



Texas Women in Higher Education
2024 Annual Conference | Oceans of Opportunity

Keynote Speakers



Emily W. Messer, Ed.D.
President, Texas Wesleyan University



Elva LeBlanc, Ph.D.
Chancellor, Tarrant County College

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Emily W. Messer, Ed.D.

Dr. Emily W. Messer, Texas Wesleyan University's 21st President and its first female leader in the university's 133-year history, is a distinguished educator, visionary and advocate for academic excellence. She brings a personal connection as a first-generation college student, igniting her dedication to student success and transformative experiences. With over two decades of experience in higher education, her leadership combines comprehensive expertise in university advancement, enrollment management and student life, marking a pivotal chapter for the University.

Before her role at Texas Wesleyan, Dr. Messer served as Vice President for Advancement and Enrollment Management at Jacksonville State University in Alabama. Her tenure there witnessed remarkable successes, including record enrollments and historic philanthropic achievements. Before her time at JSU, she held

significant leadership positions at Shorter University in Rome, Georgia, where she was Vice President of Enrollment Management and Assistant Dean of Students. Messer earned her Doctor of Education in Higher Education Administration from the University of Alabama and received two degrees from JSU, a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Master of Public Administration.

In the community, Messer has been active on boards of local Chambers in Georgia, Alabama, and most recently, Fort Worth, Texas. During her time in Alabama, she enjoyed serving on the planning committee for the annual Advancing Women to the Top Conference as well as being a board member for the Youth Leadership Development Program in Alabama.

Through her dedication to higher education and commitment to helping advance the next generation of students, Messer has received several recognitions, including participating in the American Academic Leadership Institute's Executive Leadership Academy and EAB Future President's Intensive.

With Dr. Emily W. Messer leading the way, Texas Wesleyan University enters a new era marked by boundless possibilities and transformative experiences. Her first-hand understanding of the transformative power of education, combined with her strategic vision for student success and experience, positions the University to continue its legacy of excellence while propelling students toward a future of limitless potential. Under her guidance, Texas Wesleyan is poised to foster growth, ignite forward momentum, and redefine the boundaries of what students can achieve.

Dr. Messer knows the importance families play in the lives of each person. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends, traveling, reading and outdoor activities. She and her husband, Chris, have two daughters.

Elva LeBlanc, Ed.D.

Elva LeBlanc, Ph.D., is Chancellor of Tarrant County College, a comprehensive two-year college that stands among the nation's 20 largest institutions of higher education. TCC offers affordable access to quality learning, with six campuses across Tarrant County and online. Its array of programs includes university transfer, workforce education, customized training, developmental courses, adult literacy and community enrichment.

LeBlanc began her TCC journey as a student in undergraduate courses. She continued her education at the University of North Texas, where she earned bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. LeBlanc completed postdoctoral work at Texas A&M University.

After teaching bilingual kindergarten in Fort Worth ISD, LeBlanc served as a professor and coordinator of TCC's Child Development Program. She transitioned to administrative roles, advancing to Chief Academic Officer of TCC Northwest Campus.

LeBlanc went on to become Executive Vice President for Instructional Affairs at Austin Community College and President of Galveston College. She returned to TCC in 2006 as President of Northwest Campus. In this position, LeBlanc led the creation of the first early college high school in Tarrant County, expanded partnerships and programs, and opened the Center of Excellence for Aviation, Transportation and Logistics (CEATL), a Northwest satellite campus at Alliance Airport.

In 2017, LeBlanc assumed the role of Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, the senior executive overseeing academic affairs and the promotion of the "One College" concept across the TCC District. She maintained that role while serving as Interim Chancellor in 2022. That year, the Board of Trustees officially confirmed LeBlanc as TCC's sixth Chancellor, praising her leadership abilities and focus on the College's mission.

LeBlanc is responsible for organizational leadership and culture, strategic direction, and community partnerships. Her priorities include the development and implementation of practices that drive student recruitment, retention and completion; working with K-12 schools and universities to enhance the educational continuum; and implementing new programs and curricula that align with the needs of the changing workforce. She is leading the redevelopment of key TCC facilities, creating a modern institution that grows capacity and offerings in ways that effectively serve Tarrant County.

Alongside her husband, LeBlanc created the Adrian and Elva LeBlanc Scholarship, administered through the TCC Foundation.