

EQUITY & INCLUSION SESSIONS



DR. ANTON R. REECE, PRESIDENT AND CEO, WEST KENTUCKY COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Dr. Anton R. Reece, president and CEO of West Kentucky Community and Technical College (WKCTC), has served nearly 30 years in higher education. He has extensive experience in communication, including public speaking, marketing, broadcasting news, television, and radio. Dr. Reece is an honor graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Broadcasting News, a Master of Arts in Counseling Student Personnel from Eastern Kentucky University, and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and Research at the University of Tennessee - Knoxville. Dr. Reece was a scholarship athlete at Eastern Kentucky University and the 1982 Hampton Games International gold medalist in the triple jump, held in Trinidad and Tobago. Dr. Reece believes that athletics provide life skills of discipline, resiliency, and teamwork.

Dr. Reece's higher education career began and resulted in a legacy of firsts as the first minority affairs coordinator at the University of Kentucky Community College System in 1990. From 1999 - 2003, he also became the first African American dean of student affairs at West Kentucky Community and Technical College. Dr. Reece spent 13 years at the University of Tennessee serving in various roles, including, coordinator of academic support, director of student activities, executive director of the student success center, and associate vice provost of academic affairs and student success. On Oct. 1, 2016, Dr. Reece achieved a historic appointment as the first African American and second president of West Kentucky Community and Technical College. Under his leadership, WKCTC has earned national distinction as a five-time finalist for the Bellwether Consortium, and as a five-time Aspen Institute finalist consistently ranked in the top 10 nationally among the nation's 1,100 community and technical colleges. Under Dr. Reece's leadership, WKCTC received a historic \$15 million-dollar gift in December 2020 from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott for diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, which is the largest gift from an individual donor in the college's history and, according to the New York Times, among the largest individual donor gifts among community and technical colleges nationally.

Dr. Reece has 30 years of extensive student success, enrollment, retention, teaching and learning, and diversity, equity, and inclusion expertise and is a highly sought-after national speaker. He has spoken to over 600 varied audiences in New York, Texas, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, Mississippi, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Minnesota, and Arizona. These audiences include corporations, colleges, high schools, youth organizations, churches, and prisons, and have provided him with critical material to empower others. Dr. Reece was also selected to serve nationally on the American Association of Community and Technical College's "Unfinished Business" panel to address gaps in equity among community and technical colleges, and a featured speaker for the American Association of College Trustees as a featured speaker on rural colleges access, retention and technology challenges. Dr. Reece has been featured in national publications, including the Chronicle of Higher Education and Community College Daily. He has published research articles on diversity, workforce training and leadership empowerment initiatives.

At the regional and local level, Dr. Reece utilized his visionary, creative, and leadership skills to actively build partnerships, convene teams with transformative results, and intentionality outreach to diverse, rural, and underserved communities, NAACP, and engage K-12 education, business, industry, religious, chamber of commerce, economic development, and community partners in Paducah and the Jackson Purchase area. Dr. Reece pioneered the annual Regional Educators Award for K-12 educators and the first regional business symposium attracting over 100 businesses and CEOs to address workforce and economic development needs.

Dr. Reece sums up his leadership style, as "empowering others to find their voice by achieving their education and career dreams with direction and purpose."