

Business-Higher Education Forum

2026 Faculty Innovation Fellowship

Information Session #2 – March 16, 2026

Session will be recorded and we will distribute the slides after the session to the email that was used to register.

We can pause the recording at any time at anyone's request.

*This session does **not** use any AI agents or tools, and we ask you please deactivate any personal ones.*

Welcome

Kristen D. Fox

Chief Executive Officer
Business-Higher Education Forum



Session Overview

About BHEF

The Case for a Fellowship Experience

Inside the Experience

What Makes a Strong Proposal

Role of Executive Sponsors

Looking Ahead: 2026 & Beyond

Ask questions any time.



2024 Cohort at Drake University in Des Moines, IA

The Business-Higher Education Forum is a national network connecting pioneering corporate and higher education leaders to identify emerging skills and **co-develop pathways that address talent gaps.**



We empower and catalyze **collaborations** that deliver **accelerated, inclusive, and effective solutions** across education and work.

Business and university leaders join BHEF to **lead innovation** that meets the changing talent needs of learners, workers, and businesses.

A National Alliance of Cross-Sector Talent Leaders

accenture amazon AON JPMORGAN CHASE & Co. S&P Global StanleyBlack&Decker BR Business Roundtable

Ellucian Google macmillan learning State Farm® Pearson U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION

American Public University System AMU ASU Arizona State University BGSU CAL POLY CU NY THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK CLARK UNIVERSITY

CSCU Columbia University County College of Morris Drake University Georgia Tech. Georgetown University Grand Valley State University Hudson County Community College Hudson is Home! Miami Dade College MC MONTGOMERY COLLEGE NC STATE UNIVERSITY Northeastern University

SDSU San Diego State University Fairfield University SUNY The State University of New York University System of Maryland University of Virginia WGU WAKE TECH UNT UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

brand ed MENTOR COLLECTIVE TRELIS FOUNDATION GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE COUNCIL ACE ECMC Foundation N2N NREL Transforming ENERGY Strada EDUCATION FOUNDATION

PASSHE FOUNDATION VIRTUAL INTERNSHIPS NCAD National Center for the APPRENTICESHIP DEGREE Junior Achievement™ Podium Education D2L Riipen RI Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner

gia GROWING INLAND ACHIEVEMENT TEXAS BUSINESS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL UTAH SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION TALENT READY UTAH NGA NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

Why a Fellowship?

Colleges and universities aren't fully executing



Source: BHEF "Forging Partnerships" Report (2024)

Leaders agree faculty capacity is a key barrier to success.

Accelerating how we close the gap: The BHEF Faculty Innovation Fellowship

Leaders identify
and empower
innovative
faculty leaders



Convert
promising ideas
into **well-crafted**
action plans



Catalyze and
deliver **real-
world solutions**
for student
success



Build better skills for better performance.®

The Fellowship Experience

Incubator & Accelerator: One Destination



Goals for the Experience

1. **Develop innovative mindsets** that identify and pursue strategic innovations to expand pathways to student success
2. **Empower influential faculty** with the knowledge, skills, and insights they need to lead novel and innovative projects
3. **Build a network of peer leaders** across the institutions
4. **Deliver a sustainable capstone project** that builds equitable talent pipelines through high-impact practices for student success and industry engagement

A Diverse Network of Innovators from Across the Country

46 Fellows with 44 projects

6 MSIs (HBCU, HSI, AANAPISI)

11 States represented

20 Institutions

48% Female leaders

Bowie State University

Buffalo State University

Cal Poly State University

Clark University (MA)

Central Connecticut State University

Charter Oak State College

Drake University

Georgetown University

Hudson County Community College

Miami Dade College

Northeastern University

8 Public universities

6 R1 Research institutions

2 Community colleges

4 Independent institutions

48% Non-white leaders

North Carolina State University

San Diego State University

State University of New York Cortland

State University of New York Old

Westbury

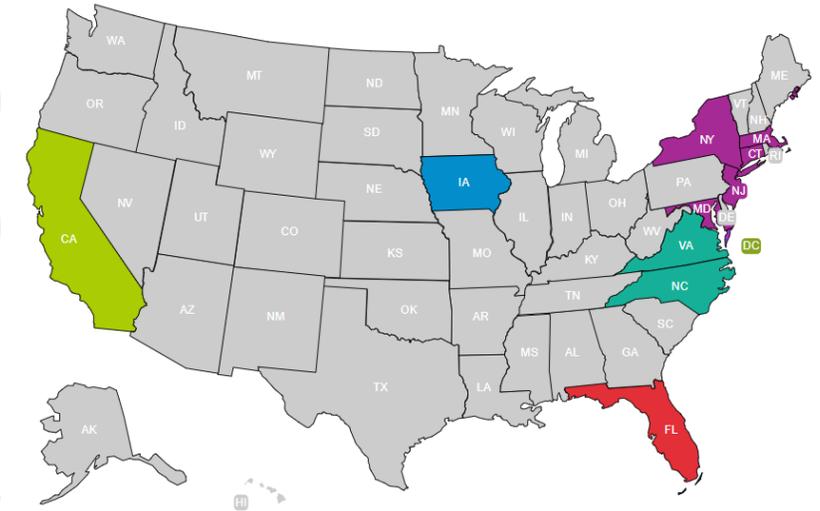
University at Buffalo (SUNY)

University of New Haven

University of Maryland Global Campus

Virginia Tech

Wake Tech Community College



2024 Faculty Innovation Fellowship Cohort



Benjamin A. Abugri
Southern Connecticut State



Ifedapo Adeleye
Georgetown University



Thomas J. Barron, Jr.
Charter Oak State College



John Alan Chermak
Virginia Tech



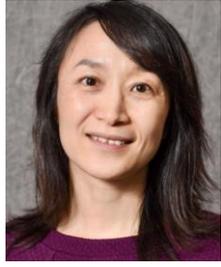
Eric Cornish
Miami Dade College



Peter Cronrath
Hudson County
Community College



Tommy Demos
Miami Dade College



Huiling Ding
North Carolina State
University



Scott Ferguson
North Carolina State
University



Stacy Gnacinski
Drake University



Lori Harvin
Coppin State
University



Alvin Henry
San Diego State
University



David Knight
Virginia Tech



Michelle M. Kusaila
Central Connecticut State

19 Fellows
13 Institutions
6 MSIs
10 States represented



Lorraine Powers
Wake Tech Community College



Byron Purse
San Diego State University



Barry J. Tracey
Wake Technical
Community College



Elana Winslow
Hudson County
Community College



Yianna Vovides
Georgetown University

2025 Faculty Innovation Fellowship Cohort

27 Fellows
13 Institutions
6 MSIs
11 States



Shadi Abouzeid
Georgetown University



Caleb Bragg
CSCU: Central CT State University



Anne Brown
Virginia Tech



Kathleen Burke
SUNY: Cortland



Paul Case
Clark University



Camelia Fawzy
USM: University of Maryland Global Campus



Ali Hajbabaie
North Carolina State University



Ben Hawkins
Cal Poly



Jamie Henzy
Northeastern University



Leah Huizar
Drake University



Stephanie Kim
Georgetown University



Alper Koparan
Northeastern University



Pooneh Lari
North Carolina State University



Lucy McGowan
Cal Poly



Chad Mckenzie
Wake Tech Community College



Mehdi Mekni
University of New Haven



Lorenz Neuwirth
SUNY: Old Westbury



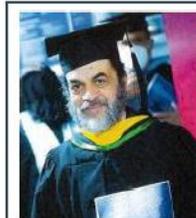
Daniel M. Ondieki
Hudson County Community College



Brooke Palkie
CSCU: Charter Oak State College



Carlos Paternina
San Diego State University



Mohammad Qasem
Hudson County Community College



Varum Ramberran
Miami Dade College



Supriyo Ray
USM: Bowie State University



Jas Singh
Clark University



Stephanie Smith
Virginia Tech



Diego Tibaquirá
Miami Dade College



Ganesh Walunj
SUNY: Buffalo State University



Yin Yu
San Diego State University

The Trajectory to Success

Through the lens of their capstone project, we took Fellows on a three-phase journey to implementation.

Phase I: Innovative Mindset

What does it mean to embrace and champion innovation on campus?



Phase II: Change Management

Who do you have to influence and how?
How does your innovative drive shared success?



Phase III: Leadership

What are your strengths and leadership voice?
Where do you need support? What does it mean to lead in today's environment?

A Multi-modal Experience: Each phase includes an in-person “anchor” session, virtual session, office hours, and pre/post-work using templates, readings, and guides.

Creating a Clear Cadence from Training to Implementation

PRE-WORK

Readings or videos
Introduce tools, assessments, or templates
Intentional practice

ON-SITE WORK

+ Training and expertise
Group work
Peer mentoring
Real-world case studies

EXECUTION

+ Refine into polished artifacts or practice
Implement what you learned with sponsor

SECTION 1: Guiding Frameworks and Background for Change

Two main frameworks supported the development of the Change Leadership Toolkit. We first describe the Keck/PKAL Model for Systemic Institutional Change as a way to understand the complex process of change. We then introduce the equity and social justice framework we applied to the development of the toolkit found in the book Higher Education Administration for Social Justice and Equity.

The Keck/PKAL Model for Systemic Institutional Change

Systemic change is a long-term journey. There are several different models and theories of change that have tried to capture this complex process that occur over time. One example is Kotler's eight-step process model (Define, Select, Organize, Measure, Implement, Monitor, Evaluate, and Sustain). Another is the model developed and published by Fred and Roger Lewin for advance change in undergraduate STEM education, shown in Figure 1. This model, which conceptualizes the change process as a river, is a helpful visual representation of the systemic change process over time.

Change Leadership Toolkit 2.0: Change Leadership Ecosystem Map

Add one change goal to the far-left ribbon, then visualize the needs of your Change Leads (Share Summary) items on across your lane inside already set Leadership Cores that are operating in your change ecosystem, and Learn you have identified. Then, consider all these factors together to position the actions you should take next on the right ribbon.

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Equipping future engineers
Dr. Scott Ferguson

Reduce the critical thinking skills gap identified by engineering education by implementing an innovative and authentic "real-world" problem.

Engineering education delivers the best critical thinking skills are underdeveloped!

Shadi Abouzeid, PhD
Assistant Professor of the Practice
Associate Faculty Director
MS, Ed. M, Ed. M, Ed. M

Sandbox for Real-World Artifacts

Innovation (Elevator) Pitch

April 2024

Before



January 2025

After



Full Gallery Available at [bhef.com](https://www.bhef.com)

Pitch Decks

Let's Rethink How We Work: Creating Meaningful Change in the Workplace (MCW)

At Coppin State University, we embrace balance and wellness, cultivating an environment where faculty flourish and students soar.

Dr. Lori Harvin BHEF Faculty Innovation Fellowship 2024

Project Timeline

In Process 2021-2024

Cohort Feedback Innovation Session April 2024

First Meeting November 2024

2024

BHEF Fellowship - Join Internal Committee

September 2024

Weekly Meetings, Finalize Invites, Mission, Meeting Date

Faculty

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

Analyze and present a critically reflective opinion about the theories, research, and information generated throughout the course, and express ideas clearly through discussion and writing.

Mastery set at: 3

Calculation Method: 75/25 Weighted Average

Partnerships?

The Cheesecake Factory

Fellows have recorded full eight-minute pitches to refine their explanation but were not required to submit a "final."

Highlights

Narratives

BHEF BUSINESS-HIGHER EDUCATION FORUM

YOUR PROJECT

Project Title: Designing Agile Academic Programs
 Project Mantra: What you learn to do in the classroom should be what you do in the workplace.

Disrupting Agile Academic Programs: Needs of faculty, industry, and students allow for curriculum agility in the classroom.

What have you done so far? Describe milestones you have accomplished.

Our project required quite a bit of an approach of Confirm, Capture, and Communicate. Universities have done it in relation to aligning the curriculum. In addition, in curriculum is defined and implemented this approach were being responded to.

Confirm Visualize Review Adjust

Figure 1: Enabling Curriculum Agility

In addition, we concentrated on leveraging to provide insights role instructors, students, and administrators.

The achievement of course-level outcomes (CLOs), program-level outcomes (PLOs), and school-level outcomes (SLOs). This effort is part of a broader initiative related to assessment of PLOs led by Vice Dean Adelery.

What will happen next? What will project on the Fellowship conclude?

Following is an example of how this we aim to implement next.

Example:

To achieve CLO1, a student may be discussion in a discussion board by their peers to explore different questions additional sources. The instructor direction, etc.

To show the student progression to time completion, accuracy/following could be used to track progress. The Likert scale as follows:

- 4: Transfer (Near) (applies to)
- 3: Mastery (meets all expect)
- 2: Approaching Mastery (in)
- 1: Beginning Mastery (on the road toward mastery)
- No evidence

The resulting visualization from the When the student completes a task indicate progress.

When the activities are completed, progress/had based on the results of achievement of the course level outcomes.

Figure 2: Timeline for Enabling Curriculum Agility project

What will be the impact of? We expect that once we work through the pilot and create a dashboard that can provide Faculty Directors with useful data in terms of learning progression from course to school outcomes, it will enable evidence-supported decisions for revising curricula. This should have an impact on how we work (becoming more responsive and proactive).

How will you measure it? In the pilot we will be conducting interviews with faculty directors and instructors. In addition, we will be surveying students for feedback at the mid-semester and at the end.

What opportunities or challenges do you see for your students as you implement this project?

I am testing my model (which is really a very light approach for faculty as the bulk of the work falls on designers) this semester in the course I am teaching to be able to speak to other instructors from the teaching standpoint.

I am not sure that students will have any challenges given that they will have an additional grad-book in Canvas on Learning Mastery.

What unique elements have you had to consider to ensure your project provides an equitable and accessible experience?

Executive Sponsors & Sustainability

Feel better!

Alvin Henry <ajhenry@sdsu.edu>
 To: Frank Avery
 1/31/2025

Click here to download pictures. To help protect your privacy, Outlook prevented automatic download of some pictures in this message.

****This message is from an External person!****

Hi Frank,

Sorry to hear about the illness. I hope you feel much better real soon.

Luckily I will see you next month in San Diego. Plus I just won a \$850k grant!

Take care today,

-Alvin



RE: Final Deliverable Submissions

David Ferreira <dferreira@cha>
 To: Frank Avery
 Cc: Jennifer Thornton
 Fri 2/7

****This message is from an External person!****

Hi Frank,

Glad to schedule a quick call. Tom has gotten a lot out of the experience and raves about it. We are so glad he had this opportunity and looking forward to what Brooke is able to do as well.

Do you have time Monday at 10am to chat? If not, I can look at Thursday the 13th at 4.

-Dave



Build better skills for better performance.®

What Makes a Strong 2026 Capstone

2026 and Beyond: An Updated Experience

Build on Core Accelerator

Build on our high-quality innovation mindset and change leadership practices.

Integrate AI Demands

Leveraging new capacity and infrastructure, shift to supporting “next level” leaders in administration.

Expand WBL Capacity

AI skills demands requires new capacity demands of institutions.

2026 Capstone Focus Areas

Fellows' capstone projects must address at least one of two required themes. Addressing both is ideal:

AI Skills Adoption & Integration

- Building students' capacity to apply AI in real workplace settings
- Embedding AI competencies or industry-recognized credentials in curriculum with employer input
- Creating employer-engaged workforce pipelines around AI-enabled roles

Likely would not qualify: AI pedagogy alone, or projects without a direct student workforce outcome.

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

- Expanding student access to internships, co-ops, apprenticeships, or employer-engaged courses
- Stackable credentials co-designed with industry partners and tied to concrete hiring pathways
- Workforce pipeline programs targeting specific student populations or high-demand sectors

Likely would not qualify: Internal curriculum changes without employer or off-campus component.

What Makes a Strong Capstone Proposal

Strong proposals clearly answer three questions:

Who benefits, and what is the workforce gap?

Name the student population and describe the specific skills or access gap your project addresses. Vague audiences and vague problems make for weak proposals.

What concretely changes for students?

Describe a measurable outcome like credentials earned, placements made in an experience, employer relationships built, or similar. How can you measure phases from testing to pilot to scale? The project should produce something leaders, faculty, and students can point to.

What happens after the fellowship ends?

Show that the work continues and can measurable expand impact. Describe your sustainability plan and the specific role your executive sponsor, broader institution, and-or business community, will play in scaling or institutionalizing the project.

Unlikely to be competitive: projects focused solely on internal curriculum redesign with no employer or workforce component.

Ingredients for Successful Fellowship Experience

1. Treat as an Incubator & Accelerator Experience, not Honorific Society

Fellows and sponsors that accepted the experience as an incubator and accelerator better capitalized on the learnings and outcomes.

2. Sponsor Level and Engagement Matters

Sponsor quality had major determination of success (though, some persevered without it). Those with engaged, top-level sponsors had significantly stronger success and fewer barriers, proving the theory of the program.

3. Smaller Cohorts, Deeper Work

Fellows in the first cohort developed stronger, safer peer connections throughout the program. When expanded, Fellows struggled to find the same cohesion, limiting peer trust.

4. Intentional diversity matters

Cohorts and Fellows were repeatedly grouped into working groups with different experiences (ex. community college faculty paired with research faculty at R1 private institution)

Ingredients for Successful Fellowship Experience

5. Pre-Work and Post-Work Investments Yielded Gains

Those who more fully utilized the templates/readings and homework assignments had stronger experiences and made progress more quickly.

6. Pairing the Fellowship with Leadership Training and Support Can Accelerate Success

Fellows without formal leadership training or administration training struggled with bringing projects to life or scale. Many had never explored leadership development and many lacked experiences with budgeting, grants, “pitching” a concept, or working with stakeholders off-campus to build momentum.

7. Growing the Sandbox Safely Pushes Fellows to Real Gains

In the second cohort, we experimented with immersive, on-site training in two corporate environments using a staggered approach. By doing this, we were able to help Fellows better understand their industry engagement gaps and grow in between sessions. Our final session was rigorous and represented one of the largest “readiness” tests.



Build better skills for better performance.®

Executive Sponsors

The Role of Executive Sponsors

REQUIRED BY BHEF

Principal or senior-level administrator (Cabinet)

HR and budget authority

Backing of the **institution**

Committed to project vision and Fellow's success



Clear Expectations & Support from Executive Sponsors

CHAMPION

Advocate for the role of the innovation and its place in advancing the institution
Reinforce strategic value for the innovation to college/university strategy.
Create visibility for the innovation.

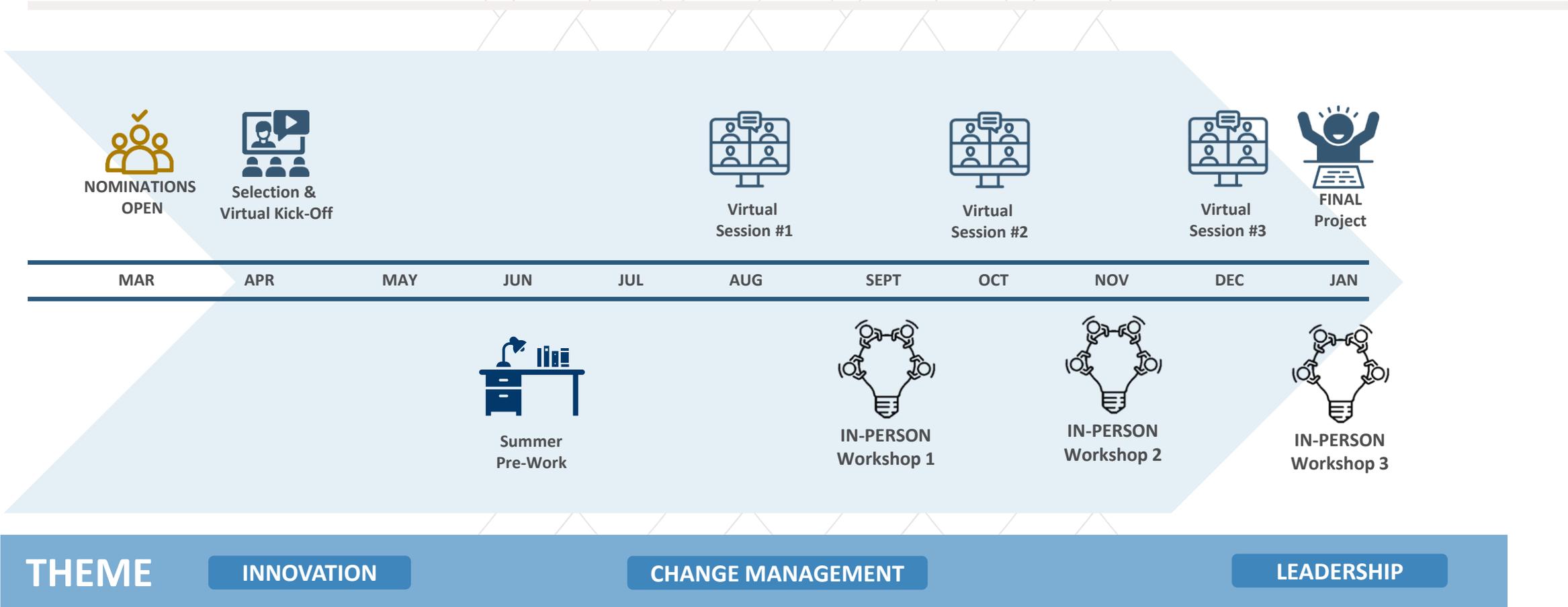
MENTOR

Advise on key considerations for project & support strategies
Connect with cross-cutting resources, peer mentors, broader community
Create connection for the Fellow with their leadership aspirations

SUPPORT

Prioritize the experience for the Fellow by ensuring they have administrative clearance to dedicate time.
Remove administrative barriers as needed to Fellow can succeed.

SAMPLE 2026 TIMELINE: Cohort 1 Timeline



THEME

INNOVATION

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

LEADERSHIP

Key Information for Tuition & Eligibility

Tuition

In-Network: \$5000 per Fellow

Out-of-Network: \$10,000 per Fellow

Institutions that join BHEF as an in-network partner by June 30, 2026, may receive the in-network reduction.

Travel

Institutions should plan for ~\$1500 of travel.

Fellows and institutions agree to make every effort to provide ample travel time and stay for duration of on-site content.

of Fellows

Institutions are capped to *up to two* Fellows.

System offices may coordinate up to *four* Fellows across any combination of institutions, with a maximum of two per institution.

Key Eligibility Criteria for Faculty:

- Full-time faculty teaching credit-bearing courses in a two- or four-year degree program
- Minimum three (3) years of experience at their current institution by the end of the 2025–2026 academic year
- Clear and eligible capstone project
- Executive sponsor
- Confirmation of budget / budget authority via executive sponsor nomination form



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2025-2026 Cohort Capstone: What they built

Faculty Goals & Gains by the Numbers

FACULTY INNOVATION FELLOWSHIP: CAPSTONE PROJECTS

The Business-Higher Education Forum's (BHEF) Faculty Innovation Fellowship provides the tools, experts, and space to design, develop, and lead innovations that establish equitable talent pipelines and expand pathways to student success. Fellows pursue new employer partnerships and gain the leadership and change-management skills necessary to successfully implement innovative practices within and beyond their classroom. Fellows regularly meet over nine months to learn, build a strong network, and develop capstone projects which are vetted and shared by their cohort peers, BHEF staff, and national experts.

BHEF is grateful to the ECMC Foundation and our network partners for their support of the inaugural 2024 and 2025 cohorts.



Shadi Abuzeid
Fellowship Year: 2025
Georgetown University
From Roadblocks to Roadmaps:
Building Faculty Capacity for AI-
Enhanced Learning
• Pitch Video



Benjamin A. Abuyi
Fellowship Year: 2024
Southern Connecticut State University
Preparing College Students for the
Workforce Needs of Industry
• Pitch Video



Ifedapo Adedoye
Fellowship Year: 2024
Georgetown University
Job Academy Program
• Pitch Video



Thomas Barron
Fellowship Year: 2024
Charter Oak State College
Formation of Business Advisory
Council
• Overview Deck



Caleb Bragg
Fellowship Year: 2025
CS&J Central CT State University
Creating Class Connections
• Pitch Video
• Overview Deck



Anne Brown
Fellowship Year: 2025
Virginia Tech
The Discovery Lab: Transforming
Higher Education Through Hands-
On Discovery
• Pitch Video
• Overview Deck

Full Gallery Available at [bhef.com](https://www.bhef.com)

Project Topics & Themes

- AI & Emerging Tech
- Industry-Embedded Curriculum
- Workforce Credentialing
- Employer Advisory Boards/Infrastructure
- Student-centered learning innovations (ex. VR/AR)

Key Outcomes

93% improved ability to apply industry partnership frameworks

90% improved ability to scale pilots

80% improved accessibility-centered design

24% reported exceeding their initial capstone project goals

100% of 2025 respondents report projects implemented or expected to be implemented.

95% of 2024 cohort participants implemented projects

Institutional Impact

Project Impact Level

1. 8 Institution-Level proposals
2. 7 Department-Level proposals
3. 6 Course-Level proposals
4. 4 Program-Level proposals
5. 2 Research-Based proposals

Majority of projects had multi-stakeholder impacts on campus.

Project Impact Themes

Institution: Scaling innovations, promoting AI, and enhancing employer engagement. Ecosystem building, professional identity initiatives, and open educational resources.

Department: Centers on fostering collaboration and mentoring through advisory boards, interdisciplinary hubs, STEM spaces, and skills-based frameworks. Some projects lack clear definition.

Program: Targets structured initiatives like bioinformatics mentoring, business advisory boards, internships, and micro-credential programs with a research-oriented focus.

Course: Highlights course-specific innovations such as problem-based and project-based learning, AI integration, certifications, and fintech modules to strengthen industry connections.

Research: Explores assessing entrepreneurship centers and addressing the needs of workers with neuro-cognitive challenges through focused research efforts.

Early Outcomes

Mellon Foundation grant bolsters groundbreaking Asian American Studies program

The program provides community-focused curriculum at San Diego State University

By **Leslie L.J. Reilly**
Tuesday, April 8, 2025

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impact and influence the fabric of American society.

The Asian American Studies Department will develop a curriculum, for the major and minor, that integrates traditional scholarship with innovative, hands-on learning experiences and applied internships within the San Diego community.

“One of our core courses will involve students collecting oral histories from local AANAPI communities,” Henry said.



President Adela de la Torre, Professor Alvin Henry, and College of Arts and Letters Dean Todd Butler meet in the president's office. (Leslie L.J. Reilly/SDSU)

2026 Experience: Updated Timeline

February 23 through April 3: Nomination/Application Period

Monday, March 9 – Informational Webinar #1 – [RSVP Here](#)

Friday, March 13 – Informational Webinar #2 – [RSVP Here](#)

Friday, April 10 – Estimated date for published 2026 in-person locations.

Friday, April 10 – Selection Notification (Estimated)

Friday, April 17 – Virtual Kickoff (11:30am ET)

In-Person Kick-Off (Session 1) – Est. Sept 16-18

Frequently Asked Questions

My institution isn't a BHEF member — can I apply?

Yes, at the \$10,000 rate. Institutions whose leadership joins BHEF before June 30 qualify for the \$5,000 partner rate.

Does AI pedagogy count for the AI theme?

No. The focus must be on students' capacity to apply AI in the workplace, not on training faculty.

I don't have an employer partner yet — is that disqualifying?

Not necessarily. Describe your strategy and how your executive sponsor will help.

Does my executive sponsor attend sessions?

No. They mentor, champion the project, and remove institutional barriers — but do not attend workshops.

What if my project changes during the fellowship?

Projects often evolve. The proposal is a starting point — refinement is expected and by design.

When will I hear back?

Selection notices estimated April 10. Virtual kickoff for selected fellows: April 17 at 11:30am ET.

Questions & Discussion

General Questions: fellowship@bhef.com
Frank Avery, Managing Director, Frank.Avery@bhef.com

