Speaker Introduction • approximately 2 minutes
Russ Kavalhuna, J.D.
President, Henry Ford College

Russ Kavalhuna became president of Henry Ford College in 2018. The role unites his passions for public service, education, and leadership. As the son of an immigrant, his family's story is the foundation of his belief that public education is the gateway to the American Dream.

At Henry Ford College, he is focused on student success through expanding resources for access, mentoring students, leading innovations in services and teaching, and creating public and private partnerships.

Before being appointed president at Henry Ford College, Russ was the Executive Director of Flight Operations at Western Michigan University's College of Aviation. Previously, he was a federal prosecutor and a commercial airline captain.

Mr. Kavalhuna is active on commissions, committees, and in public service. A few examples:

- He is the co-chair of the statewide Higher Education Workgroup of the Growing Michigan Together Council.

- He is a member of the Joyce Foundation Board of Directors.

- In 2020 and 2021, he was appointed to the statewide Workforce Development Board and the Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services.

- Governor Gretchen Whitmer's team consults with him regularly on higher education policy, and featured his work in supporting the statewide Futures for Frontliners and Michigan Reconnect programs.

- He is part of the inaugural cohort of the Aspen New Presidents Fellowship for Community College Excellence, which includes only 25 presidents nationwide.

- Governor Rick Snyder appointed him to Michigan's 21st Century Talent Creation Subcommittee, which focuses on a skilled workforce and collaboration between industry and educators.

- He is serving his fourth term on the Michigan Aeronautics Commission, the statewide board for aviation infrastructure and rule-making.

- He participated in the Presidential Leadership Scholars program in 2016, led by former U.S. Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

Mr. Kavalhuna earned his undergraduate degree in aviation science from Western Michigan University, and his juris doctor from WMU Cooley Law School. He and his family are proud residents of Dearborn.