

## Equity Week Opening Keynote: Cultivating Community with Eric K. Ward



[Eric K. Ward](#) is a leading civil rights strategist and Executive Vice President of Race Forward, dedicated to dismantling systemic racism and combating authoritarianism and organized hate, including antisemitism. Raised in Southern California, his experiences as a Black punk rocker shaped his commitment to social justice and grassroots activism, which he honed from 1989 to 2003 across the Pacific Northwest and Mountain West. Mr. Ward co-founded #CultureGuard to help subcultures reclaim their narratives and serves on several boards, including the Proteus Fund and Auburn Theological Seminary. As Board Chair of States at the Core (STAC), he promotes local democracy and civic engagement.

The only American awarded the Civil Courage Prize, he has transformed national discussions on race, antisemitism, and democracy. His work is featured in documentaries like *Viral: Antisemitism in Four Mutations* and *We've Been Here Before*, and his writings challenge white nationalism and highlight the power of grassroots activism. Mr. Ward continues to inspire action toward a more just and inclusive society.

## Leadership and Advocacy for Inclusive Practices: How to Be an Agent of Change Within Your Community



[Jason Green](#) is a Maryland-based business executive, board advisor, and early-stage investor focused on the future of work, economic opportunity, and mobility. In 2013, he co-founded SkillSmart, an award-winning platform that connects employers, job seekers, and education providers, enabling diverse communities to equitably benefit from over \$100B in economic development. He is also Executive-in-Residence at Zeal Capital Partners, a DC-based inclusive investing™ venture firm addressing health, skills, and wealth gaps.

Previously, Jason served as Associate Counsel to President Barack Obama, advising on legal, economic, and domestic policy, particularly in response to the Great Recession, focusing on workforce retraining and economic development strategies. Earlier, he was National Voter Registration Director for Obama's 2008 campaign, leading the 50-state Vote for Change initiative, and has managed field operations for several political campaigns.

The son of a preacher and a public school teacher, Jason values community engagement and serves on various boards, including chairing the Montgomery County Remembrance and

Reconciliation Commission. He directed and co-produced *Finding Fellowship*, an award-winning PBS documentary on the unification of three racially segregated churches in the 1960s DC region. A TEDx speaker, he has been featured on Bloomberg News, MSNBC, and NPR discussing workforce trends, politics, and the economy. Jason is a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis and earned a law degree from Yale Law School.

## The Power of Intersectionality: Exploring the Layered Identities Within Our Community



**Dr. Christine Crefton** is an Educational Resource Program Manager at Montgomery College, where she leads high-impact initiatives, including the Micro-credentials program and Pressbooks coordination. With a strong focus on open education and equitable access to learning, she collaborates with faculty to expand credentialing opportunities and develop open educational resources (OER) that remove barriers for students.

Christine holds a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Management from Drexel University, specializing in Organization Development and Adult Learning. She also earned a Master's in Library Science and Information Systems from Drexel and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Villanova University. With experience across higher education, government, and the private sector, Christine is dedicated to transformational leadership, fostering innovation, and ensuring that education remains accessible and inclusive.

## The Power of Empathy: Bridging Divides and Celebrating Differences



**Dr. Sarah Federman** is an author, educator, and conflict resolution practitioner. Prior to this work, she spent a decade as an international executive working with clients such as Google and the NFL. A job transfer from Manhattan to Paris led her to an encounter with her own name on a Holocaust memorial wall. This moment prompted her to turn her attention to helping people avoid mass violence, focusing specifically on corporate complicity. She is now an Associate Professor

of Conflict Resolution at the Joan B Kroc School of Peace Studies at the University of San Diego.

## Effective Communication Across Cultures and Generations & Generational Jeopardy



**Dr. Alexander Jun** is a researcher who focuses on equity and justice in higher education globally. A TEDx speaker (2012), he has held fellowships at the Center for Khmer Studies (2010) and Curtin University (2016) and was Scholar-in-Residence at Belmont University (2018). An associate editor of the *Journal of Behavioral and Social Sciences*, Dr. Jun authored *From Here to University* and co-authored *White Out* (2017), *White Jesus* (2018), and *White Evolution* (2019). A ruling elder at New Life Presbyterian Church, he was the moderator of the 45th General Assembly of the PCA (2017). He lives in California with his wife, Jeany, and their three teenagers.



**Dr. Paul D. Miller** is a STEM education expert specializing in instructional design, curriculum development, and professional learning, with a strong emphasis on inclusive education and technology integration. He has facilitated over \$34 million in federal and state grants, collaborated with school systems in 28 states, and presented internationally on cooperative learning, math achievement, leadership coaching, and competency-based education.

From 2007 to 2018, Dr. Miller led technology-based learning initiatives at Johns Hopkins University and the Success for All Foundation, including web-based professional development and early childhood program collaborations with Sesame Workshop. Before joining Montgomery College, he served as Director of Strategic Operations at the Maryland State Department of Education, developing a statewide micro-credentialing program and advancing inclusive instructional practices for students with disabilities. He holds an Ed.D. in Instructional Design for Online Teaching and Learning from Johns Hopkins University and an M.A. in Instructional Systems Development from UMBC.

## Spring Equity Dialogue



**Dr. Isis Artze-Vega** serves as college Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs at Valencia College in Central Florida, which serves about 70,000 students annually and has long been regarded as one of the nation's best community colleges. She provides strategic leadership for the College's seven campuses, as well as for the areas of curriculum, assessment, faculty development, distance learning, and partnerships for educational excellence. Prior to joining Valencia, Isis served as Assistant Vice-

President for teaching and learning at Florida International University (FIU). Before FIU, she taught English composition and enrollment management at the University of Miami. Isis is the lead author and editor of: [\*The Norton Guide to Equity-Minded Teaching\*](#) and co-author of [\*Connections Are Everything: A College Student's Guide to Relationship-Rich Education\*](#).

## MC Interfaith Breakfast and Discussion: Let's Talk Community



[Nik Sushka](#) has over 20 years of experience in higher education, nonprofit, and advocacy work, including serving as president of a youth civic engagement organization and coordinating service-learning and civic engagement work in the Rockville Office of Student Life. Since 2021, Nik has served as director of MC's academic coaching program, the Achieving the Promise Academy (ATPA). As a trained facilitator in interfaith dialogue, Nik has previously hosted interfaith programs at MC, including an Eat, Pray, Love Interfaith Breakfast series in 2017.