



## IN THIS ISSUE



## FEATURED STORIES

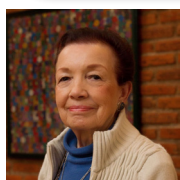
- Women's National Football Conference names **Camille Filardo-Kraft EdD '03** as Commissioner Page 3
- Kevin Baxter EdD '04** appointed Director of the Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program at the University of Notre Dame Page 5
- Carlos O. Cortez PhD '06** named Chancellor of the San Diego Community College District Page 7
- Five New Trojans** appointed school district superintendents Page 8
- Jame'l Hodges EdD '11** appointed Vice President for Student Success And Engagement at Edward Waters College Page 9
- Michèle Turner '81, EdD '14** to lead new USC effort to strengthen ties to local diverse businesses Page 10

Connect virtually with over 2,700 Rossier alumni and students on the  
**USC Rossier Career Network**



Join today at [rossier.peoplegrove.com](https://rossier.peoplegrove.com)

## 1950s



**Janet Boldt Saenz** *BS '59* was awarded a special medal for 60 years of continuous teaching in Mexican schools and universities (five of the 60 years were in the Los Angeles Unified School District at 32nd Street and Lockwood Avenue schools.) Janet continues to teach gifted education courses in the Graduate School at the University of Tlaxcala in Mexico.

## 1970s

**Peter Chang** *PhD '71* recently retired and is enjoying it immensely!

**Daniel Harris** *EdD '74* is retired and living in Nashville, Tenn., where he raises chickens and sells eggs to his friends and neighbors.

**Michael McCabe** *MS '74* had a whimsical article, "I Had Brought My Phone With Me," published in the February 2021 issue of the *Virginia Journal of Education*. Michael is a high school teacher, and the article chronicled one recent Saturday during which he was being repeatedly distracted from his weekend school work. The article illustrated to students that teachers understand being distracted because they too get distracted, but reminded students that one must return repeatedly to the work one has to do until it is finally finished.

**Gary Peterson** *BA '72, MS '74* earned his EdD in leadership and continuous improvement from Concordia University Wisconsin in May 2021.



**Karen Popovich Levyn** *BS '72, MS '74* is serving as a human relations commissioner in Beverly Hills, Calif. The Human Relations Commission consists of five members of the Beverly Hills community appointed by the City Council to advise, recommend, assist and encourage activities and programs to be undertaken to promote positive human relations in all aspects of community life.



**Barbara Gregson** *MS '76* received an Emmy Award as archival producer for the Netflix series "ReMastered." It was her fourth nomination and first win.

**Gary Wexler** *EdD '76* is currently co-owner and vice president of operations for Luxe Linen, a trusted leader in fine linen rental in Southern California. He retired in 2002 as director of curriculum, instruction and assessment in the William S. Hart High School District in Santa Clarita, Calif.

**Todd DeMitchell** *EdD '79* retired after 18 years in public schools and 30 years at the University of New Hampshire. While at the University of New Hampshire he held an endowed professorship in education, an endowed professorship in justice studies as well as being awarded the University Distinguished Professor Award in 2010. In addition, Todd received a Teaching Excellence Award and the University Graduate Faculty Mentor Award. He authored/co-authored 10 books on education law and labor and published over 200 articles in law reviews, case commentaries, education journals, and book chapters. Todd's scholarship was cited in a Writ of Certiorari before the US Supreme Court, in motions before state supreme courts and by federal and state courts as well as attorneys general.

## 1980s

**Judith Carl** *PhD '88* retired in February from her professional self-employment as a psychologist after 33 years. She moved from California to Oregon to be closer to her brother and his family. Judith is currently looking for a new home with some land (about one acre) in a quiet and rural neighborhood.

## 1990s

**Ann Kwinn** *PhD '90* is the manager of instructional design and quality control at the UC Riverside Extension. She oversees the online learning function providing direction, processes and training. During the pandemic, the school implemented the Canvas learning management system and converted all face-to-face courses to online. UC Riverside is Ann's undergraduate alma mater.

**Kathryn Wurtman** *BS '91* has been teaching for 34 years, including the past 28 years in Long Beach Unified School District where she currently teaches kindergarten.



## Women's National Football Conference Names Camille Filardo-Kraft EdD '03 as Commissioner



The leadership of the Women's National Football Conference (WNFC) has selected **Camille Filardo-Kraft EdD '03** as the league's next commissioner. Camille is no stranger to sports leadership. Her experience has spanned junior college, four-year college, as well as the graduate level and the NFL, which afforded her the ability to interface with all levels of athletes. Over the past 20 years she has served as an associate athletic director, senior woman administrator, Title IX deputy, and college dean.

Concurrently, she taught as an adjunct professor while she created multiple businesses. Most recently Camille served as the administrator of the NFL Substances of Abuse Program.

"I am deeply honored to have been appointed to the Commissioner of the WNFC. As the recipient of Title IX advancements, I was fortunate to have played, studied, and worked within athletics my entire life. Therefore, I believe this is the opportunity of a lifetime and I am committed to advancing the dreams of women to achieve their vision of excellence and equality. It is thrilling to be part of history with the intent of moving the needle."

**Deborah Mason-Dawes MS '95** works as an academic, on-set teacher for children in the film industry and also serves as an entertainment industry child welfare worker.

**Penelope Ho BS '97** is an instructional coach, dual language learner program specialist in the San Francisco Unified School District. She supports PK and TK teachers in classroom instruction and provides professional development training, focusing on dual language development and instructional strategies.

**Riye Park MS '99** earned an MA in educational research/intercultural competency from Durham University in the UK in 2012 and an EdD in educational leadership from California State University, Fullerton in 2018.

### 2000s

**Rita Bishop EdD '02** retired in June 2020 after 12 years as superintendent of the Roanoke City Public Schools in Virginia. Rita was named the 2014 Virginia Superintendent of the Year and is proud to have led major equity achievements during her tenure. She is currently writing a novel.



**Sue Sorensen MS '02** published a new book, *Four Simple Rules of Personal Finance: Wise Up to Rise Up*. The book is a good primer for average to low income individuals struggling with financial problems, as well as for young people, particularly those from disadvantaged homes. [Book Link](#)



**John Purcell ME '03, EdD '06** is co-author of the book *Schoolarts Collection: Early Childhood* which centers on art education for young students using child-centered approaches. [Book Link](#).

**Josh Van Norman MAT '07** is the superintendent/principal of San Antonio Union School District in Lockwood, Calif. Serving as one of the state's youngest superintendents, he has brought about positive change to a district that had experienced declining enrollment, high suspension rates, chronic absenteeism, and low academic performance prior to his arrival. Josh's relational skills and innovative approaches have been the hallmark of his leadership in the various districts he has worked in throughout his career.

**Marine Avagyan EdD '08** recently rejoined Glendale Unified School District as the director of equity, access, and family engagement, leading the newly renamed categorical department. In this role she leads the work of serving students and their families through collaborative planning and implementation of state and federal programs.

**Jeremy Collins MAT '09** is a golf coach at GOLFTEC in Brea, Calif.

**Thomas Tan EdD '09** was selected as the recipient of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) 2021 State Technology Administrator of the Year award. He currently serves as director of network and computer services at Hacienda La Puente Unified School District.

## 2010s

**Craig Bartholio** *EdD '10* was promoted to associate professor at Azusa Pacific University beginning in the 2021-22 academic year.

**Rose Hajian** *MAT '10* is a fourth grade teacher at Pilgrim School in Los Angeles.

**Anna Huerta** *BA '09, ME '10* is a creative director at Boss Flight Entertainment in Austin, Texas where she is the vision holder for a newly launched mobile game. Anna partners with a publisher and works with a team of 60 people from a variety of disciplines. She is also on the change management team and spends part of her role on organizational initiatives to scale the company, increase morale, and keep the business efficient.

**Jim Moss** *EdD '10* was elected to the Utah State Board of Education for a four-year term beginning in 2021, where he serves as vice chair of the Finance Committee, after serving for three years on the Utah State Charter School Board.

**Bonnie Alger** *MAT '11* completed her DMA in orchestral conducting in 2018 at the University of Maryland, College Park and then commissioned as an officer in the United States Army. She was recently promoted to the rank of first lieutenant, and serves as the executive officer of the 1st Cavalry Division Band at Fort Hood, Texas. Last fall, Bonnie was a guest lecturer and panelist for various music courses at Randolph-Macon College, Humboldt State University, and the University of Maryland.

**Jennifer Estell** *MAT '11* is happy to report that she continues to teach at the same charter school, Options for Youth, where she was first hired in 2011 and will celebrate her tenth year at the school in November.

**Darin Gray** *MAT '11* earned his masters degree in cybersecurity from California State University, San Marcos in May 2021. Darin was also the recipient of the James E. Ballinger Engineer of the Year award — an award which honors exceptional engineers renowned in their fields.

**Wenli Jen** *EdD '11* was awarded the 2020 Outstanding Youth Award for her civic engagement work in the community. Due to the pandemic, the award ceremony was postponed. This March, she celebrated with 2020 and

2021 award recipients in a virtual awards ceremony. Wenli also earned a certificate in data science from University of California, Berkeley, Haas School of Business.



**Jessica Simpson** *MAT '11* is a positive behavioral intervention and support (PBIS) specialist with the Santa Clara County Office of Education in San Jose, Calif. She is responsible for supporting PBIS training and implementation. Jessica provides facilitation, training and coaching to school sites as well as maintains related documentation records and reports. She also provides ongoing assessments of school-wide PBIS implementation.



**Lauren Ford** *ME '12* earned her doctorate of education in educational leadership from San Francisco State University in May 2020. Her dissertation, “Community College Reform: Placing Foster Youth at the Center of a More Equitable Vision for Success” focused on providing practical recommendations to practitioners to increase equitable student success, informed by the lived experiences of former foster youth students enrolled in California community colleges. Acknowledged by program faculty for her leadership within the program, combined with the support of her dissertation committee, Lauren was named the 2020 EdD program Distinguished Scholar. Through her dissertation research, coupled with her previous fellowship with the Biden Foundation, Lauren was tapped to contribute to a national series of reports dedicated to inform practitioners on how to best support under resourced students through national College Promise initiatives. The team Lauren works with will specifically focus on foster youth in higher education with the reports being published later this year.

**Michael Fox** *ME '12* is an academic advisor at Georgia State University in Atlanta. He helps students with course scheduling and refers students to appropriate resources.



**Matthew Jellick** *MAT '12* continues to write for the *Shenzhen Daily*, the English newspaper of record in Shenzhen, China. His articles appear monthly, and discuss everything from education to music, and from Mexican restaurants to bicycle riding. He enjoys writing as it helps him express both frustration and hope about life abroad.

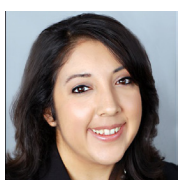
## Kevin Baxter EdD '04 appointed Director of the Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program at the University of Notre Dame



**Kevin Baxter EdD '04**, the chief innovation officer at the National Catholic Educational Association and past senior director and superintendent of schools for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, has been named the director of the Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program at the University of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE).

As director, Kevin will oversee the formation of Catholic school leaders in one of ACE's flagship programs and serve as a professor. Students in the Remick Leadership Program earn a master's degree in educational leadership as they learn to build robust Catholic school communities, advance teaching and learning, and manage school resources.

Kevin will draw on a long career dedicated to serving students, teachers and principals in Catholic schools. Over the span of more than 20 years, he has taught middle and high school math and science; served as an assistant principal, principal and superintendent of elementary schools; and, in 2015, became superintendent of schools in the nation's largest Catholic archdiocese, with more than 265 schools and 77,500 students.



**Frances Kellar EdD '12** launched her independent consultancy, Tri-Ed Learning Collaborative (TLC), specializing in applied research and consultation for individuals and K-12 organizational teams seeking to improve professional

practice through intentional inquiry, targeted professional learning, and conscientious coaching for equity.

**Devery Rodgers EdD '12** is an assistant professor of education leadership at California State University, Long Beach where she enhances the ability of preK-16 educators to lead and improve the outcomes in their organizations.

**Matt Rutledge MAT '12** was selected for the 2020-21 cohort of the Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms Program.



**Cecilia Santiago-Gonzalez EdD '12** was featured in a *Los Angeles Times* article, "[College Students Pour Out Emotions Amid Pandemic to Bots](#)," about the use of AI chatbots to connect with students, especially during the pandemic.



**Patricia Beckmann Wells MFA '96, EdD '13** is the chief academic officer at Emile Cohl Atelier which was launched as an experiment in disrupting the education industry. They provide full scholarship, art education for media careers to deserving

students who show promising artistic talent but are unable to afford the increasingly high tuition rates. Sponsored by Dreamworks and Epic Games, their board of directors are from Titmouse Animation, Sony and other studios. Emile Cohl Atelier started with 20 students in March in their inaugural class with the goal to open the industry to a more inclusive voice.

**Owynn Lancaster MAT '13** is the chief academic officer at College Bridge. He coordinates their academic vision and mission to help K-16 education align their intersegmental work to ensure the success of all students, specifically in the areas of STEM and college counseling.

**Robert Mijares MAT '13** moved from Seoul to Singapore to continue working on the international scene developing applied learning math programs in middle school. As a teacher at the Singapore American School, he brings math to life through practical applications from gardening to designing new exhibits at the zoo.



**Marco Nava EdD '13** recently published an article co-authored with Delia Estrada and Susan Ward Roncalli, "Trauma-Informed Social-Emotional Leadership, Teaching, and Learning." The article appears in the

February 2021 issue of *Principal Leadership* magazine, a publication from the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). The article outlines LAUSD's blueprint for expanding social-emotional learning initiatives at scale.





**Janna Bernstein** *ME '14* earned her PhD in curriculum and teaching with an emphasis in cultural studies, international education, and multicultural education from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in December 2020. She received the Graduate College Medallion honoring exceptionally involved and high-achieving students. Janna's research focuses on investigating the lived experiences of women professionals utilizing intersectional analysis and racial formation theory.



**Amber Bradley** *ME '14, EdD '19* is associate director, New Venture Challenge at the University of Chicago, Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. She is responsible for oversight and administration of the Polsky Center's capstone program, the New Venture Challenge (NVC). The NVC is recognized as one of the top-ranked university accelerator programs in the nation and has grown to include five distinct tracks.

**DeJah Carver** *ME '14* is the lead counselor at Alliance Gertz-Ressler High School in Los Angeles.



**Shi Chen** *MAT '14* will complete a PhD in applied linguistics from Northern Arizona University in July.

**Lise Choucair** *MSN '07, EdD '14* is an instructor, care coordination, UM & CDI at Queen's Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii.

**Margie Cruz-Hassan** *ME '14* is an assistant director at the University of Miami, Miami Herbert Business School. She is responsible for the management and strategic planning for seven graduate business programs, which include the accelerated MBA, full-time MBA, dual degrees, real estate, health administration, and international business. This encompasses the delivery and oversight of program operations as it relates to operating budgets, degree requirements, academic performance, advising, and registration. Margie is also responsible for special events related to these programs, including student onboarding and orientation, international trips, and commencement. In addition to program management, she oversees all graduate student organizations and their operating budgets.

**Margaret Jacquard** *MAT '14* is an assistant principal at Florida Virtual School.

**Daisy Jauregui** *MAT '14* was nominated for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST).

**Oscar Macias** *EdD '14* is the principal at Luther Burbank Middle School. The school was one of around 100 schools in the entire state selected as a California Distinguished School.



**Mary Anna Noveck** *EdD '14* is a learning and development specialist (primary) at the USC Shoah Foundation where she promotes the institutes leadership within Holocaust/genocide education for early childhood and primary lives.

**Elisabeth Roche** *MAT '14* transitioned to founding EdLight, an ed-tech startup, after 10 years in the classroom. EdLight helps schools with solutions for remote learning and tutoring that supports schools in focusing on authentic student work. Elisabeth supports partnerships with schools, as well as training and implementation of their product nationwide.



**Kelly Russell** *MAT '14* is a K-8 STEAM, math, science, and robotics teacher at Carden Arbor View School in Upland, Calif. She teaches and instills passion in integrating the arts with STEM education.

**Shaheed Sabrin** *BA '11, MAT-TESOL '14* recently completed an English language specialist assignment for the US Department of State for teachers in Egypt. He focused on effective lesson planning and classroom management.

**David Adams** *MAT '15* recently transitioned into the investment banking arena within the financial industry. His new job focuses on securities consulting and advisory work to CEOs, CFOs and directors of publicly traded companies. David's primary focus is within the reverse mergers and acquisitions of publicly traded entities.



**Dean Davis** *MAT '15* is a senior principal aerospace systems scientist/engineer with the United States Space Force, Los Angeles Space Force Base, Space & Missile Systems Center (SMC) in El Segundo, Calif.

## Carlos O. Cortez PhD '06 named Chancellor of the San Diego Community College District



**Carlos O. Cortez PhD '06**, a nationally recognized educational leader who has been president of the San Diego College of Continuing Education (SDCCE) since 2015, will be the next chancellor of the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD). His first day as the SDCCD's chief executive officer will be July 1.

As chancellor, Carlos will be responsible for all operations in a district that is the largest provider of workforce training and education in the region with a \$780-million annual budget. The chancellor oversees San Diego City, Mesa, and Miramar colleges, and the San Diego College of Continuing Education; assures that the district is administered in accordance with policies adopted by the Board of Trustees and state and federal regulations; and maintains a close working relationship with the community, K-12 and local higher-education systems, as well as local, state and federal officials.

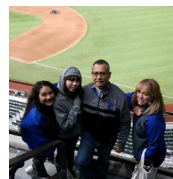
In selecting Carlos, the Board of Trustees is adding a CEO with considerable teaching and leadership experience. Carlos has taught consistently for the past 23 years. He has served as an administrator for 16 years and as CEO for 11 years. As the president of the San Diego College of Continuing Education, Carlos oversees one of the four colleges of the SDCCD, the seventh-largest community college system in the United States. SDCCE is the 11th largest institution in the California Community College system, serving 40,000 students annually at seven campuses and over 200 off-site locations.



**Brian Guerrero EdD '15** has been elected as the next president of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). NACE is the leading association that connects talent acquisition

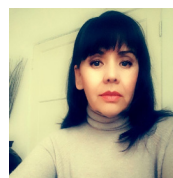
professionals with college career services practitioners. Brian will lead the association in providing high-quality resources and research on hiring trends and the future of work. He will serve as president-elect in 2021-22 before assuming the office of president in 2022-23. Brian currently serves as assistant dean of the Center for Career and Professional Success at The Ohio State University.

**Jeanne Herman EdD '15** is director of advising at Otis College of Art and Design where she directs and oversees college-wide processes and procedures related to academic advising. Jeanne also manages a centralized advising system that serves as the training and development hub for all academic advisors; plans, develops, and manages college-wide advising policies; and integrates transactional and transformational advising methods into consistent workplace practices for academic advisors across various departments and programs.



**Catalina Lara MPA '96, EdD '15** transitioned from 20 years in Los Angeles independent schools, to taking a position with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2019. For the 2021 season, Catalina became senior

manager of education and learning for the Dodgers' minor league system in the US and internationally. She oversees education programming for players and serves as a resource for player development staff.

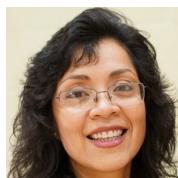


**Madeleine Mejia EdD '15** is an assistant professor at the College of Education at California State University, Fullerton.

As an expert in language and literacy instruction, she teaches online and in-person courses that focus on issues of diagnosis and remediation of reading and writing needs; critical literacy; racial equity pedagogy; diversity; and critical self-reflective practices to improve the delivery of instruction. In this new role, Madeleine will continue her research in students' voice during the learning and teaching process; teachers' roles and active agency in professional development/ inquiry into professional practice; critical literacy; and equity education.

**Leisha Nickels** *MAT '15* is an eighth grade science teacher in the Turlock Unified School District.

**Shindale Seale** *MAT-TESOL '15, EdD '18* was selected as chair of the University of California, Santa Cruz Extension Diversity Program.



**Merari Weber** *EdD '15* was recognized, in honor of Women's History Month, by Rancho Santiago Community College District's board for helping shape America's future through public service, leadership, and professional achievements in the district. Merari serves as an associate professor, English as a second language (ESL), guided pathways coordinator and chair of the ESL Department at Santa Ana College's School of Continuing Education.



**Trista Beard** *EdD '16* was awarded the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) top prize in student affairs programs and services, the 2021 Grand Gold Award, for leading the USC Topping Scholars Program. The Topping Scholars Program supports low-income students at USC who also demonstrate extraordinary community awareness. Trista and her team were also honored with the Gold Award for First-generation Student Success Initiatives.



**Cristian Biviano** *ME '16* is a human resources analytics specialist at IBM. He currently sits on the engagement and diversity and inclusion analytics teams where he designs and manages employee surveys. He also supports recruiting efforts by providing data and statistics for trends and patterns. He analyzes competitors practices, makes recommendations to management, prepares reports of data results and presents findings to leadership. Lastly, Cristian identifies and suggests short-term and long-term goals, milestones, and benchmarks for key performance metrics. He recently earned a masters of human resources and industrial relations with a concentration in diversity and inclusion from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

**Daniel Chatham** *EdD '16* is a visiting professor at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey, Calif. teaching in the International Education Management program. He was also the editor of the recently published book "Advancing Online Course Design and Pedagogy for the 21st Century Learning Environment."

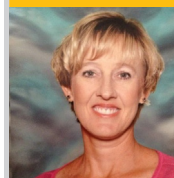
## Five New Trojans Appointed School District Superintendents



**Cheryl Hildreth** *EdD '19*  
Superintendent  
Washington Unified School District  
West Sacramento, Calif.



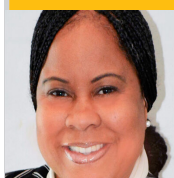
**Mathew Neal** *EdD '18*  
Superintendent  
Woodland Park School District  
Woodland Park, Colo.



**Julie Olesniewicz** *EdD '12*  
Interim Superintendent  
Claremont Unified School District  
Claremont, Calif.



**Julie Synyard** *EdD '10*  
Superintendent  
Martinez Unified School District  
Martinez, Calif.



**Darnise Williams** *EdD '09*  
Superintendent  
Sequoia Union High School District  
Redwood City, Calif.

**Karen Preciado** *ME '16* is an enrollment services supervisor at El Camino College in Torrance, Calif. where she oversees the Warrior Welcome Center assisting with new, continuing and returning students.

**Michael Alvarez** *EdD '17* is a part-time, assistant professor at California State University, Northridge. He creates and leads the following online courses - Teaching English Learners in Multiethnic Secondary Schools and Content Area Literacy and Learning in Multiethnic Secondary Schools.

**Allison Bellows** *MAT '17* is an English teacher, instructional coach and sports coach at Paras Los Ninos Charter Middle Schools where she has been working since 2018. She coaches the girls soccer and basketball teams and serves as the state testing coordinator.

**Michael Davis** *EdD '17* is president pro tem of the City of Los Angeles Board of Public Works and was named the chief racial equity officer for the commission.



## Jame'l Hodges EdD '11 appointed Vice President For Student Success and Engagement at Edward Waters College



Boasting of a superlative record for supporting overall student development and achievement as a seasoned and progressive student success and engagement leader in higher education, **Jame'l Hodges EdD '11** has accepted an appointment as the new vice president for student success and engagement at Edward Waters College (EWC) in Tampa, Fla.

Jame'l provides direct leadership as the institution's chief student success and engagement officer charged with bringing the dynamism, energy, innovation, and progressive leadership necessary to efficaciously shape the future of EWC student success and engagement. As a student-centered professional, Jame'l will initiate, develop, maintain, and provide oversight for a comprehensive array of the college's student focused programs and services including student activities and leadership, religious life, student health services, counseling services, campus safety/security, residence life and housing, and career services all of which combine to create a holistically phenomenal Tiger student experience.

As an accomplished student affairs professional, Jame'l most recently served as associate vice president for student success & engagement at Virginia State University (VSU) where he dually led in the development and implementation of student programming and experiential initiatives designed to enhance student academic progress, student leadership, and student's overall personal growth and professional readiness. He also shared leadership responsibilities in support of new student orientation, campus residence life and housing, student conduct as well as oversight of various campus student activities/engagement initiatives, greek life, intramurals, and student sponsored clubs and organizations.

**Brandon Johnson ME '17** is a certified professional career coach at Be Gallant Coaching. As a career coach and resume writer, Brandon provides highly-tailored career-focused support to students and professionals who are looking to make moves in their professional journey.

**Natasha Neumann EdD '17** is part of the Educational Leadership and Administration Program (ELAP) faculty in the School of Education at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. She works with graduate students seeking a masters in educational leadership and also students who are seeking the preliminary administrative services credential (PASC) in addition to the masters. Natasha was hired as a tenure-track faculty member in fall 2019 following over 20 years serving in K-12 education as a bilingual teacher, middle school Spanish teacher, district level curriculum coordinator and elementary school principal.

**Ezinne Ofoegbu ME '17** defended her dissertation exploring the college experiences and identity of black women student-athletes at Division I, predominately white institutions and will graduate from North Carolina State University with a PhD in educational leadership, policy, and human development. This fall, Ezinne will be an assistant professor of educational leadership at Santa Clara University.



**Christopher Riddick EdD '17** is a principal at ReadySet, a high-touch boutique consulting firm specializing in making more human-centric, inclusive work environments in Washington, DC.

The firm leverages decades of academic and professional experience to deliver tailored, data-driven strategies and learning solutions.

**Daisy Sanchez Pocasangre MAT-TEOL '17** is an English language coordinator at Alliance College Ready Middle Academy 12. She ensures EL students have access to academic content and ensures ELD standards are being taught across campus by coaching and providing professional development for teachers. Daisy also works with parents to demonstrate how they can support their student through their learning.



**Helene Sparangis EdD '17** was recently promoted from career advisor to senior career advisor at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. She supervises student staff, works on employer and faculty partnerships, and manages research fellowships for specific student studies.

## Michèle Turner '81, EdD '14 to lead new USC effort to strengthen ties to local diverse businesses



USC'S new Office of Business Diversity and Economic Opportunity will be led by **Michèle Turner '81, EdD '14**, who was named associate vice president of the effort. The office will be tasked with building partnerships with area businesses owned by minorities, women and veterans. Part of the university's civic engagement and economic partnerships team, the effort aims to further USC's broader strategy for equity, diversity and inclusion.

Turner is a graduate of USC Rossier's Global EdD program and was previously the executive director of the USC Black Alumni Association. Turner cites both education and business as essential tools for social equity.

"Business ownership is a way to generate wealth for diverse families," Turner says. "That's a primary goal, and it's tied to social justice. To get there, you've got to take down institutional barriers that can keep those small businesses from competing."

**Olugbenga (Benga) Agbelemose EdD '18** is associate director, RT/ABG/PFT at Cedars Sinai Medical Center. He is responsible for all the activities of respiratory therapy and pulmonary medicine which includes respiratory therapy, pulmonary function lab, and blood gas lab.

**Diana Aguilar ME '18** is a student equity professional expert at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, Calif.



**Nancy Bjorklund EdD '18** is director, Office of Continuing Education for the Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine at Western Michigan University. She oversees a highly specialized unit that

impacts physician and other health care providers learning, performance, and patient health outcomes. Continuing Education (CE) is an integral part of the health system continuous quality improvement program. As such, the CE office positively impacts the improvement of the patient experience, improving the health of populations, and reduces the per capita cost of health care. Additionally, Nancy provides strategic and operational leadership for the medical school's overall continuing education program and represents the school at the local, regional, state, national and international level.

**Scott Bradley ME '18** has joined the technology and data company, Splunk as the program specialist for onboarding and employee development in Brooklyn, NY. In this role, Scott will work to improve and build out a holistic onboarding and employee experience for Splunk employees around the globe and assist with learning and

development initiatives for the company.

**Alana Burton EdD '18** is creator and founder of Infinity Flow LLC which helps organizations become stronger, better, and more profitable. Using her educational and professional background, Alana provides individualized tools and support to collaboratively redesign and reenergize organizational business culture, separating them from other competitive organizations. She uses a restorative, mindfulness, social-emotional, and diversity, equity and inclusion lens in all of her work.

**Amie Carter EdD '18** is an assistant superintendent in the Marin County Office of Education in San Rafael, Calif. She is the liaison for the California Collaborative of Educational Excellence, and responsible for assisting with all aspects of curriculum and instruction for the county.

**Joseph Cortez EdD '18** was recently named to lead the International Association of Chiefs' of Police (IACP) Research Advisory Committee (RAC). The mission of the RAC is to provide input, advice, and direction to the association, law enforcement practitioners, law enforcement researchers, Department of Justice leaders, and the entire criminal justice system on all aspects of law enforcement policy research and evaluation. The RAC is an influential and essential committee for the IACP. The committee guides the association's decision making on urgent policing and justice policy research actions.

**Vanessa Gonzalez EdD '18** and her partner, Edgardo Vaquerano, welcomed Eva Isabel Vaquerano on October 24, 2020 in Downey, Calif.



**Charles Kim** *MAT '18* is a social science teacher at Palos Verdes Peninsula High School where he teaches US and world history. Even though this has been a challenging year, Charles enjoys interacting with students through online instruction and is excited that he's back at his alma mater (Class of 2013). Go Panthers and Fight On!



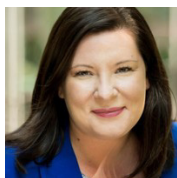
**Fanisha Muepo** *EdD '18* and her husband Laurent Muepo, Jr. have a consultation business, Think Big Educational Services. They assist families on college preparation, scholarships, and tutoring. In addition they offer grant writing and book editing services.

**Miguel Solis** *EdD '18* is head of school at Maui Preparatory Academy in Lahaina, Hawaii.



**Stacey Vye** *EdD '18* was recently promoted from associate professor to professor at Saitama University in Saitama, Japan. She coordinates the English academic writing program and the self-access center specializing in motivation, proficiency, reflection, and formatting from fundamental to advanced literacy.

**Emily Weisberg** *EdD '18* was elected to the Burbank Unified School Board with the highest number of votes of any city-wide official in the history of Burbank. She currently sits on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, Local Control and Accountability Plan Committee (LCAP), Special Education District Advisory Committee (DAC) and the Career Technical Education (CTE) Advisory Committee.



**Amy Carmack** *EdD '19* is assistant dean of transition and experience at Salem State University in Salem, Mass.

**Michael Colarusso** *EdD '19* completed an MSHRM in human resources management from USC Bovard College in 2020 - his second graduate degree from USC. Lifelong learning keeps him Fighting On!

**Aerial Ellis** *EdD '19* was elected to serve as president by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Foundation's board of directors following her appointment by the organization's nominating committee. She had previously served on the PRSA Foundation Board as a representative of the PRSA National Board. The PRSA Foundation is an independent, 501(3) charitable organization dedicated to advancing diversity

and inclusion within the communications profession. A rising leader within the communications profession, Aerial is an entrepreneur, educator and dedicated advocate of improving diversity, equity and inclusion within public relations.

**Jannah Garfio** *EdD '19* is a senior manager, inclusive design at the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.



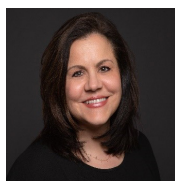
**Theresa Haskins** *EdD '19* is one of the newest faculty members for the Master of Science Human Resource program at USC Bovard College, joining as an adjunct associate professor. She will be teaching courses aligned to organizational development, change management, talent management, and diversity.

**Lauren Leahy** *EdD '19* was named coordinator of student services for the Solano Beach Unified School District.



**MJ Marggraff** *EdD '19* dissertation was an innovation study related to social isolation. The application addressed how to mitigate isolation astronauts experience when on extended and distant missions. Her

research translated to societal social isolation issues and inspired her to co-found a startup company that has developed an application and device with an initial focus on providing a new way to connect older family members with young children. The startup, Kinoo, Inc., includes a team of child development and technology experts. As a result of the unique innovation, first suggested in her dissertation and then developed thereafter, MJ has been awarded two US patents for the AI and the time-sharing methods (an application useful for long-duration flights.) She has continued to develop this technology to help our astronauts' behavioral health when returning to the moon and then on to Mars. Fight On!



**Dee Masiello** *EdD '19* is the founding director, Center for Continuing and Professional Education (CCPE) at Suffolk University in Boston, Mass. She has been tasked with building the strategy and

operations for the newly created center. The aim of the CCPE is to grow and expand the institutions non credit, professional and executive education offerings in Boston and beyond. Dee is very much looking forward to this new challenge!

**Narges Rabii-Rakin EdD '19** is chief advisor for academic and diversity programs in the Rancho Santiago Community College District in Santa Ana, Calif. In her role, Narges leads the district in implementing strategic initiatives, including the creation of a culture for equity, diversity, and inclusion. She works directly with the chancellor as an operational strategist on diversity, equity and race relations throughout the district.

## 2020s

**Ashley Albright ME '20** is a case manager in the Housing Information Office at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Mich. She processes all intake requests for housing health and disability accommodations. Ashley also assists with processing applications and communicating timely and relevant housing information to students, parents, and campus partners.

**Kaitlyn Boothby MAT '20** is a long-term substitute teacher in the Los Angeles Unified School District teaching ELA and social studies. She is excited to be working with students who were in her first semester fieldwork placement classroom.

**Cairo Briceno ME '20** is a resident director at Pitzer College.

**Christiana Cobb-Dozier ME '20** is a school counselor at Resolute Academy, a middle school serving students in grades 5-8. In her role, Christiana works to empower her students to be the best version of themselves through developing necessary social emotional skills, pursuing academic success, and exploring college and career interests. In addition, she is the author of a new children's book "Racing for the People," which was created in partnership with fellow USC graduate **Kimiyo Brown ME '20** as illustrator.

**Sandra Colton-Medici EdD '20** is the founder and CEO of College of Style, which helps entrepreneurs and small business owners build their online brands through online education, workshops, Q&As with business leaders, networking opportunities and more.

**Carlos Cruz EdD '20** was appointed dean, student care network and basic needs at Dallas College. Carlos provides guidance and leadership in developing wrap-around services at Dallas College, serving 90,000+ students. The student care network was created to accept

referrals regarding individuals in distress or whose behavior raises concerns about their well-being or others'. Additionally, this area addresses behaviors or mental, emotional, or psychological health conditions that may be disruptive, harmful, or pose a direct threat or risk to the health and safety of the Dallas College community. Carlos is also responsible for developing advocacy centers focused on students' basic needs - food, clothes, and shelter.

**Deborah Elder EdD '20** is chief academic officer for instruction, accountability, and innovation at Los Lunas Schools in Los Lunas, NM. She has leveraged post-pandemic innovation to improve student learning, increase equity of student outcomes, and achieve the district vision of becoming the premier school district in New Mexico.



**Jas Jefferies ME '20** is a residence hall coordinator at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Mo. She serves 650 students in a healthy, empowering campus environment by supporting residential community experiences that enhance student learning & development.

**Cecilia Jerez MAT-TESOL '20** is a virtual English language fellow at the US Department of State. The Virtual English Language Fellow Program offers virtual programming opportunities for partners of the English Language Fellow Program around the world. Virtual fellows work via online platforms with the Public Affairs sections and regional English language officers based at US embassies, as well as with local host institutions to provide English language teaching and learning support.



**Michelle Juarez EdD '20** is the founding director of academic support and advising at the new Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine in Pasadena, Calif. She is responsible for leading the academic skills, support, and academic advising resources.

**Cassandra Koett EdD '20** is a high school principal at Lexington Christian Academy in Lexington, Kentucky.



**Joseph Kotarski EdD '20** was recently named superintendent of the inaugural Dubai Schools, a public-private partnership between the Dubai government and the private schools provider, Taaleem Education. The Dubai Schools will offer a premium



education to public school students with the mission of developing global citizens who are empathetic critical thinkers. Two schools will open in fall 2021 and expand campuses each year until there are eight schools by year four.

**Denise Kuo** *MAT '20* is a fourth grade, long-term substitute teacher at Oliveira Elementary School in the Fremont Unified School District in Fremont, Calif.



**Matthew Mayer** *EdD '20* is associate director, community impact and social innovation at Santander Consumer USA, Inc.

**Josephine Ochoa** *MAT-TESOL '20* is a program assistant - associate site director at Bridge to Enter Advanced Mathematics (BEAM).

**Shirleen Oplustic** *EdD '20* is a middle school principal in the Moorpark Unified School District.

**Martha Pogue Maimone** *EdD '20* is an adjunct professor at Glendale Community College teaching English as a second language (ESL). She is charged with developing

effective lesson planning and implementation. Martha also initiates supportive learning activities for ESL learners that aim at advancing their newly acquired skills.

**Jennifer Quezada** *EdD '20* was recently elected during an at-large election to serve as a governing board member for Fontana Unified School District. The school district serves over 36,000 students. It was her first run for political office and she is thrilled to be serving her own school district in which she attended as a K-12 student and also had the honor of teaching at the same middle and high school she attended.

**Timo Sandritter** *EdD '20* is president of Rippleworx.



**Aleksandr Voninski** *EdD '20* is associate director - client relations (Australasia) for ETS in Sydney, Australia. ETS is the world's largest non-profit education testing and assessment organization. In his role, Aleksandr manages government and institutional client relations (admissions and student recruitment stakeholders) across Australia, New Zealand and the greater Pacific Islands region, improving accessibility and equity for test takers in urban and remote locations.

**USC Rossier**  
School of Education

**Visit the  
*Class Notes* website**

- **Share an update with us for inclusion in the next issue of *Class Notes*.**
- **Read past issues of *Class Notes*.**

**[rossier.usc.edu/alumni/class-notes/](http://rossier.usc.edu/alumni/class-notes/)**