El Paso (UT-EP) <i>Comprehensive Landscape Data Analysis of OY in El Paso County</i> To survey El Paso County to find the reasons that opportunity youth disengage and will provide the action network research-based recommendations in order to reconnect OY in school and work.	\$27,500	Holistic Support/ Reconnecting Learners
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley <i>UTRGV MH Project</i> To train, supervise, and support students, faculty, and staff to help students with mental health-related challenges, forming the most effective "front line" in bridging those students to needed support resources they may otherwise not access.	\$155,739	Holistic Support
Victoria College Foundation <i>Counseling Center without Walls: Reducing Barriers to Increase Mental Health Services Access and Participation at Victoria College</i> To create a comprehensive mental health counseling program for Victoria College's historically underserved student population to support their successful term completion, persistence, graduation, and transfer.	\$199,995	Holistic Support

Grant Highlights

The past few years have brought unprecedented challenges for individuals, families, communities, and organizations. This section highlights grants that closed during FY2022 (Oct. 1, 2021–Sept. 30, 2022) in each of the Foundation’s three focus areas. These grants all began prior to the pandemic; two of the three needed to shift their strategies significantly in response to the global health crisis. The Foundation appreciates their transparency and thoughtfulness as they shared their insights from this process.

HOLISTIC STUDENT NEEDS



Through annual surveys, [CCCSE](#) (the Center for Community College Student Engagement) provides longitudinal snapshots into student engagement at community and technical colleges across the country. Trellis Foundation and CCCSE initially partnered to include a subset of questions focused on the experiences of students working part-time or full-time as they study. While the 2019 [SENSE](#) (Survey of Entering Student Engagement) included this focus, the subsequent surveys pivoted to an emphasis on the impact of COVID-19 on postsecondary students. In fall of 2020, CCCSE queried incoming students through SENSE; in spring of 2021, CCSSE (Community College Survey of Student Engagement) looked into the experience of all students.

The results of all three survey administrations underscored the importance of connecting with students personally, understanding their needs and commitments outside of the classroom, and increasing access to supports—both financial and those more holistic.

Linda Garcia, Ph.D, Executive Director at CCCSE, shared these reflections from the three survey administrations:

- *SENSE 2019 Working Learner Takeaway: One of the most important takeaways from the analysis of the responses to the SENSE 2019 Working Learner module is that when faculty and staff know about and talk with entering students about their work and help them find balance between their working lives and their academic lives, those students are more engaged—and as such, on a path to being more successful.*
- *SENSE 2020 COVID-19 Impact Data: We learned that inequities that already existed for many students were only amplified by the pandemic. When existing struggles intersected with additional challenges brought on by the pandemic, students likely needed particular support systems at their colleges—such as emergency aid programs, food pantries, mental health services, and assistance with technology—more than ever. However, we learned that the majority of students (57%) didn’t know if their colleges had support services to help them cope with stress related to the pandemic. Colleges may need to be more intentional around messaging about available services that can help students cope with stresses caused by and exacerbated by the pandemic.*
- *CCSSE 2021 COVID-19 Impact Data: We learned that while 23% of students were struggling to pay for college as a result of the pandemic, another one in five (20%) reported struggling to pay for college, but not as a result of the pandemic. What this means is that the pandemic has potentially doubled the number of students who are struggling to pay for college. With data like these, the importance of financial assistance counseling cannot be understated.*



Organizations who work to reconnect students to postsecondary opportunities often offer time and relationship-intensive, in-person supports to students. [Project GRAD Houston](#) (a service of The Tejano Center for Community Concerns) supports students of all ages as they navigate the college process. Through this grant, their staff were reaching out to young adults who have “stopped out” from several Houston institutions, to help them re-enroll and complete their studies.

As Project GRAD engaged with students, postsecondary institutions, and community-based organization partners, they found it was important for smaller organizations to be flexible, have a variety of access points, and to be willing to meet people (and organizations) where they are. They also found that the agility of a smaller organization could lead to a stronger support ecosystem overall in the event of a pandemic or other significant change; a small, nonprofit partner may be able to adapt immediately to support students in the interim while larger partners, such as colleges and universities, may need to implement changes more slowly.

When the pandemic started, GRAD shifted to virtual services. They eventually reopened in-person services and kept virtual services in place as an option. GRAD found that the majority of young adults who had stopped out (or were opportunity youth) continued to prefer the new virtual option for support. “In addition to removing the transportation barrier, it also gives them more control and structure around scheduling and time spent in the appointment. Links to our virtual services

are also now included in newsletters, and social media posts and physical marketing materials have QR codes to our website, making initial entry to our services more convenient and accessible,” Ann Stiles, former president & CEO of Project GRAD Houston, shared.



A staff member assists a student with college access paperwork at GRADcafé.

Adriana Wilson, Executive Director of Programs at the Tejano Center, provided recommendations related to lessons learned:

Be flexible in your collaborations. Make sure your partnership agreements leave room for adaptation. Keep the end goal in mind but be willing to take a different route to get there if needed.

Find a way to do targeted recruitment. Identify a partner who has access to potential client contact information and find a way to work with them collaboratively to engage youth.



As affordability concerns continue to dominate conversations on the value of postsecondary education, and an increasing number of students are juggling work, family, and studies simultaneously, colleges and universities understand the importance of reducing inefficiencies and friction in the process wherever possible. Since 2018, the [Charles A. Dana Center](#) at the University of Texas at Austin has led statewide efforts to align four-year universities and community colleges to create clear transfer pathways within geographic regions.

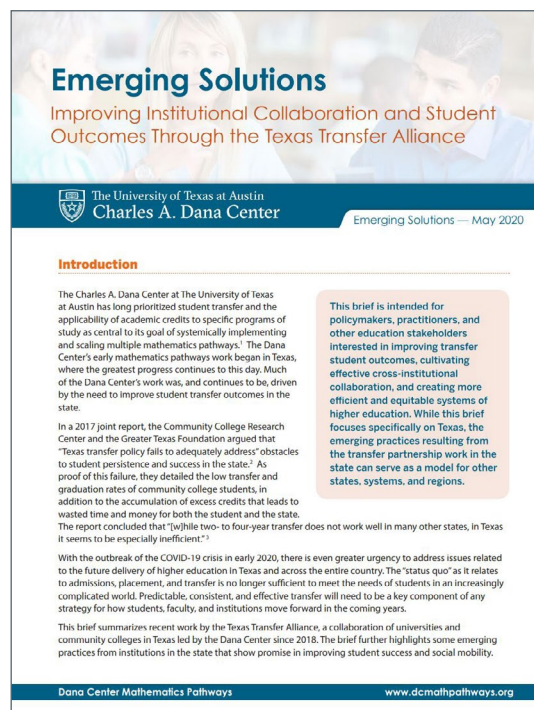
The work of the Texas Transfer Alliance engaged partners from multiple statewide systems: Texas A&M University System, Texas Association of Community Colleges, Texas State University System, University of North Texas System, and University of Texas System. The universities engaged with their regional community college partners to identify a series of 90-day action plans to continue to strengthen curriculum alignment.

Dana Center staff shared a cogent summary in their final grant report for other regions and states working on similar strategies:

- *Solving transfer is a complex issue that requires multiple and complex solutions beyond state-wide policies and mandates. Institutions must be committed to allocating the necessary resources, both financial and managerial, that lead to improved student transfer experiences.*
- *Policy must be addressed at the state level but also at the institutional level. The practice of transfer between institutions [can be] a powerful barrier or potential tool to increase degree attainment.*
- *Building trusting relationships across institutions continues to be a significant factor in how policies and practices are implemented. In the Center's work with institutions and the three P's (policy, practice, and people), relationships and trust-building across institutions with key student success players can influence related challenges and barriers to student success. The relationships and experience with the 90-day planning cycle will strengthen the ongoing partnerships between transfer partners across the state, smoothing the transfer process for thousands of students.*

- *Three principal areas of work create the proper environment for successful student transfer—the policy environment, institutional practices, and professional relationships. All three are critical, but the professional relationships that build trust between two institutions are paramount. Working together in a trusting relationship, institutional teams can overcome deficiencies in the other two areas. However, without that relationship, progress on transfer is challenging to achieve.*

Additional insights from the multi-year initiative are shared in a [brief](#) published by the Dana Center.



Looking Forward

As we complete our fifth year as a stand-alone Foundation, we are honored by the trust and partnership of our grantees. As a community, we continue to reassess the best approaches and levers for philanthropic giving. Trellis Foundation believes that we can often best serve our community by providing space to learn. For us, this has meant devoting a significant portion of our 2022 giving to a mental wellbeing cohort of grantees.

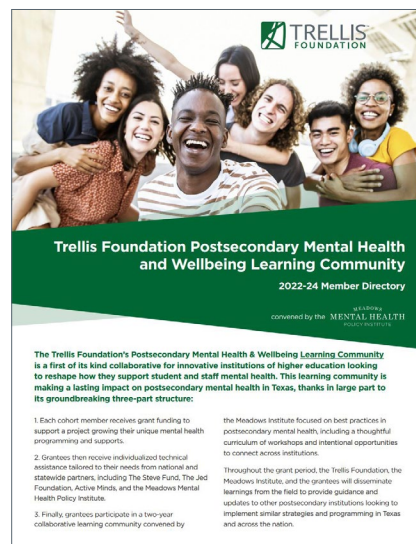
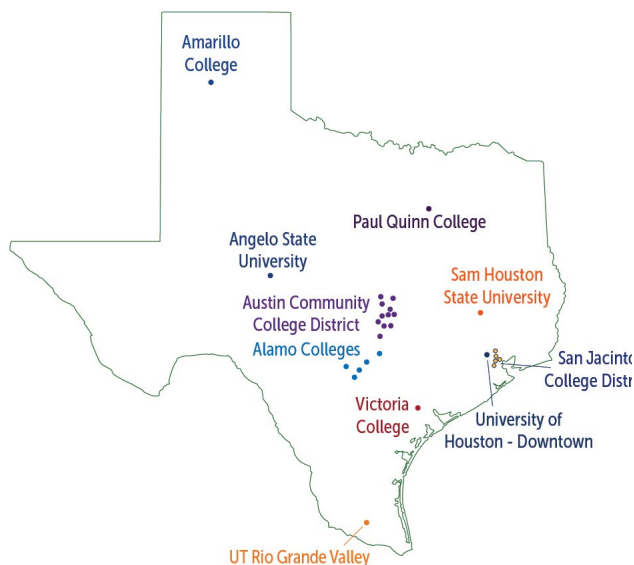
Led by the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute and supported by three national technical assistance providers (the JED Foundation, the Steve Fund, and Active Minds), we are learning alongside 10 Texas colleges and universities. We look forward to sharing what we learn and inviting all of you to join us at our spring 2024 convening focusing on the policy and practice recommendations developed through this work. We are humbled by the dedication of these institutions to understanding the needs of their students and supporting all facets of the students' experience in their journeys to postsecondary completion.

With inflation costs remaining high throughout the country, we continue to assess the needs of partner organizations across the state. For the upcoming year, we are particularly focused on the following objectives:

- Support community-based partners as they compete to hire and retain talented staff in the current economic environment.
- Provide educational resources to Texas legislators as they consider the Texas Community College Finance Commission's recommendations, determine the best way to allocate this biennium's budget surplus, and prioritize continued improvements of data and course alignment across the Tri-Agency work.
- Establish a robust understanding of the existing ecosystem of Prison Education Programs and education connections for students exiting the prison system. This is particularly timely as access to Pell dollars for incarcerated students will re-start nationwide July 2023.

We are excited for the opportunities 2023 brings, and we are grateful for the continued partnership and dedication of all of you, who work so diligently to support Texas students.

Trellis Foundation 2022 Mental Health and Wellbeing Grant Cohort



[Mental Wellbeing Learning Community Directory](#)

Staff

Kristin Boyer, Executive Director

Ms. Boyer leads Trellis Foundation's efforts to advance equitable postsecondary outcomes for low-income students and students of color across Texas. Prior to her appointment as executive director for the Trellis Foundation, she directed the philanthropic program and activities for Trellis Company. She currently serves as an Advisory Committee member for the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, as a co-chair for the Latino Student Success Funders Group, and as the Leadership Committee Chair for Philanthropy Advocates.

Jenny Achilles, Sr. Director and Chief Program Officer

Ms. Achilles joined Trellis Foundation (then Trellis Company/TG) in 2013 with nearly a decade of higher education service in various capacities, including student affairs and study abroad advising. Ms. Achilles serves on local and national committees, such as the Central Texas Education Funders Network steering committee, the Texas Rural Funders Membership & Dues Task Force, and the Grantmakers for Education Learning, Evaluation and Data Impact Group. She previously served on the Membership Committee for the National Scholarship Providers Association from 2015-2017. She also leads the board of directors for a nonprofit dance and wellness studio in Austin.

Megan Beadle, Grants and Operations Manager

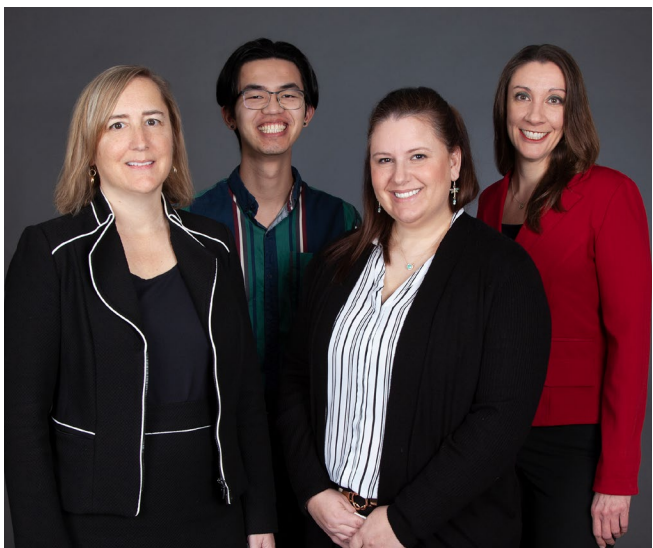
Ms. Beadle joined the Trellis Foundation in 2021 with nearly 15 years of experience in grantmaking and working with underserved populations in corporate and higher education settings. Prior to joining Trellis, she led state-level charitable giving for the Walmart Foundation, assisting state and local nonprofits across the country. Additionally, Ms. Beadle worked on the Graduation and Grant Initiative at the University of Central Florida, assisting college seniors at risk of not finishing their degrees due to financial and situational hardships.

Johnathan Cheung, Graduate Fellow

Mr. Cheung is currently a second-year master's student at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. He focuses on education policy with an emphasis on the intersection of equitable access through poverty alleviation and completion of post-secondary studies through educational intervention. Previously, Mr. Cheung worked at an educational non-profit as an AmeriCorps member and a policy intern at District C in the City of Houston for Councilwoman Ellen Cohen. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Political Science from the University of Houston.

Alexa Garza, Graduate Fellow

Ms. Garza's passion for advocacy is rooted in her personal experience of incarceration and the stigma she faced in her community upon release. She hopes to use storytelling as a way to change the narrative around system involvement. Alexa aspires to provide her unique perspective to elevate the often-neglected voices of incarcerated women of color and their lack of support in pursuing higher education while in the system. She is eager to participate in research and analysis that will support effective policy reform to provide access to higher education for all individuals impacted by the justice system. Ms. Garza is currently a first-year master's student at Texas Woman's University. Previously, she obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Tarleton State University and completed certification through the Library of Congress as a braille transcriber.



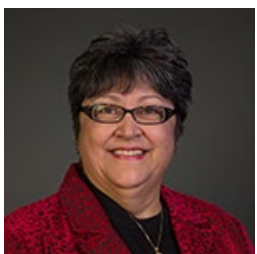
Left to right: Kristin Boyer, Johnathan Cheung, Megan Beadle, and Jenny Achilles. Not pictured: Alexa Garza

Board Members



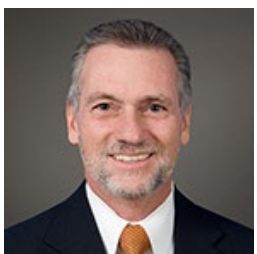
Mark Milliron, PhD, Board Chair

Dr. Mark Milliron is an award-winning leader, author, speaker, and consultant who works with universities, community colleges, K-12 schools, foundations, corporations, associations, and government agencies across the country and around the world. He serves as President and CEO of National University (NU), one of the largest private, nonprofit universities in the United States. NU is designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and has a 50-year history of innovating around the needs of military, working, and nontraditional students. In addition to his work with NU, Dr. Milliron helps catalyze positive change in education through his service on the boards and advisory councils of leading-edge education organizations, including the Trellis Foundation; Bennett College; the Global Online Academy; Civitas Learning; the Mastery Transcript Consortium; and ISKME/Open Education Resource Commons. He also holds an appointment as a Professor of Practice in the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin. Regardless of all his activities and accomplishments, he will quickly tell you that the most important job and the greatest blessing in his life is serving as Julia's husband, and as father to Alexandra, Richard, Marcus, and Max.



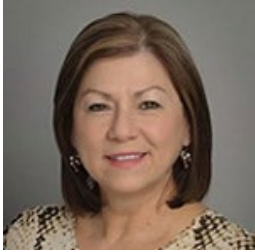
Dora Ann Verde, Board Secretary

Ms. Dora Ann Verde is a Certified Public Accountant with a private practice in San Antonio primarily serving nonprofit organizations, prior to which she served as chief of internal audit for the San Antonio Water System and partner in a public accounting firm. Her community involvement currently includes board services for several nonprofit organizations including ACE Academy in the Northeast Independent School District, National Association of Corporate Directors, WINGS (Women Involved in Nurturing, Giving, Sharing), San Antonio 100, San Antonio Women's Hall of Fame, SOLI Chamber Ensemble and Trellis Company. She also serves as a corporate board member and chair of the audit committee for a privately held corporation. Ms. Verde also served as board chair for Trellis Company, Texas Public Radio and SAY Si. She currently serves as secretary of the ACE Academy Board and treasurer for WINGS. She is also chair of governance and nominating committee for the SOLI Chamber Ensemble. Ms. Verde holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in accounting from the University of Texas at San Antonio. Her professional organizations include membership in the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Texas Society of CPAs, San Antonio Chapter of CPAs, and Institute of Internal Auditors.



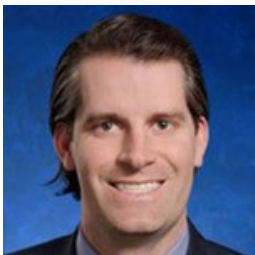
Richard Rhodes, PhD, Immediate Past Chair

Dr. Richard Rhodes serves as chancellor of the Austin Community College District, having served as its chief executive since September 2011. In that time, Dr. Rhodes has worked to improve pathways into higher education, strengthen awareness of the community college mission, and give students the tools to accomplish their educational, professional, and personal goals. He also serves on the boards of many national and local organizations including Trellis Company, chair of the American Association of Community Colleges, member of the League for Innovation, gubernatorial appointment to Texas Workforce Investment Council, and a member of the Association of Governing Boards – Presidents Council.



Alma Garcia

Ms. Alma Garcia started her career as a bilingual education teacher in the Brownsville Independent School District, where she went on to serve as an elementary and secondary school principal. She later joined the University of Texas at Brownsville, where, as an adjunct professor, she designed instructional methods courses for graduate and undergraduate students in secondary education programs, and later served as director of GEAR UP, a college awareness, readiness, enrollment, and outreach program. She joined Educate Texas in 2004 and is among the foremost experts on dual enrollment, dual credit, and early college high schools (ECHS) in the state. In 2015, she founded a consulting practice serving school districts, administrators, and nonprofits across the state. Ms. Garcia holds a bachelor's degree in education from UT-Pan American and a master's degree in educational administration from Stephen F. Austin State University.



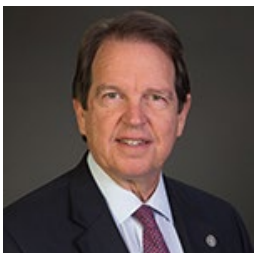
Josh Hunt

Mr. Josh Hunt is executive vice president and member of the board of directors for Hunt Companies, Inc., headquartered in El Paso, Texas. Mr. Hunt is also president of the Hunt Family Foundation and serves on several other Hunt governance boards and committees. In addition to his duties at Hunt Companies, Mr. Hunt serves on the Board of Directors for WestStar Bank, a \$2.7 Billion regional bank, the board of directors (former chair) of the Medical Center of the Americas Foundation Board and founding chair of the El Paso Children's Museum and Science Center – La Nube. Mr. Hunt is a member of the Executive Committee of the Borderplex Alliance and a member of the Young Presidents Organization (YPO) El Paso/Juarez Chapter. He is also chair of MountainStar Sports Group (MSSG), which owns several professional sports teams.



Suzanne Walsh, JD

Ms. Suzanne Walsh is the current president of Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina. She was most recently deputy director of postsecondary success for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, leading and developing a team and a portfolio of over \$70 million in postsecondary investments in institutional transformation in the United States. She previously served in leadership roles with the Lumina Foundation for Education and The Heinz Endowments. Ms. Walsh has been a frequent speaker and workshop leader at conferences such as the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities, the American Association of Colleges and Universities, and the Global Learning Council, of which she is an active member. She has published or edited several books and journal articles on the topic of educational transformation, and is the recipient of numerous awards, honors, and fellowships. Ms. Walsh has her juris doctorate and master's in social work from Case Western Reserve University, a bachelor's degree from Cornell University, and an associate degree in applied science from Hudson Valley Community College. She is a member of the Ohio Bar.



Welcome Wilson, Jr.

Mr. Welcome Wilson, Jr. is president and CEO of Welcome Group, LLC, a real estate development firm specializing in single-tenant office buildings and industrial buildings including lab, warehouse, and manufacturing facilities in the state of Texas. He is also the joint venture partner in Kingham · Dalton · Wilson Ltd., a design/build construction affiliate of Welcome Group, and is a director of River Oaks Financial Group, Inc. Mr. Wilson currently serves as chairman of the Alamo Trust and serves on the board of directors of the Remember the Alamo Foundation in San Antonio. He was appointed by Texas Governor Greg Abbott to serve on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in Austin. He also serves on the board of directors of the Texas Higher Education Foundation, Greater Houston Partnership, the Trellis Company and the Trellis Foundation in Austin, the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission, and the Texas Business Hall of Fame. In addition, he is chairman of the board of the Southwest Houston Redevelopment Authority and by appointment of the Mayor of Houston is chairman of Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone #20 (TIRZ # 20). In 2018 The Houston Business Journal named Welcome Wilson, Jr. as one of its "Most Admired CEOs." Mr. Wilson is a native Texan, is married, and attended the University of Denver.



Mission Statement

Trellis Foundation advances equitable educational opportunities in Texas by supporting postsecondary programs, practices and systems that reduce disparities and lead to success for low-income students and students of color.

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