



Dr. Michael A. Baston

President

Rockland Community College



Named one of the country's most Notable Education Leaders of 2017 by *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, Dr. Michael A. Baston serves as the 7th President of Rockland Community College in Suffern, New York. He is a national thought leader amplifying the role community colleges play in redefining educational success, leading diversity, equity, and inclusion campus-wide reform efforts, and developing executive leadership teams.

Involvement & Leadership Activities

Dr. Baston is the chairman of the Black Male CEO Educators network and is on the Board of Directors of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the primary advocacy organization for the nation's community colleges, where he also serves as Chair for their Commission on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. He is co-chair of Jobs For The Future's Policy Leadership Trust and a member of the National Advisory Board of the Center for Community College Student Engagement. He served as Designer in Residence for Education Design Lab, a national nonprofit that designs, tests, and implements unique higher education models and credentials that address the rapidly changing economy and emerging technology opportunities. In 2021, he was named a Complete College America Fellow, and also joined the Community College Workforce Coalition. Recently, Dr. Baston was elected to the Board of Trustees for Teachers College, Columbia University.

As a national Guided Pathways and Equity Transfer Initiative coach for the American Association of Community Colleges, he is noted for his work with two- and four-year college leadership teams around the nation, helping them integrate student success initiatives to advance college completion and labor market entry success. Dr. Baston also serves as a faculty advisor for Aspen Institute's Community College Excellence New President Fellowship program, mentoring new community college presidents as they explore systemic issues affecting the educational access pipeline and student success.

Featured Work

Dr. Baston's work has been featured on *MSNBC* and in *USA Today*, *The Atlantic*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Community College Daily*, *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, *The Community College Times*, and *Black Enterprise Magazine*. Additionally, he is a contributing author to *Race, Education, and Reintegrating Formerly Incarcerated Citizens* and *The Handbook for Student Affairs in Community Colleges*.

Career

Dr. Baston began his career as a public interest lawyer representing various educational institutions and social justice organizations. His work with academic clients led him to pursue a second career in academia as both a professor of legal studies and business, and as a student affairs administrator. Prior to serving as President of Rockland Community College, Dr. Baston was Vice President for Student Affairs and Associate Provost at LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City, NY.

Dr. Baston was named president of Rockland Community College in 2017. Under Dr. Baston's leadership, he helped RCC launch a Hospitality and Culinary Arts Center, a new guided pathway influenced academic school model, Career and English Skills Academies to address middle-skills workforce needs, and secured \$30 million in grant, capital, and other fundraising efforts, including back-to-back Title V Developing Hispanic-Serving Institution awards, the largest grants in RCC history. Dr. Baston's Steps Beyond Statements Initiative has helped to signal specific steps that educational institutions can take to foster inclusive excellence.

Education and Awards

Dr. Baston holds a B.A. from Iona College, a J.D. from Brooklyn Law School, and an Ed.D from St. John Fisher College. Dr. Baston received the National Council on Student Development's Terry O'Banion Gold Prize in 2015 and the NAACP Community Leadership Award in 2010.

Please direct all media inquiries to Risa Hoag, Public Relations, risa@gmgpr.com or 845-627-3000, and Susan Lyddon, VP of Institutional Advancement, slyddon@sunyrockland.edu or 347-840-1247.