



SERVICE LEARNING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

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### START HERE, GET THERE, AND CHANGE THE WORLD

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#### ABSTRACT:

Austin is home to many historic higher education institutions, including the University of Texas and Austin Community College. In this panel discussion, faculty and staff from these institutions will share their expertise in overcoming challenges associated with being active in a city with a checkered history. The initial discussion will focus on explaining the history of these two programs before moving into discussion about what challenges exist in the context of the Community Engagement and Experiential Learning programs; finally, the panelists will share lessons learned and advice on how others can address similar issues in their communities.

#### THEMATIC FOCUS:

**Shifting Foundations: Modern fundamental changes in how communities form, change, and represent themselves.**

**Blockage and Clearance: Physical, infrastructural, financial, or organizational barriers or portals to community engagement.**

#### BIO:

Loretta Edelen has worked at Austin Community College for 44 years in research, community outreach and engagement focusing on addressing underserved populations. Edelen led 14 annual Women's Empowerment Conferences and Gospel Extravaganzas. She also led ACC's Foster Care Alumni program for nine years. In 2022, she represented ACC at the Global Citizenship Alliance training in Austria.

Additionally, Edelen was an elected Trustee for Austin Independent School District from 1994 – 2002. She earned her bachelor's, magna cum laude in Clark Atlanta University's first honors program in journalism and political science and her master's in public policy from the University of Michigan.