

Leadership in Action

**TIAA Institute Theodore M. Hesburgh
Award for Leadership Excellence Winners**



BUILT TO PERFORM.

CREATED TO SERVE.

About the TIAA Institute

The TIAA Institute helps advance the ways individuals and institutions plan for financial security and organizational effectiveness. The Institute conducts in-depth research, provides access to a network of thought leaders, and enables those it serves to anticipate trends, plan future strategies and maximize opportunities for success. To learn more, visit www.tiaainstitute.org.

About TIAA

TIAA (www.tiaa.org) is a unique financial partner. With an award-winning track record for consistent performance, TIAA is the leading provider of financial services in the academic, research, medical, cultural and government fields. TIAA has \$1 trillion in assets under management (as of 12/31/2017) and offers a wide range of financial solutions, including investing, banking, advice and guidance, and retirement services.

A message from Stephanie Bell-Rose



Stephanie Bell-Rose
Senior Managing Director and
Head of the TIAA Institute

On the occasion of the Institute's 20th anniversary, our focus is on our partners and supporters—those who have made the Institute's work possible. We are honored to collaborate with them in pursuit of building and sharing knowledge with those at the helm of our nation's colleges and universities, and with other thought leaders who make a difference in the world.

Among those difference makers are the 10 recipients of the TIAA Institute's Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for Leadership Excellence. The award is named for Father Hesburgh, who served as president of the University of Notre Dame for 35 years, and on the TIAA and CREF Boards of Overseers for 28 years. He held 16 presidential appointments, involving him in virtually all major social issues—civil rights, peaceful uses of atomic energy, international development, immigration reform, and many more. Fr. Hesburgh's clear vision and moral stances made him one of the most influential and respected figures in American higher education, and beyond, in the 20th century.

The Hesburgh Award is presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Council on Education (ACE). Award recipients are chosen by an independent panel of judges, and ACE administers the award on the TIAA Institute's behalf. The award is designed to recognize exceptional leadership and inspire senior leaders throughout higher education to realize their loftiest goals.

We can learn from Fr. Hesburgh's example and leadership excellence, as we can from the Hesburgh Award winners who are the focus of this publication. Their stories and accomplishments are remarkable, and they undoubtedly are worthy of the close association with Fr. Hesburgh that the award bestows.

We trust that you will enjoy reading and gaining insights about the leadership, vision and achievements of the Hesburgh Award winners, whom we are proud to have as integral members of our Institute family.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Bell-Rose". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Stephanie Bell-Rose
Senior Managing Director and Head of the TIAA Institute

Winners of the TIAA Institute Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for Leadership Excellence

The 10 men and women recognized with the Hesburgh Award have led a wide range of institutions, from the largest four-year public system in the nation with more than 100,000 annual graduates, to a private 300-student institution that needed to be rescued, and a pioneering online competency-based college. They have successfully weathered existential challenges including an epic hurricane and crippling budget cuts. Their institutions serve among the highest numbers of low-income, minority and immigrant student populations—and rank at the top as engines of social mobility.

Together, the 10 Hesburgh Award winners have served as president or chancellor for 223 years—and all but two have done so at the same institution. Note, too, that six of the honorees still lead their institutions today, and so the count continues to climb. To date, their average tenure in office is 22 years; the national average in 2017 was 6.5 years.

The winners are recipients of numerous prestigious awards, indeed, far too many to list on these pages. Instead, the photos that follow are accompanied by a few points of interest, from which one can begin to more fully understand the Hesburgh Award winners' remarkable accomplishments, personal integrity, and leadership excellence.



William E. (Brit) Kirwan
2010 Theodore M. Hesburgh Award Winner

- Chancellor, University System of Maryland (2002-2015); President, The Ohio State University (1998-2002); and President, University of Maryland (1989-1998)
- The University System of Maryland's William E. Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation opened in 2015
- Served as chair or co-chair of the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics from 2007 to 2016



Freeman A. Hrabowski, III
2011 Theodore M. Hesburgh Award Winner

- President, The University of Maryland, Baltimore County since 1992
- Force behind UMBC's national leadership in African-American B.S. degree recipients who go on to complete Ph.D.s in the natural sciences and engineering
- Appointed by President Obama to chair the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for African Americans



Eduardo J. Padrón

2012 Theodore M. Hesburgh Award Co-Winner

- President, Miami Dade College since 1995
- Founded the world-renowned Miami Book Fair, the largest literary event in the United States, in 1984
- Awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, by President Obama in 2016



Charles B. Reed

2012 Theodore M. Hesburgh Award Co-Winner

- Chancellor, The California State University System (1998-2012); and Chancellor, State University System of Florida (1985-1998)
- More than 1.5 million diplomas bear Reed's signature
- Navigated more than \$1 billion in state funding cuts—nearly one-third of CSU's state support—in the aftermath of the 2007-08 financial crisis



Diana Natalicio

2013 Theodore M. Hesburgh Award Winner

- President, The University of Texas at El Paso since 1988
- 80% of UTEP students today are graduates of El Paso County high schools, and 70% of teachers in those county high schools are UTEP graduates
- Awarded the Orden Mexicana del Aguila Azteca, the highest honor bestowed on foreign nationals, by Mexican President Felipe Calderón in 2011



Scott Cowen

2014 Theodore M. Hesburgh Award Winner

- President, Tulane University (1998-2014)
- The 40,000 square foot basement of Tulane's main library was flooded with more than eight feet of water by Hurricane Katrina in 2005
- Tulane University's Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives was founded in 2007



John Sexton

2015 Theodore M. Hesburgh Award Winner

- President, New York University (2002–2015)
- Envisioned the 21st century university as a global network and led establishment of NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU Shanghai, both degree-granting research campuses
- Continues to teach a core course, Relationship of Government and Religion, in person at NYU Abu Dhabi for the 16th consecutive semester



Patricia A. McGuire

2016 Theodore M. Hesburgh Award Winner

- President, Trinity Washington University since 1989
- Enrollment at Trinity's women's college was 1,000 in 1969, 300 in 1989 (when McGuire started), and is more than 1,000 today—plus another 1,000 students in Trinity's expanded programs
- Filled a void in athletics facilities with a mission to serve women in D.C. by opening the Trinity Center for Women and Girls in Sports in 2003, which serves 40,000 visitors annually



Gail O. Mellow

2017 Theodore M. Hesburgh Award Winner

- President, LaGuardia Community College/CUNY since 2000
- Two-thirds of LaGuardia's 45,000 students have annual family incomes less than \$25,000, and the majority are immigrants
- Mellow has tripled enrollment and doubled the number of full-time faculty at LaGuardia during her tenure



Paul J. LeBlanc

2018 Theodore M. Hesburgh Award Winner

- President, Southern New Hampshire University since 2003
- SNHU was serving 2,500 students in 2003; it now serves more than 100,000
- LeBlanc and his wife are avid travelers and have created a scholarship fund to help Pell-eligible students study abroad

Photo credit: John Sexton, ©NYU Photo Bureau: Hollenshead

Introduction

When Fr. Hesburgh, along with his co-chair, William Friday of the University of North Carolina, opened the first meeting of the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, he told the newly assembled group that its first order of business was to figure out “where we want to go, otherwise we won’t get there.” He said so in Latin; after some translation, it was clear that the Commission’s first task was to articulate a vision for its work.

The ability to articulate inspirational visions is one of the primary strengths revealed through an examination of the lives and accomplishments of the 10 Hesburgh Award winners who are the focus this publication. The award winners also display an astute willingness to take risks; a deep commitment to access to higher education and success for traditionally underserved populations; and a talent for building community and forging partnerships.

The stories in the pages that follow show how the award winners embody these traits. Their leadership excellence reflects Fr. Hesburgh’s work throughout his lifetime to advance higher education, social justice, and access to education for women—which he advocated decades ago as the key to improving all lives in the developing world.

Several additional perspectives on leadership are included herein as well. Contributions address topics ranging from the future of undergraduate education to regaining the public trust and mission-driven leadership, among others. Contributors include Roger Ferguson, TIAA’s President and CEO; Ron Pressman, TIAA Senior Executive Vice President, Institutional Financial Services CEO; Brit Kirwan, President Emeritus of the University System of Maryland and the first Hesburgh Award winner; Mary Dana Hinton, serving in her early years as president of the College of St. Benedict; and James Ryan, incoming president of the University of Virginia. Additional commentary is offered by TIAA’s Consortial Learning Group.

It is our hope that the chronicles of the Hesburgh Award winners’ achievements and the commentaries that follow inspire the reader and offer on-the-ground insights and ideas to help advance leadership excellence throughout higher education.

“The very essence of leadership is that you have to have vision. You can’t blow an uncertain trumpet.”

Fr. Hesburgh

Global thinking and inspirational vision

Of all the factors contributing to the successful presidencies of the Hesburgh Award winners, an ability to take a global view of the institution they lead is perhaps most essential. Global thinkers move beyond linearity, synthesizing information from a wide range of inputs to generate creative solutions that, remarkably, oftentimes seem almost obvious after the fact. The capacity to identify clear, compelling paths forward and evoke widespread buy-in and commitment, however, is anything but common.

Illustrative examples abound in the stories of Hesburgh Award winners; a few are noted here to demonstrate the wide range of the manifestations of global thinking and inspirational vision.

When Gail Mellow arrived at LaGuardia Community College/CUNY in 2000, the college was fragmented, with intractable walls separating academic affairs from student affairs, and the credit division from the non-credit division—seriously complicating students’ paths to success. Pockets of innovation were stagnating rather than scaling, community engagement was minimal, and faculty were dispirited. Mellow set about conceptualizing a new vision for the college, taking a holistic approach that wove supportive, mutually interdependent relationships among all the college’s divisions, programs and departments—all with the aim of building pathways to take students from being high school dropouts to college graduates. She began the process with large-scale strategic planning meetings involving more than 100 people from every campus level (students, secretaries, janitors, full professors, senior administrators, and trustees) and the community (high school principals and local business and community leaders). Today, that “one college” approach is backed by a passionate faculty driven by LaGuardia’s motto, “Dare to do more.” Faculty are deeply engaged in tackling how best to support new pedagogies to teach the most diverse student population American colleges have ever faced.

Mellow’s leadership is reminiscent of how Eduardo Padrón has transformed Miami Dade College (MDC). When Padrón assumed the presidency there in 1995, the college was beset by the effects of years of fiscal shortfalls. He launched a year-long initiative with nearly 1,000 participating faculty and staff in discussions of academic and administrative reforms. In 2002, Padrón again tapped the creativity of the faculty and

staff, inspiring the submission of hundreds of proposals as part of MDC's Learning Agenda initiative to improve remedial education and student success. The culture of participation and buy-in still prevails today on campus—making it often recognized as one of the best colleges to work for in the United States.

Padrón has never been satisfied with simply student access; rather, he constantly communicates to MDC students that while talent is universal, opportunity is not, and they need to know that failure to take advantage of the opportunities at MDC is not an option—the institution is there to systematically support their many deep needs to help assure their success. His mantra—that MDC is a “dream factory”—permeates the campus and motivates the work of faculty, staff and students on an emotional level.

Charles Reed captured this spirit, too, as he led both the University of Florida and the California State University (CSU) systems for a combined 27 years. He said, simply, that leaders are “all in, all the time,” focused on making their institutions better for their students, community and state. This profound commitment inspires key constituencies—of which higher education has many—and generates results under even the most difficult circumstances. The Cal State system endured cuts of over \$1 billion—nearly one-third of its state funding—following the financial crisis of 2007-08, yet Reed continued to increase the number of students served through measures such as streamlining transfers from California's community colleges to CSU. While this sounds straightforward enough, it took Reed more than a decade of lobbying for a state law, which finally passed in 2010, to establish a transfer AA degree. As a result of fewer credits lost in the transfer process, the new degree quickly freed up seats for more than 50,000 additional students at CSU.

Diana Natalicio's vision for the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) is grounded in a deep understanding of the institution and its place on the U.S.-Mexico border. When she became president in 1988, like many regional universities, UTEP was trying to emulate more “prestigious” institutions despite their differences in settings, constituencies and missions. (Natalicio notes a “Harvard on the border” bumper sticker that circulated at one point.) Natalicio immediately set out to articulate a different vision, one that authentically reflected the institution and, first and foremost, its students. Rather than lament its place and circumstances as liabilities, which too often had been the case, under Natalicio's leadership UTEP instead has embraced its location and its role as a regional public university with a fundamental commitment to serve Hispanic and first-generation students from the area.

“My basic principle is that you don't make decisions because they are easy, you don't make them because they're cheap, you don't make them because they're popular, you make them because they are right.”

Fr. Hesburgh
What Works for Me, 1986

Natalicio firmly believes that serving the region and, likewise, an 80% Hispanic student population, doesn't mean that quality needs to be diminished. She continually instills this message in her faculty and students, 45% of whom enroll in graduate or professional school within three years of graduation.

A positive approach focused on possibilities is a common thread that distinguishes the Hesburgh Award winners. Scott Cowen, who led the rebuilding and renewal of Tulane out of the existential threat it faced in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, created a positive and vivid image of the future with an unwavering focus on the strengths and potential of people and organizations to accomplish things they otherwise didn't believe they could. The disbelief was understandable, as Katrina left 80% of Tulane underwater and New Orleans devastated. The university had to close for Fall 2005 but, remarkably, remained closed for just that one semester.

At another level, in New York City, John Sexton looked at NYU's campus, without a single blade of grass (compared to Columbia's relatively verdant grounds in the same city), and turned that into an asset by envisioning NYU as a vital part of New York City's ecosystem—without gates—where students could be part of the dynamic energy of the city, and learn to deal with and thrive in its rich diversity and complexity. That approach reflects Sexton's deep belief in ecumenism—the embrace of a wide range of peoples, ideas and practices, and respect and tolerance for differences. His ecumenical vision was the driving force behind NYU's globalization: Sexton oversaw the opening of NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU Shanghai, and more than doubled NYU's study-abroad sites.

Freeman Hrabowski describes a positive atmosphere of respect that he works to cultivate at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County (UMBC). That respect means knowing how to listen carefully, with an open mind and willingness to hear other perspectives. He emphasizes the need to ask good, hard questions and instill a culture of problem solving—a culture of getting things done. While consensus building is important, in the end, the institution needs to move forward and course-correct later if that proves to be necessary.

Patricia McGuire, along with her team at Trinity Washington University, embodies the problem-solving culture described by Hrabowski. McGuire took the helm at Trinity in 1989, when the formerly elite Catholic women's college was on the brink of closing, with just 300 students, serious financial problems, and at a time when the future of women's colleges was in serious doubt. McGuire quickly realized that a return to Trinity's "golden age" wasn't possible, and outlined a profound transformation of

the college that called for shifting its focus to the educational needs of low-income women in and near Washington D.C., along with a complete reengineering of Trinity's programs and services to meet the needs of that student population. Her vision of the future of the institution is true to its current time and place, and rooted in the Catholic imperative of social justice—and it's working.

Global thinkers are typically ahead of the curve, as their perspectives reveal shifts and trends that they prepare for and leverage. Paul LeBlanc, the most recent Hesburgh Award winner, clearly has been out in front on competency-based education. LeBlanc is president of Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU), which spawned College for America (CfA), the nation's first direct-assessment, competency-based education program. CfA is the first degree program decoupled from the credit hour to be approved by its regional accreditor and the U.S. Department of Education, which allows its students access to Title IV funding (i.e., federal financial aid funds).

Back in the early 1990s, when Hrabowski became president at UMBC, he spurred a collective vision of the university as a national model for excellence and inclusiveness, where students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds would thrive and be well prepared for success upon graduation. Today, acknowledgment of the benefits of diversity and inclusiveness is widespread; when Hrabowski formed his vision for UMBC he was at the leading edge of targeting success for all students, particularly in science and engineering.

Brit Kirwan was prescient in 2004 when the University System of Maryland (USMD) launched its Effectiveness and Efficiency initiative, a multi-year effort to systematically examine and reengineer all the of the university's academic and administrative processes. The goal was to ensure responsible stewardship of resources and, indeed, many changes were implemented and savings gained. Maryland's governor and state legislature took notice, and the university's compact with the state was strengthened—all of which served USMD well when in the wake of the 2007-08 financial crisis, state funding for higher education was slashed across the country. USMD fared better than most state institutions as a result of the trust Kirwan had worked so hard to build. In fact, Maryland is one of just seven states to see a rise in state funding per FTE student between 2006-07 (pre-financial crisis) and 2015-16. Maryland's funding rose 6% over that time, even given above-average enrollment growth; the national average over that time is a drop in funding of 11%.

Please see commentary on page 22 contributed by Kirwan on the crucial need to regain public trust in higher education.

Willingness to take risks

A global perspective, anticipating trends, being ahead of the curve—all can lead to courses of action that typically are seen as fraught with risk, as they lead institutions into uncharted territory. The Hesburgh Award winners haven't shied away from taking risks, although they clearly are savvy enough to assess whether the potential for better institutional outcomes outweighs the costs of failure.

Again, illustrative examples abound in the stories of Hesburgh Award winners; a few are noted here to demonstrate the wide range of risks they have taken on.

Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans in late August 2005, devastating the city and Tulane, which had no option but to close its doors. Tulane's students scattered to nearly 500 institutions that, in an impressive show of unity and support, agreed to take in the displaced students. As Scott Cowen struggled under incredibly difficult circumstances to save the institution, the reality of the damage to New Orleans hit home, and he realized that Tulane's drastically altered environment called for new thinking across the board. In one of his early updates to the Tulane students enrolled elsewhere across the country, Cowen took a risk that touched upon the most fundamental aspect of the institution when he told the students, "If it's not in your DNA to rebuild Tulane and New Orleans, don't come back." He and his team had predicted that 40% of the student body would return for spring semester 2006; the actual return rate was 93%. Tulane quickly integrated a public service requirement into its core curriculum for all four years, the first major research university in the country to do so. In Cowen's last year as president, Tulane students spent more than three-quarters of a million hours contributing to their community through an array of meaningful projects.

When Patricia McGuire became president of Trinity in 1989, she was told by the board chair to "fix it or close it"—and closing it would not have surprised many. Of all the fixes and changes that needed to happen, certainly becoming coeducational was one of the options on the table, to immediately tap opportunities to expand the student body and bring in desperately needed tuition revenue. Yet McGuire remained true to the core of Trinity's past and was bolstered by its founders, the Sisters of Notre Dame, who served as a voice of conscience in reminding constituents that Trinity was founded in 1897 to provide access to women who otherwise could not go to college. Driven by her passion for social justice, McGuire was determined to maintain the college's focus on women, and to concentrate on low-income African-American and Latina women nearby. The strategy was controversial and sparked much debate and opposition, but in the end,

the board approved McGuire's plan. It quickly became clear that women who historically have been marginalized in education do not eschew the women's college model, but in fact flock to a place that puts them at the center of the learning enterprise. While financial challenges are ongoing, McGuire and her team have built a solid financial platform from which to face them.

Diana Natalicio describes an intentional risk that UTEP engages in—and which many of the Hesburgh Award winners also have been willing to do—that is, take admissions risks. UTEP accepts large numbers of students who by most definitions would be considered highly at risk for completing their degrees. But UTEP knows that standard predictors aren't necessarily applicable to the students it serves. Instead, UTEP depends on its own data-based evidence and experience working with such students—those who other institutions won't admit—and succeeds, as evidenced in many ways, including the high rate at which UTEP graduates go on to earn advanced degrees.

Charles Reed and Brit Kirwan were at the forefront of addressing the need for change in higher education on two fronts: accountability, and improving teaching and learning, respectively. Reed was a leader in promoting accountability on the part of institutions, and worked hard on fostering adoption of the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) initiative. The California State University System was the first system to join VSA, making its results transparent and open to public scrutiny. Reed and the CSU presidents pressed their peers via AASCU and APLU to follow suit, and refined and expanded institutional reporting on a range of matters, such as average undergraduate student debt and graduates' economic diversity (in terms of Pell Grant recipients). Over time, the Department of Education has adopted these and similar measures in its College Scorecard.

Kirwan recognized early on that the costly traditional teaching and learning paradigms that prevail in higher education were not sustainable. He spurred the University of Maryland to experiment with new and innovative teaching and learning methods that leverage advances in technology and the cognitive and learning sciences, with the goal of improving learning and reaching more students. Working closely with the National Center for Academic Transformation, experiments in course redesign were undertaken, pilots were set up and data collected, and both successes and failures ensued. The latter were seen as part of the risk in moving to a new paradigm, and as learning opportunities to support success in the long run. The work continues at Maryland, largely via initiatives driven by the William E. Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation. Today, colleges and universities across the country are fully aware of the need to improve teaching and learning outcomes.

“If there is to be more lasting peace among the crew members of spaceship Earth, the first and greatest prerequisite at this historical moment is justice, a more equitable sharing and use of the total life resources available.”

**Fr. Hesburgh
Address at St. Francis
Xavier University, 1978**

Commitment to access and success

These stories begin to reveal the passion all Hesburgh Award winners share for providing access and supporting success for underrepresented minorities, low-income students, and first-generation and nontraditional students of all kinds.

A few statistics to illustrate that commitment:

- Three out of four students who enter Miami Dade College are under-prepared for college-level work in at least one basic skill or the English language. Nearly 50% live in poverty, and more than two-thirds are classified as low income (150% of the federal poverty level or less).
- Ninety-five percent of Trinity's students are African-American or Latina females; 82% are Pell Grant recipients.
- Cal State University is the largest four-year public university system in the United States, with more than 430,000 students—more than 75% of whom are ethnic minorities—and 110,000 annual graduates. In 2014-15, the full cost of tuition for 61% of all CSU undergraduates was covered by grants, scholarships or waivers.
- In 2012—just before Diana Natalicio was recognized with the Hesburgh Award—UTEP was ranked #1 among all U.S. universities by *Washington Monthly* magazine in providing social mobility for its students.

The statistics speak volumes; just a few of the stories behind them shed light on what motivates the Hesburgh Award winners, and how they build and sustain a campus culture that supports access and success.

Freeman Hrabowski captures the spirit of creating an environment focused on success with the story of his own convocation as a college freshman, when the assembled students were told, “Look to your left, look to your right; one of you will not graduate.” Hrabowski has long countered that with his own mantra at UMBC: “Look to your left, look to your right; our goal is to make sure all of you graduate.” The shift in mindset is crucial, and calls for sustained commitments from both the institution and its students.

Hrabowski consistently communicates key themes to UMBC students, namely: their education is vitally important to UMBC; UMBC is determined to both challenge and give them the support they need; it's crucial that they are all in; and they are at UMBC to prepare for the rest of their lives.

Eduardo Padrón's belief in MDC as a "dream factory" has long been grounded in extending access to inclusion by embracing diversity and cultivating a sense of belonging for every student. The inclusion challenge at MDC is formidable—its student population is among the most diverse in the nation, speaking 85 languages and representing more than 180 of the world's 195 countries. One of the most effective approaches to inclusion employed by Padrón is ensuring the diversity of its faculty, at 54% minority; its workforce, 78% minority; and its executive leadership, 59% minority and 53% female. Padrón began his academic career as a student at Miami Dade when it was a community college. Having lived through much of what MDC students today are experiencing better positions him to understand them and their needs, which go well beyond the academic realm. On a personal level, he gets it.

At LaGuardia Community College, the majority of its 45,000 students are immigrants. The sheer number of cultures that represents has spurred Gail Mellow to rethink many aspects of the traditional college structure and curriculum. From 2009 to 2011, Mellow engaged the entire "one college" in an in-depth, data-driven review to more fully understand how to improve student success, focusing on each juncture where students were lost. The linchpin of the restructuring that followed was an integrated advising initiative built around teams of student peers, professional advisors and faculty. Mellow is passionate about engaging faculty in the national conversation on college completion and, at LaGuardia, how best to implement new pedagogies and craft a "hyper-inclusive" curriculum. Mellow began her academic career as a student at a community college and, like Padrón, promotes the power of community colleges to combat poverty, reduce inequity, and build the middle class. Her commitment inspires the faculty and pervades the institution's ethos.

At SNHU, Paul LeBlanc has created multiple low-cost pathways to degrees for nontraditional students, from College for America, its online competency-based education program, to its many Degree-in-Three programs, which reduce students' residential experience to three years by combining traditional classes with internships and other credit-bearing experiential learning, shaving 25% off the cost of a degree. Perhaps one of LeBlanc's most ambitious projects is the Refugee Initiative, building off years of difficult work with Rwandan refugees to expand into Lebanon, Kenya and

South Africa. Today, just 1% of the world's more than 65 million refugees have access to higher education, and no other institution is attempting to offer them full degree programs at any scale. Closer to home, in 2017, LeBlanc created the SNHU Center for New Americans to offer access to higher education and other services to refugees in Manchester, New Hampshire, a city whose mayor has called for an end to refugee settlement in the area. Clearly, LeBlanc's commitment to access and success runs deep; combined with innovative thinking, that commitment has generated a loyal and energized faculty and staff excited to be part of creating new paradigms for the future of higher education.

Diana Natalcio is motivated by a vision of institutional excellence centered on enabling talented people to achieve their goals regardless of their resources or backgrounds. For the population UTEP serves—nearly 50% of whom report a family income less than \$20,000 a year—conversation about value propositions and the ROI of higher education isn't as relevant as is empowering the residents of the El Paso region to understand that UTEP is a choice for them. One of the terrible things about poverty, Natalcio notes, is how much it limits one's options; she feels a responsibility to inspire and motivate young people to envision goals, and to offer them an opportunity to achieve those goals at UTEP. She has developed a deep, symbiotic relationship between the community and the university that is changing the narrative for UTEP's historically underserved region on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Patricia McGuire, too, is focused on serving the historically underserved in her institution's region, specifically, Washington, D.C. and surrounding counties. Like all her fellow Hesburgh Award winners, she is working hard to minimize the financial hurdles that the vast majority of students struggle to overcome, and speaks forcefully about the need for reform of financial aid processes. McGuire is an advocate for new models characterized by collaboration among institutions across sectors rather than by competition. First order is to acknowledge who today's students are: 75% commute to class while juggling parenting, working or both; conversely, fewer than 20% are enrolled full-time and living in a campus dorm. McGuire urges that additional research be undertaken to more deeply understand students—including the more than 30 million people who started college but never earned degrees—and how best to serve them, ranging from obvious fixes such as more convenient class times and office hours to offering food pantries and emergency housing for homeless students.

Building community and partnerships

The Hesburgh Award winners would be the first to say that their many accomplishments are the result not just of their leadership, but also of team efforts and partnerships forged throughout their local communities and beyond.

A few examples of those partnerships demonstrate the creativity and commitment of these leaders to build stronger institutions that are better positioned to serve their students and communities.

In the philanthropic realm, the partnership that Freeman Hrabowski forged with Robert Meyerhoff 30 years ago has blossomed into a powerhouse for increasing diversity among future leaders in science, engineering and related fields. The Meyerhoff Scholars program is open to prospective undergraduate students of all backgrounds who plan to pursue doctoral study in the sciences or engineering. Recipients receive support from all angles and engage in study groups, research experiences and internships, all within a tight-knit community of like-minded students who inspire and support each other. The UMBC Meyerhoff “family” today is 1,300-plus strong, with more than 1,000 alumni and nearly 300 students enrolled in graduate and professional programs. Moreover, Hrabowski has extended the success of the Meyerhoff program by applying lessons learned to similarly structured and endowed programs in the arts, humanities, public affairs and teaching fields.

Gail Mellow describes how her emphasis on the “community” aspect of community college has more fully embedded LaGuardia into the fabric of New York City. Community engagement is high and philanthropic support has exploded during her tenure, as the benefits of a thriving institution redound throughout the area. Eduardo Padrón has set an example by building powerful relationships throughout Miami over the many years he has led MDC, largely by serving the community with open doors and life-changing opportunities. He notes how crucial those relationships have been when state funding drops and tuition simply cannot be raised, and he needs to turn to the community for support of MDC’s ambitions.

Patricia McGuire describes the work of community building as creating common cause; for example, working with the local business community to identify their needs and train students for the kinds of jobs that local industries and companies need to fill. At SNHU's College for America, online programs are specifically designed to serve working adults and their employers. CfA now partners with more 100 companies to create customized courses that educate their employees across a range of specializations.

The partnership between Northrop Grumman and the University of Maryland is a striking example of coordinating higher education with workforce needs. Five years ago, under Brit Kirwan's leadership, the University of Maryland launched ACES (Advanced Cybersecurity Experience for Students), the nation's first honors program focused exclusively on cybersecurity. The effort originated with the workforce needs of Northrop Grumman, Maryland, D.C., and the surrounding metro area—which has a particular need for cybersecurity workers. Both parties have worked to improve the high rates at which students switch out from STEM fields: Northrop Grumman integrated ACES students into its internship programs, which, importantly, are paid, and connected students with its own cyber professionals as mentors. The university, meanwhile, instituted intensive project work to help students build the team skills so valued by industry, and created an immersive and supportive living-learning environment for ACES students. The close collaboration among these partners is a model of active engagement across sectors.

Clearly, partnerships take many forms—in the case of NYU's efforts to enhance its STEM offerings, a long-standing partnership with Brooklyn's Polytechnic University led to a formal merger: the creation of NYU Polytechnic School of Engineering in 2014, fully integrating Brooklyn Poly's 5,000 students and 160 faculty into the NYU community. This complex undertaking involved a range of issues beyond academics, such as incorporating students into the NYU residence hall system, increasing representation in the NYU Senate, and merging formerly rival sports teams.

John Sexton has demonstrated his passion and skill for leveraging possibilities both locally and worldwide. NYU Abu Dhabi graduated its first class in 2014, and NYU Shanghai will do so in 2018. The latter, which was jointly established by NYU and East China Normal University of Shanghai, is the first American university with independent legal status to be approved by China's Ministry of Education. Along with its three degree-granting campuses (New York, Abu Dhabi, and Shanghai), NYU's Global Network University consists of 11 sites in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and South

America. The myriad partnerships that characterize the network offer students and faculty a range of opportunities for study, research, teaching and collaboration—and help educate world citizens with the wide-ranging perspectives, understanding and tolerance so crucial to addressing global problems.

Closer to home, higher education leaders are keenly aware of their interdependence with the K-12 sector, and several of the Hesburgh Award winners have been at the forefront of remarkable partnerships with the schools in their regions. More than 25 years ago, Diana Natalicio spearheaded formation of the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, a partnership that includes all nine school districts in El Paso County, the El Paso Community College, UTEP, and area business and civic leaders, all working together toward the goal of raising educational aspirations and attainment among all young people in the region. This vertically integrated commitment to systemic change entails multiple initiatives, including bringing together K-16 faculty in math, reading and other disciplines to eliminate disconnects for students as they progress along the pathway to college graduation. Today, El Paso-area high schools have the highest overall graduation rate of all Texas major metro areas, and the gap between Hispanic and Anglo graduation rates has narrowed to 6%. Further, 80% of UTEP students today are graduates of El Paso County high schools, and 70% of teachers in those county high schools are UTEP graduates, clearly demonstrating the symbiotic relationship between the sectors.

When Patricia McGuire became president at Trinity, none of its students were graduates of the D.C. Public Schools system. Yet McGuire’s transformation of Trinity called for serving that very population. Clearly, the future of Trinity’s transformation was in many ways dependent upon McGuire successfully building bridges, cultivating trust, and forging partnerships with the D.C. schools, from which Trinity previously had insulated itself. She paints a picture of always being on the lookout, always open to opportunities that can contribute to fulfilling Trinity’s mission.

Scott Cowen’s work with the New Orleans public school system was jumpstarted with a phone call to Louisiana state education officials, who had taken over the devastated system in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Cowen offered to spend \$1.6 million to reopen Lusher Elementary School, just two blocks from campus, as a K-12 charter school, provided that the school would reserve space for the children of Tulane employees. Tulane also would offer free college courses to older Lusher students and

**“The true
antidote to the
public’s view
that colleges
are simply
ivory towers
of intellectual
dilettantism
is engagement
with important
public issues—
however difficult
and thorny those
issues may be.”**

**Fr. Hesburgh
God, Country, Notre
Dame, 1990**

guarantee admission to Tulane to high-achieving Lusher graduates. A partnership was quickly born, and soon after Cowen was appointed to the city's Bring New Orleans Back Commission and charged with leading the effort to rebuild and reform the city's failing public school system. Under Cowen's leadership, more than 90% of New Orleans schools eventually became independent charters. The Orleans Parish School Board has slowly worked its way back since the 2005 storm, and over time will be regaining responsibility for many of the schools in its district. Student outcomes and progress will be closely tracked by researchers at Tulane's Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives, formed in 2007.

Charles Reed launched an unusual partnership with predominantly African-American churches to increase the number of African-American students, particularly males who were lagging behind their peers in college enrollment. Reed—who more than doubled the number of Mexican-American and Latino students from 67,000 to 137,000 during his tenure at Cal State—collaborated with Bishop Charles Blake of the West Angeles Church of God in Christ in Los Angeles to create “Super Sunday,” launched in 2005 with 24 partner churches. During the first Super Sunday church service, Reed spoke to the congregation about what it takes to get to college, urging the young people to set their sights on a four-year degree, and emphasizing the value of that degree to their families. Reed was accompanied by CSU campus representatives, who set up information booths and answered questions after the service. Today, Super Sundays are held each year during February and March at more than 100 partner churches throughout the state. CSU campus presidents and other officials speak, and a series of companion events fill the weekends. Since its launch in 2005, Super Sunday has reached more than 1 million African-American congregants.

In closing

The average length of presidential tenure for the Hesburgh Award winners is 22 years—a testament to their passion for higher education and commitment to service. Their loyalty and devotion have benefitted the institutions they serve and their many constituents in countless ways. Their accomplishments and insights are meaningful and inspiring; by sharing them the TIAA Institute aims to nurture leadership excellence within institutions and throughout the sector.

To further enrich this publication, the Institute tapped Brit Kirwan, a Chancellor Emeritus and winner of the first Hesburgh Award, for his perspective on a key issue of the day: that is, the critical need to regain public trust in higher education. To complement Kirwan's insights—and those of all the Hesburgh Award winners—the Institute invited two leaders in the early stages of their careers for brief thought pieces on leadership from their perspectives. Contributions from James Ryan, incoming president of the University of Virginia, and Mary Dana Hinton, serving in her fourth year as president of the College of St. Benedict, follow Kirwan's commentary on the pages below.

TIAA's success is tightly intertwined with higher education's success. Its deep commitment to higher education and leadership excellence is reflected in the work of the TIAA Institute and, indeed, is embedded throughout TIAA and the company's values and mission. This publication closes with perspectives from TIAA leadership, including Roger Ferguson, TIAA President and CEO, who serves as co-chair of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences' Commission on the Future of Undergraduate Education, and Ron Pressman, CEO of TIAA Institutional Financial Services, who shares his thinking on team building and service. Final comments are offered by Mark Saine, a member of Pressman's team and TIAA's Consortial Learning practice, who applies the principles of leadership excellence displayed by the Hesburgh Award winners to developing the leaders of tomorrow.

We are grateful for these thoughtful contributions, and trust that the stories and insights of the Hesburgh Award winners chronicled here will inspire leaders throughout higher education to achieve their highest aspirations.

Additional presidential insights



Brit Kirwan

On regaining the public trust...

Higher education is today navigating very stormy seas. Seemingly endless turbulence, much of it self-induced, has eroded public support and trust in what has historically been one of our nation's most revered enterprises. As a result of dramatically increased tuition, which threatens to place college out of reach for many; polarization of student groups, which threaten academia's long-held principles of freedom of expression; and academic, athletic and other scandals at some of our most distinguished universities, which cause many to question the integrity of institutional leadership, more and more Americans believe that our colleges and universities are turning a blind eye to their fundamental societal responsibilities.

Traditionally, our nation's colleges and universities have been society's primary engine of upward social mobility, the crucible for knowledge creation and innovation to advance our collective quality of life, and its means of developing the next generation of educated citizenry for the preservation of our democracy.

Today, narrow institutional interests, driven in large part by mindless pursuit of superficial and discredited college rankings, too often overwhelm higher education's basic responsibilities to society.

Higher education desperately needs leaders who see a *higher calling* for their institutions, one that places greater emphasis on national needs, in concert with institutional priorities. We need leaders who champion higher education's role in advancing social mobility. We need leaders who ensure that their institutions prepare students for active participation in civic life and contribute to a society that values education and the pursuit of truth.

Only with such leaders can higher education recapture the public's confidence, trust and support. Only with such leaders can higher education fulfill its indispensable role in securing our democracy, global leadership, and the American Dream.

Brit Kirwan

Chancellor Emeritus, University System of Maryland

Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for Leadership Excellence, 2010 Winner

On leading a large, complex organization...

The most important thing to do is to articulate a shared vision of the future, to use that vision to establish priorities, to have a team in place across the university that can carry out those priorities and make course corrections as needed.

On lessons in higher education leadership...

No. 1, it should never be about you. It should always be about the institution and the mission of the institution. To lead a university, you have to constantly keep in your mind, “What is the core mission of this university?” The mission of UVA is quite clear. It’s about great teaching; it’s about great research; it’s about public service. Everything you do needs to be in advancement of that mission.

No. 2, it’s incredibly important to be honest and transparent. You need to make hard decisions if you are in a leadership position. You shouldn’t be shy about the necessity to make hard decisions. But you should always be willing to explain your reasoning, understanding that not everyone is going to agree with you, but they should at least understand your rationale.

Another lesson I’ve learned is that it’s really important to be visible. And it’s important to always recognize that it’s a privilege to be at a great university. So, spend time with students. Spend time with faculty. Recognize that you really have the great privilege of being around a remarkably talented, diverse, committed group of students, faculty and staff.

James E. Ryan

Incoming president of the University of Virginia (beginning August 2018)



James E. Ryan



Mary Dana Hinton

On mission-driven leadership...

Higher education leadership is widely acknowledged as exceedingly challenging in today's environment. To lead in these times, a leader must possess an internal sense of mission that compels an organization forward when the journey is difficult. Mission-driven leadership is powerful in three ways.

First, the strength of a personal mission enables leaders to promote a purposeful vision in the face of daunting odds. Today, in the midst of challenging times—economically, demographically, and in terms of public perception—effective leaders must not only equip their communities to be proactive, but they also must be consistent in moving their community toward a hopeful vision for the future. Mission-driven leaders are motivated by challenges and use them to promote institutional aims. The job is demanding, but our internal missions invigorate us.

Second, mission-driven leadership demands a level of vulnerability. Through an authentic relationship with their community, leaders demonstrate an openness to shared reflection and problem solving, essential habits in the face of difficulty. I have found that making myself vulnerable and sharing my experiences with others not only strengthens my own leadership, but also nurtures a community of courageous and compassionate leaders.

Third, mission-driven leadership enables one to assess and act on opportunities in ways that promote a wholeness in life. Leaders must discern which personal and professional opportunities promote their mission, and say no to other tempting distractions. Professionally, we must guard against mission drift and ensure we protect our institutional values and mission. Personally, there is grave danger in allowing ourselves to be compelled by the will or values of others. A personal mission offers a true north.

Demands placed on college leaders come from every direction and at warp speed. Mission-driven leadership sustains leaders in times of challenge, facilitates courage and compassion, and guides smart decision making.

Mary Dana Hinton
President of the College of St. Benedict (2014 to present)

From TIAA leaders

On the future of undergraduate education...

The strength of our nation's undergraduate institutions is tightly linked to the health of our democracy, the vibrancy of our economy, and the vitality of our society. That's the underpinning to *The Future of Undergraduate Education, The Future of America*, the final report from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences' Commission on the Future of Undergraduate Education. I serve as co-chair of the group with Mike McPherson, president emeritus of the Spencer Foundation and Macalester College, and also a member of the TIAA Board of Overseers. In an initiative supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Commission was asked to take a broad view of undergraduate education in all of its manifestations, covering all types of institutions, students, and degrees. The Commission comprises a group of remarkable individuals who share a passion for education.

The Commission agreed that there is no single model for a successful undergraduate experience; rather, the diversity of educational pathways is a particular strength of the American approach. Now that most high school students have access to some college option, the nation's future success depends on its ability to realize the untapped potential of the many students who begin but do not complete their undergraduate education.

In its report, the Commission offers strategies in three priority areas to address the challenges we face. The first priority is ensuring that students have high-quality educational experiences that prepare them for success. The second is increasing completion rates and reducing inequities among different student populations. The third priority is controlling costs and increasing affordability to make undergraduate education financially accessible to all who can benefit.

Dedicated and passionate leadership are critical for achieving progress. The Commission encourages leaders of the nation's colleges and universities—with their widely diverse missions and students—to commit to fulfilling the promise of education for all our citizens and our nation.

Roger W. Ferguson, Jr.
President & CEO, TIAA



Roger W. Ferguson, Jr.



Ron Pressman

On leading effective teams...

Many leaders say that they are only as effective as the individuals with whom they choose to surround themselves. Indeed, the most successful leaders know how to assemble and manage high-performance teams. The benefits of teamwork include increased productivity, the ability to bring multiple perspectives to bear, and the energy that arises from collaboration and mutual support. At TIAA, we've committed to a core set of team-building principles to support leadership excellence. A commitment to these principles can make the difference between simply getting the job done, and getting the job done efficiently, quickly, and without mistakes...or as I like to say, "Simple, fast and flawless!"

My team-building tenets include:

- *A shared team purpose* that is clear and inspiring; the team must be held accountable for meeting established goals
- *The size and structure of the team* must match the team's purpose: role clarity and well-defined cadences, agendas and tasks are critical to success
- *Team dynamics* are important as well: teams must trust each other, manage conflict in healthy ways, and share a drive for collective results
- *Sufficient resources and support* are crucial to achieving team goals, including necessary data, education, processes and systems, and rewards
- *Leadership should be shared* among team members, who participate in active decision making and hold each other accountable; managers coach their team members and remove obstacles, empower the team, and set direction when needed
- *The most effective teams* are comprised of talent that is highly competent, committed, and diverse, with the right mix of abilities and expertise

Ron Pressman

Senior Executive Vice President, Institutional Financial Services CEO, TIAA

Reflections from TIAA's Consortial Learning practice...

There is no substitute for vision. Visions both motivate and remind, and create a unique resonance between leaders and those who follow. In crafting a vision, leaders often play a three-part role of teacher, facilitator and artist. As a teacher, the leader's understanding of the larger world informs initial communication about the need for developing a shared vision. This understanding emanates from the leader's exposure to an expansive set of worldviews, and leads to a broader frame of reference less subject to boundaries than others might impose. As a facilitator, the leader can both engage his or her own vision while inquiring about others' views. Leaders in this facilitative process are simultaneously shaping and being shaped in a manner that leads to an even sharper view of the future. The artist works to sculpt these perspectives into an elegant artifact—a vision statement of subtle complexity. In the inevitable struggles that institutions face to fulfill their missions and thrive, a heartfelt vision is the differentiator between a promise fulfilled and a promise undelivered.

A compelling vision nearly always leads to a great chasm that separates the realities of today from the possibilities of tomorrow. Many leaders think that standing on the shores of today is far safer than leaping towards the vagaries of tomorrow. Yet the great lessons of leadership teach us that preserving the status quo is also risky. Staying in one place too long bears a cost that too often is not calculated because it is invisible to leaders. Institutions caught in a holding pattern are squandering the engagement of their institution's talent. People need momentum to grow, to strengthen, to achieve, and to connect with others; this sense of dynamism sparks the best of what people can do and achieve together. The risk of doing something is no greater than the risk of doing nothing—it is just that the timeline is different. A leader who makes a dramatic move forces the future to come faster. The leader who presides over the status quo causes an inevitable decline over an unknown time frame.

The groundwork for leadership success is built early on in a leader's career by the authentic and strategic desire to understand the needs of others around him or her. Leadership maturity is advanced by cultivating the understanding that for me to win, I need to enable others around me to win too. It is striking how little great leaders think of their own success and how much they focus on the success of others; similarly, it is doubtful that any of the Hesburgh Award winners started their leadership journey by thinking about how much they wanted to be admired as a leader. I constantly remind the leaders I work with that the measure of their success is how successful they help others to be. And as the Hesburgh Award winners have shown, as your influence grows, your impact expands to include an ever-greater band of people positively affected by you and your institution. Indeed, great leaders stand out and are easy to identify because they leave everyone and everything better than when they started.

Mark Saine
TIAA Senior Director of Leadership Development



Mark Saine



Maureen Devlin

About the Author

Maureen Devlin is a TIAA Institute Fellow, serves as Senior Advisor to the Forum for the Future of Higher Education, a think tank resident at MIT, and is a higher education consultant. She helps the TIAA Institute build out its Higher Education Program by commissioning research and generating new knowledge and insights to guide higher education leaders' decision making. Previously, Maureen served as associate director of the Forum for the Future of Higher Education and as executive director of the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, a group formed in 1989 to generate a reform agenda for intercollegiate athletics. She has authored or edited more than two dozen books, reports and publications. Maureen earned her A.B. at Harvard University, cum laude, in Government, and her M.A. at The Pennsylvania State University, in Sport Administration.



Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh C.S.C. (1917-2015)
President of the University of Notre Dame, 1952 to 1987
TIAA and CREF Boards of Overseers, 1963 to 1991

“If our lives in education have any meaning or significance, it will be in our reading the signs of the times and in educating the young of our times in the vision and values that will civilize and make for reasonable human progress and lasting peace on earth.”

Fr. Hesburgh
The Hesburgh Papers, 1979

Photo credit: Notre Dame Archives



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New York, NY 10017