

# Inaugural Cohort of Chamber Executives Graduate from ACCE's Fellowship for Education Attainment

May 8, 2015

Congratulations to the nineteen chamber executives that graduated from ACCE's Fellowship for Education Attainment, a professional academy launched by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) in 2014. The inaugural cohort of fellows were chosen to participate in the immersive year-long fellowship based on their demonstrated commitment and passion for improving the birth-to-career education pipeline in their communities.

"We are all thrilled with the caliber of expertise and depth of engagement among the inaugural cohort of fellows," said Mick Fleming, president of ACCE. "These chamber executives have set the bar high for their peers and helped us build a powerful body of knowledge."

Throughout the year-long Fellowship, all Fellows developed regional action plans focused on addressing specific education attainment or workforce development issues in their communities. Their initiatives culminated in "final products" that were presented at the graduation convening in April hosted by Lumina Foundation in Indianapolis.

Tina Wirth, VP of Workforce Development for the JAX Chamber, developed a regional action plan focused on Earn Up—a community collaboration designed to raise the region's college and certification attainment rate

This fellowship program serves to advance chambers' previously defined education attainment goals and ultimately help business associations around the country build replicable programs and policies.

## 2014-2015 Graduating Fellowship Class:

Linda Ashworth, Vice President, Operations, Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce

Mita Bates, President, Ardmore Chamber of Commerce

Alisha Benson, Vice President of Education & Workforce/Executive Director Spokane STEM, Greater Spokane Incorporated

Andrew Davis, Legislative Director, Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce

Richard Dayoub, President & CEO, The Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce

Betsy Dexter, Manager of Education & Workforce Policy, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

Ian Fletcher, Vice President of Workforce Development, Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce

Mary Graham, Senior Vice President, Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce

Lindsay Haymes, Manager of Business Assistance, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Hank Hyatt, Vice President of Economic Development, Greenville Chamber

Amy Anderson, Strategic Consultant, Association of Washington Business Institute

Greg Laposa, Project Manager, St. Louis Regional Chamber

Jennifer McFarren, Director of Workforce Development Greater Pensacola Chamber

Brian Paschal, Senior Vice President, Education & Workforce, Tulsa Regional Chamber

Jim Schoettle, Executive Director of Development, Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce

Heather Valudes, Advocacy Director, The Lancaster Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Emily McGrath, Director of Workforce Development, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

Tina Wirth, Senior Director of Workforce Development, JAX Chamber

Gilbert Zavala, Vice President, Education and Talent Development, Austin Chamber of Commerce

For more information about ACCE's Education Attainment Division visit: <http://www.acce.org/divisions/education-attainment-division/>