

**James Kvaal**

**U.S. Under Secretary of Education**

**October 18, 2023**

**[5:00 pm] Dr. Pam Luster (@DrPamLuster)**

Welcome back to [#EquityChat](#) sponsored by [@CollegeFutures](#) w/your hosts [@equityavengers](#) [@DrTammeil](#) & [@DrPamLuster](#). Tonight, we're honored to be chatting with the U.S. Under Secretary of Education, [@UnderSecKvaal](#). Welcome Secretary Kvaal!

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster·2m](#)

Truly an honor for us! [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil·2m](#)

Replying to [@UnderSecKvaal @DrPamLuster and 2 others](#)

Thrilled to have you here! [#EquityChat](#)

**[5:05 pm] Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)**

**Q1 @UnderSecKvaal As you engage in equity-focused work, what is your walk-up song or anthem?  
@DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers**

[James Kvaal @UnderSecKvaal·26s](#)

When I'm on the road with my team, I usually take DJ duties and I like to think I do a pretty good job. My current rotation includes Fleet Foxes, Prince, and Jungle. If I had to pick a song, let's go with "A Little Less Conversation" by Elvis. [#EquityChat](#)

**[5:11 pm] Dr. Keith Curry (@lamkeithcurry)**

**Q2 @UnderSecKvaal How did you first get started working in #highered? What led you to focus on creating equity in education? @DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers**

[James Kvaal @UnderSecKvaal·1m](#)

As I graduated from college, I knew that I couldn't have done it without financial aid – and my education created incredible choices for me. Everyone should have those choices. I still believe that college is essential to solving our country's biggest challenges. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil·4m](#)

Me too! I will forever be grateful to [@UCBerkeley](#) Financial Aid Systems Team, who gave me my work-study job & helped me navigate my own financial aid as 1st gen, low-income student. The access to early college programs, affirmative action, & financial aid changed my life.

[5:18 pm] Dr. Luster (@DrPamLuster)

**Q3 @UnderSecKvaal #TheStudentLoanReliefCommittee met for the first-time last week. How is this group and new student debt relief efforts approaching negotiations differently to support student loan borrowers? @DrTammeil @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers**

[James Kvaal @UnderSecKvaal](#)

I don't agree with the Supreme Court decision striking down President Biden's plan for \$20,000 in student debt relief, but we are moving forward. We are looking at the Higher Education Act, rather than the emergency authority in the HEROES Act, (1/2)

[James Kvaal @UnderSecKvaal·26s](#)

and we are going through a full rulemaking process. Our goal is to move as quickly as possible to help as many borrowers as possible. [#EquityChat](#) (2/2)

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster·2m](#)

Replying to [@UnderSecKvaal @DrTammeil and 2 others](#)

We are fortunate to have [@POTUS](#) supporting borrower relief and an indefatigable ally like you doing the hard lift! [@equityavengers #EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil·10m](#)

Appreciate this! Leadership requires us to not let barriers deter us from moving forward and finding ways to support students where we know it's needed.

[5:25 pm] Dr. Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

**Q4 @UnderSecKvaal In addition to student debt relief, what do you see as the biggest barriers to racial equity in #highered and how is the DOE working to address them? @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers**

[James Kvaal @UnderSecKvaal·47s](#)

Students of color disproportionately attend underfunded colleges and universities, where they get less support and face longer odds to graduate. (1/2)

[James Kvaal @UnderSecKvaal·46s](#)

We need to invest in – and confer prestige onto -- the HBCUs, MSIs, TCUs, community colleges, and other places that are expanding opportunity to people who otherwise wouldn't have it. [#EquityChat](#) (2/2)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil](#)

YES!!! Our nation's community colleges are MSIs, serving the largest proportion of students of color. That's 70% of [@CalCommColleges](#) students. It's past due...Sign me up?! How can I help? [#EquityChat @equityavengers @DrPamLuster @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures](#)

[5:32 pm] Dr. Curry (@Iamkeithcurry)

**Q5 @UnderSecKvaal What has been your biggest disappointment or failure in your current position, and how have you or your team overcome that disappointment/failure? @DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers**

[James Kvaal @UnderSecKvaal·30s](#)

The two Supreme Court decisions this summer felt like major blows to our work for inclusive colleges and upward mobility. But [@SecCardona](#) isn't the kind of person to mope. We are focused on how much good work we can still do, and bringing a new urgency to that work. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster·1m](#)

Replying to [@UnderSecKvaal @Iamkeithcurry and 3 others](#)

As [@BarackObama](#) said..grab a clipboard..we have to persist as our students don't have time for us to mope! [#EquityChat @equityavengers](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil·4m](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster @UnderSecKvaal and 5 others](#)

Have clipboard, ready to work! What's next crew.. [@BarackObama](#)? Feeling some [#EquityAvenging](#) for our students?

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil](#)

[@EquityAvengers](#) Unite! I'm inspired! I know there are days I want to mope, but I am reminded that there are race-conscious leaders and co-conspirators whose urgency for students and our work to support thriving communities will not give up!

[5:39 pm] Dr. Luster (@DrPamLuster)

**Q6 @UnderSecKvaal To do this work, we must continue learning and partnering with others. How do you educate yourself and who is informing your practice? @DrTammeil @Iamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers**

[James Kvaal @UnderSecKvaal·47s](#)

I meet with as many college leaders and students as I can, both in Washington and on campus, as many meetings as I can. I read widely. I seek out the most insightful observers of [#HigherEducation](#) . (1/2)

[James Kvaal @UnderSecKvaal·45s](#)

And I benefit from working with one of the smartest, most dedicated teams anywhere! [#EquityChat #teamwork](#) (2/2)

[5:46pm] Dr. Gilkerson (@DrTammeil)

**Q7 @UnderSecKvaal The road to racial equity is long. How are you sustaining yourself? What practice would you recommend to other #EquityAvengers? @DrPamLuster @Iamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers**

[James Kvaal @UnderSecKvaal·4s](#)

It has to be the students I meet on college campuses, especially the students who are [#firstgen](#), have low-income families or are students of color. Their journeys are far more impressive than any test score (1/2)

[James Kvaal @UnderSecKvaal·2s](#)

and I'm inspired by their plans to using their degree to give back to their families and communities. [#EquityChat](#) (2/2)

[5:53 pm] Dr. Curry (@Iamkeithcurry)

**Q8 @UnderSecKvaal We all have a vision of the future we want to live in. What is your freedom dream for higher education and what gives you hope for its future? @DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers**

[James Kvaal @UnderSecKvaal·11s](#)

To take full advantage of college's potential for upward mobility, everyone should have choices among colleges, universities, and career programs that lead to jobs and a better life. [#EquityChat](#)

[6:00 pm] Dr. Luster (@DrPamLuster)

TY [@UnderSecKvaal](#) for joining us on [#EquityChat @CollegeFutures](#) and continuing to be a champion for equity in [#highered](#). Join us next week as we host [@alexa\\_wesley1](#) & [@naspajill](#) to talk about their latest research [@NASPAtweets](#). [@DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @equityavengers](#) OUT!