

2021 Incoming OCCJ Board Members

Ken Busby, Executive Director & CEO, Route 66 Alliance



Ken Busby is the Executive Director & CEO of the Route 66 Alliance. Previously, he served as Executive Director & CEO of the Arts & Humanities Council of Tulsa for twelve years. Before that, Busby was the Director of Development for Tulsa Zoo Friends and was with the Gilcrease Museum for eight years, serving as Membership Director and Director of Communication. A native of Tulsa, Busby holds a dual Bachelor of Arts degree in communication and French from the University of Tulsa. He has a Master of Arts degree in journalism from Indiana University at Bloomington. A member of Phi Beta Kappa, Busby is also a graduate of Leadership Oklahoma Class XVII.

Busby is the immediate past chairman of the Tulsa Performing Arts Center Trust. He was elected to the Arts Education Advisory Council of Americans for the Arts in 2010 and is past chairman of that Council. He also serves on the executive committee of the Tulsa Symphony and Workforce Tulsa and serves on the Regional Tourism Marketing Committee for the Tulsa Regional Chamber's Visit Tulsa. He is an adjunct professor at the University of Tulsa and serves as a consultant in the areas of fundraising, grant writing, strategic planning, and board development for nonprofits across the state. In 2008, Busby received the Governor's Arts Award for Community Service and the Global Vision Award from Tulsa Global Alliance. In 2011, he received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Holland Hall. In 2013, the Association of Fundraising Professionals named him its Outstanding Fundraising Executive, and in 2015, Busby was named the Leadership Oklahoma Distinguished Graduate.

Dr. Dewayne Dickens, Director of Culturally Responsive Practices, Tulsa Community College



Dr. Dewayne Dickens is the Director of Culturally Responsive Practices for Tulsa Community College, a position to support students' semester persistence toward attaining a degree or certificate through the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Through his office, students are guided with research-based practices to enhance leadership, self-assessment, and goal-setting skills for students – with a particular focus on first-generation and underserved populations.

Dr. Dickens has served as a Developmental English Associate Professor at Tulsa Community College for 17 years. His doctorate is in Curriculum and Social Foundations (English emphasis) with a dissertation focus on college persistence for African American males. Dr. Dickens has extensive experience in faculty professional development (having served several years as Tulsa Community College's Coordinator for the Academy for Teaching Excellence, the three-year orientation and professional program for new full-time faculty), leadership, diversity and multicultural learning issues, implicit bias discussions, including national presentations on such topics as creative strategies for teaching and learning, race in education, technology in classroom instruction, and community involvement with education.

He is a member of the John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation Board of Directors and leads the Curriculum Development Team. He also serves as a Board Member for the Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice, Oklahoma Humanities, KIPP Tulsa, Racism Stinks, along with his serving as a Commissioner for the Mayor's African American Affairs Commission of Tulsa.

Aaron Fulkerson, Partner and Chief Development Officer, Schnake Turnbo Frank



Aaron Fulkerson joined the Schnake Turbo Frank in 2010 and became a partner in February 2012. Aaron leads the firm's rapidly growing management consulting division, STF's practice focusing on leadership and strategy. Aaron is a Predictive Index Certified Partner, Myers-Briggs Certified Practitioner, a Birkman Certified Professional, and holds a coaching certificate from the Association for Talent Development. He brings more than 15 years of experience, ranging from Fortune 500 companies to small businesses and government organizations.

As an Oklahoma native, Aaron is the former chief operations officer of the Florida/Caribbean region of Right Management Consultants. More recently, he was president and chief operations officer of Gabbard and Co. With his ability to provide solutions for his clients, Aaron is helping the firm expand its expertise and offer more ways to meet clients' needs.

Outside of work, Aaron enjoys a deep passion for music. Aaron has more than 20 years of experience in the music industry as a composer, producer, songwriter, and arranger.

Aaron obtained a bachelor's degree in film scoring from Berklee College of Music in Boston and a master's degree in business administration in progress. He is involved in the Foundation for Tulsa Public Schools, board of directors; Ronald McDonald House of Tulsa, board of directors; State Chamber of Oklahoma, board of directors; Allied Arts, board of directors; Lyric Theatre, board of directors.

Darius Kirk, Executive Director, KIPP Tulsa



Darius Kirk earned his Bachelor's and Master's degree in Education from Langston University, and Educational Specialist Degree from Webster University. He also completed some post-graduate work at Harvard University, Graduate School of Education, in School Turnaround. With the mindset of forever learning, Mr. Kirk has aspirations on completing his Doctorate in Education within the next two years at Webster University. He has been in education for over 19 years. His experiences included teaching for 8 years at East Central High School and KIPP Tulsa College Prep. In administration for 9 years with experience in

leading middle school, high schools, and within central office.

Darius Kirk was recently appointed the Executive Director position for KIPP Tulsa. He is excited to return to KIPP to join and push as the organization goes from good to great. Mr. Kirk has a servant's heart and is willing to do whatever it takes to ensure the lives of people are improving daily.

Rev. Dr. Gary Peluso-Verdend, Executive Director, Center for Religion in Public Life, Phillips Theological Seminary



Gary Peluso-Verdend is the President Emeritus and Executive Director of the Center for Religion in Public Life at Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa, OK, an ecumenical seminary affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Since 1993, he served at Phillips as a program director, the dean, development executive, and president (until July 2018). For five years (2000-2005), he was the director of church relations at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, IL.

Gary is an ordained elder in The United Methodist Church. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago Divinity School in 1991. He attends Boston Avenue United Methodist Church in Tulsa. He teaches adult church school classes frequently and enjoys putting together online, public courses (e.g., Regenerating the Spirit of Democracy).

He is the proud, and humbled, recipient of the 2019 Nancy Day Spirit Award from OCCJ.

He and his wife live with their daughter in Tulsa, in the fourth (and last) house-in-need-of-updating they have owned. Gary's three grown children and their families live in the Chicago area.

