



Speaker Introduction • approximately 2 minutes

Russell A. Kavalhuna, J.D.
President, Henry Ford College



Russ Kavalhuna became president of Henry Ford College in July 2018. The role unites his passions for public service, education, and leadership. As the son of an immigrant who attended a Michigan community college, he believes the community college model of education and service is the gateway to the American Dream.

At Henry Ford College, he is focused on student success, a culture of teamwork, and strategic partnerships.

Before being appointed president at Henry Ford College, Mr. Kavalhuna was the Executive Director of Flight Operations at the Western Michigan University 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:

- In May 2020, he was appointed to the statewide Workforce Development Board, with a mission of advancing and improving the workforce development system in Michigan.
- Governor Gretchen Whitmer's team selected him to consult regularly on higher education policy.
- He is part of the inaugural cohort of the Aspen New Presidents Fellowship for Community College Excellence, which includes only 25 presidents nationwide. The goal is to accelerate transformational change on behalf of students.
- 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 currently serving his fourth term on the Michigan Aeronautics Commission, the statewide board for aviation infrastructure and rule-making.
- He participated in the second class of 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.