

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Nominates Dr. Brian Bridges as Secretary of Higher Education

10/30/2020

NEW BRUNSWICK – Governor Phil Murphy today announced his nomination of Dr. Brian Bridges as the next Secretary of Higher Education.

“Making college more affordable and accessible has been a hallmark of our mission to build a stronger and fairer New Jersey for all,” **said Governor Murphy**. “After conducting a nationwide search for a new Secretary of Higher Education, we’ve found just the right leader to build upon our progress. Dr. Brian Bridges has the vision and experience needed to put a college education within reach for more students, including continuing our highly successful Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) program. I know he’ll be a fierce advocate for our students and will work closely with both public and private college and university leaders to expand opportunity while promoting equity and access for all.”

“I would also like to thank Interim Secretary of Higher Education Diana Gonzalez for her capable leadership of the Office over the past few months,” **continued Governor Murphy**. “Diana has coordinated closely with our colleges and universities to navigate the challenges of the pandemic and will continue to serve the Administration as a critical member of our team.”

“I am humbled but invigorated by the confidence of Governor Murphy to serve as the next Secretary of Higher Education for the great state of New Jersey,” **said incoming Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Brian Bridges**. “I have a deep and abiding faith in the power of colleges and universities to not only provide life-changing educational experiences, but to also serve as economic engines and hubs of innovation and intellectual discovery. I look forward to working with leaders across the Garden State to develop and refine policies and practices that further improve student success, create efficiencies of scale, and strengthen the higher education enterprise.”

“Brian Bridges is a great choice to be New Jersey’s new Secretary of Education,” **said Dr. Michael L. Lomax, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the United Negro College Fund**. “Brian has led our research and institutional transformation work at UNCF, driving our strategy to ensure that our Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) produce ever stronger results for the students they serve. Brian is a passionate, committed, and relentless advocate for justice, equality, and equity in the academy. All of us at UNCF will miss Brian, but we know that he will continue to champion the urgent cause of higher education access and affordability, and he will lead a new era of innovation and transformation for all of New Jersey’s colleges and universities and their students.”

“The challenges that confront higher education today are daunting, but the opportunities are unlimited. I am excited by the nomination of Dr. Bridges, and look forward to a partnership with him that will seize on the opportunities before us and how, together, we can leverage New Jersey’s higher education resources to help make New Jersey fairer and stronger for everyone,” **said Rutgers President Jonathan Holloway**.

“Brian is just the leader we need at this time. He is dedicated to advancing equity in education and I’m **excited** that he’s decided to join our team and continue the work we began on behalf of students across New Jersey,” **said former New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Zakiya Smith-Ellis**. “I am looking

[Back to top](#)

forward to working with him and am confident that he has the skills necessary to assume the mantle of setting statewide higher education policy."

"It has been an honor serving New Jersey's higher education community as Interim Secretary at a time when institutions, students and families face unprecedented challenges during this ever-evolving public health emergency," **said Interim Secretary Diana Gonzalez**. "I look forward to working closely with Dr. Bridges to continue making progress on our State Plan for Higher Education goals, including addressing college affordability and access through the Community College Opportunity Grant, to ensure we take an equitable approach to emerging from this crisis stronger than ever."

Brian Bridges, Ph.D., currently serves as Vice President of Research and Member Engagement at the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) in Washington, DC, where he leads UNCF's Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute (FDPRI) and the Institute for Capacity Building (ICB). He serves as the organization's chief research officer, principal editor and contributor for FDPRI's publications, as well as the manager of internal and external projects involving capacity building, evaluation and assessment. Dr. Bridges also leads the UNCF Career Pathways Initiative, a project funded by the Lilly Endowment, to improve job placement outcomes at HBCUs and PBIs.

Prior to joining UNCF, Dr. Bridges was Vice Provost for Diversity, Access, and Equity at Ohio University. Previously, he was Associate Director of the Center for Advancement of Racial and Ethnic Equity at the American Council on Education and has held various other roles, including Associate Director at the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). While at NSEE, he managed a million-dollar subcontract for the Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students project, a national initiative funded by Lumina Foundation to assist minority-serving institutions in their use of NSSE results for institutional improvement. He is a former Adjunct Assistant Professor of Higher Education Administration at George Washington University. Throughout his career, Dr. Bridges has served on numerous panels and advisory committees on issues related to student engagement, HBCUs, learning environments at minority-serving institutions, and success factors for African American college students at predominantly white institutions.

Dr. Bridges earned his Doctorate (Ph.D.) in Higher Education Administration from Indiana University–Bloomington, a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of North Carolina–Charlotte, and a Bachelor's of Arts in English Language and Literature from Francis Marion University.

Dr. Bridges was born in Brooklyn, NY and reared in Beaufort, SC. He will begin his new role on November 16, 2020.

Governor Phil Murphy

[Home \(/governor/\)](#)

Administration

[Governor Phil Murphy \(/governor/admin/about/\)](#)

[Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver \(/governor/admin/lt/\)](#)

[First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy \(/governor/admin/fl/\)](#)

[Cabinet \(/governor/admin/cabinet/\)](#)

[Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency](#)

[\(/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml\)](#)

[Boards, Commissions & Authorities \(/governor/admin/bca/\)](#)

[Internship Opportunities \(/governor/admin/internship.shtml\)](#)

Governor's Residence - Drumthwacket (<http://drumthwacket.org/>)

Key Initiatives

Economy & Jobs (</governor/initiatives/#Economy>)

Education (</governor/initiatives/#Education>)

Environment (</governor/initiatives/#Environment>)

Health (</governor/initiatives/#Health>)

Law & Justice (</governor/initiatives/#Justice>)

Transportation (</governor/initiatives/#Transportation>)

News & Events

Press Releases (/governor/news/news/562022/approved/news_archive.shtml)

Photos (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy>)

Public Addresses (</governor/news/addresses>)

Executive Orders (/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html)

Administrative Orders (/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml)

Direct Appointments (</governor/news/appointments>)

Advice and Consent Appointments (</governor/news/acappointments>)

Statements on Legislation

(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)

Administration Reports (</governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml>)

Transition Reports (/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml)

Press Kits (</governor/news/press>)

Social

Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/>)

Twitter (<https://twitter.com/GovMurphy>)

Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/>)

Snapchat (<https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy>)

YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice>)

TikTok (<https://www.tiktok.com/@njgov?>)

Contact Us

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling/\)](/governor/contact/scheduling/)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/all/\)](/governor/contact/all/)

Statewide

[NJ Home \(//www.nj.gov\)](http://www.nj.gov)

[Services A to Z \(//www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html)

[Departments/Agencies \(//www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/)

[FAQs \(//www.nj.gov/faqs/\)](http://www.nj.gov/faqs/)

[Contact Us \(//www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html)

[Privacy Notice \(//www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html)

[Legal Statement & Disclaimers \(//www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html)

[Accessibility Statement \(//www.nj.gov/nj/accessibility.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/accessibility.html)

[\(//nj.gov/opra/\)](http://nj.gov/opra/)

[\(https://my.state.nj.us/openam/UI/Login\)](https://my.state.nj.us/openam/UI/Login)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2023
Office of Governor PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000

[\(https://tech.nj.gov/\)](https://tech.nj.gov/)