



**Speaker: Dr. Ryan Maltese**

**Title:** The Whole First-Year: Reimagining the Journey to a College Degree

**Audience:** Administrators

**Topic:** Proactive Systems for Identifying and Supporting First-Year Students from Historically Underserved Backgrounds

**Summit track:** Milestones and engagement

**Objectives:**

- Teach administrators to develop systems that support students in their first year of college.
- Establish cross-functional teams for timely intervention, including onboarding processes, academic support and holistic advising.
- Track the impact of early alert systems, academic advising systems, and the first-year experience course.

**Session Description**

Morgan State University, an urban research HBCU in the mid-Atlantic region, has experienced unprecedented growth and success over the last decade. Recent data show, however, that our new students are grossly underperforming, resulting in twice as many students in danger of being on academic probation after their first year. In an effort to interrupt this trend, our team has redesigned programs and initiatives across the first-year undergraduate lifecycle: onboarding, orientation, registration and enrollment. Participants will hear how we are reframing the first year to include peer mentoring, strategic and intrusive academic advising, first-year experience course redesign, and achievement-based student engagement programs that guide a historically underserved student population through their first year in college. Participants will then share their own stories of successes for first-year students as we identify best practices in transitioning this new generation of learner into the undergraduate experience.

**Speaker Bio**

Dr. Maltese has spent much of his professional career in higher education administration. He attended Oberlin College and holds a law degree from North Carolina Central University School of Law. He has been a member of the Georgia Bar since 1999. Dr. Maltese has taught a variety of undergraduate courses in Political Science, Education and Life Skills. He holds a Master's Degree in Conflict and Peace Studies from UNC Greensboro and a Ph.D. in Educational Policy Studies from Georgia State University. During his doctoral studies, he served as Program Director and Graduate Fellow for the Joseph & Evelyn Lowery Institute for Justice & Human Rights. His work at the Institute focused on servant leadership and service learning



opportunities at the undergraduate levels and developing conflict resolution programs for K-12 students at metro Atlanta schools.