

Bridget Burns

Executive Director, University Innovation Alliance

As a trusted advisor to university presidents, Dr. Bridget Burns is on a mission to transform the way institutions think about and take action on the behalf of low-income, first generation, and students of color. She serves as the founding Executive Director of the University Innovation Alliance, the first consortium of public research universities collaborating to close achievement gaps through testing, scaling, and sharing innovative and successful practices.

Named one of the “16 Most Innovative People in Higher Education” by *Washington Monthly* magazine, her work has helped the UIA campuses accelerate student success innovation. Since 2013, the UIA campuses have increased their low-income graduates by 32%, and they are on track to produce an additional 130,000 graduates by 2025. Their work has been highlighted in national outlets like *The New York Times*, *Fast Company*, *60 Minutes*, and was featured in the documentary “Unlikely”.

Bridget served on her first presidential hiring committee at age 22, and has spent the past two decades helping to hire, advise, and advocate on behalf of more than 30 presidents and chancellors from around the country. Originally from rural Montana, she started her higher education journey at community college with a Pell grant, going on to receive her Bachelor’s degree (Political Science) and Master’s degree (Public Policy) from Oregon State University, and her Doctorate of Education from Vanderbilt University (Higher Education, Leadership & Policy).