



Carrie Besnette Hauser
President and CEO



Carrie Besnette Hauser, PhD, is president and CEO of Kauffman Scholars, Inc. (KSI). In this capacity, she serves on the Senior Leadership Team of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. To date, KSI is the foundation's largest single financial and longest-term commitment. Drawing from Mr. Kauffman's legacy of innovation and entrepreneurship, KSI is charged with dramatically impacting the high school graduation, college matriculation, and post-secondary completion of students from the Kansas City, KS, and Kansas City, MO school districts. From this living laboratory, KSI is contributing to the national discussion about college access and success of low-income urban youth.

Besnette Hauser's experience includes a variety of leadership roles in private foundations, higher education, and the public policy arena. Prior to joining Kauffman in 2011, Besnette Hauser served as vice president for advancement and external relations at Metropolitan State College of Denver, which serves Colorado's second largest undergraduate population of 25,000 students in a diverse urban setting. She was also executive director of the College's foundation.

From 2000-2006, Besnette Hauser was vice president and an original senior officer of the Daniels Fund where she led the development and implementation of the Daniels College Prep and Scholarship Program and the Daniels Opportunity Awards, both designed to serve low-income, at-risk students across four states in the Rocky Mountain West. While at Daniels, she served as a "loaned executive" advising Denver's mayor on a city-wide college scholarship program and assisting the Metro Denver Sports Commission on an initiative to attract top-tier international sporting events.

Her background also includes teaching assignments at UCLA, the University of Denver, and in Colorado State University's executive MBA program. She has held research and legislative staff roles as well as positions with the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and the University of Arizona, her undergraduate alma mater. She earned her master's and PhD degrees from UCLA where she focused on public policy and federal legislation impacting higher education. Her dissertation, sanctioned by the Pac10 conference, centered on Title IX and intercollegiate sports.

A dedicated community leader, Besnette Hauser has served on a number of boards and commissions, including the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, its Leadership Foundation, and its Economic Development Corporation; the Metro Denver Sports Commission; and Visit Denver. She received gubernatorial appointments to Colorado's Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care Reform and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. Denver's Mayor appointed her to his Justice Center Taskforce. At the national level, she is past president of the National Scholarship Providers Association, served on the Pathways to College Network executive committee, and is an Educational Policy Institute board member. In 2008, she was named the 9News Leader of the Year by Denver's NBC affiliate and the Colorado Leadership Alliance.

An avid outdoorswoman and athlete, Besnette Hauser has summited Mt. Kilimanjaro, climbed to the Mt. Everest base camp, and moonlighted as Grand Canyon river guide. She and her husband, Jeff Hauser, enjoy skiing, backpacking, mountain-biking, and nearly all things outdoors.