



Leanna Blevins

Executive Director
New College Institute

Leanna Blevins is the Executive Director of New College Institute, a state-funded higher education center in Martinsville, Virginia. She was directly involved with the creation and development of New College Institute including the design and development of a vision for providing innovative postsecondary access to a rural region, political advocacy, fundraising, and grassroots campaigns to engage prospective students and employers. Since 2004, Leanna has served in various capacities to sustain and support the effort, including educational and curriculum design, political and legislative relations, outreach program design, student support design, and budgetary management

Prior to her work at New College, Leanna worked as Assistant to the President at the University of Virginia and also worked in the offices of State Government Relations, University Relations, and Faculty Advancement. Previously, Leanna served as Director of Career Development at the University of Virginia's College at Wise and as a Student Consumer Advocate at Virginia Tech.

Leanna earned a B.A. from Virginia Tech and an M.Ed. and Ph.D. from the University of Virginia. Her dissertation research focused on students in rural Virginia and their access to and persistence in public colleges and universities. As a first generation college graduate herself, she is passionate about policy development and advocacy work toward enabling better educational attainment for underserved communities.

Leanna is an active board member of Smart Beginnings of Martinsville Henry County, the Virginia Network of Women in Higher Education, the Martinsville-Henry County Family YMCA, the Danville Science Center, and is a volunteer with the Blue Ridge Gymnastics Academy Parents Association. Leanna is an alumnae of LEAD Virginia.

Leanna is most proud of three major accomplishments who call her Mom.