

A person with their back to the camera, wearing a dark jacket, holds a large brown cardboard sign high above their head with both hands. The sign has white and yellow text. The background is a blurred crowd of people outdoors, suggesting a protest or public gathering.

PRESSURE POINTS:

**COLLEGES UNDER
SCRUTINY**

HIGHER EDUCATION SEMINAR



SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2024
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

EWA Higher Education Seminar:

Pressure Points: Colleges Under Scrutiny

University of Pennsylvania

Sept. 12-13, 2024

EWA is grateful to Lumina Foundation for providing the major funding that made this seminar possible. EWA thanks the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education for hosting the seminar. EWA retains editorial control over all programming.

All programming will take place in the Graduate School of Education.



**Mark your calendar for
EWA's 78th
National Seminar
in St. Louis, MO!**

**EWA
78TH
NATIONAL
SEMINAR**

MAY 28-31, 2025



Penn GSE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA



Welcome to Philadelphia!

On behalf of the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education, I am delighted to welcome you to the Education Writers Association Higher Ed Seminar.

Your commitment to illuminating the complexities, innovations, and enormous challenges facing higher education is invaluable. I believe your work plays a critical role in not only higher education, but, in the coming months, our democracy. We at Penn GSE share your dedication to advancing knowledge and understanding – and fostering meaningful dialogue in this vital field.

Thank you for the crucial work you do. We look forward to engaging with you throughout the seminar and into the future.

All best,
Dean Katharine Strunk
University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education



DAY 1

THURSDAY

SEPT.
12

Breakfast

Complimentary breakfast will be served at the hotel, Homewood Suites University City, starting at 6 a.m., and a complimentary shuttle to and from campus will be provided.

All seminar activities take place in Room 355/356 until 4 p.m. on Sept. 12.

9 a.m. - 10 a.m.

Welcome Activities

Welcome to the 2024 EWA Higher Education Seminar

Steph Smith, content director, *Education Writers Association*

Katharine Strunk, dean, *University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education*

Keynote Interview

Coffee Break

10 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

10:15 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.

Speech on Campus Part 1: First Amendment and the History of Campus Protest

Congress called on college presidents to testify. Faculty received suspensions or got fired for taking part in protests. At the same time, student protestors faced arrest or expulsion — all raising concerns about free speech in higher education. What is the role of the First Amendment on campus? What stories should reporters look at as the fall semester approaches?

Jared Mitovich, *The Daily Pennsylvanian*

Sean Stevens, *FIRE*

Jonathan Zimmerman, *University of Pennsylvania*

Kayla Jimenez, *USA Today* (moderator)

11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Student Journalism Partnerships: Covering Elections

In many newsrooms across the country, education reporters are stretched thin with limited resources and tight deadlines. Meanwhile, elevating youth voices remains a critical goal, especially as the election approaches. One solution: newsrooms partnering with student journalists. Hear from experts who addressed the decline of local journalism by tapping the talents of college news outlets.

Sam Gregg, *The Triangle*

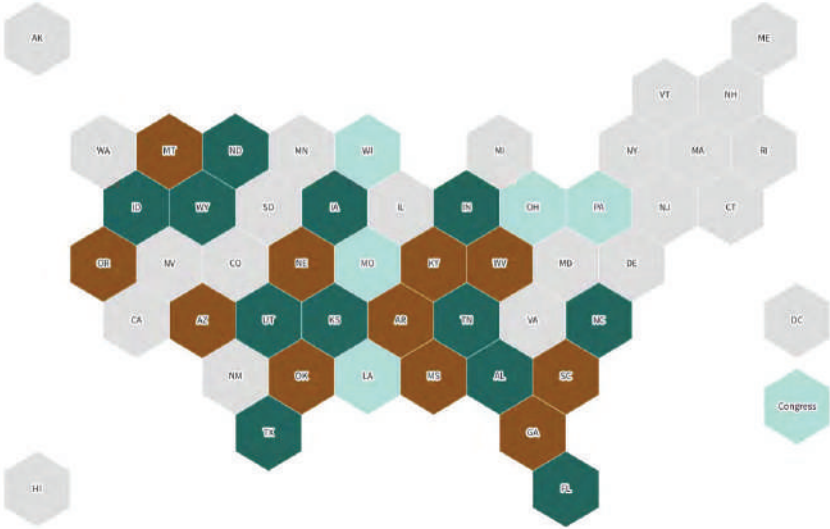
Rachel Janfaza, *independent journalist*

Lydia McFarlane, *Villanova University*

Lara Salahi, *Endicott College*

Wesley Wright, *Open Campus* (moderator)

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION EFFORTS ARE UNDER ATTACK ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES.



Note: Florida and North Carolina also have bills introduced, which their colors do not reflect.

Where Anti-DEI Legislation Has Been Proposed

A pattern indicates active bills in different statuses.

■ No bill ■ Introduced ■ Final legislative approval ■ Signed into law ■ Tabled, failed to pass, or vetoed

Explore *The Chronicle's* DEI Legislation Tracker today to find out:

- Where anti-DEI legislation has been proposed.
- What the legislation would restrict.
- What is in each of the proposed bills.



SIGN UP FOR ALERTS

Lunch

12:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.

1:45 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

10 Story Ideas on College Finances

Across the nation, public universities are facing budget troubles, enrollment struggles and pressure to cut humanities courses and majors. One college is closing per month, on average. Get tips on reviewing budgets and asking probing questions about financial pressures on colleges. Also, hear experts explain how higher education's fiscal woes affect college towns, and learn who is most impacted by the looming demographic cliff.

Julee Gard, *University of St. Francis*

Jon Marcus, *The Hechinger Report*

Stephanie Shonekan, *University of Maryland*

Janet Woojeong Lee, *NPR* (moderator)

Coffee Break

2:45 p.m. - 3 p.m.

3 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Speech on Campus Part 2: Education in the Midst of Tension

Engaging in civic and civil discourse amid tension and conflict can be difficult, but it's possible — and many would argue essential. As higher education is in no small part about learning and debating new ideas, colleges must step up to teach and work with students in tumultuous times. How are colleges engendering a culture of robust, civil debate in this moment? Hear lessons learned from professors, advice and recommendations from student leaders and reflections from reporters on the past spring semester.

Sigal Ben-Porath, *University of Pennsylvania*

Jack Ruotolo, *BridgeUSA*

Abdesalam Soudi, *University of Pittsburgh*

Kayleigh Skinner, *Open Campus* (moderator)

4 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Rooms 427 and 322

Small Groups, Big Ideas: Preparing for the Fall

Join colleagues for small-group discussions about challenges reporters face on the higher education beat and how to tackle them. Get tips on pitching stories, workshopping new story angles and accessing college officials amid a tense and evolving campus climate. Open the notebook, brainstorm (and commiserate!) with fellow journalists.

Reception

5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

The Atrium

SXSW EDU 2025

MARCH 3-6 AUSTIN, TX



Photo by Sabrina Macias

MAKE AN IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

Join us at the 15th annual SXSW EDU Conference & Festival as we tackle the world's most critical social issues through the lens of education.

Experience bold new ideas in March to drive impact with education's top thought leaders.

Be part of this unforgettable experience on a deeper level and showcase your expertise to inspire change. Visit sxswedu.com/participate to explore participation opportunities.

REGISTER NOW TO SAVE sxswedu.com/attend

follow us @sxswedu      

DAY 2

FRIDAY

SEPT.
13

Coffee Break

9 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.

All sessions and lunch will be in room 263/264 on Sept. 13.

9:15 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

Fireside Chat With 2023 EWA Awards Winners: Localizing Your Investigation

An investigation into Virginia university expansions revealed that many Black residents lost their homes. In the “[Uprooted](#)” series, reporters examined higher education’s role in erasing communities of color. A series by a student-run outlet, [The State News](#), examined the many problems plaguing Michigan State University’s Title IX office, from misconduct to sexual assault. Two award-winning reporters break down their work on these investigations and offer story ideas to help reporters localize their own work as they hold higher education institutions accountable.

Brandi Kellam, *Virginia Center for Investigative Journalism at WHRO*

Alex Walters, *The State News at Michigan State University*

Coffee Break

10:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

10 Story Ideas on the Future of Campus Diversity

Last year brought the end of race-conscious college admissions. In 2024, we've seen bans on offices and staff dedicated to DEI and a series of delays with the updated FAFSA — all of which disproportionately impacts students of color. Given the current political climate, will colleges be able to enroll diverse students in meaningful ways and create a safe and welcoming culture for all?

Divya Kumar, *Tampa Bay Times*

Cara McClellan, *University of Pennsylvania*

Marcela Rodrigues, *The Dallas Morning News*

Olivia Sanchez, *The Hechinger Report* (moderator)

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

AI Outside of the Classroom

Artificial intelligence goes beyond cheating and plagiarism. Campuses are using AI to reshape curriculum, discover gaps in research and find new recruitment methods. At the same time, some universities are also using flawed AI surveillance technology. How can reporters better understand how students, faculty and administrators are using AI in their work — for better or worse? What's working? What is still in question, and what should reporters be asking their universities?

Kofi Nyarko, *Morgan State University*

Jenay Robert, *EDUCAUSE*

Joe Sabado, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

Taylor Swaak, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (moderator)

Lunch

12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Notes

Our Nation's Future

BY THE NUMBERS



42
MILLION

Nearly 42 million people have some college experience but left before earning a degree or credential, often labeled "some college, no degree."

(National Student Clearinghouse)



56
PERCENT

56 percent of never-enrolled and previously enrolled adults say cost is a "very important" reason why they have not enrolled or reenrolled in college.

(Lumina/Gallup)



72
PERCENT

By 2031, 72 percent of all jobs will require at least some education and training beyond high school.

(Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce)

At Lumina Foundation, we are committed to moving the nation toward higher learning for today's student. [Learn more at luminafoundation.org](https://luminafoundation.org)



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