

TENATIVE AGENDA

43RD ANNUAL SFARN CONFERENCE

Student Financial Aid Research Network Conference
Tuesday, July 14 - Thursday, July 16 | University of Louisville, Kentucky
Red Barn located at 2011 S Brook St, Louisville, KY 40208

DAY 1 - TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2026

11:15 AM - 12:00 PM

Check-in and Registration / Lunch (Pick up)

12:00 PM - 12:10 PM | Welcome

Sean Simone, Vice President of Research | Director of the Pell Institute, COE

12:10 PM - 12:30 PM | Research Presentation 1

Implications for Higher Education Finance and Student Aid of the Right to Higher Education (RTHE) Movement

Maggie Cahalan, COE/Pell Institute

12:35 PM - 12:55 PM | Policy/Symposium Talk 1

One Big Bill Impacts on Graduate Education Access for Low Income Students

Chazz Robinson, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

01:00 PM - 01:20 PM | Research Presentation 2

Fixing the Formula: Targeting Wealth in State Financial Aid Policy

Christian Smith, University of Georgia
Alejandra Villa-Moges, Partnership for College Completion

01:20 PM - 01:30 PM

Break

01:30 PM - 01:55 PM | Policy/Symposium Talk 2

When APR Meets NIL: How 'Neutral' Metrics Deepen Structural Inequities for HBCU Athletics

Rolando Shannon, Tennessee State University
Ajah Hawley-Alexander, Iona University and University of Southern Mississippi

02:00 PM - 02:20 PM | Research Presentation 3

Higher Ed's Social Value: Postgraduate Earnings Across Fields of Study

Daniella Paradise, Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)



DAY 1 - TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2026 (cont.)

SFARN Conference

02:25 PM - 02:50 PM | Policy/Symposium Talk 3

Financing Program Sustainability and Scale: A Conversation with CUNY ASAP Replication Partners

Bethany Lewis, Ithaka S+R
Ioana Hulbert, Ithaka S+R
Diana Strumbos, ASAP National Replication Collaborative

02:55 PM - 03:15 PM | Research Presentation 4

An Impact Study of the Washington College Grant (WCG)

Daniel Oliver, Washington Student Achievement Council
Ian Mikkelsen, Washington Student Achievement Council

03:15 PM - 03:25 PM

Break

03:25 PM - 03:45 PM | Research Presentation 5

Higher Education's Economic Value to States

Marián Vargas, Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)

03:50 PM - 04:10 PM | Research Presentation 6

Place and the Perceptions of Postsecondary Value

Kathryn Blanchard, Strada Education Foundation
James Dean Ward, Strada Education Foundation

04:15 PM - 05:05 PM | Special Panel 1

Implementing Workforce Pell Under OBBB: What the New Provisions Mean for Higher Education

Katie Berger, Lumina Foundation
Robert Kelchen, University of Tennessee at Knoxville
Wesley Whistle, New America

05:15 PM - 06:30 PM

Reception | University Club of Louisville (U Club) Ballroom



DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2026

SFARN Conference

08:30 AM - 09:00 AM

Coffee & Light Breakfast

09:00 AM - 09:05 AM | Welcome Back

Sean Simone, Vice President of Research | Director of the Pell Institute, COE

09:05 AM - 09:50 AM | Special Panel 2

Updates on New Data and Product Releases

Chris Bennett, RTI International
Josh Pretlow, RTI International
Sean Simone, COE/Pell Institute
Nicole Brunt, COE/Pell Institute

09:55 AM - 10:15 AM | Research Presentation 7

Cost of Attendance Misestimation and Aid Equity in the FAFSA Simplification Era

Bahar Akman, Hildreth Institute
Jeremy Thompson, Hildreth Institute

10:20 AM - 10:40 AM | Research Presentation 8

Understanding the Implementation of Universal FAFSA Completion Policies in Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, and Louisiana

Kyla Hurns, EdTrust
Victoria Jackson, EdTrust

10:40 AM - 10:50 AM

Break

10:50 AM - 11:10 AM | Research Presentation 9

True Cost of College in CA: Aligning Cost of Attendance Budgets with Student Realities

Laura Szabo-Kubitz, The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS)
Jessica Petrass, John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY)

11:15 AM - 12:05 PM | Special Panel 3

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Across Practitioner Offices On-Campus: What Financial Aid Offices Should Know

Moderator: Charlotte Etier, NASFAA

Panelists:
Lindsay K. Wayt, NACUBO
Samantha Hicks, Coastal Carolina University



DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2026 (cont.)

SFARN Conference

12:10 PM - 12:30 PM | Research Presentation 10

Restoring Opportunity for Higher Education

Tom Mortenson, Pell Institute/COE
Nicole Brunt, Pell Institute/COE

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm | Lunch

Enjoy your meal!

01:30 PM - 01:50 PM | Research Presentation 11

New Jersey's Community College Opportunity Grant: A First Study to Measure Impact and Outcomes

Thomas Zimmerman, New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE)

01:55 PM - 02:20 PM | Policy/Symposium Talk 4

Evaluating a Statewide Financial Aid Intervention: Early Evidence from the Pell Initiative for Virginia

Moderator: Barry Simmons Sr., State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)

Panelists:

Dannette Gomez Beane, Radford University
Joy Pugh, University of Virginia
Alexis Brooks-Walter, Virginia State University
Tim Wolfe, William & Mary University

02:25 PM - 02:45 PM | Research Presentation 12

Supporting College Students Year-Round: Implementing Summer TAG in New Jersey

Kirsten Meidlinger, Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University

02:50 PM - 03:10 PM | Research Presentation 13

Explaining Recessionary Changes in Funding for State Financial Aid Programs

Meredith Fergus, University of Minnesota



DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2026 (cont.)

SFARN Conference

03:15 PM - 04:00 PM | Poster Presentations with Refreshments

Working and Learning in Hard Times: A Causal Analysis of How Economic Downturns Shape Community College Students' Trajectories | Chenjun Yu, University of Michigan

Graduate Student Debt and Inequality: Education Access Under the One, Big, Beautiful Bill | Gabriella Pitcher, University at Albany

When Aid Isn't Enough: Mandatory Fees in the Financial Aid Equation for First-Generation Students | Ivanna Colon, Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi

Beyond Tuition: Affordability Constraints in Community College STEM Pathways | Leanne Davis, Education Northwest

Understanding Student Experiences in Debt-Free Programs: A Qualitative Analysis from Marshall For All | Madison Martin, Marshall University

The Relationship Between Financial Aid and First-Generation Student-Athlete Retention at Small Colleges and Universities | Adam Cocco, University of Louisville and Alan Grosbach, National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)

Funding an Online Master's Degree in STEM: How Do Students Do It and Is It Worth It? | Alexandria Ardisson, University of Florida and Jennifer Drew, University of Florida

College Access and Success for Youth Formerly in Foster Care: Addressing Systemic Barriers and Policy Gaps | Stephanie Saulnier, ECU Dept. of Social Work

Economics is the New Need Analysis | Zachary Goodwin, Marquette University

Maximizing Financial Aid for Student Parent Success | Laura Szabo-Kubitz, California Competes & The California Alliance for Student Parent Success

When Financial Aid Excludes Faith: How Federal Student Aid Policy Constrains Muslim Students' Graduate Education Pathways | Hind Haddad, The Ohio State University and Denison University

Undergraduates' Experiences with the New FAFSA: An Exploratory Qualitative Study | Joy Sorrells, Florida State University

04:05 PM - 04:25 PM | Research Presentation 15

Measuring Student Housing Insecurity from a Transformative, Strengths-Based Perspective

Sky Duke, University of Wisconsin-Madison

04:30 PM - 04:50 PM | Research Presentation 16

Stressed and Strapped: How Financial Insecurity Shapes Student Mental Health

Anthony Schuette, Trellis Strategies

04:55 PM - 05:15 PM | Research Presentation 17

Designing Data Informed Supports for Debt Free Pathways: Principles and Practices from Marshall For All

Madison Martin, Marshall University



DAY 3 - THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2026

SFARN Conference

08:30 AM - 08:45 AM

Coffee & Light Breakfast

08:45 AM - 08:50 AM | Welcome Back

Sean Simone, Vice President of Research | Director of the Pell Institute, COE

08:50 AM - 09:40 AM | Special Panel 4

State Longitudinal Data Systems

Jacob Gross, University of Louisville Kentucky
Raj Darolia, University of Kentucky
Matt Berry, Kentucky Center for Statistics
Travis Muncie, Council on Postsecondary

09:45 AM - 10:05 AM | Research Presentation 18

TRIO's Impact: A Look at Grant Distribution Across Three Programs

Daniel Ceva, EdTrust

10:10 AM - 10:30 AM | Research Presentation 19

How Much Is Safe? Lessons from Borrowers and Practitioners About Student Loans

Ashley Barry, College Access: Research & Action (CARA)
Janice Bloom, College Access: Research & Action (CARA)

10:30 AM - 10:40 AM

Break

10:40 AM - 11:00 AM | Research Presentation 20

From College to Homeownership: How Undergraduate Major, Salary, and Student Loan Debt are Associated with Housing Outcome

Roy Y. Chan, Lee University



DAY 3 - THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2026 (cont.)

SFARN Conference

11:05 AM - 11:30 AM | Policy/Symposium Talk 5

Rethinking Satisfactory Academic Progress: Evidence for Policy and Practice

Ira Nichols-Barrer, Mathematica
Charlotte Etier, NASFAA,
Christina Lomeli, JBAY
Jessica Petrass, JBAY
Janai Raphael, Lumina Foundation

11:35 AM - 11:55 AM | Research Presentation 21

Losing Pell, Losing Students: Federal SAP Policy as a Hidden Completion Barrier

Meacie Fairfax, Complete College America
Kate Szur, John Jay College
Margo Wright, FAIR AID Initiative

12:00 PM - 12:20 PM | Research Presentation 22

The Relationship Between Financial Aid and First-Generation Student-Athlete Retention at Small Colleges and Universities

Adam Cocco, University of Louisville
Alan Grosbach, National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)

12:20 PM - 12:30 PM | Closing Remarks

Sean Simone, Vice President of Research | Director of the Pell Institute, COE



SFARN SPONSORS



The Pell Institute thanks our generous sponsors!



