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Today's Students Coalition Welcomes 2023-24 Student Ambassador Fellows



(From left) David Mesta, Minnesota State University, Mankato; Grace Moore, Brown University; Cristian Reyes, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo; Raine Yung, School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today's Students Coalition (TSC), a collective of 39 higher education policy, advocacy, and membership organizations, announced its newest cohort of Student Ambassador Fellows today. In its second year, the fellowship annually recognizes four outstanding student-advocates and aims to expand their advocacy and leadership skills while deepening their knowledge of federal postsecondary education policy.

The fellows were selected from a competitive pool of 80 applicants from across the U.S. and represent the cultural diversity and various backgrounds of the country's college student population. Following in the footsteps of the inaugural cohort, the fellows will receive training on the federal legislative process, build on their civic engagement skills, and learn the power of storytelling to shed light on critical issues and inspire positive change.

Founded on the principles of commitment to equity, federal policy for today's students, and sustainable change, fellows will elevate the voices of students to help inform policymakers on students' experiences in higher education. The fellowship equips and empowers fellows to be part of the next generation of decision-makers and advocacy leaders through training, mentorship, and professional development.

Meet the 2023-2024 fellows:

The second cohort of TSC Student Ambassador Fellows will run from September 2023 - May 2024.

David Mesta (he/him), a senior at Minnesota State University, Mankato majoring in communication and media with a minor in political science, currently serves as the University's student body vice president, a Latinx Student Union member, and is a recent recipient of the 2023 Latinx Affairs Student Leadership Award for his drive to create a more equitable campus. Mesta previously served on LeadMN's student Cabinet as vice president, where he launched the LeadMN emergency grant program to help students

facing food insecurity during the pandemic and helped craft the organization's legislative agenda while also meeting and testifying to state and federal legislatures to push for better policies like the Hunger-Free Campus Act, Minnesota college mental health awareness act, and college grants.

Grace Moore (she/her), a junior at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in sociology. An orientation leader for first-year students at Brown, she also serves as an events director planning annual fashion events for Fashion@Brown, one of the school's largest student-run organizations. Moore has been an intern for Strada Education Foundation and, most recently, the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) where she developed and presented orientation materials to legislators on behalf of the Legislative Advisory Committee. She also designed state and regional fact sheets about the impact of higher education in New England to advocate for increased funding for higher education.

Cristian Ulisses Reyes (he/him/él), a first-generation student in his senior year at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in California and child development major with minors in ethnic studies, equity in education, and queer studies, has also engaged in education work through the Education Trust-West's inaugural FIERCE Fellowship cohort. Reyes serves as a student intern with the Office of University Diversity and Inclusion, focusing on helping his campus be an equitable space for all. He recently worked as a teaching and learning intern with Achieving the Dream, engaging and assisting with research on Hispanic Serving Institutions. Participation in the Chicano Latino Youth Leadership Project's Comcast Fellowship sparked his passion for public service in education. This year, Reyes will serve as the secretary of diversity and inclusion for his student body.

Raine Yung (she/her/hers), a Presidential Scholarship recipient and an incoming junior at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in studio art, earned an Associate of Fine Arts from Harold Washington College in Chicago. She is most proud of her time as graphic designer and editor-in-chief of her college's award-winning literary arts magazine, *The Wright Side*, which affirmed Yung's goal of using art to inspire social change. Beyond school, she works with organizations such as Young Invincibles, where she currently serves on the National Youth Advisory Board, and Free Spirit Media, where she recently completed a summer internship and worked on two feature-length films.

About Today's Students Coalition

Today's Students Coalition (TSC) is a cross-cutting group of policy, advocacy, and membership organizations who have joined forces to push for urgently needed policy changes that will better serve today's students. The Coalition is forging new consensus across a diverse group of organizations focused on the needs of working adults, parent learners, veterans, first-generation students, and all postsecondary learners.

About Higher Learning Advocates

Higher Learning Advocates (HLA) is the leading bipartisan nonprofit organization that advocates for today's students and their postsecondary success through policy and systems change. Established in 2017, HLA advocates for policies and support programs that ensure opportunity and promote inclusive pathways for all learners to succeed through an equitable system of higher learning, employment, and economic mobility.

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