



Michael A. Baston, J.D., Ed.D.

President, Cuyahoga Community College



Michael Baston is the fifth president of Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) in Cleveland, Ohio. He is a national thought leader on the role of community colleges in shaping educational success, supporting regional workforce needs and economic growth, championing diversity, equity and inclusion reforms, and developing executive leadership teams.

As Tri-C president, Baston focuses on strengthening the College's mission of providing high-quality, affordable and accessible education and services. Since becoming president in July 2022, he has promoted access and success for the 41,000 credit and noncredit students attending Tri-C's four campuses and other locations throughout the Cleveland area.

Leadership and Honors

As a national Guided Pathways and Equity Transfer Initiative coach for the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and for the Racial Equity for Adult Credentials in Higher Education Collaborative (REACH), Baston is noted for his work with leadership teams at two- and four-year colleges across the nation, helping them integrate student success initiatives to advance college completion and successful labor market entry.

Among many other professional honors and activities, Baston received the National Council on Student Development's Terry O'Banion Gold Prize in 2015 and the NAACP Community Leadership Award in 2010.

Baston also serves on numerous national boards and committees, including the Rising Presidents Fellowship for Community College Excellence at the Aspen Institute and the advisory board for the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE). He is a fellow and member of the Council on Equitable AI for Complete College America and serves on the board of directors for the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurs (NACCE) and the League for Innovation.

Baston is a trustee of Columbia University's Teachers College, serves on the advisory board for the College Board, is a member of the board of directors at Cristo Rey Brooklyn High School in New York City, and is a member of the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). At the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), Baston is a member of the Editorial Advisory

Board for the *Trusteeship* magazine.

In Northeast Ohio, his board service includes the Greater Cleveland Partnership, the United Way of Greater Cleveland, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, Team NEO, Playhouse Square, the Downtown Cleveland Alliance and Downtown Cleveland Inc., Unify Jobs/Unify Labs, the American Red Cross Northern Ohio Region and Bluecoats Inc. He is also a member of the Cleveland Leadership Center's Leadership Cleveland Class of 2024.

Baston has garnered numerous awards and recognitions for his achievements. They include *Crain's Cleveland Business* Power 150 list, the Blacks in Management Excellence in Leadership Award and the Who's Who in Black Cleveland award. The Cleveland Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference also honored him with the 2023 Educator of the Year award.

Career

Before leading Ohio's largest community college, Baston served as the president of Rockland Community College in Suffern, New York. During his tenure (2017-2022), he led numerous initiatives to spur growth and increase educational pathways. Under his guidance, the college launched a new hospitality and culinary arts center, developed career and English skills academies to address middle-skill workforce needs, and significantly increased grants, capital and other funding.

Before joining Rockland Community College, Baston was the vice president of Student Affairs and associate provost at LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City, New York.

Baston began his career as an attorney, representing various educational institutions and social justice organizations. His work with academic clients led him to pursue a second career in academics, both as a professor of legal studies and business and as a student affairs administrator.

Education

Baston holds a B.A. from Iona University, a J.D. from Brooklyn Law School and an Ed.D. from St. John Fisher University.

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