

AACTE HOLMES SCHOLARS

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What is the AACTE Holmes Scholars® Program?

Mission

The mission of the [Holmes Scholars Program](#) is to create a professoriate and education leadership pipeline that is representative of the diverse student body in America's schools, and to elevate and empower graduate students whose academic interests prioritize ensuring fairness, belonging, and equal opportunity in education for all.

Theory of Change

To achieve its mission, the Holmes Program provides mentorship, peer support, and professional development opportunities to graduate students from Colleges and Schools of Education to enrich their scholarly experience. The program supports individuals whose scholarship aligns with the program's mission.

History

Launched in 1991 by the Holmes Group, the program was created with the founding goal of establishing equity, diversity, and cultural competence in higher education and PK-12 schools. Designed to enrich the scholarly experience and professional training of talented graduate-level students of color pursuing careers in education, the program has evolved over the years. AACTE, a longstanding partner of the Holmes Group, assumed full ownership of the program in 2010. While the specific goals and groups represented have varied, the overarching mission of diversifying the profession has remained steadfast.

Impact

The Holmes Scholars Program has supported over 1,000 scholars, fostering a legacy of alumni who serve as faculty members, deans, superintendents, federal officials, advocates, union leaders, state education leaders, and more. These leaders bring their expertise and diverse experiences to revolutionize EPPs and the education field at large.

“One of the values of being a part of Holmes is relationship building. Being able to garner a relationship with other Scholars that look like me, other black and brown Scholars. Also, being able to align research interests. Being a part of Holmes puts me in the space of belonging.”

Charles A. Barnes II, JD, Holmes Scholar Council President
Rowan University



Activities

AACTE delivers national programming, while individual Holmes Institutions provide tailored on-campus professional development and mentoring to address the unique needs of their Scholars. At the national level, the program offers a range of activities for Scholars, including:

- 1. Holmes Preconference:** The Holmes Preconference is a dedicated event held alongside AACTE's Annual Meeting, providing Holmes Scholars with tailored professional development sessions, networking opportunities, and a supportive space to share their research and experiences. This event fosters community building and equips scholars with tools to advance in their academic and professional journeys.
- 2. Washington Week:** Holmes Scholars participate in Washington Week to engage in critical discussions on education policy, advocacy, and leadership. Through workshops, networking, and visits with policymakers, scholars gain firsthand experience in influencing education policy and advancing equity initiatives.
- 3. Research & Dissertation Retreat:** The R&D Retreat is a focused event designed to support Holmes Scholars at all stages of their academic journey, with tracks tailored to prospective doctoral students, candidates in candidacy, and those nearing dissertation completion. Scholars receive mentorship, resources, and feedback on their research while connecting with peers and faculty in a collaborative environment.
- 4. Holmes Career Fair:** The Holmes Career Fair, held during AACTE's Annual Meeting, connects Holmes Scholars and alumni with institutions and organizations seeking to diversify their leadership and faculty. Scholars gain access to exclusive job opportunities and networking, enhancing their pathways to impactful careers in education.
- 5. Year-round virtual professional development & networking events:** The Holmes Scholars Program provides a year-long professional development series featuring webinars on critical topics to support scholars' academic, professional, and personal growth. Sessions have included grant writing, mental health and wellness, job interviewing strategies, navigating microaggressions, academic writing, and more.
- 6. Fellowship Opportunities:** AACTE collaborates with partners to offer diverse fellowship opportunities, each featuring unique funding and professional development components, such as the *Journal of Teacher Education (JTE)* Fellowship.
- 7. Online Community:** Holmes Scholars and alumni gain access to an online community where they can connect with peers and access archived resources. This resource remains available indefinitely as long as alumni maintain membership with AACTE.



Who Can Participate in the AACTE Holmes Scholars Program?

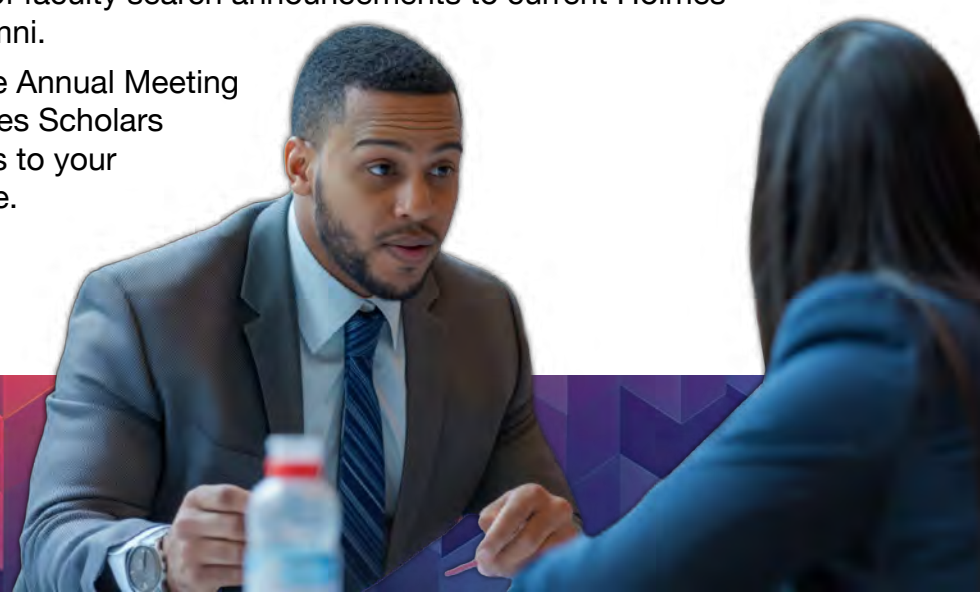
- Enrollment in the Holmes Scholars Program is institution-based, meaning students must be enrolled at a participating institution with an established Holmes Program to take part.
- Participation is open to any AACTE member institution.
- Member institutions can launch and recruit Holmes Scholars at the **master's, doctoral, or post-doctoral** levels across any program within their College of Education.
- Each institution determines its own eligibility criteria based on its organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion goals, which may include the following:
 - Academic track levels: master's, doctoral, or post-doctoral.
 - Research interests: educational equity, belongingness in schools, bias in assessments, etc.
 - Identity criteria: race, ethnicity, disability, LGBTQ+, and other intersecting identities.
 - Program concentrations: policy, early childhood education, higher education leadership, and more.

Why Should Your Institution adopt a Holmes Scholars Program?

Benefits for Institutions

The AACTE Holmes Scholars Program provides institutions with a unique opportunity to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in education while gaining valuable benefits that support students, faculty, and institutional goals. By adopting the Holmes Program, your institution can

- **Unlock Individual Potential:** Foster a sense of belonging where students from historically underrepresented backgrounds feel valued, respected, and supported. This environment empowers participants to reach their full potential as future educators and leaders.
- **Open the Door Wider for Opportunity:** Ensure that racially and ethnically diverse students have access to opportunities they have historically been excluded from. The program offers mentorship and professional development to help students thrive academically and excel in the field.
- **Strengthen Unity Across the Profession:** Build a national network of peers, mentors, and professionals, fostering collaboration and shared purpose within the education community to create lasting change.
- **Boost Recruitment, Retention, and Results:** Enhance recruitment and retention efforts by offering graduate students of color a support network, unique professional experiences, and access to valuable peer and mentor connections.
- **Elevate Your Institution's Standing in the Profession:** Position your institution as a leader in diversity and inclusion, demonstrating alignment with national accreditation standards and strengthening your reputation in the field.
- **Enjoy Exclusive Program Benefits:**
 - Significantly discounted rates for Scholars and Program Coordinators to attend AACTE's Annual Meeting and Washington Week.
 - Exclusive participation in the Holmes Scholars Career Fair at AACTE's Annual Meeting as well as the Holmes Research & Dissertation Retreat.
 - Free distribution of faculty search announcements to current Holmes Scholars and alumni.
 - Recognition at the Annual Meeting and AACTE Holmes Scholars website, with links to your program's website.



Benefits for Scholars

The Holmes Program provides an enriching and supportive community for graduate students from historically underrepresented backgrounds pursuing education careers. As a Holmes Scholar, you gain access to unparalleled mentorship, networking, professional development, and leadership opportunities that propel your academic and career aspirations.

- **Supportive Peer Network:** With over 1,000 Holmes Scholars and alumni from more than 70 active institutions, scholars engage in a dynamic community that fosters collaboration and support. They stay connected through in-person conferences, virtual gatherings, social media groups, and online communities facilitated by AACTE and the National Association of Holmes Scholars Alumni (NAHSA). This network promotes excellence and equity, driving impact across PK-20 institutions and education policy.
- **Mentorship & Networking:** Holmes Scholars gain direct exposure to deans, faculty, nonprofit leaders, and government officials at key events such as Day on the Hill and the Holmes Career Fair. These opportunities provide valuable connections, insights, and career advancement support.
- **Leadership & Career Advancement:** Scholars have access to leadership pathways that support career growth, including fellowships, opportunities to present research at national conferences, invitations to speak and publish, and leadership roles on the Holmes Council. These experiences help scholars develop their professional voice and expand their influence in the field.
- **Professional Development:** AACTE convenes the Holmes community for professional development through national and regional in-person events, virtual learning sessions, and customized support from Holmes Institution program coordinators. These opportunities equip scholars with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in their academic and professional careers.
- **Funding Opportunities:** Holmes Scholars can apply for exclusive funding and fellowships to support their research and career advancement. AACTE offers the Dissertation Funding Competition each year, along with additional fellowship opportunities through various partnerships. These resources help scholars secure financial support to advance their academic and professional goals.



Expectations of Holmes Institutions and AACTE

Holmes Institutions and AACTE play a vital role in supporting scholars and ensuring the success of the Holmes Program. These expectations help create a consistent experience across institutions, ensuring scholars have access to in-person convenings that foster community, professional growth, and the joy of learning alongside peers who share their passion and values. AACTE and the Holmes community are committed to making the program accessible and continuously collaborate with member institutions to establish and sustain Holmes programs.

Holmes Institutions

- Maintain active membership with AACTE.
- Determine selection criteria, program size, and budgets for their institutional Holmes Program.
- Assign a Holmes Program Coordinator to serve as the main point of contact, participate in quarterly meetings, and attend the Holmes Preconference.
- Fund scholar registration fees and associated costs for participation in national events, including the Holmes Preconference, Washington Week, and the Research & Dissertation Retreat, according to the expectations for each Scholar track.
- Provide mentoring, networking, and professional development opportunities on campus.

AACTE Holmes National Office

- Plans and hosts the Holmes Preconference, Washington Week, Research & Dissertation Retreat, and quarterly virtual professional development events.
- Organizes and facilitates quarterly coordinator meetings.
- Supports and sustains national Holmes Program activities through operational funding, grants, and sponsorships.
- Works closely with the Holmes Student Council and Advisory Committee to set objectives for national Holmes events.
- Recruits and onboards new Holmes Programs.
- Monitors and evaluates the Holmes Program's effectiveness.
- Maintains a database of active programs, scholars, and resources.





Expectations of Holmes Scholars

Holmes Scholars are expected to actively participate in program activities, engage in research, and contribute to the broader educational community. Expectations vary based on the scholar's academic level.

Master's Track

- Must be enrolled in a Master's Program in Education at a Holmes sponsoring institution.
- Should be engaged or planning to engage in teacher education, whether preservice or in-service.
- Required to attend the Holmes Preconference annually.
- Invited to attend Washington Week and the Research & Dissertation Retreat.
- Must commit to a minimum one-year tenure in the program.

Doctoral/Post-Doctoral Tracks

- Must be enrolled in a Doctoral or Post-Doctoral program at a Holmes sponsoring institution.
- Expected to submit proposals to present research at the Holmes Preconference and/or the AACTE Annual Meeting.
- Required to attend the Holmes Preconference each year.
- Must attend Washington Week and the Research & Dissertation Retreat at least once during their tenure.
- Must commit to a minimum two-year tenure in the program.

Getting Started with the Holmes Program

Every member institution is eligible to join the Holmes Program by starting with an interest call with AACTE. This call allows AACTE to understand your institution's specific goals and budget for your inaugural cohort. Launching a program requires the commitment of the dean of your school or college of education, as well as discussions on key elements such as recruitment strategies, cohort size, retention plans, and identifying a program coordinator to ensure a successful launch.

Whether you are a faculty member gathering information to present to your dean or your institution already has the support and mandate to move forward, you can schedule an interest call by emailing Nicole Dunn at <mailto:ndunn@aacte.org>.

For Scholars:

If you are a student, first confirm if your institution already participates in the Holmes Program, as enrollment is managed exclusively through member institutions. You can check this information [online](#). If your institution doesn't currently have a program, consider sharing this brochure with a supportive faculty member or leadership to express your interest.

