

# Reach

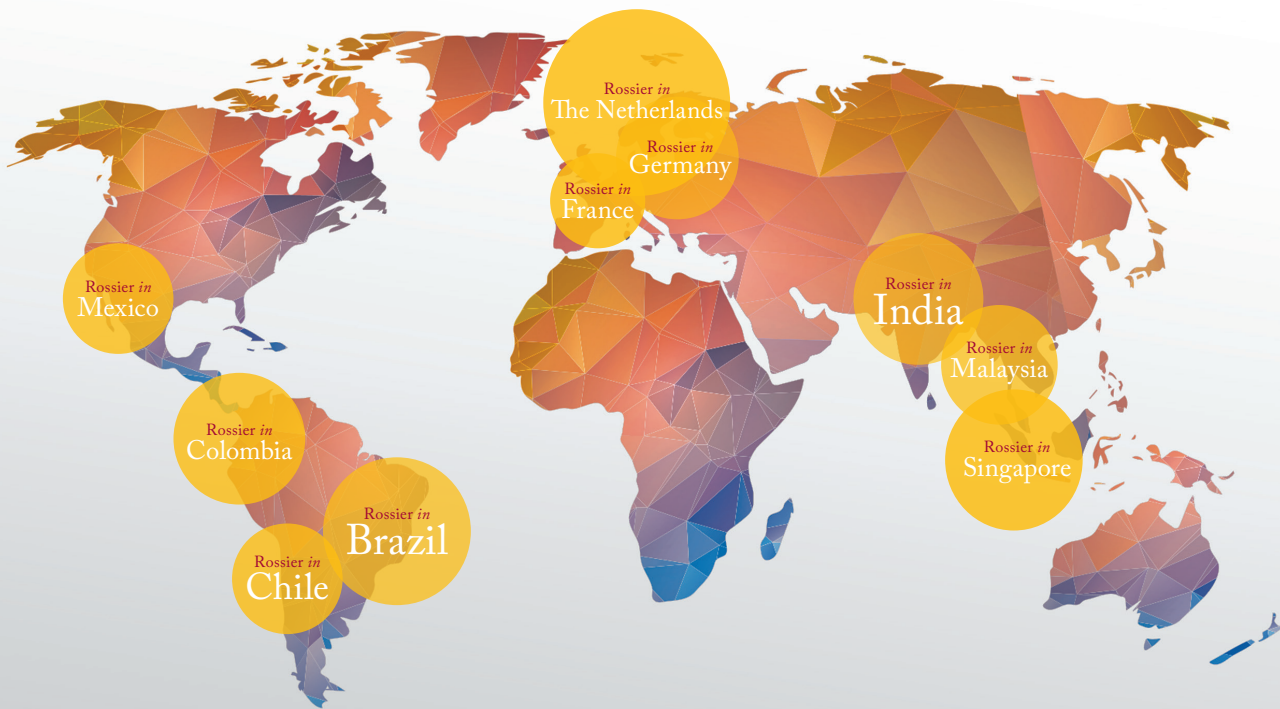
ISSUE 10 | June 2015

THE PUBLICATION FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH

## The Global Reach *of Rossier's Research Faculty*

**IN AUGUST 2013, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR TATIANA MELGUIZO LEFT HER LOS ANGELES HOME** to spend a sabbatical year in Paris to complete research focusing on college students from Brazil. The unorthodox peregrination made perfect sense to the globe-trotting Melguizo, who earned bachelor's and master's degrees in economics from Los Andes University in Bogotá, Colombia, another master's in social policy from the London School of Economics and a PhD in Economics of Education from Stanford University.

While in Paris, Melguizo rendezvoused with her co-author of the Brazil project—Jacques Wainer, of Brazil's University of Campinas—and also presented her findings at conferences in Paris, Dijon and at the University of London.



“Many other professors around the world choose Paris for their sabbaticals,” she says, “so it becomes a natural place to make meaningful academic connections with scholars from across the world.”

Meaningful academic connections are the practical necessities of international research. Mary Helen Immordino-Yang, associate professor of education, psychology and neuroscience, is in the early stages of a new project that will take her to Germany and The Netherlands during a sabbatical year. “I’ll be giving a series of talks and will be exploring research collaborations related to urban adolescent development, especially immigrant adolescents’ identity development,” she says.

*continued on next page*

USC  
Rossier  
School of Education

MESSAGE

### From the Dean

Rossier’s mission is to improve learning in urban education locally, nationally and globally. And we take that global goal very seriously. Our MAT, EdD and Global Executive EdD students are based in nearly 40 different countries, an accomplishment supported by an innovative synchronous online learning platform. For several years, we have also been hosting intensive face-to-face coursework for the Global Executive EdD in Los Angeles, Hong Kong and Doha, Qatar. And this fall, USC Rossier will be launching its first international Doctorate of Education cohort, based in Singapore.

While our rapidly expanding pool of students and alumni from these programs is testimony to Rossier’s global impact, so too is the exhaustive research conducted by individual faculty members who bring fresh insights to faraway regions while also impacting the ways educators practice here in the United States. This issue of *Reach* spotlights some of that work in progress.



**Karen Symms Gallagher, PhD**  
Emery Stoops and  
Joyce King Stoops Dean

Meanwhile, in August 2015, Estela Mara Bensimon, professor of education and co-director of the Center for Urban Education (CUE), will travel to the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México to participate in a seminar on the future of the university. She will speak about future directions for organizational learning and assessment. Bensimon has also made frequent trips to Chile. In 2014, she was a guest of the University of Santiago and University of the Bío Bío, where she spoke about the assessment of equity.

“Chile’s higher education leaders have developed an interest in CUE’s Equity Scorecard,” says Bensimon of the tool that uses institutional data to formulate action plans. “They are grappling with the great income-based inequality in access to public universities.” She also spent a week providing seminars and workshops to faculty and administrators of the Economics Department at the University of Chile.

Asia is another popular destination among Rossier faculty. During his 2014–15 sabbatical, Associate Professor Darnell Cole conducted research on diversity in Singapore and Malaysia (see *Q&A*, page 3). And in September 2015, William G. Tierney, Wilbur-Kieffer Professor of Higher Education and co-director of the Pullias Center for Higher Education, is heading to India on a Fulbright-Nehru Scholarship (See accompanying article). Tierney is no stranger to travel. In 2014, he began a series of month-long visits to the University of Hong Kong (HKU), where he is contributing to the development of HKU’s international education policy studies program. He conducts an ongoing series of lectures, consults on research proposals and helps the university expand its role in the United States and globally.

“Education is a growth industry in Asia,” noted Gerry Postiglione, Chair Professor of Sociology and Educational Policy at HKU. “The careful analysis of various trends with regard to students, governance and faculty has significant implications for policy reform in productive economies such as Singapore and China, but also in developing countries such as Nepal and Myanmar. The result is a greater need for collaborative research with faculties such as mine and internationally known colleagues such as in the Rossier School.”

**T**ATIANA MELGUIZO TURNED TO BRAZIL in her quest to measure how postsecondary institutions are adding value to students in higher education. She set out to measure not only student learning outcomes in higher education, but also other relevant educational outcomes such as persistence, graduation and early earnings.

Why Brazil?

“Brazil has been a pioneer in the world in terms of creating complex systems to track higher education student progress and measuring student learning outcomes,” she says. “The United States is just starting to grapple with these complex issues, so having the international comparison is invaluable.”

At the April 2015 conference of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), Melguizo presented on her findings in a session titled “Practices that Support Learning in Higher Education Across the Years and Across the Globe.” In her paper, titled “Are Students Gaining General and Subject Area Knowledge in College? Evidence from Brazil,” she explained how she utilized data from Brazil’s National Student Performance Exam, which was given to both freshmen and seniors in the three main categories of programs between 2008 and 2010: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); Social Sciences; and Biological Sciences.

“This exam was not only designed to measure the general knowledge and subject area skills gained by students in higher education,” says Melguizo, “but it was also a requirement for graduation.” Brazil’s comprehensive system also provided data for Melguizo to assess gains by specific major as well as by individual (low- vs. high-income) and institutional (public vs. private) characteristics.

She hopes her work has applications at home as the United States begins developing its own rigorous and valid assessment and evaluation system. Meanwhile, she is also completing a similar study of college students in Colombia through a grant funded by the Spencer Foundation. Fabio Sánchez Torres, Los Andes University in Colombia, and Gema Zamarro, University of Arkansas, are her co-PIs.

“The data in Colombia is even better than the data from Brazil,” says Melguizo, “and our goal is to test different econometric models that will let us produce accurate estimates of these complex measures.”

**W**ILLIAM G. TIERNEY WILL SPEND THE 2015–16 ACADEMIC YEAR IN INDIA as a Fulbright-Nehru Scholar. This is his third Fulbright, having conducted previous fellowships in Central America and Australia.

Tierney is an expert on higher education policy analysis, governance and administration. His Fulbright project is titled “Academic Work in a Global Economy: Privatization, Public Governance and Regulation, and the Changing Nature of Faculty Work.”

“I’ll be looking at the impact of globalization,” says Tierney, “and considering how to grapple with creating 21st-century universities in the world’s largest democracy.”

Tierney has long been curious about the impacts of globalization on higher education in countries throughout the world. Says Tierney: “I have written about the various forms of privatization in Malaysia and how the definition of quality in Central America is in constant tension with what is meant on the world stage.”

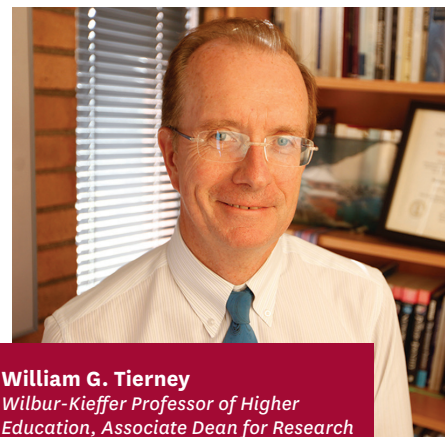
And yet he still believes globalization is poorly understood by American educators, particularly when it comes to privatization; regulation and governance; and issues surrounding academic staff.

These will be his focal points as he sets out to spend time at two host institutions: O.P. Jindal Global University, which is private; and the public National University of Educational Planning and Administration.

At the conclusion of his fellowship, Tierney plans to publish a book on globalization in higher education with Johns Hopkins University Press.



**Tatiana Melguizo**  
Associate Professor of Education



**William G. Tierney**  
Wilbur-Kieffer Professor of Higher Education, Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs and Co-Director of the Pullias Center for Higher Education

# Changing *the* Lens

*One Rossier expert on diversity in higher education gets a new global perspective*

**DARNELL COLE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION AT USC ROSSIER**, has devoted his career to understanding how diversity plays out in higher education. After more than 15 years of research on American campuses, last year Cole traveled to Singapore and Malaysia to examine how diversity impacts students' educational success in those two countries. By exploring the differences between the United States and Southeast Asia, Cole hopes to apply his new insights to demonstrate the implications and ramifications for institutional policy and practice in the United States.

Cole's study was conducted at the Centre for Transcultural Studies at Temasek Polytechnic in Singapore and at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, in collaboration with Dr. Elizabeth Keith and Dr. Faridah Kutty, respectively.

**Rossier Reach** asked Cole to explain why he pursued this international project.

---

**Q: Why did you decide to conduct research abroad?**

**DC:** I thought going outside the United States would bring a fresh perspective to how populations create structural mechanisms to improve their overall well-being through the lens of diversity.

---

**Q: So why Singapore?**

**DC:** Singapore has a diverse society that presents a number of ways to explore its approach to social integration. While many parts of Europe have been studied around issues of diversity and immigration, Singapore has not shown up in the literature, and I saw a wonderful opportunity to explore the country's approaches to ethnic and religious diversity.

---

**Q: Why was it important for you to travel to a new location rather than delegating work to collaborators on-site?**

**DC:** One reason has to do with the lens that different people bring to their work. A US-based lens on diversity work comes with a certain social and historical context, including a deep background in legal cases around civil rights. I wanted to make sure this perspective was part of the project, not to mention the perspective I would be bringing as an African-American. I also thought it was important to observe firsthand the ways people navigate social, ethnic and religious differences.

---

**Q: How did this new region make you reconsider the strengths of Americans' approach to diversity?**

**DC:** Well, in the United States we are able to frame diversity more broadly than in other countries in the world. By that I mean that our long history of civil rights has given us a spectrum for discussing topics pretty openly, such as race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation. This is not the case in Southeast Asia, where diversity might refer to regional differences as opposed to issues around indigenous populations. It's harder to have conversations about gender and even more difficult to address sexual orientation.

---

**Q: How do you mentor your students at Rossier?**

**DC:** I encourage them to have an openness about their sense of self around their research topics while being open to new possibilities, new perceptions and new ways of understanding. You really get to test out your own assumptions on the ground, not just the research ones, but the ones that inform the research.

---

**Q: What's next?**

**DC:** We're developing proposals for the upcoming Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) and AERA conferences, each from the Singapore research—one that deals with the impact of their curriculum on critical thinking, and the other on changing and impacting perspectives around tolerance, acceptance and understanding. A Malaysia paper will look at student faculty expectations, specifically the kinds of relationships that develop between the national population of Malaysia and international students. Yet another paper will be a comparison of some of these key measures of diversity in Singapore, Malaysia and the United States. The results will show how frequently students are interacting with people who are different from themselves and the extent to which these kinds of interactions—as well as curricular interventions—impact students' educational gains.

REACH | [rossier.usc.edu](http://rossier.usc.edu)

“*I thought it was important to observe firsthand the ways people navigate social, ethnic and religious differences.*”

— Darnell Cole



**Darnell Cole**  
Associate Professor of Education



## Faculty Awards 2014—2015

The American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE) honored **Estela Mara Bensimon** with their Outstanding Latina Faculty Award for Research & Teaching in Higher Education.



**Estela Mara Bensimon**  
Professor of Education and Co-Director  
of the Center for Urban Education

**Mary Helen Immordino-Yang** won an Early Career Impact Award from the Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences (FABBS) Foundation. The award was given in recognition of her “major research contributions to the sciences of mind, brain, and behavior.”

**Adrianna Kezar** was named a 2015 Fellow of the American Educational Research Association. Fellows were chosen for “their commitment to excellence in research and for their significant contributions to the field.”

**Brendesha Tynes** received the American Educational Research Association’s Early Career Award, recognizing “a scholar’s distinguished portfolio of cumulative education research within the first decade following the receipt of a doctoral degree.” She also received a Spencer Foundation Midcareer Grant of \$150,000. The purpose of the grant is “to enrich the work of academic midcareer scholars who are seven to 20 years post doctorate.”

## FORMING RESEARCH RELATIONS *in* ASIA

In May, Cathryn Dhanatya, USC Rossier’s assistant dean for research, attended a senior seminar hosted by the Asia Pacific Higher Education Research Partnership (APHERP).

“Creating Cultures of Quality within Asia Pacific Higher Education Institutions” was held at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China, led by Deane Neubauer, formerly of the University of Hawaii at Manoa and now with the East-West Center.

APHERP’s purpose is to identify “leading scholars of quality throughout the world with identified interests and capabilities in Asia-Pacific higher education and to work to promote their collaborative efforts to produce leading-edge scholarship.”

In keeping with this purpose, APHERP’s senior seminars set out to help participants explore “how universities seek to develop quality and emphasis through their own internal processes either in responses

to evaluations of external quality assurance entities or through their own efforts.”

Participants represented universities from various parts of China, Vietnam, Malaysia and Australia.

Dr. Dhanatya presented USC Rossier’s 2012–17 strategic plan, providing foundational information for other institutions to do the same. “USC Rossier has an interest in working in the Asia-Pacific region,” said Dr. Dhanatya. “We can further USC Rossier’s vision by partnering on research on higher education. We have much to offer in that area, and we can certainly learn from other top-tier universities in Asia and the Pacific Rim.”

Dhanatya reports that a published compilation of papers from the seminar is forthcoming.

For more information on Asia Pacific Higher Education Research Partnership, visit [apherp.org](http://apherp.org).

### CONTACT

USC Rossier

#### Office of the Dean USC Rossier School of Education

3470 Trousdale Parkway  
Waite Phillips Hall 1101  
Los Angeles, California 90089-0031  
213.740.8313  
[rossier.usc.edu](http://rossier.usc.edu)

#### RESEARCH CENTERS

##### Center on Educational Governance

213.740.0697  
[uscrossier.org/ceg](http://uscrossier.org/ceg)

##### Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice

213.740.7401  
[cerpp.usc.edu](http://cerpp.usc.edu)

##### Pullias Center for Higher Education

213.740.7218  
[pullias.usc.edu](http://pullias.usc.edu)

##### Center for Urban Education

213.740.5202  
[cue.usc.edu](http://cue.usc.edu)

#### For more information about the research at USC Rossier, contact:

William G. Tierney  
Associate Dean for Research  
and Faculty Affairs  
213.740.7218  
[wgtiern@usc.edu](mailto:wgtiern@usc.edu)