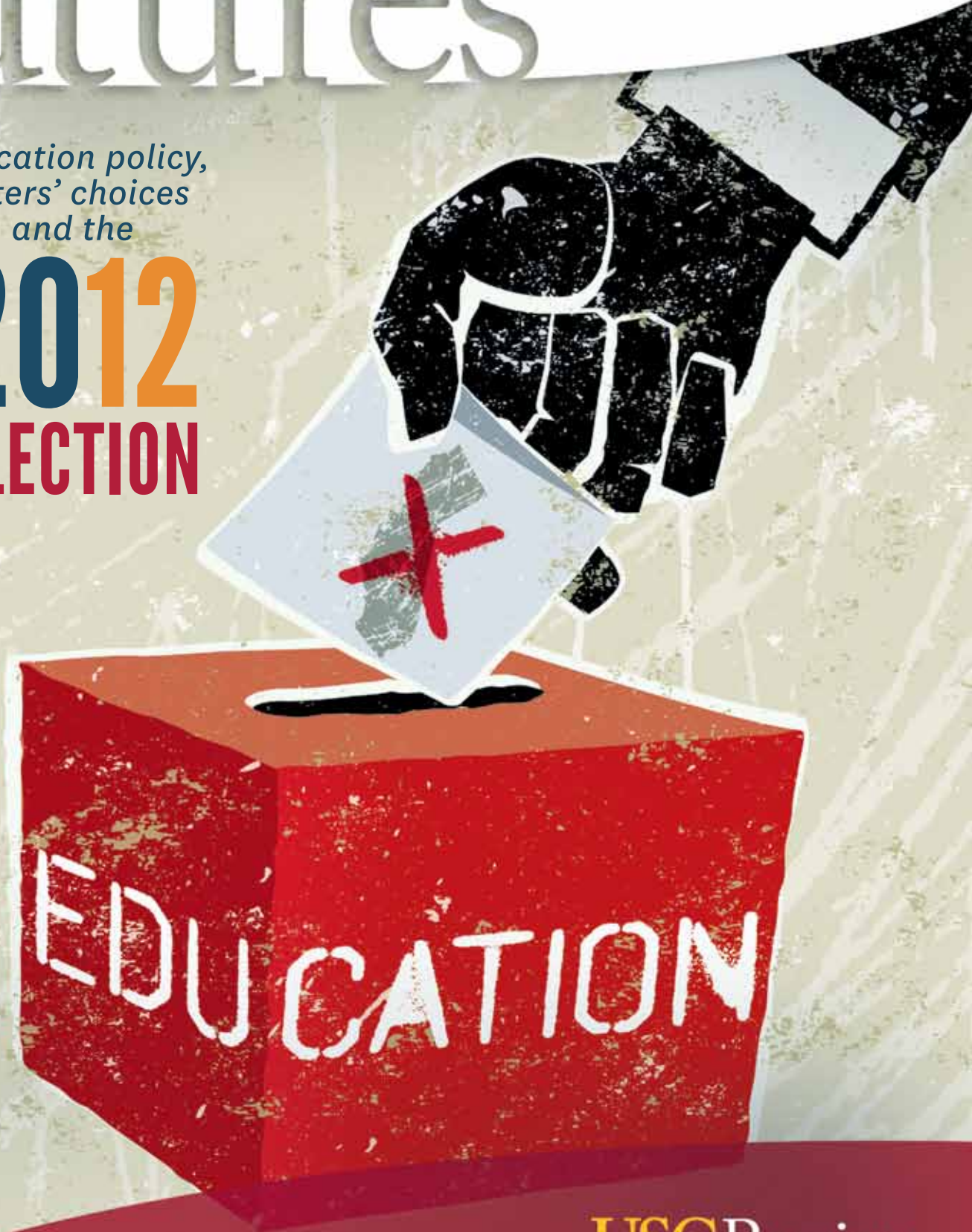


futures in Urban Ed

education policy,
voters' choices
and the

2012
ELECTION



ROSSIER ALUMNI ARE *changing the game*

USC Rossier
School of Education



CORE COMMITMENTS

At the University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education, we continue to build upon our exceptional reputation as a leader in urban education with these core commitments:

- Guaranteeing a diverse school community
- Offering a personalized student experience
- Seeking innovative approaches to learning
- Providing opportunities for global exchange
- Uniting theory and practice

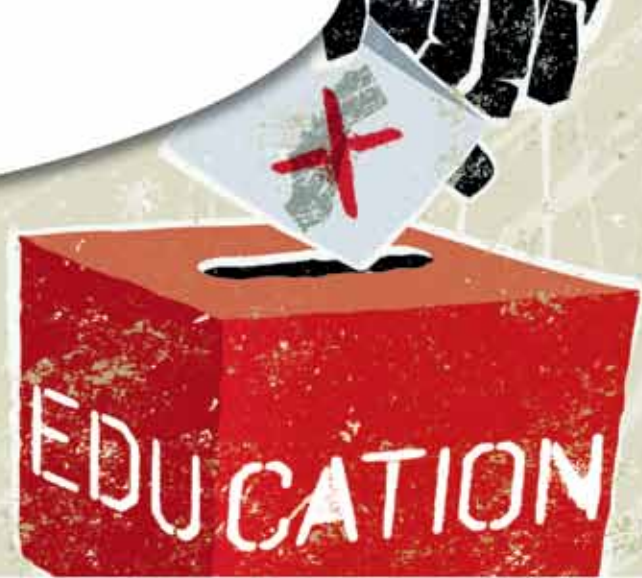
The Rossier School is pleased to announce a new program, which will prepare experienced teachers for entry into administrative and leadership roles.

- An innovative curriculum will challenge students to critically examine contemporary issues and to develop effective sustainable school leadership strategies.
- Courses will meet online during evening hours to facilitate the participation of working professionals.

- Teaching credential holders who complete this program and fulfill additional state-mandated requirements will be eligible for the California preliminary Administrative Services Credential

Cohorts will begin in January and June. For more information, please visit us online at <http://tinyurl.com/uscmesl> or email rossier.info@usc.edu.

futures in Urban Ed



Polls by USC Rossier and Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) show how California voters feel about education

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Rossier — Rhymes with Career

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Dear Friends of Rossier,

AS WE APPROACH ELECTION SEASON, we thought it would be fitting to highlight some of the education policy issues that are on the minds of voters.

Rossier scholars are informing and changing policy at the regional, state and national levels in pursuit of our mission to improve learning in urban education. Our faculty research is truly translational in its direct application to the most pressing issues in education.

EQUITY | FINANCE | ACCESS

Here are just a few examples:

- Alicia Dowd testified before Congress and presented her research on the impact of debt on graduate student enrollment for Latino students to the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.
- Darline Robles is a member of that Advisory Commission, which works to chart ways to increase Hispanic educational attainment.
- William G. Tierney advises higher education leaders statewide in a number of areas, and with Guilbert Hentschke produced "Making it Happen," a report with recommendations for how colleges and universities statewide must work together to grow enrollment and ensure student success.
- Lawrence Picus has changed policy in the states of Arkansas, Arizona, Kentucky, Wyoming, Wisconsin, North Dakota and Washington with his research on school finance.
- Estela Mara Bensimon as co-director of the Center for Urban Education works with the University of Wisconsin, Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), and a number of individual institutions to transform those systems' policies towards more equitable practices and student outcomes.
- In Los Angeles, Julie Marsh, Katharine Strunk, and Dominic Brewer led the i3-funded study of LAUSD's Public School Choice Initiative and its implementation and outcomes.
 - A study led by Julie Marsh compelled New York City Department of Education to end its schoolwide performance bonus program.



This issue of *Futures* highlights the recent work of USC Rossier and Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) to assess California voter sentiment in a number of education areas. Dominic Brewer led Rossier's involvement in this poll and provides an introduction to this informative section, which also examines the implications of school funding initiatives in the state.

The November ballot will be an opportunity for each one of us to influence education policy and move forward in a collective effort to improve outcomes for all students.

Fight On.

KAREN SYMMS GALLAGHER, PH.D.
EMERY STOOPS AND JOYCE KING STOOPS DEAN

In September 4, over 100 ninth graders from South Los Angeles and beyond started their first day in an innovative new learning environment, USC Hybrid High School. Dressed in matching cardinal sweater vests, the students were the first to participate in the new public charter school model that tackles one of the predominant causes of dropouts.

“The most glaring reason that kids drop out is scheduling problems,” said Stephanie McClay, founding principal, adding that many high school upperclassmen leave school because they are juggling work and family care, among other demands. “The dropout issue is generally looked at as a recovery problem, but we want to prevent kids from even considering dropping out – starting in the ninth grade.”

The inaugural class at Hybrid High is held to high expectations – with a mission of 100 percent of students graduating in four years college and career ready. The school is designed to remove many of the obstacles to reaching their highest potential. The downtown L.A. site will be open up to 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, and nearly year-round, and students get personalized learning plans tailored to their schedules, strengths, and interests. “Our model is about empowering them as self-directed learners and the intelligent, capable young people they are,” McClay said. “Every kid has a different path for achieving that goal.”

While students are allowed certain freedom and flexibility, they are also held to high standards and expected to complete all college entry requirements by graduation. The format lends itself well to Hybrid High’s mantra, “No Excuses!”

USC Hybrid High School Opens Its Doors

“Hybrid High challenges the notion that successful education can only occur in traditional classrooms. It can succeed whenever there is a will, an imagination, and an opportunity.”

— USC Provost Elizabeth Garrett



The vast majority of students live south of the I-10 Freeway, with roughly three-quarters of the student body Latino/a, and one-quarter African American. The students are largely from communities in which 50 percent of their peers will not finish high school.

Another unique aspect of the school is its staff – three of the school’s seven teachers have doctorates, and a fourth is currently pursuing an EdD. Such a level of education, found among only 2 percent of the U.S. population, is highly unusual among teaching positions at one school. Half of the staff is also Rossier alumni, which McClay says happened by virtue of their qualifications. “They just rose to the top, and we didn’t realize until afterwards that we had USC folks,” McClay said. “It’s a testament to the quality of the programs and the experience they’re getting at Rossier.”

“The excitement that I feel about Hybrid High is almost overwhelming,” said math teacher Stefnie Evans. “Meeting these families has made me realize how significant this work and this school will be. These parents are so full of hope for their children, and we get the opportunity to serve them.

“The potential impact to families and communities is profound and inspiring.”

Collegeology Games Offer High Stakes Help

Getting into college is not instinctive for anyone. There are many months of financial aid and college applications, admission essays and tests – all with inflexible deadlines and very high stakes. Some students have parents and family members who have attended college and can guide them through the process. For the many others who are in under-resourced schools with overworked counselors and are the first in their families to think about higher education, the guiding posts to college are few and far between.



This was the impetus behind the creation of **Collegeology Games** – a suite of games produced by the USC Pullias Center for Higher Education, in partnership with the Game Innovation Lab at USC School of Cinematic Arts and the Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation (CORE). The games help students practice strategies for navigating the college admission and financial aid process before they encounter it in the real world.

Since the suite's first card game, Application Crunch, was developed in 2010, underserved middle and high school students throughout the Los Angeles area have learned the ropes for getting into college. The game has been used by guidance counselors around the United States, and results indicate players are gaining college knowledge and growing their college-going efficacy.

In 2012, **Collegeology Games** is introducing Mission Admission, a Facebook application of the card game, where high school students can find the information in the social network in which they are already spending much of their time.

With support from the USC Office of the Provost, The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation, TG, the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, **Collegeology Games** has also begun play-testing a digital prototype of a game for middle school students.



Personal Stories —
On the Road

FIRST GENERATION

The new documentary film, *First Generation*, explores the challenges four individual students face as they attempt to navigate their way into college. The film, which was produced by USC alum Adam Fenderson and his wife, Jaye, offers an inside look at the lives of these California high school students who hope to be the first in their families to attend college. *First Generation* consistently exposed the difficulty these students had as they tried to navigate the college application process with little guidance and a slew of misinformation. **William G. Tierney**, USC University Professor and Director of Rossier's Pullias Center for Higher Education, was featured prominently in the film.

Jessica is a high-achieving daughter of a single mom in rural Kern Valley who works in her grandmother's diner and longs to go to college. Keresoma comes from a large poor Samoan family and aspires to attain a college education to help support them. Dontay is an ex-drug dealer working hard to get a football scholarship for college, and Cecilia, the daughter of migrant field workers, has amassed a list of academic achievements but has neither the money nor the understanding of the college application process.

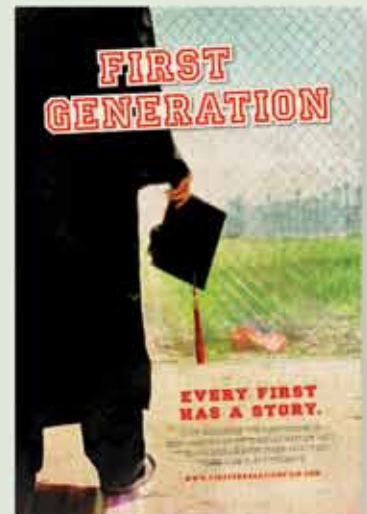
In an effort to raise awareness of the plight of college bound students like these, USC Rossier co-hosted a series of screenings of the film in Los Angeles, Washington, and Sacramento. Each screening was followed by a panel discussion on the barriers to college access for low-income and first generation students, the social and economic implications of improving college access and attainment, and tangible action steps and promising solutions to help increase the college-going rates among this student population.

Rossier Dean Karen Symms Gallagher moderated the discussions in Los Angeles and Washington with Tierney, filmmakers Adam and Jaye Fenderson and the featured students. **Collegeology Games** was presented by panelists as one critical solution to bridging the information gap for first generation students.

The *First Generation* students, Dontay Gray, Jess Chevallier, Keresoma Leio, and Cecilia Lopez, all traveling to Washington for the first time, visited with Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA) and Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA). White House Senior Policy Advisor for Education Zakiya Smith also participated in the Capitol Hill screening and discussion of the issues around college access.



Filmmakers Jaye Fenderson (L) and Adam Fenderson (back) tour Washington with *First Generation* students (L to R) Keresoma Leio, Jess Chevallier, Cecelia Lopez, and Dontay Gray



Scan this code for
more about the
First Generation film





Our online academic community is infusing energy into USC's overall academic community. Faculty and students speak excitedly of the enduring relationships and rigorous intellectual interaction that many of our online programs facilitate."

— USC President C. L. Max Nikias

MAT PROGRAM
1200
GRADUATES



MAT STUDENTS
LIVE IN
**two
dozen**
COUNTRIES

MASTER OF
EDUCATION IN SCHOOL
LEADERSHIP
STARTS JANUARY 2013

K-12

USC Rossier Online

As Rossier continues to expand the online delivery of its quality academic programs, the USC Rossier Online brand encompasses this growing catalogue.

USC Rossier Online revolutionized teacher preparation three years ago when it began delivering its acclaimed and academically rigorous Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program through an innovative interactive online platform developed by 2tor, Inc. Through the online MAT, Rossier is preparing transformative teachers and impacting K-12 education on an unprecedented scale. Today, the program boasts 1,200 graduates, and nearly 3,000 students have come from every state and two dozen countries across the globe.

Rossier Online programs have now expanded and instructional online platforms allow USC students to fully participate in quality programs from anywhere in the world.

Rossier Online currently offers Master of Arts in Teaching – Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MAT TESOL) to prepare students to be English language teaching specialists in a variety of settings and educational levels.

In the fall of 2012, Rossier Online launched its Master of Education in Advanced Instruction for experienced educators who seek an advanced degree and expertise in areas such as differing abilities, STEM, or humanities at the elementary or secondary levels. Students in both the ME in Advanced Instruction and the MAT will have the opportunity to earn an additional Special Education Credential or a Gifted Education Certificate beginning this fall as well. The ME in Advanced Instruction will also have an on-campus program, beginning June 2013.

USC Rossier Online will offer a Master of Education in School Leadership starting January 2013 for educators who seek K-12 administrative leadership positions such as principalships or assistant principalships.

Programs offered through USC Rossier Online are of equal rigor and stature to their on-campus counterparts. Students engage in a virtual campus experience through the interactive social networking platform, with live, face-to-face sessions, self-paced coursework, and field-based experiences in their own communities.

USC Rossier graduates become members of the lifelong and worldwide Trojan alumni family.

Superintendents Explore Latino Achievement at USC



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF LATINO SUPERINTENDENTS AND ADMINISTRATORS

On March 23, K-12 school leaders from around the state came to USC to connect with researchers and learn how to integrate promising practices for improving Latino student achievement into their classrooms, schools, and districts.

The California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators (CALSA) conclave featured a welcome by **Dean Karen Symms Gallagher**, and opening comments by **Tom Torlakson**, State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Keynote addresses were given by **Carlos Garcia**, Superintendent of San Francisco Unified School District, and **John Deasy**, Superintendent of Los Angeles Unified School District.

With 285 attendees, the gathering was the largest CALSA conclave in its history. A number of Rossier faculty members presented their research at the conclave, including **Paula Carbone**, **Rudy Castruita**, and **Pedro Garcia**.



Rudy Castruita, Dean Gallagher, and Superintendent John Deasy were among the presenters at the CALSA conclave.

34th Pullias Lecture Features Harvard Professor Clayton M. Christensen

Harvard Professor Clayton M. Christensen, author of *The Innovative University: Changing the DNA of Higher Education From the Inside Out*, delivered the 34th Pullias Lecture on March 29.

Christensen, who is best known for his study of innovation in commercial enterprises, spoke about what other markets can teach us about improving higher education. He discussed how lower-end products and companies disrupt and displace their established higher-end counterparts.

"Somebody comes up from the bottom of the market and then cleans it out," he said, using the history of steel mills, automobile manufacturing and Sony's pocket radios as examples.

Christensen applied the process to higher education, with USC and Harvard on one end and the University of Phoenix on the other.

"USC and Harvard must become the Hybrid Prius – taking the best of the old and the new," he said. "We need to integrate these things to prevent a disrupter from displacing us."

The 34th Pullias Lecture also marked the official renaming of the Earl and Pauline Pullias Center for Higher Education (formerly the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis), as a result of a \$5 million bequest from the Pullias family estate. The late Earl V. Pullias was one of the founding faculty members of USC's Department of Higher Education in 1957.



Clayton Christensen (above) delivered the 34th Pullias Lecture, at which William G. Tierney (right) announced the naming of the Pullias Center.





HOW CALIFORNIANS VIEW PUBLIC EDUCATION



*Dominic Brewer
Clifford H. and Betty
C. Allen Professor in
Urban Leadership
USC Rossier School
of Education*

by dominic **BREWER**

CALIFORNIA HAS LONG BEEN viewed by the rest of the nation as a leader in many areas, including education. The state's K-12 and higher education systems were once the envy of other states. Of late, though, the news from the Golden State has not been so rosy. For the last three decades California has faced increased demands on public services while suffering through economic cycles that have had exaggerated effects on the state budget. The result has been increased competition for limited resources, budget uncertainty and steadily eroding state dollars for local schools. At the same time, demands on schools to produce better educated students have increased. As expectations have risen, however, the state hasn't come up with sustainable solutions.

Given this backdrop, how does the public view California's schools and education policy effectiveness? Recent polling conducted by Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) and the USC Rossier School was designed to answer these questions. The PACE/USC Rossier Poll is an attempt to learn in more detail about how Californians perceive and understand the challenges now facing California's education system, and how to move the system forward.

Over the past 30 years, PACE has been part of conversations about education policy in Sacramento, working to bring academic research to bear in order to improve policymaking. Change in Sacramento will come about only when the public demands it. PACE and USC Rossier plan to conduct several polls each year, examining how the public perceives the broad "condition of education" as well as addressing specialized topics. The following article focuses on topics addressed in the 2012 polls – how voters think we should fund schools, and how voters believe teachers should be evaluated, hired and fired in K-12 schools. ■

81%

SAID TEACHERS
CONTRIBUTE A GREAT
DEAL TO SCHOOL
SUCCESS

2/3

SAID THE STATE SHOULD
INCREASE EDUCATION
SPENDING TO IMPROVE
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

of californians
55%

ARE IN SUPPORT OF
PROPOSITION 30

51%

OF PARENTS WANT TO CUT
WASTE BEFORE RAISING
TAXES TO FUND EDUCATION
AND PUBLIC SAFETY

USC Rossier/PACE Poll Results

66% of Californians agreed the state should provide more resources to poorer school districts even if it decreased spending in wealthier districts

55% favored higher spending in low-income schools even if it meant less spending in their neighborhood schools

70% said it was important to leave decisions about how to spend money to local public schools and districts

RE: The single factor most important in evaluating teachers:

- 31% said student achievement on standardized tests
- 23% said teaching experience
- 10% said peer evaluations

76% said an increase in spending should include changes to the way resources are used

2/3 said they would choose to hire new teachers rather than increase teacher salaries

Half of Californians said teachers are most responsible for improving student academic performance in schools, 22% said parents, and 5% said principals have the most impact

80% believe principals should have more freedom to fire teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory

47% said principals should choose teachers for their schools, even if it means reducing teachers' rights

73% believe teachers should not lose their jobs without a fair hearing

For complete results, visit: <http://edpolicyinca.org/polls>

California Voters Speak Up for Change in Education

THE USC ROSSIER SCHOOL OF EDUCATION 2012 polls on state education policy conducted with Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), a research partnership of USC, Stanford University and UC Berkeley, elicited some surprising results.

A majority of Californians, according to the PACE/USC Rossier Poll, believes that the state should provide additional resources to poorer school districts, even at the expense of schools in their own communities. Another strong finding was that local school districts should hold more control over how money is spent in public schools.

The polls also indicate that voters want principals to have more control over the hiring and firing of teachers, feel strongly about the importance of teachers to student achievement, and support teacher evaluations that are linked to student test scores.

State legislators are out of step with the public on these findings and other educational policies, said poll director Dan Schnur. Schnur, who also leads USC's Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics, said the polls "demonstrated how the state's elected officials haven't yet caught up with voters, or with those interested in meaningful education reform."

The polls, which were conducted in May and August, were the first in a series designed to frame the education policy debate for California legislators.

The results underscored two continuing key problems in California's education system. One is the state's failure to target resources to the schools and students who need them most. The other is the heavy burden placed on local educators by the state's rules on how resources can be used, said David N. Plank, executive director of PACE. "These findings suggest that Californians understand these problems and want them solved," he said.

EQUITY IN SCHOOL FUNDING

The finding that the state should provide additional resources to poorer school districts is particularly unexpected, given the state's chronic and ongoing budgetary strains. Sixty-seven percent of respondents believe the state should provide additional resources to poorer districts, while 55 percent also said this funding should be provided even at the expense of their own community schools.

California educators agreed that equity is currently one of the toughest conversations in education today, given the extraordinary budget problems districts face. "People don't want to talk about equity," says Darline Robles PhD '94, former superintendent for the Los Angeles County Department of Education and current professor at USC Rossier.

"Superintendents have a real challenge in certain communities which are underserved not just in education, but in all the resources, including parks, transportation, and grocery stores. If you contrast these communities, even in the same district that is well-served – most importantly by stable family situations – that community has to be made to understand the whys of the equity situation." (See sidebar)

BROWN'S BALLOT INITIATIVE

The August PACE/USC Rossier Poll gauged California voter support for Gov. Jerry Brown's tax initiative, Proposition 30, which would temporarily raise the state sales tax and taxes on incomes of more than \$250,000 to fund schools and public safety. (See page 14)

That poll found a slim majority of Californians favor the Brown tax initiative, but Californians also said they wanted to cut wasteful spending before raising taxes. About 49 percent agreed with the statement that politicians should focus on wasteful spending before raising taxes, compared to 35 percent who agreed that they should "take a stand against further cuts to schools and public safety, make the wealthy pay their fair share and help balance the budget."

Even among parents, 51 percent agreed the focus should be placed first on cutting waste before raising taxes to fund education and public safety. "These polls show voters don't buy the 'we just need more money' argument," said

ONE DISTRICT'S PERSPECTIVE

Poll Results

Dominic Brewer, Clifford H. and Betty C. Allen Professor in Urban Leadership at USC Rossier and Director at PACE. "Voters don't trust the state to control funding, and believe there are major structural problems that need to be addressed, like teacher evaluation, student testing, transparency, and local control."

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD TEACHERS

The PACE/USC Rossier Poll also confirmed that Californians believe teachers are the most important factor in the classroom. Nearly half said that teachers were most responsible for improving student academic performance in schools, while 22 percent named parents and 5 percent named principals.

The PACE/Rossier Poll found that 81 percent of Californians said teachers contribute "a great deal" to a school's success. When given the option between using funds to hire more teachers or to increase teacher salaries, two-thirds of Californians said they would choose to hire more new teachers.

Katharine Strunk, assistant professor of education and policy at USC Rossier, said these results indicate voters think it's better for schools to hire more teachers and shrink class sizes than to pay existing teachers higher wages, which could attract better candidates.

But she says research shows the latter scenario would have a greater impact on student achievement. "Students do better in small classes, but you would need to lower class size so dramatically for that to work in California and the effect of reducing a class by two or three students is minimal compared to having a really good teacher," Strunk said.

"All evidence shows a great teacher impacts student success not just in

continued on page 12 »

RICHARD SHEEHAN EdD '02, superintendent of Glendale Unified School District (GUSD), said poll findings that voters want funding redirected from wealthier to poorer districts resonates with him.

Sheehan said inequities exist even within the same district, and at GUSD, he constantly faces budgeting dilemmas between higher-income schools in North Glendale and lower-income schools in South Glendale.

"One thing we do for the South is provide extra teacher staffing for teacher interventions; there are fewer barriers for teachers in the North. If I tell my class to go home and read this or write this paragraph, 95 percent of kids there will. And if they get hung up, most likely they have a parent who has a college education who can assist them," Sheehan said.

"But in the South, barriers arise and a kid gets frustrated – there may be a language and education barrier at home, so that same student will try, but will not be able to do it to the extent that a kid in the North will be able to."

Continued Sheehan: "I'm guessing this isn't going to make me popular, but if you look at the affluent communities in Laguna, Newport Mesa, Beverly Hills, and Montecito – they can opt out of the state funding model because their property values are so high. They get more money per student than lower income areas. Tell me, how is that equitable?"

Michele Doll EdD '09, a principal of one of Glendale's more affluent schools, Crescenta Valley High, shares the sentiment of voters who believe that principals should have more control over who they hire and fire. She expressed frustration with the process of letting one of her teachers go. "If someone's not cutting the mustard, and they're tenured, I can put them on an improvement plan, and then they can go to peer-assistance review. But it can drag on for years."

She agrees with the 70 percent of Californians polled that says it is important to leave spending decisions to local officials. She says that funding for teacher professional development is a priority for her, and a big reason for her students' success, which includes being a California Distinguished School where one-third of the students take Advanced Placement courses with an overall pass rate of nearly 80 percent.

"While the state is very restrictive of how I can spend my small amount of funding, as a site principal, I make sure that all of that funding goes to helping teachers be better teachers." ■

— Elizabeth Segal



Michele Doll

« continued from page 11

California Voters Speak Up

school but later in life, on jobs, graduation, and income. I'd rather have my kid in a larger class with an amazing teacher than one that is three or four students smaller with just an average teacher."

THE PRINCIPAL'S CHOICE

The hiring and firing of teachers continues to be a politically charged subject, and Californians seem to want principals to have more control over the matter. The PACE/USC Rossier Poll showed 47 percent of Californians agree principals should be able to choose the teachers that work in their schools, even if this means reducing the rights of teachers. Forty-one percent of Californians disagreed.

Nearly 80 percent of Californians also agree that principals should have more freedom to fire teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory. Currently, principals are required to hire the most senior teacher who wants a position that is vacant, and with cutbacks of late, there is usually a sizable pool of teachers who were recently laid off that are required to be hired before any other candidates can be considered.

Additionally, California teachers receive tenure after two years, at which time removing him or her requires a lengthy due process that involves the teacher's union. "Principals don't have a lot of say over who gets to teach in their schools," Strunk said. However, she added that principals with more autonomy would mean teachers with fewer rights. There is a precedent for the contracts as they currently exist, says Strunk, and such a tradeoff should be carefully considered.

"Once upon a time, principals and administrators transferred teachers they didn't like and hired teachers who were their friends, so all of these things are in place in teacher union contracts for a reason," she said. "If you take away those rights, you may risk those problems arising again."

EVALUATING TEACHERS

Teachers have been thrown into the national spotlight due to recent federal initiatives that mandate student standardized test scores be used to evaluate teachers, such as Race to the Top and the flexibility waiver to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Meanwhile, teachers unions continue to oppose the use of these tests to assess how teachers are doing.

The PACE/USC Rossier Poll showed 31 percent of Californians think student achievement on standardized tests is the single most important factor in evaluating teachers. Twenty-three percent said teaching experience is the most important factor, and 10 percent named peer evaluations as the most important factor.

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), which has been piloting a new teacher evaluation system over the past year, recently received a court order to show proof it was using student test scores in its evaluations, according to state law. However, state legislation in the pipeline would require districts to negotiate their evaluation systems with teachers unions, which have been zealous opponents of using student test scores to evaluate teachers. If Bill AB 5 passed, LAUSD's new system and others like it will likely be jeopardized.

"Everyone would like the districts to work with the unions so teachers have a voice in teacher evaluation, but they have taken a hard stance against using student standardized tests," Strunk said. "Currently 99 percent of teachers are rated as effective, and we know that's not true. We need a system where principals know who is truly effective and who is not."

The PACE/USC Rossier Poll conducted in May, surveyed 956 California adults online and in August, surveyed 1,041 likely California voters online. Brewer said that with the 2012 election upon us, it would behoove elected officials to pay attention to these findings.

"PACE's mission is to inform policy debate in Sacramento. There is an appetite for greater understanding and recognition of the trade-offs. So our results could encourage and empower more sophisticated politicians. This is additional information that provides an antidote to the simple sloganeering." ■

— Andrea Bennett

WHERE THEY STAND

THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES ON EDUCATION ISSUES



OBAMA

ROMNEY

School Choice

- Supports “innovative” charter schools, and feels that they should be a model for the reform of more troubled schools
- Has declared his support for charter schools
- Plans to allow students to bring Title I and IDEA funds with them to any public or private school of their choice

College Funding

- Won college tax credits of up to \$10,000 for college students, as well as greater funding for Pell grants
- Opposes changes to the Direct Loan program
- Would do away with the federal “direct loan” program, which makes student loans directly from the federal government, and would allow private bank student loans again

Teacher Evaluation and Pay

- Wants to overhaul teacher evaluations to be partly tied to student performance
- Wants to tie teacher evaluation to student performance, and eliminate “unnecessary certification requirements” for teachers

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

- Issued waivers for more than half the country for the NCLB law in exchange for the promise to set new goals for preparing students for college
- “A Chance for Every Child” plan suggests a reform of NCLB by emphasizing greater transparency
- States would have incentives to create public report cards that evaluate each school

Higher Education Regulation

- Has continued to push for greater regulations, specifically in the area of for-profit education
- Opposes regulations imposed by Obama Administration, and proposes that consumer choice will reward quality programs

— Sources: whitehouse.gov/issues/education | mittromney.com/issues/education

PROPOSITIONS 30 & 38

by Lawrence O. PICUS

CALIFORNIA'S PERSISTENT BUDGET CRISIS has led to substantial reductions in spending for K-12 schools and community colleges. Unlike past "budget cuts" where revenue levels grew more slowly than predicted spending needs, since the 2008 start of the great recession, spending for schools and community colleges has actually decreased.

November's ballot gives voters two propositions, 30 and 38, designed to provide more funding for our schools.

California's schools receive their money through a byzantine funding structure that has been modified, adjusted and adapted to various needs for more than 30 years. Since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, control over funding levels has rested almost entirely with the State, and although 1988's Proposition 98 guaranteed a specific share of the State's budget to K-14 education, recent budget balancing actions have left schools with less money than guaranteed under its terms. The California Legislative Analyst's Office estimated that in 2011–12, Proposition 98 funding for K-14 education was some \$13.7 billion less than the funding guarantee, and \$9.1 billion less than was available to schools in 2007–08.

For the 2012–13 school year, the State budget for Proposition 98 funding is \$53.5 billion, an increase of \$6.6 billion over the previous year. However, virtually all of this increase is contingent on the passage of Proposition 30, Gov. Brown's proposal, which establishes temporary tax increases to fund schools and balance the state budget. Proposition 38, authored by advocate Molly Munger, which temporarily raises taxes but places limits on how the money can be used, will also appear on the ballot in November.

PROPOSITION 30

Proposition 30 was placed on the ballot by the Legislature, and the 2012–13 budget was balanced assuming it will pass. The measure temporarily increases sales tax by one-quarter cent (between January 1, 2013 and the end of 2016), and personal income taxes for high-income taxpayers from 2012 to 2018. Specifically, marginal tax rates will increase by 1 percent on taxable incomes above \$250,000 for single filers and \$500,000 for joint filers. The marginal tax rate increases by 2 percent for taxable incomes over \$300,000 and \$600,000 for single and joint taxpayers respectively, and 3 percent for taxable incomes over \$500,000 and \$1,000,000.

These temporary tax increases are expected to raise approximately \$6 billion a year – slightly less in the first year and in the last two years after the sales tax increase expires. Under the Proposition 98 guarantee, a large portion of these funds would go to K-14 education (89 percent to K-12 and 11 percent to community colleges), with the remainder used to balance the state budget. However, if Proposition 30 fails, trigger cuts enacted in the budget would reduce funding by nearly \$6 billion, most of it falling on education. Schools and community colleges would lose \$5.35 billion midyear, while both the UC and CSU systems would see their revenues reduced by \$250 million each. The remaining



Although both measures purport to increase state revenues to support education – and in the case of Proposition 30, other state services – the actual revenues raised by each are subject to the changes in California’s economy and could range widely from current estimates over time.”

reductions, which are comparatively small, would come from other state services. For schools and community colleges, \$3 billion would disappear immediately and the remaining \$2.4 billion would increase late payments from the 2011–12 fiscal year, forcing school districts and community colleges to potentially borrow more in the short term.

PROPOSITION 38

Proposition 38 increases personal income tax rates for 12 years from the 2013 tax year through the 2024 tax year. Marginal tax rates would go up for all taxpayers except for those with taxable incomes below about \$7,000 (single filers) and \$14,000 (joint filers). The marginal rate would increase by 0.4 percent at low-income levels and increase in steps to a marginal rate increase of 2.2% for individual taxable incomes above \$2.5 million and joint taxable incomes over \$5 million.

Proposition 38 is expected to raise an average of \$10 billion a year (less in 2012–13); with 60 percent available for schools, and 70 percent allocated as largely unrestricted Education Program Grants distributed to schools on the basis of enrollment. The balance of the 60 percent of the funds for school funding would be distributed through Low Income Student Grants (18 percent) based on low income enrollments at each school, and Training, Technology and Teaching Materials Grants (12 percent), also distributed to schools on the basis of enrollment. The measure requires that funds must be spent at the school whose students generated the funds.

Ten percent of the revenue raised through Proposition 38 would be allocated to Early Care and Education (ECE) and the remaining 30 percent of the funds would be allocated for Debt Service Relief. After 2015–16, the school and ECE allocations would be limited, allowing more resources to be used for debt service.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE ELECTION?

What happens after the election is largely unknown. If both Propositions pass, the one with the most votes would likely prevail, according to the state constitution. To try to mitigate any confusion should both pass, each measure has a section that is intended to clarify what provisions would go into effect if both pass. If that happens, and Proposition 38 has more votes, the money raised would be distributed to schools as required by the measure, but the Proposition 98 funds would be reduced by nearly \$6 billion due to the trigger cuts.

Although both measures purport to increase state revenues to support education – and in the case of Proposition 30, other state services – the actual revenues raised by each are subject to the changes in California’s economy and could range widely from current estimates over time. Given the volatility of the state’s income tax receipts in recent years, estimates further into the future are subject to more variability.

It is unlikely that either of these propositions will help simplify and clarify the way our schools are funded in California. However, both will increase revenues for schools, reducing the existing stress educational agencies face as they strive to meet the needs of our children. ■

*Lawrence O. Picus
Professor of Education
USC Rossier School
of Education*





To achieve inclusiveness, as a nation, we must first look in the mirror and have the courage to critique ourselves, to interrogate our commitments, and to ask if equity is reflected in our educational policies, legal reform, and political positions...”

DURING THE FALL 2012 ACADEMIC TERM, the presidential election will take place; around the same time, the Supreme Court will hear Fisher v. The University of Texas case on affirmative action. The Fisher case has a chance to reverse Supreme Court’s 2003 Grutter decision, which stated that there is a compelling interest to increase diversity in institutions of higher education. Many argue that institutions of higher education should reflect the diversity of our country; hence, the need for considering race in college admissions.

Others point to President Obama as an example of why affirmative action is no longer needed. After all, President Obama is running for a second term. If he, as a person of color, can be the president of this democratic country, why can’t students of color pull themselves up by their own bootstraps without governmental assistance, such as affirmative action or federal financial aid?

This socio-political context provides an excellent opportunity to engage in a fruitful discussion about diversity. While we encounter people from different backgrounds, many do not seek to understand the diversity that surrounds us or who we are in relation to others. At times, we merely tolerate those who are different from us, perhaps, because it is safe to do so. In order to adequately face the challenges and opportunities our diversity presents us with, our goal should be to move beyond tolerance. We should actively seek to understand across lines of difference, to pave the way for real encounters, and to build relationships that not only decrease tensions in our society, but also enhance the well-being of everyone (Eck, 1997).

The second step to these initial encounters is an opportunity for open dialogue. In his book, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire states, “As a democratic relationship, dialogue is the opportunity available to me to open up to the thinking of others, and thereby not wither away in isolation” (1994, p. 119). As a nation, we too, need opportunities to have open dialogue – (through) speaking and listening: this process can reveal both common understandings and real differences that will allow us to critique others and ourselves (Eck, 1997).

Three Elements to Advancing Diversity:

dialogue, self-critique, and commitment

Shafiqah Ahmadi
Assistant Professor
of Clinical Education
USC Rossier School
of Education



In his book, *Hope on a Tightrope*, Cornel West states, “It takes courage to look at the mirror and see past your reflection to who you really are when you take off the mask, when you’re not performing the same old routines and social roles. It takes courage to ask – how did I become so well adjusted to injustice?” (2008, p. 9). To achieve inclusiveness, as a nation, we must first look in the mirror and have the courage to critique ourselves, to interrogate our commitments, and to ask if equity is reflected in our educational policies, legal reform, and political positions that our politicians are taking on, issues such as same-sex-marriage, affirmative action, and immigrant rights, especially in this election year. Most importantly, how do we as a democratic society grapple with the politics of power in relation to diversity? And how do we address these issues in our educational environment? This self-reflection should inform our social responsibility toward ‘equity and justice for all.’ It will allow us to make informed and engaged decisions about the type of research we engage in, our curricular choices, classroom pedagogies, designing program objectives, and governing ourselves. The diversity of faculty and staff should reflect the diversity of the current and future student body. An understanding of diversity, without a commitment to it, is simply ‘academic’ and not representative of a progressive, forwarding thinking nation or body of educators committed to social change and the academic success of all students.

For references, go to: <http://www.uscrossier.org/news/category/publications/futures/> ■

new arrivals

Uju Anya joined Rossier in August as Assistant Professor of Clinical Education. Anya comes from UCLA, where she received her PhD in 2011 and served as a lecturer in the Department of Applied Linguistics. At Rossier, she will be working in the MAT TESOL program.

Christian Chun joined Rossier as Assistant Professor of Clinical Education. Chun's teaching and research address critical multiliteracies and social semiotic approaches to language and education.

His work has been published in several leading peer-reviewed journals, and he is currently working on a book manuscript that addresses language, power, and agency in an EAP classroom.

Maria Gutierrez Ott (PhD '94) joined the Rossier School as Executive in Residence in October. Ott was most recently the superintendent of Rowland Unified School District. She is the co-author of *A Culturally Proficient Society Begins in School*, written with Rossier colleague Darline Robles, and was named the 2003 Hispanic Woman of the Year by the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation.

Uju Anya



Christian Chun

new roles

Richard Clark, Research Professor and Co-Director of the Center for Cognitive Technology, retired on June 30. He began his career at USC Rossier in 1978 as professor of educational psychology and technology, and retires as an Emeritus Professor.

Zoe Corwin has been named Research Assistant Professor for the USC Pullias Center for Higher Education at Rossier. She directs the *Collegeology Games* Initiative. (See page 4)

Tatiana Melguizo was promoted to Associate Professor of Education. She continues her study of community college students and STEM education at the Pullias Center.

Maria Gutierrez Ott



Rossier Faculty Honored at AERA

A number of Rossier faculty members were elected to leadership positions in the American Educational Research Association (AERA) as well as recognized by the organization for their research, at the annual meeting of AERA. **William G. Tierney** was inducted as AERA President, the first USC scholar to be elected to this highly regarded position.

USC Rossier and Social Work joint appointee **Ron Avi Astor** was appointed a 2012 Fellow of AERA, joining a select group of scholars which includes current and past USC Rossier faculty members **Estela Mara Bensimon, Dominic Brewer, Richard Clark, Myron Dembo, Rodney Goodyear, Harry O'Neil, Robert Rueda, Gale Sinatra** and **William G. Tierney**.

At the meeting, several other Rossier scholars were spotlighted:

Adrianna Kezar

AERA Division J Vice President

Julie Marsh

AERA Recipient of the Division L,
Outstanding Policy Report

Tatiana Melguizo

Outstanding Reviewer for AERA Journal,
Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis

Gale Sinatra

AERA Vice President, Division C

Katharine Strunk

AERA Recipient of the Division L,
Educational Policy and Politics, Junior Scholar Award
Outstanding Reviewer for AERA Journal,
American Educational Research Journal

Brendesha Tynes

AERA Recipient of the Early Career Contribution Award

Kristan Venegas

AERA Secretary/Treasurer
Special Interest Group, Hispanic Research Issues



Adrianna Kezar



Julie Marsh

Tatiana Melguizo



Katharine Strunk



Brendesha Tynes



Ron Avi Astor



Gale Sinatra



William G. Tierney



Kristan Venegas

Faculty News

Patricia Burch co-authored a policy brief on Supplemental Educational Services (SES) and students with disabilities and English Language Learners, as part of the IES-funded study of these federally mandated tutoring services in five low-performing school districts, their implementation and impact.

Rudy Castruita received the Classroom of the Future Foundation's Visionary and Outstanding Leadership Award for his role as San Diego County Superintendent of Schools.

Adrianna Kezar authored a book published by Routledge in April, *Embracing Non-Tenure Track Faculty: Changing Campuses for the New Faculty Majority*. The book details the findings of her review of faculty contracts at institutions regarded as models for their support of contingent faculty. In May, Kezar led a Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success convening to discuss the impact of overreliance on non-tenure-track faculty on student learning and success.



The USC Center on Educational Governance (CEG) released its sixth annual School Performance Dashboard, which draws on data from 2003 to 2011 to rate charter schools across multiple measures of financial health and academic performance, including state test scores and classroom spending. The report, which includes a list of the 10 highest ranked schools and an interactive online dashboard, is funded by The Ahmanson Foundation, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation and the



Weingart Foundation. **Priscilla Wohlstetter**, CEG director and lead author of the report, recently announced her resignation as Diane and MacDonald Becket Professor in Educational Policy at Rossier to become a full-time professor at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York.

The USC Center for Urban Education (CUE) released a report on the impact of debt for Latinos pursuing degrees in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The report, "Reducing Undergraduate Debt to Increase Latina and Latino Participation in STEM Professions," examines the borrowing patterns of undergraduate students and the relation of that debt to enrollment in graduate school, and offers recommendations to mitigate the effects of debt and improve Latino participation in STEM. **Alicia Dowd** and **Lindsey Malcom PhD '08** co-authored the report, which is based on a study funded by the National Science Foundation and led by Dowd and **Estela Mara Bensimon**.



Tatiana Melguizo published a study in the June issue of *Research in Higher Education* that found minority college students who major in the STEM fields earn at least 25 percent more than their peers who study humanities or education. The study followed more than 1,000 Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino and black students over nine years, and found Latinos majoring in STEM fields also reported the highest earnings among the groups studied. It was funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation through the Institute for Higher Education Policy.

COMMENCEMENT

Rossier Graduates Celebrate

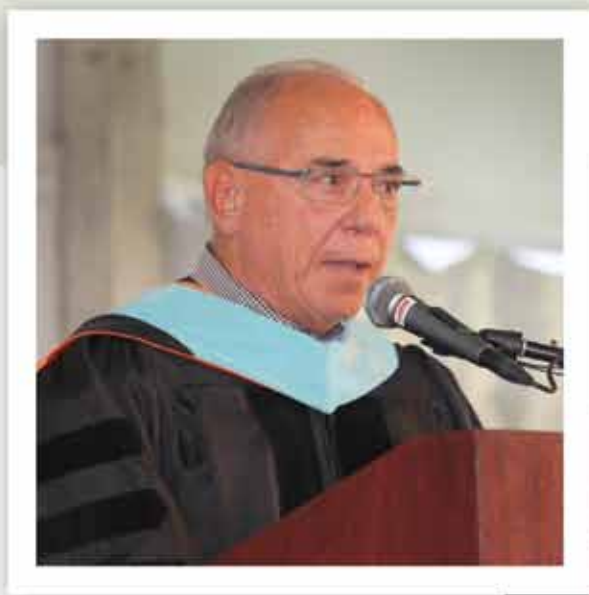
THIS YEAR'S COMMENCEMENT boasted the highest number of Rossier graduates in the history of the school.

On May 10, doctoral candidates adorned in red velvet regalia were hooded at the Rossier Doctoral Commencement Ceremony in Founders Park. Close to 180 PhD and EdD candidates participated in the procession, led by flag bearers **Kris De Pedro PhD '12** and **Chris McDonald EdD '12**. The ceremony also honored three outstanding dissertation award winners – **Aime Black EdD '12**, **Wendy Marshall EdD '12**, and **Elizabeth Jordan EdD '12**.

On May 11, close to 700 master's candidates and their families and friends convened at Howard Jones Field, led by flag bearers **Julisa Maldonado Vargas MAT TESOL '12** and **Briana Weiland ME PASA '12**.

Commencement speaker **Don Shalvey EdD '95**, deputy director of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and co-founder of Aspire Public Schools, captivated the audience with stories of his rise through the education field and lessons he learned along the way. Student speaker **Julio Cesar Ortiz MFT '12** talked about his growth as a Rossier student and his commitment to advocating for urban communities and the underserved.

Graduating Master of Arts in Teaching candidates started the celebration early on May 10 at the MAT Trojan Pride Day. Both online and on-campus students attended a discussion panel on the teaching job market led by former superintendents and Rossier faculty **Darline Robles** and **Michael Escalante**. The new graduates learned about alumni opportunities, listened to capstone presentations by their peers, and attended an evening cocktail reception hosted by 2tor, Inc. ■



Do what needs to be done and check to see if it is impossible only after you're finished."

— Don Shalvey

Keynote speaker Don Shalvey spoke of his experience as an educator in Central California prior to founding Aspire Public Schools ◀



Scan this code to hear Don Shalvey's speech ▶



2012



When given the choice of doing well or doing good... choose doing good."

— Don Shalvey



*Student speaker **Julio Cesar Ortiz** said his experience at Rossier prepared him to heal the emotionally wounded ►*



alumnus fights for
QUALITY SCHOOLS IN
CHICAGO

OLIVER SICAT HAS FACED A FEW CHALLENGES since he was handpicked to be Chief Portfolio Officer of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) one year ago. But the road is rarely smooth when you are a true education change agent.

Sicat BS '01 is charged with giving every student in the district the opportunity to attend a high quality school. To meet this objective, 20 of the lowest performing schools in the district were closed down or turned around and 12 new schools were authorized in the last year, amid protest from some members of the community. He has one of the toughest jobs, but also one of the most critical to educational equity.

The son of hardworking Filipino immigrants, Sicat grew up poor in Santa Ana and learned firsthand how some communities were excluded from high quality public education. "My parents didn't have any means, go to college, or know the language, but they believed that education would be my ticket to the American Dream," Sicat said. "We had to go to church to get milk and butter and other sustenance, but they finagled a way for me to get into the Irvine school system because they knew that where you lived determined the quality of education you got." This is something Sicat and his colleagues are trying to change in CPS.

"We're trying to give great school options to every student and remove inequities in the community based on income and race," he said. In addition to the political heat involved in school turnarounds, Sicat and the newly created team have high achievement goals for students in the district's 670 schools.

Currently, CPS students score four points below the national average on the ACT, and have a graduation rate of 57.5 percent. Sicat says CPS aims to close that achievement gap and raise the graduation rate to 75 percent.

Despite his parents' ability to navigate the system to improve the quality of his education, Sicat didn't have any direction when it came to higher education. "I went to a school with 3,000 students and didn't talk to the guidance counselor until the day of my graduation," he said. "My parents had no idea how to get me into college, so they saved up \$1,000 for a private service to help me." Those services turned out to be a scam, but Sicat managed to transfer to USC in the middle of freshman year as a business major. USC ignited his entrepreneurial spirit, and helped him build confidence in the face of challenge. He and a friend started a USC branded antennae ball business, and the Trojan Bookstore became their first contract.

One day, the young business major was leafing through a career resource book on campus when he was struck with the desire to help other first generation kids get to college. He reflected on one of his most

oliver SICAT, BS '01
Chief Portfolio Officer of Chicago Public Schools



Photo by Jose More / Chicago News Cooperative

inspirational mentors, his elementary school principal, Gene Bedley, and realized his fate was in education. "My experience at 'SC was phenomenal, and I felt completely ready for the first day of class in a tough urban environment, and that was amazing," Sicat said. "When people bash schools of education, I tell them that I've had a counter experience."

Sicat went on to Harvard, where he received \$100,000 in seed money to start the non-profit Emagine, an after school program in Boston. He also taught math, and was named 2006 Teacher of the Year in Boston Public Schools. That same year, he was recruited to become the founding principal of UIC College Prep, building its first high school – Noble Street Charter School – from the ground up. The charter opened in 2008, and in 2011, became the highest performing non-selective school among Chicago's 118 high schools.

"One theme that has stuck with me is the ability to make positive multigenerational change – through a company, school system or nonprofit – that creates change after I'm gone," Sicat said. "Now I'm trying to have the same impact at CPS." So far, Sicat and his team have made great strides. In addition to turning around dozens of schools, CPS is creating a single application process for the whole district, eliminating the different rules and mounds of paperwork parents must navigate to get their kids into a good school.

He said he has also learned many things in the last year that he hopes will help him facilitate change more easily in the coming year. "We came in with a sense of urgency and moved kids out of low performing schools, and we're glad we did that," he said. "But a year later, we better understand how to work with the communities with respect. If we can collaborate better, be transparent, and see that we're all trying to reach the same goals, the noise or pushback will always be there – but at least people will understand our intent. We're getting better at it."

Whether building a business, launching a non-profit or leading a district – all before the age of 33 – Sicat is no stranger to challenge. And he said he thrives on the demands of his current post, and plans to pursue a long career in education leadership.

Sicat said a laser focus on the kids he's trying to help lets him navigate the pressures of the job. "If you base all of your decisions on improving student learning, you'll succeed," he said. "From what I have experienced, if you focus on the kids and get good results, that trumps everything else and all of the politics." ■

— *Andrea Bennett*

Alumna Brings the *Future to Life for Kids*



ATHY BIHR EdD '05 MAKES CAREER CHOICES tangible and tactile for kids. As vice president and executive director of the Tiger Woods Learning Center in Anaheim, she guides flocks of students as they put their academic interests into action with hands-on career exploration and college preparation classes.

On a June morning, teenagers clustered around tables balancing sticks into architectural replicas. At one table, three 17-year-old girls circled what is starting to resemble the Eiffel Tower. "We've been coming here every summer since the sixth grade, and we learn something different every year," said Itzel, who attends high school in Huntington Beach along with her two friends. She said she especially liked this engineering class. "We're actually learning how to create structures. You're not just seeing it in a textbook, you're actually doing it."

That's the idea behind the curriculum Bihr developed in 2005 when she arrived at the brand-new center, which now sees up to 6,000 elementary school kids and 5,000 high school students each year. Students get to "become" marine biologists, video game designers, and forensic scientists with programs that bring academic concepts to life. And teachers come to the center to learn how to use technology more effectively to make science class a hands-on experience for kids, instead of just another reading lesson.

"I don't think kids are bored in school; we just need to do better at connecting what they learn in a classroom to the real world," Bihr said. "Kids learn when they get their hands in something. This program is designed to connect subjects taught

in school to how they are applied in the real world. This helps students recognize their full potential and visualize what their future could be like."

The spacious, modern facility sits above the tranquil green of a golf course. Inside, vibrant college pennants cover a prominent wall next to stacks of glossy university brochures – constant reminders of the high expectations for students' futures.

Bihr said her childhood was unlike that of many of the kids she sees at the center. The Whittier native had the opportunity to explore interests like sports, dance and travel, and college attendance was assumed. She also learned from her parents the importance of equal opportunity for all.

From her earliest years of employment, Bihr found a special love for two things – working with kids and being outdoors. The golf enthusiast coached sports, worked for the city parks and recreation department, and designed large-scale interactive games for kids at summer camp.

Later, she pursued those dual interests as a physical education teacher in LAUSD. It was the kids there that first stirred a passion for educational equity that has driven her since. "The kids there didn't have two pennies to rub together," Bihr recalls. "My purpose in life is to level the playing field, and create opportunity for all kids to be successful, regardless of background or circumstance."

After moving up the ranks in K-12 administration, and most recently serving as principal and director of Vista View Middle School, Bihr decided to take a step towards making an even

“Our measuring point should be how kids are doing in their careers, how successful we are doing as a nation.”

kathy BIHR, EdD '05
Vice President and Executive Director of
the Tiger Woods Learning Center



bigger impact in education. She pursued her doctorate of education at USC Rossier.

“I liked the practicality of what I was learning and that we had both professors and practitioners,” Bihr said of the program. “Dr. (David) Marsh was my chair, and he gave me a lot to think about with organizational change and what holds people back from change, and I’ve used that multiple times in my career. Dr. (Stuart) Gothold and Dr. (George) Giokaris were practitioners with experience in K-12 in addition to university experience, so they brought real tangible knowledge to the program.”

Bihr’s Fullerton-based cohort was one of the first to conduct thematic dissertations – a key component of the school’s innovative EdD program. She and her colleagues examined school district reform, with each doctoral student exploring a different angle on the topic. “Everyone in my cohort has been wildly successful, and many of us remain good friends to this day. I think the natural network that was formed through our program was an added benefit to the USC experience. We received a quality education, grounded in practice and reinforced with research.” For Bihr, leading the Tiger Woods Learning Center was a natural progression for her career, and not just because she loves golf. She believes the center fills an expanding void in education created by high stakes testing.

“I believe in accountability, but to the degree that it paralyzes the workforce is a problem. I see a lot of being in lock step and following the guidelines, and little creativity

from teachers,” she said. “We have to have higher goals than making kids proficient – that’s just mediocre. Our measuring point should be how kids are doing in their careers, how successful we are doing as a nation.”

Her commitment to the kids that she serves is undeniable, and extends beyond the learning center. Bihr also serves on the board for El Viento Foundation, which works to improve the lives of youth in the Oak View community of Huntington Beach, and she chairs the organization’s academic committee. She’s also on the board of the nonprofit Project Tomorrow, which supports the innovative uses of science, math and technology resources in K-12 schools. Bihr is also the newest member of the USC Rossier Board of Councilors.

“I want to advance the ideas of education for all, and I want to put myself in a position to have the influence to see that through. Choosing USC to further my education was the best move of my professional career. I learned that there are members of the Trojan family all around me that are focused on the same thing. Together, we can ensure education equity around the world.” ■

— Andrea Bennett

USC Rossier is hosting a special Orange County alumni event at the Tiger Woods Learning Center on February 7, 2013, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. For more details, visit <http://rossier.usc.edu/alumni/engagement.html>

USC Rossier Alumna Uncovers

The Mysteries of Congress

GISELA ARIZA ME '11 ALWAYS WANTED to make a difference in the education of underserved students. She just didn't know the level her aspiration would reach – all the way to Washington, D.C.

Born in Los Angeles to Guatemalan immigrants, Ariza attended public schools with few resources and teachers who seemed "burned out." When she was recommended to attend an honors English course in the seventh grade, a world of possibilities opened up to her. "My new classroom had textbooks, shelves of novels, computers and colorful projects on the wall," she remembered. "It was the first time I felt I was learning, and it is one of the reasons I am where I am today."

Ariza also faced discrimination as one of only two students of color in her new class. While her parents couldn't fully relate to their daughter's struggle against racism in an American school, they always debated the topic of global politics, particularly the inequities faced by many people. In a bid to change alcohol and tobacco policies in California's African-American and Latino communities, Ariza began to spend time outside of school working with a nonprofit and gained a greater appreciation of social issues as an undergraduate sociology major.

"I realized that many of my high school classmates had dropped out starting in 10th grade, and I knew they weren't stupid – they just felt disconnected from the material and their teachers. So I decided that education was one of the systems I could make a change in," Ariza said. "I applied to USC Rossier, which has a program that recognizes that the school system is not tailored to students of color."

In the Master of Education in School Counseling program, she found a mentor in Professor Alan Green. "Academically, he helps me understand what my options are and never hesitates to connect me with the right people," she said. "During her time here at USC Rossier, she blossomed as a young inquisitive adult, leading her to more questions about self, schools, and her ethnic and cultural background and related policy," Green said.

"Since being in D.C., she has grown 10 times more in terms of her knowledge base, skills and inquiry."

The USC Rossier program taught Ariza how to be creative in her approach toward education and the way she communicated with students. But an internship at a Los Angeles Unified School District charter school showed that the disconnection between students, teachers and learning still existed. "I felt I was making a difference but only in one life at a time," she said. "I realized that I didn't have the power to make changes in laws and policies, and I had very little understanding about our government system and how decisions are actually made."

After graduation, Green suggested that Ariza apply for a fellowship with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute in Washington, D.C., to gain a deeper understanding of education policy behind the scenes and expand her experiences beyond the familiarities of Southern California.

Ariza received the fully funded fellowship as a secondary education fellow sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and says the experience has been eye-opening. "This program helped me to understand the complexities of the system. It's complicated, and it's a power struggle. And a lot of the decision-makers aren't educators and haven't been in the classroom," she said. "After uncovering the mysteries of Congress, I realized that even if I miss seeing my students one-on-one, this might be the only way to impact more lives." ■ — *Andrea Bennett*



Ariza (second from left) with colleagues of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute in Washington.

K12 HIGHER ED

Career Advice from the Nation's Education Leaders

At left, Rudy Crew delivered the keynote at the conference, which included several breakout sessions. At right, Myrna Morales and Pedro Garcia participated on a panel for site administrators.



NEARLY 200 ROSSIER ALUMNI, STUDENTS, AND EDUCATION LEADERS, nearly double last year's roster, attended the 2nd annual USC Rossier K-12/Higher Education Leadership Conference on July 26 to network and hear from the nation's top education leaders about the state of the profession today. The conference, which includes breakout panel discussions focused on career pathways for leaders of schools and districts, featured a special panel for higher education leaders for the first time.

"One thing that's unique about USC is the connections you maintain after you get your degree," **Greg Franklin** BA '83, EdD '97, superintendent of Tustin Unified School District, told the crowd, which included a significant showing of EdD alumni and students. "No other group in the world looks after their own like USC does."

Co-sponsored by the Dean's Superintendents Advisory Group (DSAG), which Franklin chairs, the conference was attended by members of the Rossier Board of Councilors, including **Mark Rocha** PhD '88, superintendent/president of Pasadena City College; **Don Leisey** EdD '73, former superintendent and educational entrepreneur; and **Carol Fox** MS '62, USC Trustee and Board of Councilors Chair.

Rossier Professor **Rudy Crew**, who was recently appointed as Oregon's Chief Education Officer, delivered a rousing keynote on leadership in the K-12 education system, and the critical issues that future leaders must address in order to truly transform their school districts for the better. "How you frame the discussion means everything," Crew said. "How you enter the human heart is everything, because this is just as much about the heart as it is the mind."

Later, attendees broke into four targeted panel discussion sessions according to their careers of interest, featuring insights and advice from a host of Rossier alumni with experience in the field.

Rossier Professor **Pedro Garcia** EdD '83, former superintendent of Nashville Public Schools, moderated a panel for site administrators, which featured **Erik Elward** EdD '11, founding principal of Alliance Health Services Academy High School; **Myrna Morales** EdD '05, assistant superintendent of human resources for Paramount Unified School District; and **Andrew Pulver** EdD '11, assistant superintendent of human resources for the Los Alamitos Unified School District. Franklin led a panel for district officers, with panelists **Derrick Chau** PhD '02, instructional director at LAUSD; **Helen Morgan** BS '82, EdD '10, superintendent of Hawthorne School District; and **Jim Elsasser** EdD '11, superintendent of Claremont Unified School District.

Rossier Executive in Residence **Mike Escalante** EdD '02, former superintendent of Glendale Unified School District, moderated the superintendents panel, featuring Rossier Professor **Rudy Castruita** EdD '82, former superintendent of schools for San Diego County, and **Peggy Lynch**, former superintendent for San Dieguito Union High School District.

Rocha moderated the conference's higher education panel, which included **Felicitio Cajayon** EdD '12, vice chancellor of the Los Angeles Community College District's Economic & Workforce Development Department; **Sonja G. Daniels** EdD '10, associate vice president for student affairs and dean of students at Cal State Dominguez Hills; **Felicia Hunt** ME '96, EdD '04, associate dean of graduate studies at Cal Tech; and USC Professor **John Brooks Slaughter**, former president of Occidental College. ■

Dear Rossier alumni,

GREETINGS FROM THE OFFICE OF ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT, a new division in the Rossier School of Education. I am very proud to write that a year after graduating from USC Rossier with my EdD in 2011, I have returned to campus in a new role focused on connecting fellow Trojan educators to each other and to Rossier.

I have spent my professional life in education, serving as an adjunct professor in Rossier's MAT program, an independent school administrator, a bilingual kindergarten teacher, a program director and a youth coach. I have always loved learning and connecting with other educators — and I love USC! — so this was an opportunity I could not pass up.

An important component of my work is to identify and reach out to Rossier alumni in the field, including leaders of K-12 environments, higher education institutions and other organizations to better understand how our alumni would like to be connected to each other, to Rossier, and to USC. Those connections can include everything from tailgates to networking to professional development and beyond. We are keenly aware of the need for networking within the Trojan Family in the current job market, and facilitating that process is a priority for me in my first year.

Since I arrived on campus in May, I have had the opportunity to meet alumni in Southern California, Hawaii, New York and San Francisco as part of an informal listening tour to be sure we understand the needs and perspectives of our alumni. It is incredibly gratifying that nearly every alumnus I have met then gives me the names of five or six other Trojans that I should meet as well. It is an honor to have a front line view of the Trojan Family at work! Special thanks go out to the Dean's Superintendents Advisory Group who partnered with us on the successful K-12/ Higher Education Leadership Conference in July, which attracted our largest alumni crowd yet (*See page 27*).

I hope to meet you personally or virtually over the coming year, and I hope you will take advantage of two new resources to stay connected to USC Rossier. The first is our brand new alumni, family and friends portal, the Rossier Family Network (*see page 29*). Also check out the Alumni Engagement page at rossier.usc.edu/alumni/ to learn about new resources and upcoming events in Seattle and Orange County. And, of course, don't miss Homecoming here on our beautiful campus on November 9 and 10.

Finally, please do not hesitate to share your thoughts or ideas for alumni engagement at USC Rossier by emailing me at alumni@rossier.usc.edu. I look forward to hearing from you. ■

FIGHT ON!





Get connected & stay connected

via the Rossier Family Network

Rossier alumni, students, faculty and friends can stay in touch and make new connections via the new Rossier Family Network.

Members can participate in and start groups and discussions that fit their interests, learn about upcoming events, and view photos from past events. They can also search for other members using a variety of criteria in order to find people they know or network with fellow Rossier community members who share their professional interests or background.

This online community is intended for people who have an affiliation to the school, and is available by invitation or administrator approval. If you have not received an email invitation but would like to join, please email Rossier Social Media Strategist Kathy Christie Hernandez at kchernan@usc.edu or Director of Alumni Engagement Kalim Rayburn at kayburn@rossier.usc.edu. You can view the Rossier Family Network at uscrossier.ning.com.



kalim RAYBURN, EdD '11

Director of Alumni Engagement | USC Rossier School of Education

the **Academy**

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Members in The Academy receive special recognition and are invited to key events throughout the year.

For more information on funding opportunities and how you can be a member, please contact Diana Hernandez, Director of Annual Giving, at **213.740.3499** or **dehernan@usc.edu**.

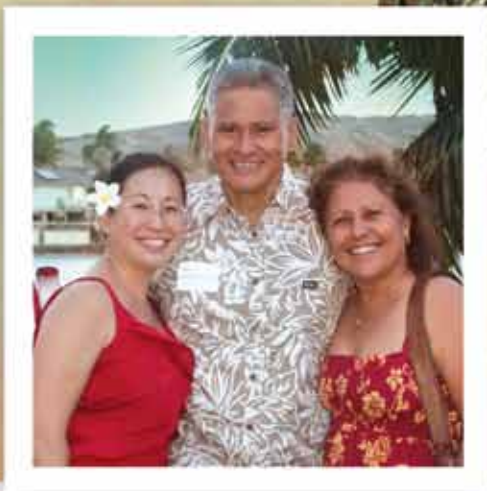
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Rossier On the Road



(L to R) Dean Gallagher, Don Leisey EdD '73, Robin Berg ME '71, Omar Alvarez ME '10, Ursula Edman MAT '12, Kalim Rayburn EdD '11, and Anne Wicks MBA '05 at the San Francisco reception ◀



(L to R) Gwendolyn Lewis, Kimberly Lewis EdD '14, Lee Stinzler, guest, and Linda Okoye MAT '11 at the reception in New York ▶



(L to R) Thanh Truc Nguyen EdD '07, Louis Kealoha EdD '06, and Linda Fischer EdD '05 at Rossier reception in Honolulu ◀

Upcoming Events

USC @ Washington Meet-up

Thursday, October 11, 2012

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Library Bistro | Seattle, WA

Rossier Reunion Reception

Classes of '62, '72, '82, '87 & '02

Friday, November 9, 2012

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

USC Rossier Homecoming Tailgate

Saturday, November 10, 2012

Before USC v. Arizona State game | University Park Campus

Orange County Alumni Event

Thursday, February 7, 2013

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Tiger Woods Learning Center | Anaheim, CA

The Annual Fund for Rossier

The Annual Fund for Rossier plays a critical role in maintaining the school's stature as a global leader in education practice, policy and research by providing day to day unrestricted support. Annual Fund dollars provide Dean Gallagher the greatest flexibility to meet the high priority needs of the school, including funding student scholarships, and increasing support for academic programs and faculty research.

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Donors that make a lasting commitment by including the USC Rossier School of Education in their estate plans are recognized during their lifetime in The Legacy Society. If you have included Rossier in your estate plans, we would like to honor you. Please let us know by contacting Anne Wicks, Associate Dean for External Relations, at awicks@usc.edu or 213.740.3498.

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2011–2012

As of June 30, 2012

academy honor roll

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If you prefer to be recognized another way, please contact Diana Hernandez, Director of Annual Giving, at dehernan@usc.edu or 213.740.3499.

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